

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED CAREER MOBILITY,
CAREER MOBILITY PREFERENCE, JOB SATISFACTION AND
ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT**

by

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I, TANZIA FRANCES JOÃO, student number 36123471, declare that this dissertation, entitled **“The relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment”**, is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that ethical clearance to conduct the research has been obtained from the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, University of South Africa, as well as from the participating organisations.

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SUMMARY

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED CAREER MOBILITY, CAREER MOBILITY PREFERENCE, JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

by

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The objective of this study was to explore the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. A secondary objective was to determine whether various age, gender, tenure, marital status and race groups differed significantly regarding their perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. A perceived career mobility scale and career mobility preference scale, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (short form) and the Organisational Commitment Scale, were applied to a non-probability convenience sample consisting of 82 South African accountants, auditors and financial staff members.

Significant relationships were observed between the variables. Significant differences were found between age and race groups' perceived career mobility, gender and tenure groups' career mobility preference, and age and tenure groups' organisational commitment. The findings contribute valuable new knowledge that may be used to inform retention practices in the financial sector.

KEY TERMS

Affective commitment; career mobility; continuance commitment; job satisfaction; normative commitment; retention.

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CHAPTER 1

SCIENTIFIC OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

This dissertation focuses on the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. In this chapter, the background to and motivation for the research are discussed. From this, the problem statement, research questions and research aims are formulated. The paradigm perspective guiding the research is then discussed, followed by a discussion of the research design and the research methods, with reference to the various steps in the research process. Finally, the chapter layout is provided.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO AND MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH

The focus of this research is an investigation of the relationship dynamics between individuals' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The context of this study is the difficulty in the retention of scarce and critical skills, in particular as they apply to financial staff, accountants and auditors in the South African context. The aforementioned context is important in this study, as research has shown that job satisfaction and organisational commitment are key variables that influence employees' turnover intention, i.e. an individual's intent to leave an organisation (Martin, 2007; Mokoka, 2007; Price & Mueller, 1981). Moreover, the greater demand for knowledge workers in the work environment presents retention challenges (Kochanski & Ledford, 2001). People's need for career development opportunities is associated with their need for career mobility. A lack of career development opportunities within an organisation has been identified as a retention factor, as employees desire career growth (Sutherland & Jordaan, 2004). Therefore, findings on the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment could be utilised to inform retention practices.

The 2008 financial management, accounting and auditing skills shortage research report (South African Institute of Chartered Accountants, 2008), commissioned by the South African Institute for Chartered Accountants (SAICA), reveals that an output of 22 030 financial staff, accountants and auditors needs to be produced by educational institutions in order to fulfil current vacancies for these skilled workers. The report confirmed that organisations experience retention problems, with accounting professionals being the group that organisations struggle the most to retain (Pato & Spira, 2008). The preceding findings support the need to explore perceived career

mobility as an important aspect of talent retention. As research on employees in the technological sector has identified that the high demand for employees due to labour market trends has led to greater career opportunities and, in turn, greater challenges in retaining these employees (Kochanski & Ledford, 2001). By employing retention strategies, South African organisations can maintain a competitive advantage and reduce the high costs incurred as a result of employee turnover (Kaplan, Meyer & Brown, 2000).

Voluntary turnover of employees in order to seek employment in alternative organisations can be understood as inter-organisational job mobility, which is regarded as an aspect of career mobility (Feldman & Ng, 2007). In this study, the concept of perceived career mobility refers to an individual's perception of the opportunity for intra-organisational and inter-organisational career mobility. Intra-organisational career mobility refers to job changes that include substantial changes in work responsibilities, hierarchical level or titles within an organisation (Feldman & Ng, 2007). It also refers to occupational change, which includes transitions that require fundamentally new skills, routines and work environments, along with new training, education or vocational preparation within an organisation (Feldman & Ng, 2007). On the other hand, inter-organisational change refers to movement between organisations.

When studying the occurrence of inter-organisational career mobility, economists commonly stress the importance of opportunity, which often arises due to a discrepancy between the supply and demand of skills. Literature as early as that by March and Simon (1958) identifies the significance of the relationship between mobility opportunity and turnover. March and Simon's (1958) seminal work highlights that the more plentiful jobs are, the greater the amount of voluntary movement external to the organisation. Likewise, Feldman and Ng (2007) propose that the motivation to seek new employment opportunities is affected by macroeconomic conditions, from a structural perspective, and industry growth, from an occupational perspective. From an individual perspective, employees have a preference for career mobility (Ng, Sorensen, Eby & Feldman, 2007). Whilst inter-organisational mobility refers to external mobility, career mobility also refers to internal mobility, which includes changing jobs and occupations within an organisation (i.e. intra-organisational mobility) (Feldman & Ng, 2007). Therefore, internal career mobility needs to be explored in order to gain an understanding of perceptions of and preferences for career mobility. The study of career mobility could provide insight into how mobility may inform employee retention in terms of the forces that keep people in their current employment situations (i.e. career embeddedness) (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

Lesabe and Nkosi (2007) highlight that individuals tend to focus on their future and that they desire progress and growth. Employees therefore may possess a preference for career mobility with the aim of career progression. Job satisfaction may be related to perceived career mobility and organisational commitment, as employees may not be committed to an organisation if they are dissatisfied with the career mobility opportunities it provides. Knowledge workers want the organisation to direct its focus toward their career development (Sutherland & Jordaan, 2004). Although employees are required to take ownership for their own career development, there is a continued focus on the utilisation of career development processes for employee retention, to instil a continuous learning mindset and to improve employee satisfaction with career growth opportunities (Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007). The preceding views highlight the importance of satisfying employee career mobility needs and preferences in order to retain employees. From Lesabe and Nkosi's (2007) view of career development it can be inferred that there is a need to study the relationship between perceived career mobility opportunities, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Job satisfaction can be defined as intrinsic satisfaction, including satisfaction with work tasks, and extrinsic satisfaction, which is derived from satisfaction with the work environment (Weiss, Dawis, England & Lofquist, 1967).

Regarding internal career mobility, a survey by Kochanski and Ledford (2001) identified that career opportunities, more than any other type of reward, yield more significant predictors of retention, followed by training opportunities and an employee's relationship with their supervisor. The preceding findings support the early work of Gaertner and Nollen (1989), who found that perceptions of the organisation's adherence to career-orientated practices, including internal promotions, training and development and employment security, are positively related to organisational commitment. Organisational commitment refers to an individual's preference to stay with an organisation (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007). According to Gaertner and Nollen (1989), employees are more committed when they believe that they are of value to the organisation, indicating that the organisation is willing to invest in them and hence that career opportunities are available. However, research findings on the relationship between career opportunities and commitment are inconsistent (Döckel, 2003). Further research on the relationship between the aforementioned variables is therefore required.

Akin to the view that organisational commitment is negatively related to turnover intention and career mobility, several researchers have found a relationship between job satisfaction and

turnover intention (Hellman, 1997; Martin & Roodt, 2007; Price & Mueller, 1981), job satisfaction and mobility (Feldman & Ng, 2007; Murrel, Frieze & Olson, 1996; Price & Mueller, 1981), and job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009; Lumley, 2009; Martin & Roodt, 2007; Price & Mueller, 1981). It therefore has been proposed that job dissatisfaction is one of the most important factors in the intention to leave an organisation (Hellman, 1997; Lee & Mowday, 1987).

Research findings on the comparative importance of job satisfaction and organisational commitment in yielding turnover have been inconsistent (Martin & Roodt, 2007; Price & Mueller, 1981). However, there is support for the negative relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment and possible external career mobility (movement between organisations) (Martin & Roodt, 2007; Price & Mueller, 1981). The preceding findings therefore suggest that individuals experiencing dissatisfaction with their job and/or a lack of attachment to the organisation may be more likely to move between organisations. Likewise, individuals experiencing greater job satisfaction and organisational commitment may be less likely to seek out and accept jobs in alternative organisations. Since the literature has confirmed the significance of organisational commitment and job satisfaction in turnover intention and actual turnover behaviour (DeConinck & Stilwell, 2004; Hellman, 1997; Martin & Roodt, 2007; Price & Mueller, 1981; Scandura & Lankau, 1997), the purpose of this study is not to uncover whether this relationship exists, but rather to understand the relationship dynamics between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in order to inform the retention of employees. Understanding the relationship between the variables of relevance to this study is of importance within the work context, as research has identified a positive relationship between organisational commitment and job performance, intention to stay, attendance, loyalty, creativity, co-operation, volunteerism and a decrease in turnover (Döckel, 2003). Likewise, performance, turnover and absenteeism are significantly related to job satisfaction (Dawis, 1992). It therefore is imperative that the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment is considered when developing talent retention recommendations.

In addition to the relationship found between career mobility, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, research has identified differences between biographical groups. A relationship has been found between turnover intention and race (Matuna, 1996; Primos, 1994; Vallabh & Donald, 2001). Since turnover intention is related to organisational commitment (Martin, 2007;

Mokoka, 2007; Price & Mueller, 1981), and organisational commitment is related to career mobility (Murrell et al., 1996; Price & Mueller, 1981) and career mobility preference (Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009), it seems more likely that the relationship between race and turnover can be better explained by the relationship between perceived career mobility and career mobility preference, and organisational commitment. The relationship between perceived career mobility and organisational commitment seems particularly relevant to the South African context, as affirmative action legislation may increase the demand for black skilled workers, hence greater mobility opportunities may be presented for this grouping. The literature has focused on job hopping as a characteristic problem for black managers (Vallabh & Donald, 2001). This highlights the need to explore possible difference in race groups' career mobility preferences. Although several studies have interpreted their findings in light of the possibility that perceived career mobility opportunity may assist in explaining the aforementioned relationship (Martin & Roodt, 2007; Vallabh & Donald, 2007), most have not explicitly measured perceived career mobility opportunity as a variable related to organisational commitment.

In addition to race, the study of differences between biographical groups, such as age groups, is important, as decisions regarding career mobility are dependent on career and life stage considerations (Feldman & Ng, 2007). Findings of studies directly or indirectly measuring differences between race groups' mobility (Vallabh & Donald, 2001), race and gender groups' career mobility preferences (Beukes, 2009; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2009), and differences between age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups' job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Martin & Roodt, 2007) are inconsistent. In view of the preceding findings, this study, in addition to the aim to investigate the relationship dynamics between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, will also explore how people from various biographical groups differ with regard to these variables. Understanding the differences between biographical groups is important in the multicultural context of South Africa.

Flowing from this background, the following research hypotheses are posed and will be tested empirically in this research:

H1: A statistically significant relationship exists between individuals' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

H2: Groups differing in age, gender, tenure, marital status and race will differ significantly in their

levels of perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Against the background sketched in the preceding section, it appears that the perceived career mobility and career mobility preference of employees must be considered in order to inform retention strategies. It is vital that organisations consider the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in the formulation of their retention strategies. Despite the potential value that can be added by knowledge of the variables of relevance to this study, the problem is that it is not clear from the literature how these four variables relate, particularly in the South African organisational context. Furthermore, there seems to be a paucity of research addressing employees' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment within the financial environment. In addition, there is little information available regarding how different biographical groups (in South Africa and abroad) differ with regard to their perceived career mobility and career mobility preference, and there is a lack of consensus regarding differences between these groups' job satisfaction and organisational commitment. By gaining insight into the relationship between the constructs of relevance to this study, organisations can implement more effective retention strategies, thus reducing costs incurred from turnover and maintaining a competitive advantage.

The problem to be addressed in this study is the uncovering of the relationship dynamics between the perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment of individuals in South African organisations. It is the purpose of the study to generate knowledge on this relationship in order to provide recommendations for retention practices and strategies for employees in the financial environment. In addition, the findings will also allow future studies to further explore the utility of the information generated by this study to better understand the role of these factors in retaining employees from different age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups.

In light of the aforementioned problem, several research questions that have relevance for the literature review are posed:

- How are the concepts career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment conceptualised in the literature, and what is the theoretical relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment?
- According to the literature, do age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial group play a role in perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment?
- What are the implications of these theoretical relationships for employee retention practices?

The following research questions are of relevance to the empirical study:

- What is the nature of the empirical relationships between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment as manifested in a sample of participants in the South African financial environment?
- Do differences exist in the perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment of individuals from different age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups, as manifested in the sample of participants?
- What recommendations can be formulated for retention practices and possible future research based on the findings of this research?

1.3 AIMS

Given the above research problems, the following general and specific aims have been formulated.

1.3.1 General aim

The primary aim is to critically explore, analyse and evaluate the nature of the relationship between individuals' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The secondary aim is to determine whether individuals from different age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups differ with regard to their perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

1.3.2 Specific aims

In terms of the literature study, the specific aims of this research are:

- To conceptualise career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment from the literature and to determine the theoretical relationship between career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.
- To determine theoretically (based on a review of the literature) the role of age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial group in perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.
- To determine the implications of the theoretical relationship for employee retention practices.

In terms of the empirical study, the specific aims of this research are:

- To empirically investigate the nature of the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment as manifested in a sample of participants from the South African financial environment
- To empirically investigate whether differences exist in the perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment of individuals from different age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups as manifested in the sample of participants.
- To formulate recommendations for retention practices and possible future research based on the findings of this research.

1.4 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

For the purpose of this research, the term paradigm is used in its meta-theoretical or philosophical sense to denote an implicit or explicit view of reality. The paradigm perspective refers to the intellectual climate or variety of meta-theoretical values, and beliefs and assumptions underlying the theories and models that form the definitive context of this research (Mouton & Marais, 1996).

1.4.1 The intellectual climate

Thematically, the literature survey of perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment will be presented from the humanistic and open

systems paradigms. The humanistic paradigm places emphasis on conscious experience; free will; actualising human potential for creativity and growth; and holistic approaches (Sternberg, 1998). In essence, humanistic proponents are of the opinion that individuals possess the ability to direct their own lives and thus create their own future. Among the major assumptions underlying humanism are the following: (a) human nature is inherently good; (b) individuals are free and autonomous, thus they are capable of making major personal choices; (c) human potential for growth and development is virtually unlimited; (d) self-concept plays an important role in growth and development; (e) individuals have an urge toward self-actualisation; (f) reality is defined by each person; and (g) individuals have responsibility to both themselves and to others (Coetzee, 1996; Elias & Merriam, 1980; Hiemstra & Brockett, 1994).

The humanistic paradigm is relevant to the study at hand as it assumes that individuals have the capacity to decide whether they are satisfied within a particular organisation, whether they will remain committed to the organisation and whether they choose to move to another organisation, or to change jobs or occupations. Lesabe and Nkosi's (2007) view, that people desire career progress and get discouraged when this is not possible, is aligned with the assumption that people possess potential for growth and development.

Systems theory approaches phenomena with a focus on the system, which refers to parts and processes that are in dynamic interaction. The system itself forms part of a larger supra-system and comprises smaller, interrelated and interdependent subsystems, which together form a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts (Durkin, 1981). The open systems paradigm assumes that individuals are in constant interaction with their environment. Inputs and throughputs by the system give rise to outputs (Hodge, Anthony & Gales, 1996). Through creation, continuation and adaptation, the open system is able to progress and develop its original system (Hodge et al., 1996). Career development occurs within an open system context which is identified as an open system influenced by changes within itself, as well as changes through interaction with other systems (McMahon & Watson, 2007). Factors within the environment, including economic and social factors, may influence the availability of career mobility opportunities. Through interaction with their environment, employees may become aware of opportunities for career mobility and may or may not act on these opportunities through actual career mobility.

The empirical review will be presented from the functionalist paradigmatic perspective.

According to Kouvas (2007), the functionalist paradigm seeks to provide rational explanations for social affairs by seeking to obtain understanding of order, equilibrium and stability in society and the way in which these can be maintained. Functionalism is based on the following assumptions: (a) society has a concrete existence and follows a certain order; (b) scientific theories can be assessed objectively by reference to empirical evidence; (c) there are universal standards of science, which determine what constitutes an adequate explanation of what is observed; (d) there are external rules and regulations governing the external world, and the goal of scientists is to find the orders that prevail within that world; (e) seeks to generate regulative sociology and to provide explanations of social matters; and (f) science provides the basis for structuring and ordering the social world (Kouvas, 2007). If these assumptions are accepted, an objective and value-free social science can produce true explanatory and predictive knowledge of reality. This study will be grounded in the preceding assumptions in order to ensure an objective analysis of the empirical evidence. The study is aligned with the functionalist assumption that behaviour is measurable and quantifiable, and that statistical analysis is possible.

1.4.2 Metatheoretical statements

According to Mouton (1997), it is generally accepted that no scientific finding can be conclusively proven on the basis of empirical research data. On this basis, various assumptions underlying theories, models and paradigms are held, but not tested for, in a study. In the disciplinary context, this research focuses on psychology and industrial and organisational psychology as fields of application. The following metatheoretical statements are relevant to this study:

1.4.2.1 Industrial and organisational psychology (IOP)

IOP is defined as an applied division of psychology concerned with the study of human behaviour related to work, organisations and productivity (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005). The overall goal of the industrial and organisational psychologist is to improve organisational functioning through understanding the interaction between humans and their work environment from a psychological perspective. For example, industrial psychologists may facilitate talent retention processes within organisations with the aim to improve organisational productivity. The study of organisational commitment is included in this study. Organisational commitment results from the interaction of employees with their work context and is therefore relevant to the disciplinary

context of IOP. Thematically, the study of the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment may contribute new knowledge that may improve the retention of employees as an aspect of effective organisational functioning.

1.4.2.2 Career psychology

According to Greenhaus, Callanan and Godshalk (2010), career psychology is the study of career development and career behaviour as an integral part of human development. Career counsellors can facilitate employees' career path planning and employee development support practices (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007) on the basis of factors such as career mobility preferences. Career planning and support practices may provide opportunities for identifying career and growth opportunities, thus facilitating career mobility. Of relevance to this study is the view of job satisfaction from an individual-organisation fit perspective (Dawis & Lofquist, 1993). Through career psychology, practitioners may facilitate an individual's career progression and satisfaction by matching the employee to his or her work environment. Career development is a process of progression throughout a person's lifespan and comprises several career life stages across the career life cycle (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007). Thematically, the study of the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment may contribute new knowledge to the field and practice of Career Psychology.

1.4.2.3 Personnel psychology

Personnel psychology often forms part of human resources management and is concerned with the attraction, selection, retention, development and utilisation of human resources in order to achieve individual and organisational objectives (Cascio & Aguinus, 2005). It assumes that differences between people can be used to predict, maintain and increase performance and satisfaction (Landy & Conte, 2004). Thematically, this study is concerned with the differences between employees from different age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups, in terms of their job satisfaction and with a view to increasing employee retention.

1.4.2.4 Psychometrics

Psychometric tests are utilised in order to measure aspects such as organisational commitment

and job satisfaction. In this study, the perceived career mobility and the career mobility scale are utilised to measure perceived career mobility and career mobility preference respectively. Job satisfaction is measured using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ20) (Weiss et al., 1967), and organisational commitment is measured by the Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS) (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993).

1.4.2.5 Growth psychology

Growth psychology is concerned with an individual's development to fulfil his or her potential capacities. Employees are concerned about their own future, progress and growth and tend to become frustrated when they believe that their path is blocked, or that there are some obstacles in their way (Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007). Thematically, career mobility preferences and growth requirements may be met through the provision of career mobility opportunities.

1.4.2.6 Theoretical models

The literature review of perceived career mobility, career mobility preference and retention will be presented from Feldman and Ng's (2007) theory of career mobility and embeddedness. Job satisfaction will be presented from Weiss et al.'s (1967) theory of job satisfaction, and organisational commitment will be presented from Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component conceptualisation of organisational commitment.

1.4.2.7 Conceptual descriptions

The conceptual descriptions that are of relevance to this study are defined below:

a) Career mobility

In the context of this study, perceived career mobility is understood as the perception of opportunities for inter-organisational career mobility (organisational change) and intra-organisational career mobility (career mobility opportunities within the organisation). Career mobility preference refers to an individual's preference for inter-organisational (changing jobs external to the current employing firm) and intra-organisational (job change within the organisation or development opportunities which would facilitate such a change) career mobility.

b) Job satisfaction

In this study, job satisfaction refers to the intrinsic-extrinsic definition of job satisfaction used by Weiss et al. (1967). Intrinsic satisfaction is characterised by a sense of accomplishment, self-actualisation and task identity resulting from performing one's work (Martin, 2007). Extrinsic satisfaction results from satisfaction with the work environment (Weiss et al., 1967) and is derived from recognition, compensation and advancement (Martin, 2007).

c) Organisational commitment

In the context of this study, organisational commitment refers to or is interpreted as an individual's attitude in terms of a stable mindset about an organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). In this study, organisational commitment refers specifically to an individual's attachment to his or her employing organisation.

d) Retention

As retention entails preventing people from leaving an organisation in order to work elsewhere, it requires organisations to pay attention to the employee market and understand what people seek from the work environment in order to retain them (Maxwell, 2004).

1.4.3 Central hypothesis

The central hypothesis of the study is formulated as follows:

Individuals' perceived career mobility and career mobility preference will be significantly related to their job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Groups differing in age, gender, tenure, marital status and race will differ significantly in their levels of perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Mouton and Marais (1996), a research design is a plan of how one intends to conduct one's research by focusing on the end product and formulating a research problem as a point of departure. The aim of the design is to structure the study in such a manner that the eventual validity of the findings is maximised (Mouton & Marais, 1996). Internal validity threats are to be minimised by: utilising instruments that have been shown to be valid; ensuring a structured approach to the literature review, utilising relevant theories and models; and eliminating confounding variables by proposing possible rival hypotheses. External validity will be ensured by utilising a representative sample so as to ensure the generalisability of the findings (Mouton & Marais, 1996). Central to the consideration of validity is that of reliability, which requires that the application of a valid measuring instrument to different groups under different sets of circumstances should lead to the same observations (Mouton & Marais, 1996). The reliability of this study will be enhanced by utilising the MSQ20 and OCS, both of which instruments have been found to be reliable in previous research.

The literature review and empirical study are descriptive in nature. The study is considered descriptive as a description of the relationships between variables will be reported on and recommendations with regard to retention practices will be provided (Fouché, 2005).

The empirical aspect of the study utilises a survey design to collect quantitative primary data by using self-administered questionnaires in order to achieve the objectives set out in this study (Fouché & De Vos, 2005). The unit of analysis for the primary aim (to explore the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment) is the group.

The unit of analysis for the secondary aim is the subgroup, by specifically analysing the scores of biographical subgroups within a particular organisational context.

The internal validity of this study will be ensured through the use of a structured approach in the literature review, as well as by a systematic undertaking and presentation of the empirical study. A non-probability convenience sample will be used, and therefore generalising to the general population will be limited. The validity and reliability of the instruments will be established.

1.6 RESEARCH METHOD

As illustrated in Figure 1.1, the research method consists of a literature review, in order to conceptualise concepts, and an empirical study, in order to operationalise the variables included in the study.

1.6.1 Phase 1: Literature review

The literature review focuses on exploring the constructs, namely perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The general aim of the literature study is to establish a theoretical link in the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, and to identify differences between biographical groups. These relationships are explored in order to determine the implications of the theoretical relationship for employee retention practices.

1.6.2 Phase 2: Empirical study

The description of the empirical study covers the population and sample of the study, the research design, the measuring battery, the procedure and the statistical analyses. The section to follow will highlight only the key aspects of the empirical study, and a more detailed description of the empirical study will be included in Chapter 3.

The empirical study will be presented in the form of a research article and is presented in Chapter 3. The research article (Chapter 3) outlines the core focus of the study, the background to the study, trends from the research literature, the potential value added by the study, the research design (research approach and research method), the results, a discussion of the results, the conclusions, the limitations of the study and recommendations for the practice and future research. Chapter 4 integrates the research study and discusses the conclusions, limitations and recommendations in more detail.

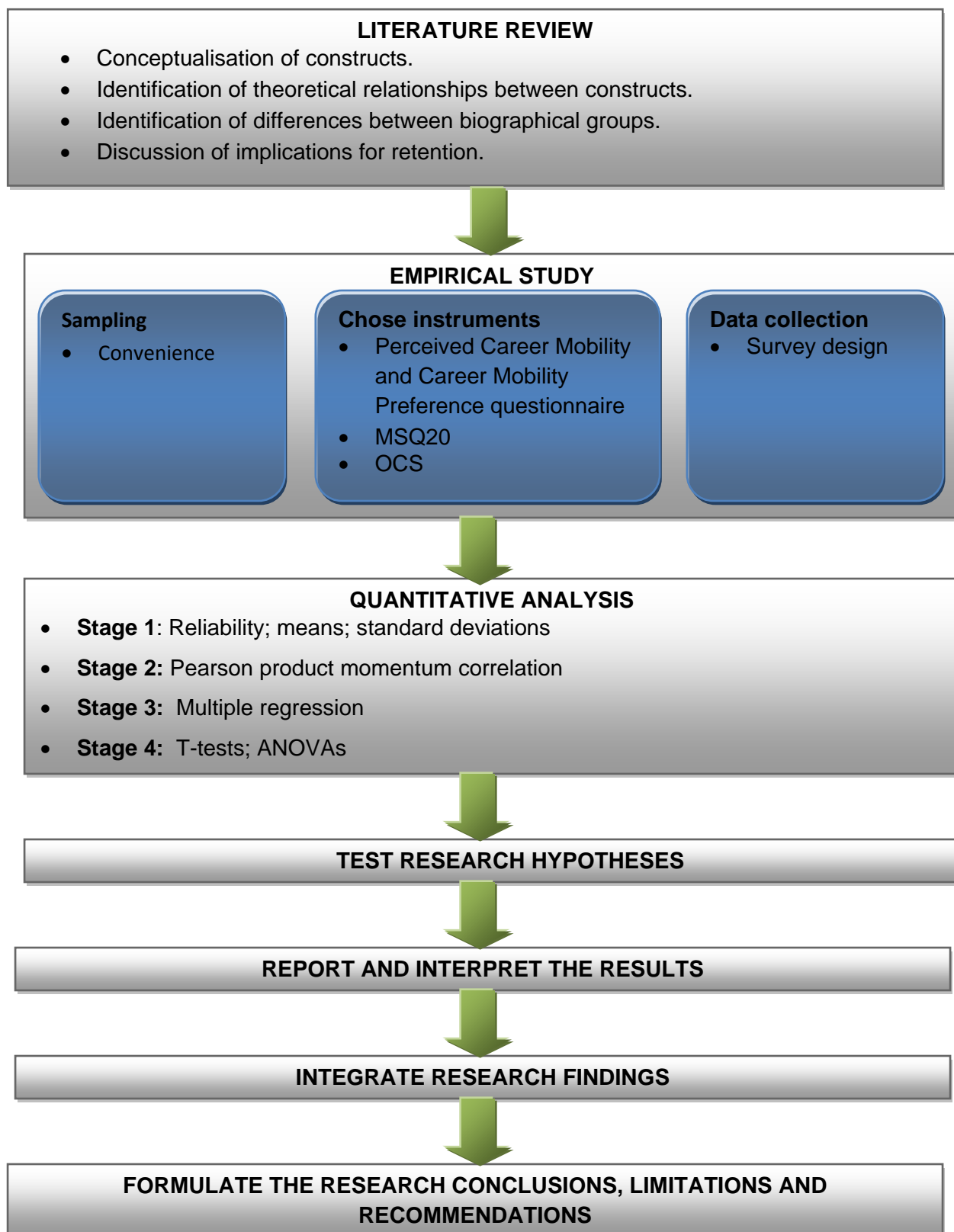


Figure 1.1. Flow diagram of research method.

1.7 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The chapters of this dissertation will be presented as follows:

Chapter 1 provides a scientific orientation to the research by discussing the background to and motivation for the research, the problem statement, the research questions and aims, the paradigm perspective guiding the research and the research methods.

Chapter 2 conceptualises the constructs of perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The practical implications of the relationship between these constructs for talent retention within organisations will be discussed.

In Chapter 3, the research findings will be presented in the form of a scientific research article.

Chapter 4 concludes the study by providing conclusions, the limitations of the present study and recommendations for future research.

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the background to the study; identified the problem statement, objectives and aims; discussed the paradigm perspective and research design; and provided the chapter layout. Chapter 2 will discuss the constructs of perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: PERCEIVED CAREER MOBILITY, CAREER MOBILITY PREFERENCE, JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Chapter 2 outlines the disciplinary context of the study and conceptualises the constructs perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The conceptualisation of these constructs is followed by the identification of antecedents to these constructs, and their implications for talent retention. Relevant models are utilised to explain the practical implications of the relationship between these constructs for talent retention practices in organisations.

2.1 DISCIPLINARY AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

This section outlines the disciplinary and conceptual foundations of relevance to this study.

2.1.1 Disciplinary foundations

The disciplines of career psychology and organisational psychology are of relevance to this study. Perceived career mobility, career mobility preference and job satisfaction will be discussed within the disciplinary context of career psychology. Organisational commitment will be discussed within the disciplinary context of organisational psychology.

2.1.1.1 Career psychology

Career psychology, as a discipline, is focused on the study and facilitation of occupational development throughout an individual's lifespan, with specific emphasis on adult career development (Theron, 2009b). Career development refers to a set of activities and resources provided by an organisation in order to assist in employee's career enhancement (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Career enhancement includes activities or processes facilitating career mobility, such as lateral moves, and promotional and/or developmental opportunities.

Key proponents of career psychology have studied the discipline from different perspectives. Whilst some theorists (Bordin, 1990; Brown, 2002; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Holland, 1973; Jung, 1971) have focused on stable, inherent, individual characteristics when studying career development, others (Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990; Super, 1990) have focused on career

development as a dynamic process shaped by developmental stages in an individual's life. Content theories are characterised by a focus on individual traits, and these theories propose that individual traits should match the job requirements. Furthermore, content theories are focused on the content of career choice, with the aim of predicting or explaining career choices in terms of individual characteristics or psychological phenomena involved in the choice (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Content theorists, such as Brown (2002), Bordin (1990), Dawis and Lofquist (1984), Holland (1973) and Jung (1971), focus on individual characteristics as key predictors of career choice. Career theories focused on personal traits turned the attention toward person-environment fit, in terms of which individuals are matched to their environment.

Process theories are centred on the process of career choice (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Process theorists, such as Super (1990) and Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990), view career choice as a dynamic process evolving over career stages. Several authors in the 1980s and 1990s, such as Roe and Lunneborg (1990) and Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996), focused on both content (career choices made) and process (explaining the process by which individuals chose and adjusted their career path).

Patton and McMahon (2006) point out that, in response to criticism regarding the exclusion of theories specific to certain racial, ethnic and minority groups, wider explanations of the career development of these groups were formulated by theorists such as Hackett and Betz (1981). In addition, modern theorists have turned their attention toward rapid changes occurring within the workplace (Patton & McMahon, 2006). A focus on the modern workplace has resulted in advances in constructivism, systems theory and paradoxical theory (Amundson, 2005; Patton & McMahon, 2006). Of relevance to this study are the constructivist and systems theories.

According to Patton and McMahon (2006), constructivist theory proposes that the individual actively constructs his or her career development. A constructivist approach follows an open systems perspective, as the individual is viewed holistically, and as constantly interacting with other individuals and the environment, seeking stability in constant change. A systems perspective to studying the perceived career mobility of an individual is relevant to this study, as perceived career mobility opportunities are a function of an individual's interaction with his or her environment. An individual's career development involves continuous planning and organisation in order to ensure a balance between career needs and organisational workforce requirements (Foong-ming, 2008; Lips-Wiersma & Hall, 2007).

Feldman and Ng's (2007) theory on career mobility is of relevance to this study. Feldman and Ng's (2007) view on career mobility and embeddedness is consistent with the view that an individual interacts with the environment and with other individuals. According to this view, career mobility is understood as job, organisational and occupational changes. Salient features of embeddedness include how a job complements other areas of an individual's life, an individual's ties with others and the ease with which these could be broken. As is the case with career mobility, job satisfaction is also viewed from a person-environment interaction perspective. Dawis, Lofquist and Weiss (1968) consider individuals to be more satisfied when their needs match their work environment. Dawis and Lofquist (1993) built on Weiss et al.'s (1967) understanding of job satisfaction, leading to the construction of the person-environment correspondence theory (PEC). The satisfaction of career mobility preferences may result in the gratification of mobility needs by the work environment.

Theorists such as Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) understood job satisfaction by using motivating theories. Job satisfaction has also been viewed by several authors as an attitude about the job, resulting from the perception of a good fit between an individual and the organisation (Ivancevich, Konopaske & Matteson, 2007). Of relevance to this study is the view of job satisfaction from the perspective of individual-organisation fit. More specifically, Dawis and Lofquist's (1993) PEC theory is of relevance to this study.

2.1.1.2 Organisational psychology

Levy (2010; p. 2) defines organisational psychology as the "application of psychological principles and theories to the workplace". A focus toward the human side of organisations became more prominent in the 1930s, after the results of the Hawthorne studies became well known. The Hawthorne studies revealed that human factors, such as the feeling that one is a significant part of the workplace, contribute significantly to morale (Theron, 2009a). This was followed by the behavioural era, which saw researchers such as Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982) and Meyer and Allen (1997) focusing on employee attitudes and behaviour. Today, organisational psychology is a popular field with a broad range of literature on organisational commitment. The focus on organisational commitment is not surprising, as this construct has been studied from the behavioural and attitudinal perspectives and is often studied by considering employee needs and wants. The study of employee thinking, feelings and behaviour

has relevance to this study, which focuses on employees' self-reports of their commitment to their respective organisations.

Organisational psychology, as a discipline, is focused on the study of organisations as systems, taking individual employees and work groups into consideration (Theron, 2009b). Employee attitudes toward the organisation provide insight into factors motivating employee behaviour within, and commitment toward, the organisation.

Organisational commitment involves employee behaviour and feelings toward the organisation, two areas of focus within the field of organisational psychology (Arnold, 2008). Whilst there are several views on organisational commitment, Meyer and Allen's (1991) multidimensional model of organisational commitment integrates a normative, behavioural and attitudinal approach. The multidimensional model's focus on employee thinking, feeling and behaviour in order to explain organisational commitment touches on all three areas relevant to organisational psychology, as highlighted by Arnold (2008). Meyer and Allen's (1991) multidimensional model is of relevance to this study.

2.1.2 Conceptual foundations

The core concepts of relevance to this study are discussed below.

2.1.2.1 Career mobility concepts

Career mobility relates to a number of career constructs. The definitions and a brief explanation of these constructs will follow, with specific reference to how they are relevant to the contemporary world of work.

a. Career

Arnold's (2008) summary of some of the definitions provided for careers, included in Table 2.1, highlight differences in views regarding the conceptualisation of careers over the last three decades. While most of the definitions in Table 2.1 focus on a series of experiences as the building blocks of a career, some authors appear to specify that learning, or changes in the psychological contract or positions, needs to take place. Arnold (2008) is of the view that,

although careers are not confined to upward and/or predictable movement within a single type of work, definitions such as those of DuBrin (1983) and Perlmutter and Hall (1992) (cited by Arnold, 2008) included in Table 2.1 suggest otherwise, as they focus on upward, predictable movement. The view of careers as a concept encompassing lateral and/or unpredictable movement is aligned with the boundaryless career within flatter organisations of the twenty-first century world of work. Career systems have moved away from traditional lifelong employment, as individuals' careers are now characterised by job incumbents having multiple employers throughout their careers, and/or multiple careers with shorter time spent in each (Baruch & Quick, 2007; Cascio, 2000; Hall & Mirvis, 1995). In addition, the new psychological contract between employers and employees provides lateral moves, and development opportunities are provided by organisations in exchange for longer work hours, added responsibility, broader skills and employee tolerance of change and ambiguity (Baruch, 2002; Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007).

Table 2.1

Summary of career definitions (cited by Arnold, 2008)

“A sequence of positions occupied by a person during the course of a lifetime” (Super & Hall, 1978).

“A series of related job experiences that fit into some meaningful pattern. If you have a series of odd jobs all your working life, that is hardly a career” (DuBrin, 1983).

“A succession or an accumulation of role-related experiences over time” (London & Mone, 1988).

“A sequence of jobs occupied and performed throughout a person’s working lifetime” (Gray, Gault, Meyers & Walther, 1990).

“Occupations that are characterised by interrelated training and work experiences, in which a person moves upward through a series of positions that require greater mastery and responsibility, and that provide increasing financial return” (Perlmutter & Hall, 1992).

“The sequence of negotiations and renegotiations of the psychological contract which the individual conducts with organisations during his or her work life” (adapted by Arnold from Herriot, 1992).

“The pattern of work-related experiences that span the course of a person’s life” (Greenhaus & Callanan, 1994).

“Accumulations of information and knowledge embodied in skills, expertise, and relationship networks acquired through an evolving sequence of work experiences over time. In this context, work experiences constitute the primary mechanism by which careers occur though they are not in themselves a career” (Bird, 1994).

In light of the aforementioned literature, and for the purpose of this study, career is defined as “a developmental process of progression over a person’s lifespan that comprises several career life stages across the career life-cycle.” (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007, p. 45). The career life-cycle is understood according to various life/career development stages throughout a person’s life. These stages include needs, life tasks and issues, as well as social factors that an individual experiences as significant to their life and career evolvment (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006).

b. Career development

Schreuder and Coetzee (2006) describe career development as an individual’s ongoing progression through a series of stages, with each stage characterised by relatively unique issues, themes or tasks. Career development often occurs as a set of activities and resources provided by an organisation in order to assist in an employee’s career enhancement (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Although organisations may offer career development opportunities, an increase in job insecurity and, in turn, a change in psychological contracts highlights the need for employees to take personal responsibility for their own development. Personal career development can be achieved by identifying and utilising career mobility opportunities. Each individual needs to take personal responsibility for and control over their career development, including making career choices, adapting to circumstances such as changing jobs or organisations, and learning to grow (Foong-ming, 2008; Lips-Wiersma & Hall, 2007).

For the purpose of this study, career development is understood according to Wolfe and Kolb's (1980) view of considering the whole person, in terms of a convergence between personal and career development. Wolfe and Kolb (1980) are of the view that career development involves the whole person in his or her constantly changing life, and that the individual's environment, responsibilities and personal circumstances need to be understood. This definition is relevant to the study, as individual needs and environmental factors are viewed as important aspects of career development. Likewise, personal and environmental factors appear important in understanding the three constructs relevant to this study and relevant to employee career development.

The career development of individuals from different age and career stage groups can be understood according to Super's (1990) life-span approach, which views career development as a life-long process. Super (1990) focuses on four life stages, namely childhood, adolescence, young adulthood and maturity. At each stage the individual is confronted with developmental tasks related to chronological age and social expectations (Schreuder & Theron, 2004). These stages are not linked only to chronological age, but also to career changes.

- *Growth (birth to age ±12-14)*

Through contact with adults and other experiences, children form a self-concept and become aware of their likes and capacities.

- *Exploration (adolescence, age ± 14-25)*

Tentative career choices are explored during this stage (Schreuder & Theron, 2004). When a particular career field is pursued as a result of other's expectations, career crises may ensue at a later stage in the individual's career (Schreuder & Theron, 2004).

- *Establishment (early adulthood, age ± 25-45)*

This stage includes trial periods whereby a succession of job changes occur before a final choice is made, as well as stabilisation in the thirties and early forties (Schreuder & Theron, 2004).

- *Maintenance (middle adulthood, age ± 45-65)*

In this stage, the individual attempts to maintain that which he/she is satisfied with in his/her career and to implement change in areas in which satisfaction is lacking. The individual may therefore continue along established lines of work, may stagnate in the status quo or focus on achieving further goals (Schreuder & Theron, 2004).

- *Decline (old age, from ± 65)*

Decline involves decelerated work activities (Schreuder & Theron, 2004), planning for retirement, and eventual retirement.

According to Coetzee and Roythorne-Jacobs (2007), a career is a developmental process constituting several career life stages that progress over an individual's life. At each of these stages the individual has to master several tasks. These tasks are summarised in Table 2.2. From the preceding summary, it is clear that the tasks to be accomplished by individuals in the different life stages are slightly different. The early stage is characterised by balancing work and family roles, entering into these roles and establishing oneself in terms of vocational identity and values. The middle stage requires the individual to deal with midlife crises, which require adjustments in work and family roles and new ways of expressing themselves creatively. The late career life stage is more concerned with tasks relevant to preparing for disengagement and retirement.

Table 2.2

Core tasks of career life stages (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007, p. 45)

Early career life stage Age: 17-39	Middle career life stage Age: 40-59	Late career life stage Age: 60+
Key life tasks/challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve independence and responsibility • Developing self-reliance or autonomy 	Key life tasks/challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refining one's identity • Clarifying one's values and philosophy of life • Adjusting to changes in family life 	Key life tasks/challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing emotionally intelligently with socio-emotional losses • Establishing satisfactory physical living arrangements

Early career life stage Age: 17-39	Middle career life stage Age: 40-59	Late career life stage Age: 60+
<p>Key life tasks/challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing vocational identity and career anchor • Finding a place in and contributing to society • Making an impact on one's environment • Becoming established in occupation and in family life • Developing intimacy, becoming committed and involved, developing stable affiliations • Developing career competency and self-efficacy • Becoming employable and career resilient • Dealing with quarter life crisis 	<p>Key life tasks/challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilising more leisure time (establishing work-life balance) • Finding new occupational satisfactions through creative self-expression as a priority • Sustaining employability through further education and development • Dealing with career transitions and career breaks • Dealing with midlife crisis • Maintaining health and emotional wellbeing through the use of emotional intelligence 	<p>Key life tasks/challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjusting to changes concerning one's spouse • Maintaining health and emotional wellbeing • Preparing for retirement as disengagement from organisational life and finding alternative ways of creative self-expression • Becoming a mentor and consultant • Remaining a productive citizen through alternative ways of self-expression

The progression of developmental approaches to careers has, in some cases, led to a loosening of close links to age (Arnold, 2008). Hall and Mirvis (1995) posit, in contrast to Super's (1990) theory, that instead of one set of career stages spanning a lifespan, careers consist of a series of many shorter learning cycles consisting of exploration-trial-mastery-exit, as they change product areas, technologies, functions, organisations, and other work environments.

This study focuses on differences between the age groups' perceived career mobility. Findings will be interpreted in light of the individual's life/career stage and relevant tasks.

c. Career success

Various authors have defined career success differently. Schein (1996) describes career success as a match between career anchors and the perception of one's job. Schein's (1996) description complements the protean career conception that career success is guided and measured by an individual's values (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). In light of the foregoing conception,

when studying an individual's career success it is important that his/her career/life stage should be considered, as different achievements, practices and tasks are focused upon and valued at different stages. Individuals from different career/life stages may therefore have different ideas of what *meaningful* work would entail. It is assumed that the perception of what is meaningful would also vary between biographical groups.

In a broader sense, career success can be divided into objective (OCS) and subjective career success (SCS). Distinguishing between OCS and SCS, Hall (2002) and Nabi (2001) propose that SCS is more complex, as it is a multidimensional construct, defined according to an individual's own idea of what encompasses success with regard to age, career stage, aspirations, promotions and other significant events. The influence of age and career stage on personal meanings of career success implies that the various tasks of the career/life stages must be understood in order to gain a better understanding of the SCS of various stages. As career/life stage tasks are accomplished successfully, the individual can gain a greater sense of career success. It seems likely, however, that a sense of career success is also influenced by external factors such as societal norms and the organisational context.

OCS, on the other hand, refers to society's idea of success as measured by factors observable to the public, such as salary, promotions and status (Arthur, Khapova & Wilderom, 2005). In studying OCS, the challenges of various life/career stages should be taken into consideration, as there are certain expectations held by society as to what an individual should achieve by a certain age. Objective measures of career success may of course differ for different cultural groups. By accomplishing tasks relevant to specific life/career stages, SCS and OCS can be enhanced. However, there is a lack of consensus regarding the interdependence of SCS and OCS and how they might affect one another over time (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). Authors studying work-life balance have expressed concern regarding the subjective-objective career duality whereby individuals trade off subjective career aspirations for objective career success indicators (Arthur et al., 2005). Employees may pursue objective career success (such as status) at the cost of subjective gratification (such as spending time with family and friends).

Although there is a lack of consensus on the definition of career success, there is an increased focus on subjective career success (Ng, Eby, Sorensen & Feldman, 2005; Reitzle, Körner & Vondracek, 2009). Boundaryless career theory suggests that the significance of OCS is

decreasing, whilst SCS is growing in importance for employees (Arthur et al., 2005). Individuals differ in their career aspirations and the extent to which they place value on factors such as promotion, progression through jobs and access to learning (Arthur et al., 2005). As described by Arnold (2008), factors such as promotions, organisational levels attained and salary are becoming less viable criteria for career success, as delayed structures, project teams and short-term contracts become more common. A change in structures, teams and contracts suggests that there is a need for researchers, practitioners and organisations to turn the focus toward criteria such as employability, career satisfaction and other encompassing factors. Encompassing factors include factors such as continuous learning, which forms a major part of employability, and are embodied as a measure of psychological success in the protean career (Grzeda, 1999).

As Feldman and Ng's (2007) view on career mobility and embeddedness is of relevance to this study, it is important to note that career mobility and career success appear to be related. Career mobility tends to be related positively to objective measures of career success, and to subjective career success in instances whereby mobility is voluntary (Feldman & Ng, 2007). Feldman and Ng (2007) propose that individuals experiencing greater embeddedness may experience greater subjective career success. Based on the aforementioned view, it may be proposed that individuals favouring career mobility opportunities experience career success when perceiving career mobility opportunities for themselves. Fulfilment of career mobility preferences by organisations may lead, in turn, to embeddedness.

Arthur et al. (2005) propose that employment opportunities (including inter-organisational mobility) influence career outcomes and that these, and other work-related variables, therefore cannot be studied independently of subjective and objective career success.

d. Career mobility

Literature as early as that of March and Simon (1958) focused on opportunity as a causal factor of turnover. Since then, the work environment has moved away from the traditional career model, characterised by stable long-term employment within an organisation, to new career models. These new career models are characterised by increased job (internal) and company (external) mobility (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Kondratuk, Hausdorf, Korabik & Rosin, 2004). This

increase in mobility resulted in an increase in the study of career mobility and mobility opportunity within the work environment.

Although career mobility has been studied for several decades, authors have conceptualised, operationalised and termed this construct differently. In turn, there does not seem to be a commonly used term in the literature. There therefore is a need to clarify and refine the construct. In this study, the terms inter-organisational career mobility and intra-organisational career mobility are of relevance. The former refers to an employee leaving an organisation to work for another organisation, whereas the latter refers to an employee changing jobs or occupations within an organisation (Feldman & Ng, 2007). Job change refers to changes in an individual's work responsibilities, hierarchical levels or titles within an organisation (Feldman & Ng, 2007). Occupational change refers to changes in the specific line of work that an individual engages in, in order to earn a living at a given point in time (Lee, Carswell & Allen, 2000). Occupational change requires certain skills, knowledge and duties that are transferable across settings, and that differentiate the occupation from other occupations (Feldman & Ng, 2007). It is assumed that inter- and intra-organisational mobility are voluntary. Perceived or actual opportunities for intra- and inter-organisational mobility have often been studied separately, with some studies focusing solely on one type of mobility.

Several authors have referred to the construct of perceived and/or actual career mobility differently. Terms such as alternative job opportunities (March & Simon, 1958), external mobility (DiPrete, 1993), career expectations (Baugh, Lankau & Scandura, 1996), internal and external flexibility (Groot & Maasen van den Brink, 2000), perceived employment alternatives (Baugh et al., 1996), opportunities (Price & Mueller, 1981), career opportunities (Döckel, 2003, Kochanski & Ledford, 2001) and mobility strategies (Murrell et al., 1996) have been used. Job hopping is a common, recently used term referring to movement from one job to another in search for bigger and better job prospects (Vallabh & Donald, 2001).

Studies of intra-organisational career mobility have included factors such as career expectations, which refers to a respondent's expectations of future advancement in their employing organisation (Baugh et al, 1996; Scandura & Schriesheim, 1991), as well as opportunities for career development (Foong-ming, 2008; Murrell et al., 1996), internal promotion opportunities (Foong-ming, 2008, Gaertner & Nollen, 1989), developmental potential (Lin & Huang, 2005) and

lateral moves (Murrell et al., 1996). Many studies have identified and studied factors such as these as retention factors. In this study, these factors are measured as part of perceived career mobility by identifying to what extent the participants perceived opportunities for these factors within their current work environment.

Inter-organisational mobility highlights a fundamental shift in the psychological contract whereby both employee and organisation are aware that their relationship is unlikely to last forever (Arthur et al., 2005). Arthur et al. (2005) argue that the study of perceived inter-organisational mobility opportunity, as opposed to actual mobility, is consistent with the boundaryless career focus on an individual's opportunity to move between employers. The measurement of perceived career mobility, as opposed to actual career mobility, provides insight into career development. High-in-demand employees may renegotiate their contract, therefore leveraging their employability skills (Arthur et al., 2005). In light of the foregoing literature, this study measures perceived career mobility opportunities independently of whether the individual physically moves.

Feldman and Ng (2007) identify the need to refine the construct of career mobility by differentiating between different types of change, including job, organisational and occupational change. As diagrammatically presented in Figure 2.1, these specific types of change are differentiated in this study under the umbrella term of career mobility. The focus falls on the individuals' perceptions of the extent to which they currently have the opportunity to move between jobs, careers and organisations. Therefore actual career mobility is not measured, but rather the perception thereof.

For many years, researchers were interested in factors causing employees to leave an organisation, but only recently have the reasons why people stay in their job, organisation and occupation been studied (Feldman & Ng, 2007). Building on Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Slablynski and Erez's (2001b) conception of embeddedness, Feldman and Ng (2007, p. 352) define embeddedness as a "totality of forces that keep individuals in their current employment situations". In addition to keeping individuals within their jobs, job embeddedness decreases the impact of negative events on employee performance and citizenship behaviour (Burton, Holtom, Sablynski, Mitchell & Lee, 2010).

The concept of embeddedness is relevant to this study, as the role of perceived career mobility opportunities in employee organisational commitment was studied.

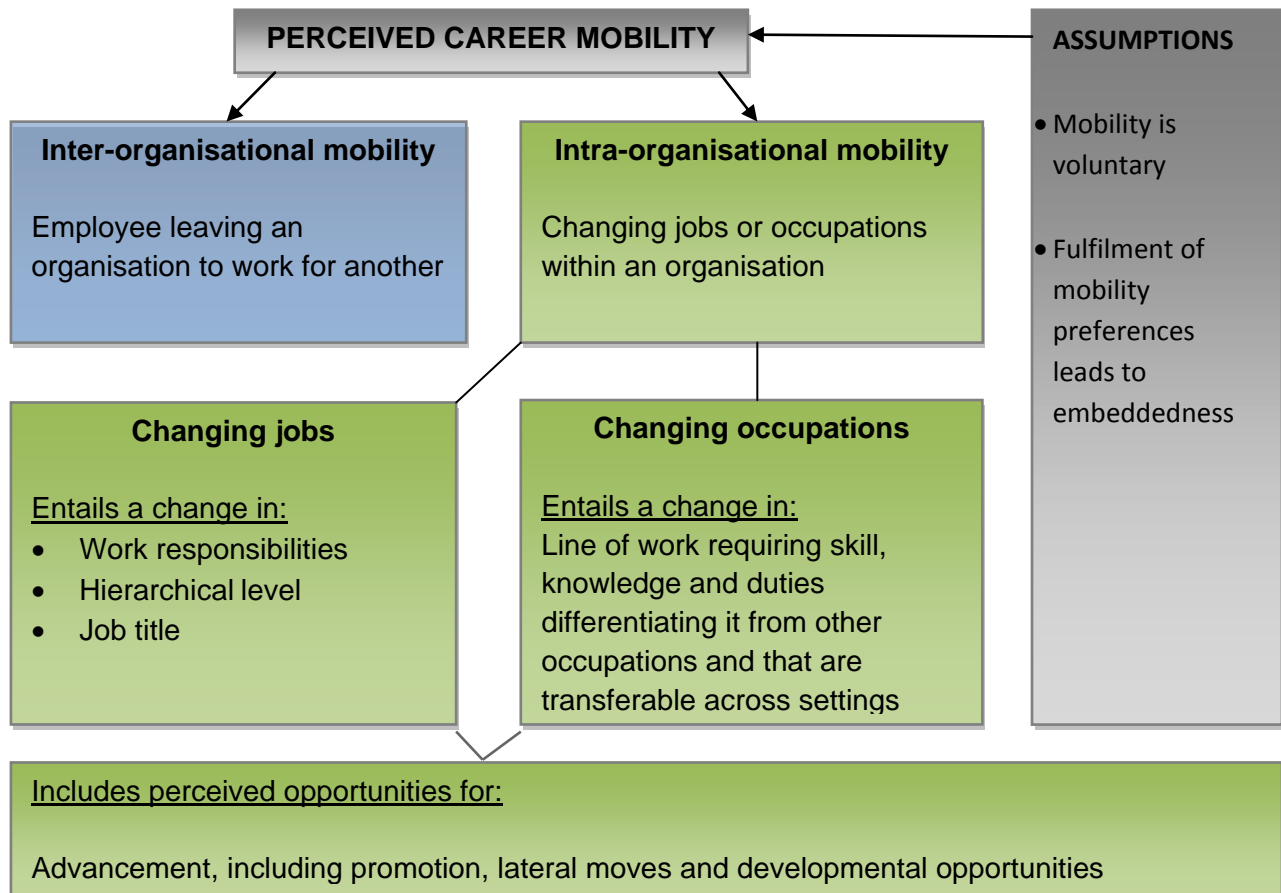


Figure 2.1. Diagrammatic representation of the concept of perceived career mobility.

f. Career mobility preference

Individuals often have preferences regarding job mobility (Ng et al., 2007). Some authors have focused on job hopping when researching employee movement between organisations (Fallic, Fleischman, Rebitzer, 2006; Khatri, Fern & Budhwar, 2001; Vallabh & Donald, 2001). Other authors have considered the need for opportunities for advancement in understanding career mobility (Brown, 1998) and retention (Sutherland & Jordaan, 2004). The conceptualisation of the boundaryless career attitude includes the permeation of physical and mental boundaries. In their measurement of the boundaryless career mindset, Briscoe, Hall and Frautschy DeMuth (2006) view the inclination toward physically moving between organisational boundaries as an

important boundaryless career attitude. Organisational mobility preference is defined as the “strength of interest in remaining with a single (or multiple) employer(s)” (Briscoe et al., 2006, p.33). Accordingly, an individual with such an inclination might be more comfortable with, or prefer to move between, several employers throughout his or her career. Of relevance to this study is not only the preference for inter-organisational career mobility, but also the preference for intra-organisational career mobility. Therefore, career mobility preference refers to an individual’s preference for inter-organisational mobility (movement between organisations) and intra-organisational mobility (changing jobs and occupations within an organisation or the development of skills that may support job or occupational change).

Individual differences in personality traits, career interests, values and attachment styles serve as sources of mobility preference (Ng et al., 2007). In light of the self-directed nature of careers, Ng et al. (2005) identify values as one of the critical determinants of a preference for mobility. Accordingly, the value of self-direction arouses self-confidence in the ability to initiate changes in one’s career.

g. Psychological contract

A psychological contract occurs between an employee and an employer. According to Schreuder and Theron (2004), this contract is based on the view that the employer’s promises lead to reciprocal behaviour by the employee. Accordingly, an employee’s beliefs are shaped by the organisation, and his or her obligations towards the employer are provided in exchange for inducements offered by the employer. The employee’s perception of the mutual obligations of both employee and employer is at the core of the definition of a psychological contract (Bal, Jansen, Van der Velde, De Lange & Rousseau, 2010; Roussouw, 1995).

There has been a shift away from relational contracts, characterised by lifelong mutual commitment, to more transactional contracts, whereby employees work for organisations for shorter periods of time, thus resulting in short-term exchanges of benefits and services (Hall, & Mirvis, 1995; Lo Presti, 2009). Lo Presti (2009) is of the view that new psychological contracts have moved away from the view of employees as passive entities offering loyalty in exchange for job security, entrusting the management of their career development to the personnel department, and organisations basing career advancement on employee tenure. New contracts

are characterised by an exchange of organisational performance for continuous learning and marketability, decreased employee loyalty, job security and increased employee distrust.

h. Retention

Retention refers to initiatives undertaken by an organisation in order to keep employees from leaving the organisation (Cascio, 2003). Several researchers have measured turnover and turnover intention when studying retention. Turnover refers to the voluntary or involuntary withdrawal of an employee from an organisation, whilst turnover intention refers to an employee's intention to leave an organisation. The voluntary withdrawal of an employee from an organisation is of concern in this study. Therefore, when reference is made to turnover in this study, a voluntary nature of withdrawal is implied. From a retention perspective, the focus is on voluntary withdrawal, as the loss of valued employees may result in decreased organisational productivity and increased costs for recruiting and training replacements (Mohammad & Nathan, 2008).

Turnover intention has been identified as an immediate antecedent to employee turnover (Martin & Roodt, 2007). Research has revealed that job satisfaction and organisational commitment are correlated negatively with turnover and turnover intention (Hellman, 1997; Lee & Mowday, 1987; Martin & Roodt, 2007; Price & Mueller, 1981). In addition, the provision of career opportunities has been studied as an important retention factor (Sutherland & Jordaan, 2004). In light of the preceding studies, it follows that an understanding of career mobility opportunities (or the perception thereof), career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment may provide insight into talent retention practices. The context of the present study is the study of perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment with a view to inform talent retention practices.

2.1.2.2 Job satisfaction concepts

A plethora of research exists on job satisfaction as an antecedent of organisational behaviour and as a consequence of various phenomena within the organisational environment. Authors have viewed job satisfaction from different perspectives, including dispositional, situational and person-environment fit perspectives (Van der Walt, 2007). Proponents of the dispositional perspective view job satisfaction as a reflection of a biologically-based trait predisposing

individuals to focus on positive or negative aspects of their lives (Arvey, Bouchard, Segal & Abraham, 1989; Staw & Ross, 1985). The dispositional perspective assumes that individuals with higher life satisfaction will experience greater job satisfaction. In line with this perspective, Kreitner and Kinicki (2006) view job satisfaction as a personal trait and a product of genetic factors. According to these authors, employee job satisfaction is consistent across contexts. The view of job satisfaction as a personal trait is contentious due to the socio-political implications for selection and organisational structural attempts to improve job satisfaction (Furnham, 1992).

In contrast to the dispositional perspective, the situational perspective argues that job satisfaction is dependent on situational variables within the work environment. Factors such as challenging work, equitable rewards, working conditions and relationships with co-workers and bosses have been identified as some of the factors within the work environment that are conducive to job satisfaction (Theron, 2009c).

According to the person-fit perspective, job satisfaction occurs when employee skills and abilities match job requirements, and is determined by the extent to which the work environment provides reinforcers to meet employee needs (Weiss et al., 1967). The person-fit perspective is relevant to this study. Ivancevich et al. (2007) define job satisfaction as an attitude that people have towards their job, and this attitude results from their perception of their job and the degree to which there is a good fit between the individual and the organisation. In line with the person-fit perspective, Weiss (2002, p. 6) defines job satisfaction as “a positive (or negative) evaluative judgement one makes about their job or job situation”. According to Dawis and Lofquist (1993), job satisfaction is an attitude that occurs when there is correspondence between an individual’s abilities and the ability requirements of his or her work. Moreover, of importance is the extent to which an individual’s needs correspond with the reinforces obtained from the work environment. Dawis and Lofquist’s (1993) person-environment correspondence (PEC) theory is utilised in this study.

Job satisfaction has also been understood by focusing on an individual’s motivation to alter behaviour in response to intrinsic need fulfilment. Need fulfilment forms the foundation of content theories of motivation put forth by proponents such as Maslow (1954) and Herzberg et al. (1959). From the aforementioned perspective, it would be assumed that the fulfilment of an individual’s need or preference for career mobility may contribute to employee job satisfaction.

In addition to these perspectives, authors have focused on (a) attitudinal versus affective perspectives of job satisfaction, and (b) job satisfaction as a global construct versus complex interrelated facets (Spector, 1997). When defining job satisfaction, Locke (1979) focuses on the positive emotional state experienced by individuals upon evaluating their job or job experiences. According to Weiss (2002), progress toward a more balanced attitudinal conceptualisation of job satisfaction occurred in the 1990s. Integrating affective and attitudinal perspectives, Brief (1998) views job satisfaction as a favourable or unfavourable internal state experienced as a result of the affective and/or cognitive evaluation of one's job. The attitudinal perspective is the perspective that is commonly used (Spector, 1997). Criticism exists in that job satisfaction is loosely, but not carefully thought of as an affective state (Brief & Weiss, 2002). There also are differences in view regarding the measurement of job satisfaction as a global feeling about the job or a constellation of attitudes about facets of the job.

According to Spector (2000), a global and a facet approach have also been taken towards job satisfaction. A global approach treats job satisfaction as a single, overall feeling toward the job, while a facet approach focuses on different aspects of the job, such as rewards, interpersonal interaction and the nature of the job itself. Accordingly, the level of satisfaction with different facets of one's job typically differs. There is a lack of consensus on whether the sum of the job facets are equal to global job satisfaction, or whether global job satisfaction indicates something else. The job satisfaction measurement instrument utilised for this study is based on the conception of global job satisfaction, and this is justified by the fact that facets often correlate well with overall job satisfaction (Spector, 2000). The global job satisfaction conceptualisation adopted in this study differentiates between satisfaction with the nature of the work environment (referred to as extrinsic job satisfaction), and satisfaction with job tasks (referred to as intrinsic job satisfaction) (Spector, 2008).

2.1.2.3 Organisational commitment concepts

Organisational commitment refers to an individual's attachment to an organisation. A plethora of research exists on organisational commitment, yet there is little consensus on the conceptualisation of this construct. Common descriptions of organisational commitment include remaining with an organisation through thick and thin, low absenteeism, putting in a full day's work, protecting company assets and sharing company goals (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Meyer and Allen's (1991, 1997) view of organisational commitment is relevant to this study.

As summarised in Table 2.3, five approaches have been put forth regarding the conceptualisation and measurement of organisational commitment. The golden thread in all of these conceptualisations and measurements is that organisational commitment is a bond or linkage to the organisation (Roodt, 2004) and a particular focus that has the potential to fulfil salient needs (Martin & Roodt, 2007). Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) highlight the following commonalities in the definitions of commitment: it is a stabilising and obliging force; and it provides direction for behaviour, for instance by restricting freedom and tying an individual to a course of action. The differences involve details concerning the nature or origin of the stabilising force that gives direction to behaviour (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

Table 2.3
Summary of definitions from different approaches to organisational commitment

APPROACH	DESCRIPTION OF ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT	RELEVANT DEFINITION
Normative approach	Congruency between employee goals and values and organisational aims, which in turn results in an employee feeling obligated to their organisation (Suliman & Iles, 2000).	Organisational commitment is a bond or linkage to the organisation (Roodt, 2004).
Attitudinal approach	A process by which employees think about their relationship with the organisation (Mowday et al., 1982; Scholl, 1981).	A particular focus, as prescribed by each of these approaches, has the potential to fulfil salient needs (Martin & Roodt, 2007).
Behavioural approach	Process by which employees become locked into an organisation and how they deal with this problem (Mowday et al., 1982; Scholl, 1981).	“The totality of internalized normative pressures to act in a way which meets organisational goals and interests” (Wiener, 1982, p. 421). “The relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation” (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979, p. 226). “Profit associated with continued participation and a ‘cost’ associated with leaving” (Kanter, 1968, p. 504).

APPROACH	DESCRIPTION OF ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT	RELEVANT DEFINITION
Multi-dimensional approach	Integrating normative, attitudinal and behavioural commitment to form a three-component model of organisational commitment comprising of a cognitive, affective and conative component.	Organisational commitment is a bond or linkage to the organisation (Roodt, 2004). A particular focus, as prescribed by each of these
Multi-foci approach	Commitment can be directed towards various foci.	approaches, has the potential to fulfil salient needs (Martin & Roodt, 2007). “The net sum of a person’s commitment to the organisation, therefore, reflects each of these separable psychological states [affective attachment, perceived costs and obligation]” (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 4). “A process of identification with the goals of an organisation’s multiple constituencies” (Reichers, 1985, p. 465).
Motivational approach	Unidimensional conceptualisation whereby organisational commitment is operationalised as a cognitive predisposition (Roodt, 2004).	“A cognitive predisposition towards a particular focus, insofar as this focus has the potential to satisfy needs, realise values and achieve goals” (Roodt, 2004, p. 85).

The normative approach focuses on congruency between employee goals and values and organisational aims, which in turn results in an employee feeling obligated to the organisation (Suliman & Iles, 2000). Several authors have distinguished between attitudinal commitment and behavioural commitment, with the former referring to the process by which employees think about their relationship with the organisation, and the latter referring to the process by which employees become locked into an organisation and how they deal with this problem (Mowday et al., 1982; Scholl, 1981).

According to the multi-foci approach, organisational commitment is directed toward different foci, such as the occupation, top management, supervisors, the team, co-workers, the union and

customers (Reichers, 1985; Wasti & Can, 2008). The multi-foci approach, on the other hand, focuses on different contingencies within an organisation, and the multidimensional approach focuses on the different forms of commitment. Meyer and Allen (1991) adopted a multidimensional approach in terms of which organisational commitment is conceptualised by integrating normative, attitudinal and behavioural commitment to form a three-component model of organisational commitment, comprising a cognitive, affective and conative component. The multidimensional approach is relevant to this study and therefore it has been highlighted in Table 2.3. Whilst this conceptualisation of organisational commitment as a multidimensional construct has received much support, Roodt (2004) argues that it is not without its problems. Roodt (2004) firstly identified that the affective and conative components create a conceptual overlap with job attitudes and job intentions. Secondly, the multidimensional nature of this conceptualisation leads to diminished parsimony, clarity and precision. From this, Roodt (2004) proposed a motivational unidimensional conceptualisation in terms of which organisational commitment is operationalised as a cognitive predisposition. Roodt's (2004) argument regarding content redundancy and construct contamination was taken into consideration in this study.

According to Mowday et al. (1982) organisational commitment and job satisfaction are two separate affective constructs; the former is a general and more stable affective construct and the latter is a more fragile and changeable affective construct. The multidimensional approach has gained support over the years (Suliman & Iles, 2000). Due to the wealth of support for and research on Meyer and Allen's (1991) definition of organisational commitment, these authors' understanding of organisational commitment as an individual's attitude in terms of a stable mindset about an organisation was utilised. According to the preceding definition, organisational commitment is divided according to preferences for staying with an organisation. Affective commitment arises out of a sense of emotional attachment; continuance commitment is rooted in a sense of economic necessity; and normative commitment arises from a sense of moral obligation to remain (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007).

In addition to the foregoing debate, researchers have conceptualised what individuals are committed to differently. According to Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), individuals can be committed to both behaviours (such as commitment toward goals) and entities (such as commitment toward the organisation). Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) propose that differences are largely a focus on emphasis, whereby commitment directed at an entity implies behavioural

consequences, even if it is not explicitly stated. Likewise, when commitment is considered to be a course of action, the entity or the body to which the behaviour is relevant can be inferred, even if it is not explicitly stated. While Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) argue that it is advantageous to view commitment as directed at both work-relevant entities and behaviour, they suggest that it may be helpful to specify entities (for example an organisation, a union or a job) and behaviour in order to understand and predict the outcomes of behaviour.

2.2 TRENDS FROM THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

The most important published studies on the four constructs (perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment) of relevance to the study will be discussed in this section.

2.2.1 Perceived career mobility and career mobility preference models

This study utilises career mobility as an umbrella term referring to both intra-organisational mobility and inter-organisational mobility. Career mobility is understood according to Feldman and Ng's (2007) differentiation between three types of change. These include job change, organisational change and occupational change.

- *Job change* refers to substantial changes in work responsibilities, hierarchical levels, or titles within an organisation. It includes internal promotions, transfers and demotions.
- *Organisational change* refers to any change in the employing firm.
- *Occupational change* refers to transitions that require fundamentally new skills, routines and work environments, and that require fundamentally new training, education skills or vocational preparation. These changes differ from job change in that they are major transitions within the individual's career path.

Feldman and Ng (2007) highlight the importance of focusing on embeddedness factors, which refer to the forces keeping individuals in their current employment situations, such as in their job, organisation and occupation. Embeddedness is an important aspect of perceived career mobility, as it focuses attention on why people stay in their jobs, organisations and occupations, despite other (and better) opportunities available elsewhere (Feldman & Ng, 2007). It is

important to note that organisational embeddedness does not necessarily imply job embeddedness and, likewise, organisational change can include or be independent of job change (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

Three factors have been identified as important forces in job embeddedness, namely fit, links and sacrifices (Feldman & Ng 2007; Mitchell et al., 2001b):

- *Fit*: The extent to which a person's job meshes with, or complements, other areas of his or her life.
- *Links*: The extent of an individual's ties with other people and activities at work.
- *Sacrifice*: The ease with which links can be broken (i.e. what individuals would have to give up if they left their current position).

The greater the extent to which the individual experiences the preceding forces, the more embedded the individual is (Feldman & Ng, 2007; Holtom & O'Neill, 2004). In addition to the aforementioned forces, Feldman and Ng (2007) identify six perspectives to explain motivating factors that contribute to employee mobility and embeddedness. The strongest motivating factors and their relevant sub-factors are summarised in Table 2.4, these factors will be discussed in more detail in the section to follow.

2.2.1.1 Variables influencing perceived career mobility

Knowledge workers are characterised by high mobility (Sutherland & Jordaan, 2004). Various variables that influence their mobility have been identified in the literature on career mobility.

Table 2.4

Career mobility factors (adapted from Feldman and Ng, 2007)

	Structural labour market factors	Occupational labour market factors	Organisational policies and procedures	Work group-level factors	Personal life factors	Personality and personal style differences
Strongest influencing factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Macroeconomic conditions ▪ Social and legal environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Industry growth ▪ Human capital investments (skill development) ▪ Rigidity and permeability of occupational mobility structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organisational staffing and compensation policies ▪ Structure of pension and insurance benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social capital, including diversity and uniqueness of ties to individuals in other networks ▪ Social support and group cohesiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amount and predictability of time demands ▪ Support in resolving work-life conflict 	
Other influencing factors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender composition within specific industries (over- or under-representations of certain gender groups) ▪ Wage levels ▪ Labour intensity ▪ Degree of change in occupational responsibilities ▪ Occupational networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intra-organisational networks ▪ Organisational socialisation practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relational demography, i.e. demographically different from others at work ▪ Task interdependence (extent of co-worker dependence on each other to achieve organisational or group goals) ▪ Virtual work ▪ Use of external labour ▪ Complementary (skills and interests add value to those of other group members) versus supplementary (skills and values are same as co-workers) person-group fit 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attachment styles (affectional bonds to others) ▪ Big 5 personality traits ▪ Locus of control ▪ Career interests ▪ Types of intelligence

a. Structural factors

According to Feldman and Ng (2007), structural factors contribute to mobility and embeddedness in that the more job opportunities of a high quality, the greater the likelihood of mobility. Major influences include macroeconomic conditions, as there are more jobs available when the economy displays greater growth. From this it follows that the more jobs that are available, the greater the perception of opportunities for mobility. Mobility in response to macroeconomic conditions may include both inter-organisational mobility and intra-organisational mobility, as existing organisations may expand under flourishing economic conditions. Thriving economic conditions may increase opportunities for career mobility within an organisation. In instances of downsizing and restructuring, fewer opportunities to move up the traditional career ladder are presented, leading some employees to leave their jobs, as this is viewed as the only way to advance (Brown, 1998). Focusing on migration to overseas organisations, Netswera, Rankhumise and Mavundla (2005) also identify economic, social and political factors as influential in an individual's choice to leave.

The social and legal environment is also particularly relevant to this study. Due to affirmative action policies implemented in the South African context, skilled black people are in short supply and high demand (Vallabh & Donald, 2001). In addition to the high demand for skilled black knowledge workers, organisations experience difficulty in the retention of certain accounting and auditing professionals due to the high demand for these professionals (Pato & Spira, 2008). Feldman and Ng (2007) have identified factors relating to the macroeconomic, social and legal environment as some of the most influential factors for embeddedness and mobility. Macroeconomic, social and legal environmental factors may also influence mobility in that lucrative salaries and/or benefits offered by organisations poaching high-in-demand employees may entice employees to change between organisations. Inter-organisational mobility could be understood according to Mitchell, Holtom & Lee (2001a) view that, despite employee contentment, the turnover process may commence as a result of unsolicited job offers. In addition, employees experiencing stagnation may become mobile in search of advancement. Economic factors such as the current economic crisis or job offers from competing firms may influence employee perceptions of the availability of alternative opportunities.

In addition to macroeconomic, social and legal environmental factors, certain race and gender groups may perceive greater mobility opportunities due to the South African affirmative action

and employment equity legislation. Brown (1998) reports that females may leave their organisation due to the “glass ceiling effect”, that is the perception of a lack of advancement opportunities. On the other hand, greater mobility opportunities may be perceived by non-white and female talent, as organisations complying with employment equity and affirmative action policies may seek to employ talented people from these groups. Various studies have explored the relationship between external career mobility, more specifically intent to leave, and race (Martin & Roodt, 2007; Vallabh & Donald, 2001). The findings are inconsistent, however. Lumley (2009) found that white employees experienced greater levels of satisfaction for several job facets, including promotional opportunities, when such opportunities formed part of perceived intra-organisational career mobility.

b. Occupational perspective

From an occupational perspective, major labour market occupational factors include industry growth, human capital investments, and rigidity and permeability of occupational mobility structures. The more permeable occupational boundaries are and the greater the industry growth, the easier it would be for employees to move between occupations. Moreover, employee perceptions of these reduced boundaries may increase the confidence of employees in their ability to successfully move between occupations (Feldman & Ng, 2007). According to Feldman & Ng (2007), human capital investment is an important influencing factor. Aligned with the view of investment in employees as an influential factor in mobility, research has found that training and development opportunities are positively related to organisational commitment (Gaertner & Nollen, 1989; Sutherland & Jordaan, 2004). A South African study of higher education institutions found training and development and promotion opportunities to be some of the most important retention factors (Netswera et al., 2005).

Feldman and Ng (2007) posit that research includes other factors, such as the over- or under-representation of certain gender groups within specific industries. Unequal representation of male or female groups results in fewer opportunities due to bias, relatively small inter-firm wage differences, resulting in less inter-organisational mobility, and labour-intensive industries experience higher involuntary exit rates and lower intra-firm mobility. A higher degree of change in occupational responsibilities may result in greater willingness to exit, whereas more occupational networks lead to stronger ties to one’s occupation than to a particular organisation.

c. Organisational policies and procedures

Major organisational policies and procedure factors include organisational staffing and compensation policies, and the structure of pension and insurance benefits. Individuals are hesitant to give up on costs related to pension and insurance, and therefore are reluctant to leave an organisation in light of the loss of such costs; these considerations are important in the decision to leave an organisation (Feldman & Ng, 2007). Weighing costs against advantages in order to make turnover decisions seems to be aligned with Meyer and Allen's (1991) conceptualisation of continuance commitment, which includes an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organisation. Wage differences between organisations may also reduce inter-organisational mobility (Feldman & Ng, 2007). Several South African studies have identified higher salaries and better benefits as a factor in increased inter-organisational mobility (Matuna, 1996; Primos, 1994; Vallabh & Donald, 2001). According to Feldman and Ng (2007), factors such as intra-organisational networks and organisational socialisation practices may embed individuals in their organisation.

d. Work group perspective

From a work group perspective, intra-organisational mobility, social capital and social support are important factors in embedding employees. On the other hand, important factors for inter-organisational mobility include acceptable time demands and support for work-life conflict (Feldman & Ng, 2007). Whilst individual differences have been shown to be related to mobility, this relationship is not specific to a certain type of mobility (Judge, Bono, Illies & Gerhardt, 2002). According to Feldman and Ng (2007), other influencing factors, such as relational demography (occurring when an individual is demographically different from others at work) and the use of external labour, are related to weak emotional attachment to the organisation and job mobility respectively. On the other hand, task interdependence among employees results in reduced inter-organisational mobility (Feldman & Ng, 2007). The lack of clarity on the effects of virtual work arrangements on mobility and embeddedness is highlighted by Feldman and Ng (2007). Feldman and Ng (2007) found that, in instances in which individuals believed that their skills and interests added value to the skills and interests of their team members (known as supplementary fit), the said individuals identified with their work group. Individuals experiencing supplementary fit and wanting to leave the organisation can be confident that the other group members could continue successfully without them. In instances of complementary person-group fit (an

individual's skills and values are equivalent to those of his or her co-workers), an individual may experience fewer links to the group but greater obligation to stay, as the others may not be able to assume the individual's responsibilities readily (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

e. Personal life factors

Major personal life factors include the amount and predictability of time demands and support for resolving work-life conflict. Inter-organisational mobility is higher when the time demands are unpredictable and there is a lack of organisational support for resolving work-life conflict (Feldman & Ng, 2007). Work-life conflict is a serious concern for working couples, and sources include occupational mobility and job placement (Schreuder & Theron, 2004). The view of career mobility as a source of work-life conflict for working couples provides support for the need to explore the relationship between marital status and perceived career mobility. Several female employees have children, and this often influences their willingness to relocate and, in turn, their perceived marketability (Eddleston, Baldrige & Veiga, 2004). If an individual does not perceive that they are sought after by their own or other organisations, it seems unlikely that they may experience high perceived career mobility. According to Eddleston et al. (2004), willingness to relocate and increased marketability are associated with advancement.

In addition to the preceding factors highlighted by Feldman and Ng (2007), these authors also indicate that an individual's decisions regarding career mobility are influenced by his or her life/career stage tasks. Older employees nearing retirement may perceive less inter-organisational opportunities for themselves, although greater tenure may lead to higher perceived intra-organisational career mobility. Aligned with the aforementioned view, Schreuder and Theron (2004) indicate that, although the late adulthood stage is generally characterised by individuals entering retirement, an increase in life expectancy has resulted in some individuals making valuable contributions to organisations during the late adulthood stage. In some instances, individuals only move into senior positions during late adulthood.

f. Personality traits and personal style

Although several personality traits and personal style differences have been identified as factors related to career mobility, Feldman and Ng (2007) do not highlight these as major contributing factors. Among these factors are attachment styles (affectional bonds with others), the Big 5

personality traits (openness to change, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism), locus of control, career interests and types of intelligence (fluid and crystallised intellectual abilities).

Neuroticism, extraversion and conscientiousness have been identified by Ng, Sorensen, Eby and Feldman (2007) as factors that may influence career mobility. Whilst neuroticism may preclude individuals from upward internal and external mobility (Judge & Bono, 2001; Ng et al., 2007), extraversion and conscientiousness may facilitate opportunities for upward mobility (Ng et al., 2007).

2.2.1.2 Variables influencing career mobility preference

Several variables have been identified as possible antecedents to career mobility preference, these variable will be discussed in the following section.

a. Personality traits and career interests

Ng et al. (2007) propose that certain Big 5 personality traits influence career mobility. Individuals experiencing greater neuroticism are unlikely to seek out internal lateral moves (Judge & Bono, 2001), but may actively engage in movement between organisations in search of more positive affirmation elsewhere (Ng et al., 2007). Conversely, individuals with greater openness to experience may seek out new experiences through lateral mobility within and between organisations (Ng et al., 2007). Likewise, extraverts and individuals with a social career interest may like to experience new opportunities (Ng et al., 2007), as they tend to be activity-seeking and prefer excitement (Bergh, 2009). Due to the hard-working nature of conscientious individuals, entrepreneurial individuals' preference to manage a business, and creative individuals' need for self-expression, these individuals may prefer upward career mobility (Ng et al., 2007).

b. Values

Individuals valuing power and achievement are likely to prefer upward career mobility (Ng et al., 2007). Likewise, career anchors such as entrepreneurial creativity and general management competence (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007) may influence an individual's preference for

upward career mobility. Similarly to the relationship between openness to change and inter-organisational career mobility, conformity and broad-mindedness seem to be related to movement between organisations, as more traditional individuals may be less predisposed to external mobility (Ng et al., 2007), while broad-minded individuals are more open to new experiences (Ng et al., 2007; Schwartz & Bardi, 2001). The relationship between values and career mobility preference is further complicated by the fact that a relationship has been reported between personality preferences and career anchors (Ngokha, 2008).

c. Attachment styles

According to Ng et al. (2007), individuals with a secure attachment style (positive view toward self and others) may experience greater confidence in their ability to advance. Individuals possessing a positive view toward others but a negative view toward themselves are unlikely to engage in inter-organisational career mobility and upward intra-organisational career mobility due to their low self-esteem. An individual with a negative view toward others (fearful and dismissive attachment styles) is more likely to move between organisations.

d. Biographical variables

Affirmative action legislation has resulted in perceived excessive mobility by black managers, as the literature suggests that job hopping is only a problem among black managers (Vallabh & Donald, 2001). Views on females' needs for new opportunities are inconsistent. Lumley (2009) and Coetzee and Schreuder (2009) propose that females value steady and stable work opportunities, whilst Beukes (2009) argues that females may experience a greater need to experiment with new career opportunities.

2.2.1.3 Implications for talent retention

South Africa is experiencing a skills shortage crisis due to the brain drain, and this has led to challenges in retaining talented employees, specifically knowledge workers (Du Preez, 2002; Kerr-Phillips & Thomas, 2009). A high demand for and short supply of employees within a specific industry results in increased competition and poaching of employees by organisations. As a result, organisations are presented with challenges in retaining talented employees. A study by Kochanski and Ledford (2001) found that labour market trends have led to higher

career opportunities, and in turn greater challenges in retaining knowledge workers. Knowledge workers' intellectual capital provides organisations with a competitive advantage (Lin & Huang, 2005), the benefits of which can be reaped by organisations through effective talent retention practices. However, there are inconsistent findings on the relationship between perceived inter-organisational career mobility and turnover (Lee, Mitchell, Holtom, McDaniel & Hill, 1999; Maertz & Campion, 2001). Mncwango and Winnaar (2009) posit that South African employees value good advancement opportunities. Decisions to leave may be dependent on whether growth opportunities are perceived (Foong-ming, 2008). Research indicates that organisational practices indicating organisational investment in employees and their development should lead to reduced turnover (Allen, Shore & Griffeth, 2003). The relationship between advancement opportunities and turnover is complexified by Foong-ming's (2008) view that knowledge-intensive organisations have fewer hierarchical levels, which results in fewer internal promotion opportunities for knowledge workers.

Today, job transitions are frequent, requiring individuals to engage in lifelong learning, to be flexible, to maintain employability skills and to continuously create opportunities for themselves (Savickas et al., 2009). The boundaryless and protean career attitudes both focus on the need for individuals to adapt to their work environment and to manage their own careers (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). Adapting to the work environment and managing one's own career development may require an individual to seek out organisations that provide intra-organisational career mobility opportunities, such as advancement opportunities. Several studies have supported Mitchell et al.'s (2001b) view of embeddedness as a predictor of voluntary turnover (Burton et al., 2010). Therefore, mobility opportunities that embed individuals with specific mobility preferences by satisfying these preference may enhance talent retention strategies.

2.2.2 Job satisfaction model

Job satisfaction will be discussed in terms of the framework of Dawis and Lofquist's (1993) person-environment correspondence theory (PEC). PEC evolved from Weiss et al.'s (1967) theory of work adjustment (TWA). According to Dawis (2005), the TWA grew out of the psychology of individual differences, i.e. trait theory. Trait theory is built on the premise that different consequences result for different people in the same situation. From trait theory it follows that the individual responds to his or her environment and, in response, the environment provides positive reinforcements (such as wages, for example) that encourage the individual to

continue responding to the environment in such a manner (Weiss et al., 1967). Weiss et al. (1967) explain that, as a consequence of this individual-environment interaction, the individual develops abilities and needs, and these needs are linked to the reinforcers that the environment provides. As diagrammatically presented in Figure 2.2, the individual utilises his or her abilities to respond to environmental requirements and, as a result of successfully fulfilling environmental requirements, the individual's needs are fulfilled by environmental reinforcers.

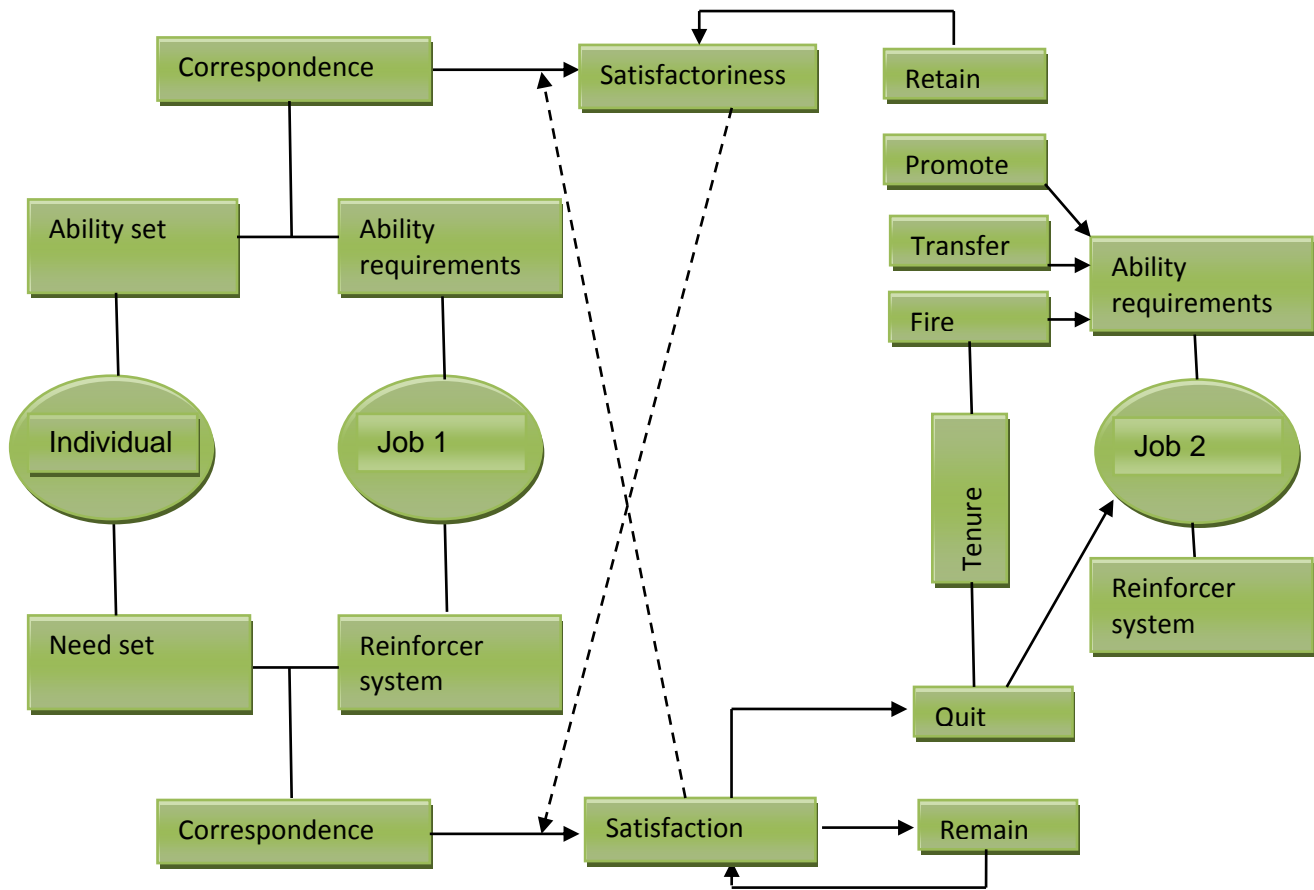


Figure 2.2. Work adjustment (from Dawis & Lofquist, 1984, p. 62).

Certain needs and abilities develop more than others, depending on the individual's potential to respond to environmental requirements, his or her opportunities to respond, the value placed on reinforcers by the individual, and the frequency of reinforcers associated with responses. Although needs and abilities develop and change, the individual is said to have a stable work personality when they become constant. Dawis and Lofquist (1984) built on the TWA by identifying four personality and work-style dimensions determining correspondence (a fit between the person and the environment), namely:

- a) *celerity*, speed in interacting with the environment;
- b) *pace*, level of activity in interaction with the environment;
- c) *rhythm*, pattern of speed in interaction with the environment; and
- d) *endurance*, duration of interaction with the environment.

The match between individual needs and abilities and environmental requirements and reinforcers is known as correspondence. Dawis et al., (1968) describe correspondence as a mutually responsive relationship between the individual and the environment. When an individual experiences correspondence, he or she seeks to maintain it (Dawis et al., 1968). A continuous and dynamic process known as work adjustment occurs, whereby the individual acts on and reacts to the work environment in order to maintain correspondence (Dawis et al., 1968; Weiss et al., 1967). Adequate adjustment is indicated by the length of an individual's tenure (the longer an individual remains in the work environment) (Weiss et al., 1967). Correspondence and hence substantial tenure infer that satisfaction and satisfactoriness exist. Satisfaction is a manifestation of the environment's fulfilment of an individual's requirements, and satisfactoriness an indication of the individual's fulfilment of the environment's requirements (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Dawis et al., 1968). Conversely, if satisfactoriness or satisfaction are not present, the individual may leave the job or organisation. A lack of satisfactoriness may result in involuntary turnover, and dissatisfaction may result in voluntary turnover, whereby an individual may leave a job for one that fulfils his/her needs and for which the individual can fulfil the ability requirements of the work environment. Figure 2.2 depicts the possibility of promotion, transfer or being fired in response to satisfactoriness or a lack thereof that may lead to an individual entering another job. Likewise, an individual is likely to remain with an organisation when satisfaction is experienced, but may quit if dissatisfaction is experienced, which would in turn lead to the said individual entering into another job.

In addition to individual differences in the preceding personality and work-style dimensions, individuals also differ in the amount of correspondence required from the environment in order to remain in it (irrespective of whether they possess similar work personalities) (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). According to Dawis and Lofquist (1984), tolerance of discorrespondence rests on an adjustment style dimension of flexibility. The more flexible individual is more tolerant of discorrespondence, and therefore knowledge of an individual's flexibility is required in order to predict tenure. Individuals with a need to increase correspondence with the environment may seek to change the environment or the manner in which their work personality is expressed. An

active mode of adjustment exists when an individual acts on the environment, while reactivity refers to a personality style dimension that exists when an individual acts on himself/herself instead of on the environment to reduce dissatisfaction (reactiveness).

The Work Adjustment Project was utilised as a basis for the development of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). Weiss et al. (1967) described the work environment with reference to individual behaviours appropriate to the environment as well as stimuli within the environment that potentially serve as reinforcers. By behaving in a manner appropriate to the work environment, an individual increases the likelihood of environmental reinforcement (Weiss et al., 1967). The Work Adjustment Project differentiated between environmental and intrinsic satisfaction reinforcement factors, and these factors are sampled by the MSQ (Weiss et al., 1967). Environmental reinforcement factors refer to factors enhancing extrinsic job satisfaction, such as working conditions, and an individual's supervisor, co-workers and the company (Weiss et al., 1967). Extrinsic satisfaction therefore refers to satisfaction with aspects of the work situation (Spector, 2008) that is derived from an individual's satisfaction with the supervisor, the enforcement of company policies, working conditions, pay, co-workers, advancement opportunities and recognition. The focus of extrinsic satisfaction therefore is on the work environment and not the actual job tasks.

In contrast to extrinsic satisfaction, intrinsic satisfaction refers to the nature of job tasks, that is, individuals' feelings regarding the work they do (Spector, 2008). Intrinsic reinforcement factors include the type of work, achievement and ability utilisation (Weiss et al., 1967). Intrinsic satisfaction may be experienced through a sense of accomplishment, self-actualisation and task identity resulting from completing the job (Martin, 2007). In the measurement of intrinsic satisfaction, the MSQ focuses specifically on temporal demand, task variety, status, congruence with own values, steadiness of employment, independence, ability and judgment utilisation and a sense of accomplishment from the job.

The theory of work adjustment (TWA) was developed from research on factors affecting the work adjustment of vocational rehabilitation clients, from which the person-environment correspondence theory evolved as a generalised version of the TWA (Dawis, 2002). Dawis (2002) explains that, as the TWA evolved, it became clear that this theory could be generalised to other environments in addition to the work environment, which was the focus of the TWA. The TWA was also relevant to populations other than vocational rehabilitation clients. The PEC

theory was developed in view of the fact that this theory, as well as the TWA, formed part of a more generic psychological theory, that is person-environment (P-E) theory. Generic P-E theory studies the interaction between the person and the environment, and this interaction has consequences for both entities, which means that the person cannot be understood without considering the environment (Dawis, 2002).

According to Dawis (2002), PEC theory, similarly to P-E theory, assumes that the person and environment act on and react to each other. PEC theory, however, goes a step further in that the person and the environment both have requirements that each expects to be fulfilled by interaction with the other. Both the person and environment possess capabilities that are used in interaction with each other in order to fulfil the other's requirements, and it is perceived by both that their own requirements will be fulfilled by fulfilling the other's requirements.

PEC theory and the TWA are based on the same assumptions, with the exception that PEC is a generalised theory (as discussed in the preceding section) focused on the fit of an individual to their work environment. In addition, the emphasis of PEC shifted away from skills and needs to abilities and values. Personality structure is described in terms of abilities and values, as it is assumed that these are more stable than skills and needs (Dawis, 2002). Countless skills and needs may be required for different jobs, and this makes the measurement of these factors difficult (Sharf, 2006). PEC theory moves toward the use of values, thus grouping needs in a meaningful manner; likewise, abilities can be used to group skills (Sharf, 2006). The six values relevant to PEC theory are achievement, comfort, status, altruism, safety and autonomy. The values are grouped according to their sources, that is, environmental, social and self. Table 2.5 summarises the definitions of the six value dimensions and identifies the sources of these values. Environmental factors are the source of safety and comfort, social factors are the source of status and altruism, and self factors are sources of achievement and autonomy.

In summary, PEC theory centres on four core aspects: a) work personality, which should match the work environment; b) an individual's fit in the work environment, which is determined by his or her values and abilities; c) correspondence between individual values and abilities, which results in tenure and stability in the work environment; and d) successful job placement, which is accomplished by matching worker traits and environmental requirements (Dawis, 2002; Zunker, 2008).

Table 2.5

Value dimensions (adapted from Dawis & Lofquist, 1984, p.29)

Value	Definition	Source
Safety	The importance of an environment that is predictable and stable.	Environmental
Comfort	The importance of an environment that is comfortable and not stressful.	
Status	The importance of an environment that provides recognition and prestige.	Social
Altruism	The importance of an environment that fosters harmony with and service to others.	
Achievement	The importance of an environment that encourages accomplishment.	Self
Autonomy	The importance of an environment that stimulates initiative.	

2.2.2.1 Variables influencing job satisfaction

Various variables influencing job satisfaction have been identified in career mobility literature, these variables will be discussed below.

a. Demographic factors

Differences between various age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups' job satisfaction have been studied for several years, yielding inconsistent findings (Martin & Roodt, 2007). Previous research has found that job satisfaction increases with age (Schultz & Schultz, 2010). These findings are supported by a study on the job satisfaction of accountants, undertaken by Westerman and Yamamora (2007). However, there are inconsistent findings regarding differences between the job satisfaction of gender (Schultz & Schultz, 2010) and race groups. Schultz and Schultz (2010) claim that more white than non-white employees report satisfaction with their jobs, although these authors argue that the pay and advancement opportunities of race groups need to be taken into account when considering this relationship. Likewise, Mncwango and Winnaar (2009) found that employees from the black population group were least likely to experience job satisfaction, and these authors also report that employees

with low living standards experience lower job satisfaction. Lumley (2009) found white employees to report satisfaction with more facets of their jobs compared to other race groups. However, white and Indian participants in Lumley's (2009) study reported that they were least satisfied with their promotion opportunities. The preceding findings are in contrast with Vallabh and Donald's (2001) findings that black managers experience greater satisfaction than white managers. It is proposed that the higher levels of job satisfaction experienced by black managers may be attributed to this grouping finding better jobs than they did in the past under South Africa's previous socio-economic climate (Vallabh & Donald, 2001).

Donohue and Heywood (2004) report that, while North American and British studies have often reported greater levels of job satisfaction experienced by women, the American study found no difference between gender groups' level of job satisfaction. Kaiser (2007) argues that interventions encouraging equal opportunities for men and women have decreased job satisfaction differences between the gender groups.

b. Cognitive ability

Whilst cognitive ability does not seem to be a significant variable influencing job satisfaction, it is related to an individual's job choice (Schultz & Schultz, 2010). The relationship between ability and job choice may be understood in terms of Weiss et al.'s (1967) view that job satisfaction occurs when correspondence exists between an individual's abilities and the ability requirements of the work.

c. Job experience

Whilst research suggests that there is a relationship between tenure and job satisfaction, the findings are inconsistent (Martin, 2007). According to Schultz and Schultz (2010), the relationship between job satisfaction and tenure parallels that of the relationship between job satisfaction and age. Schultz and Schultz (2010) hypothesise that age and tenure may be the same phenomenon under different labels. Martin (2007) found no significant difference between tenure and age groups' job satisfaction.

d. Opportunities in the work environment

Research has revealed that job satisfaction is positively related to the opportunity to utilise one's abilities in the work environment (Schultz & Schultz, 2010). The notion of a positive relationship between job satisfaction and job congruence is in line with the person-fit perspective. According to Weiss et al. (1967), job satisfaction is an attitude that occurs when there is correspondence between an individual's abilities and the ability requirements of the work they do. In addition to utilising one's abilities, job satisfaction may be related to intra-organisational mobility opportunities. The view that a relationship exists between job satisfaction and intra-organisational mobility opportunities is aligned with the view that employee perceptions of growth and promotion opportunities are related to job satisfaction (Levy, 2006; Schultz & Schultz, 2010). Lumley (2009) found that white employees and employees at staff level experienced greater satisfaction with several job facets, including promotion opportunities.

e. Social factors

Employee relationships with supervisors and co-workers seem to be important antecedents of job satisfaction (Levy, 2006). Organisational justice occurs when employees perceive that their employing organisation is treating them fairly. Research has revealed that the inclusion of employees in decision making can contribute to increased feelings of organisational justice, which in turn can lead to increased job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Mayer, Nishii, Schneider & Godstein, 2007; Wiesenfeld, Swann, Brockner & Bartel, 2007). According to Spector (2000), although pay is to some extent associated with global satisfaction, it is more strongly related to the facet of pay satisfaction. More specifically, it is the fairness with which pay is distributed that determines satisfaction, more so than pay itself.

f. Personal factors

Whilst research suggests that satisfied employees are better adjusted, the cause-effect relationship is unclear (Schultz & Schultz, 2010). Personality factors shown to be related to job satisfaction include alienation, internal locus of control, high self-esteem, self-efficacy, low neuroticism, achievement striving, impatience, social and institutional trust, conscientiousness and positive affectivity (Schultz & Schultz, 2010). Some researchers are of the opinion that

genetic factors might influence the way in which individuals respond to their work contexts, more specifically to employee job satisfaction (Iles & Judge, 2003).

g. Job characteristics

According to Levy (2006), job satisfaction is affected by the structure of the job and what it provides. More specifically, the more jobs provide autonomy, task identity, task variety, task significance and job feedback, the more satisfied employees are. In addition, individuals who can exercise greater control over their job duties will be more motivated to perform and experience greater job satisfaction (Schultz & Schultz, 2010). The relationship between job satisfaction and the capacity to exercise control over one's job duties may enlighten the understanding of the relationship between job satisfaction and job level, as higher-level individuals may possess greater job control. Job satisfaction has been shown to be higher amongst higher-level incumbents, which include certain job categories such as entrepreneurs, technical staff, professional and managerial jobs (Schultz & Schultz, 2010).

In contrast to the preceding factors, certain job characteristics are negatively related to job satisfaction. Factors such as role ambiguity and role conflict have been shown to be negatively correlated to job satisfaction (Spector, 2000).

2.2.2.2 Implications for talent retention

Sempane, Rieger and Roodt (2002) view job satisfaction as an individual's perception and appraisal of his or her job. The perception and appraisal of one's job is influenced by an individual's needs, values and expectations. Both extrinsic and intrinsic job dimensions influence job satisfaction (Castro & Martins, 2010). Extrinsic job dimensions include promotion opportunities (Castro & Martins, 2010), which form part of intra-organisational career mobility. It follows that, if an individual's need for promotion is not met, for instance, extrinsic job satisfaction may not be experienced. A strong negative relationship has been found between job satisfaction and turnover or turnover intention (Martin, 2007).

2.2.3 Organisational commitment model

In this study, Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model of organisational commitment is utilised to understand and measure organisational commitment. Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model of organisational commitment includes affective, continuance and normative commitment. Affective, continuance and normative commitment should be understood as components, as opposed to mutually exclusive aspects, of organisational commitment, because all three components may be experienced by an employee to varying degrees at a specific point in time.

2.2.3.1 Affective commitment

According to Meyer and Allen (1991), affective commitment refers to an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation. Employees experiencing strong affective commitment continue employment with the organisation because they *want* to do so. Affective commitment is characterised by a belief in, and acceptance of, organisational goals, the willingness to exert effort on the organisation's behalf and a desire to remain part of the organisation (Levy, 2006).

2.2.3.2 Continuance commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991, p. 67) define continuance commitment as "an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organisation". Employees bonded to the organisation based primarily on continuance commitment remain because they *need* to do so. For example, loss of organisational benefits due to voluntarily leaving an organisation may encourage an individual to stay with the organisation. The perceived costs associated with leaving the organisation differ for each individual.

2.2.3.3 Normative commitment

Individuals experiencing normative commitment have a sense of obligation to continue employment with an organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Employees with a high level of normative commitment feel that they *should* remain with the organisation. According to Meyer and Allen (1991), some authors have argued that normative commitment occurs as a result of

normative pressures (such as cultural socialisation) exerted on the individual by the organisation. Other authors have proposed that employees may feel obliged to stay with the organisation when an imbalance occurs in the employee-organisation relationship, for example through funding an employee's studies. When an imbalance is experienced, some employees may feel obliged to work for the organisation until the imbalance is corrected, for example paying back the bursary.

Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) highlight that the three-component model of organisational commitment has received some criticism regarding whether affective and normative commitment are distinct from one another, and whether continuance commitment is a unidimensional construct. Whilst there is mixed support for the distinction of the constructs of the three-component model, support exists for the dimensionality of the model. Despite the existence of a high correlation between affective and normative commitment, confirmatory factor analyses has revealed that the three constructs are better explained as separate factors (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

2.2.3.4 Antecedents to organisational commitment

In addition to the lack of consensus regarding the conceptualisation of organisational commitment, authors' views differ regarding the development of organisational commitment and how it affects behaviour (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Organisational commitment occurs both as a precursor to and a result of certain organisational behaviours. A discussion of organisational factors that result in the organisational commitment of employees will be discussed in the following section. A description of organisational commitment as a precursor to turnover, and hence talent retention, will then be presented.

This study adopted a multidimensional view of commitment in terms of which organisational commitment is viewed as a mindset binding an individual to an organisation (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Based on the multidimensional view of organisational commitment, the antecedents of organisational commitment will be explained by focusing on the three components of organisational commitment, that is affective, normative and continuance commitment.

a. Affective commitment

Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) propose that affective commitment is developed through any variables, personal or situational, contributing to the likelihood that an individual will become intrinsically motivated to a course of action, and recognise the value of and/or develop identity from association with an entity or the pursuit of an action. In addition, supervisor support and recognition are related to affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Wayne, Shore, Bommer & Tetrick, 2002), as well as to the perception of being treated fairly and to the enhancement of an employee's sense of personal importance and competence (Meyer & Allen, 1997). A positive relationship has also been found between age and affective commitment, whereby older employees, or those with longer tenure, tend to be more committed (Levy, 2006). Several recent South African studies, however, have reported contradictory findings regarding the relationship between age and organisational commitment (Lumley, 2009; Mguqulwa, 2008; Martin & Roodt, 2007). A study by Mguqulwa (2008) that focused specifically on affective commitment found that males tended to experience greater affective commitment than females. However, research on the relationship between gender and organisational commitment has however yielded inconsistent results (Martin, 2007).

According to Spector (2000), affective commitment occurs as a result of job conditions and met expectations, while continuance commitment occurs as a product of benefits accumulated from working for the organisation and by a lack of alternative jobs. The latter is of particular interest to this study.

b. Continuance commitment

Continuance commitment develops from an individual's perception that costs may be incurred should he or she discontinue a specific action. Moreover, Meyer and Allen (1991) propose that this form of commitment may develop due to the perception of a lack of alternatives. Whilst the view that continuance commitment develops from a perceived lack of alternatives has received criticism, the implications of this argument are however an interesting consideration in this study.

Findings regarding the relationship between continuance commitment and biographical variables such as gender, tenure and job level have been inconsistent. Research on the relationship between tenure and organisational commitment have yielded inconsistent results (Martin &

Roodt, 2007; Mguqulwa, 2008). Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found a positive relationship between higher-level jobs and organisational commitment. In considering the relationship between tenure and organisational commitment, it is important to note that the relationship between continuance commitment and tenure is argued to be stronger than that of the relationship between tenure and affective commitment. The relationship between continuance commitment and tenure may be stronger because, as tenure increases, so do sunk costs. Another biographical variable found to be related to continuance commitment is that of gender. Lumley (2009) found that females displayed greater continuance commitment than males. However, as discussed in the preceding section, studies regarding the relationship between gender and organisational commitment have yielded inconsistent results (Martin, 2007).

c. Normative commitment

Normative commitment develops when an employee internalises norms concerning appropriate conduct, obtained through socialisation, and/or receives benefits and experiences the need to reciprocate (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). It is hypothesised that early socialisation processes may impact employee normative commitment, as indirect evidence suggests that employees with a need to fulfil their obligations to others are more likely to be normatively committed (Meyer & Allen, 1997). A recent study by Lumley (2009) found no significant differences between age, gender and race groups' levels of normative commitment.

2.2.3.5 Implications for talent retention

The most widely studied correlate of organisational commitment is turnover (Meyer & Allen, 1991). According to Meyer and Allen's three-component model of organisational commitment, all three components reduce employee turnover, as they bind employees to the organisation (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). The relationship between organisational commitment and turnover has been the focus of many studies, with the majority of the findings identifying a negative relationship between organisational commitment and turnover or turnover intention (Wasti & Can, 2008). Research has identified a strong relationship between organisational commitment and employee retention (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, Topolnytsky, 2002). Differences between various age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups' job satisfaction and organisational commitment have also been studied (Martin & Roodt, 2007). D'Manto and Herzfeldt (2008)

found that younger generations were less willing to remain in the same organisation and had lower organisational commitment. However, the findings are inconsistent (Martin & Roodt, 2007). The focus of retention is not only voluntary turnover by employees, but also involuntary turnover. Behavioural consequences of organisational commitment can provide insight into the retention of high-performing staff. Several studies have reported that organisational commitment is related to increased performance and attendance behaviours, although some studies have not found this relationship (Meyer & Allen, 1991). According to Foong-ming (2008), the literature on organisational support supports the notion that, in response to the provision by the organisation of a caring and supportive work environment, employees reciprocate with feelings of attachment to the organisation and working to achieve organisational goals.

In line with the objectives set out for this study, a literature review was undertaken to determine the theoretical relationship between career mobility, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. This was done to determine theoretically (based on a review of the literature) the role of age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups in perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. These relationships were studied in order to determine the implications of the theoretical relationships for employee retention practices. Figure 2.3 illustrates a proposed integration of the literature relevant to this study.

2.3 INTEGRATION: THEORETICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED CAREER MOBILITY, CAREER MOBILITY PREFERENCE, JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Today's workplace is characterised by constant change, which has an impact on an individual's inter- and intra-organisational career mobility (Kondratuk et al., 2004). Due to globalisation and the resultant increase in competition, the world of work as we know it is changing. Research on technological employees has identified that the high demand for employees due to labour market trends has led to increased career opportunities and, in turn, greater challenges in retaining these employees (Kochanski & Ledford, 2001). The link between a high demand for scarce skills and retention challenges highlights the connection between external career mobility and retention. Likewise, Vallabh and Donald (2001) interpret their findings of a positive relationship between job hopping and lower organisational commitment experienced by black managers in light of the view that black managers might not allow themselves to become highly

committed so that it would be easier to break away from the organisation if new job offers arise. The relationship between race and career mobility must be understood in light of the South African context, in terms of which black employees, particularly knowledge workers, are in high demand due to the employment equity policy. From the preceding literature it follows that, in order to retain employees, external career mobility must be considered. In addition to external career mobility, internal career mobility must also be taken into account, as internal career mobility may play an important role in retaining employees. The organisational fulfilment of intra-organisational career mobility preference may assist in retaining employees.

The preference to be mobile within the work environment forms part of the protean and boundaryless career attitudes (Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009). The protean career attitude, while related yet distinct from the boundaryless career attitude (Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009), refers to a self-directed orientation to the career (Hall, 1976). More specifically, an individual's own values are utilised to define career success, and self-directed career management behaviours are practised (Briscoe et al., 2006). Briscoe et al. (2006) measured the boundaryless career attitude by focusing on the boundaryless mindset, including a propensity and preference for working with other people and organisations across organisational boundaries, as well as an individual's mobility preference to work for multiple organisations. Awareness of protean and boundaryless career attitudes, a shift to a more transactional psychological contract (Baruch, 2004) and hence increased mobility, have resulted in the need for employees to take full ownership of their careers through career self-management activities and continuous learning. In addition, organisations need to offer career development practices, thus supporting career growth and employee satisfaction (Levy, 2006; Schultz & Schultz, 2010).

Employee satisfaction occurs when an individual's values and abilities correspond with the environmental requirements (Dawis & Lofquist, 1993). Individuals taking responsibility for their own career development may gain insight into their values and abilities and seek alternative job opportunities that fit their career goals and aspirations.

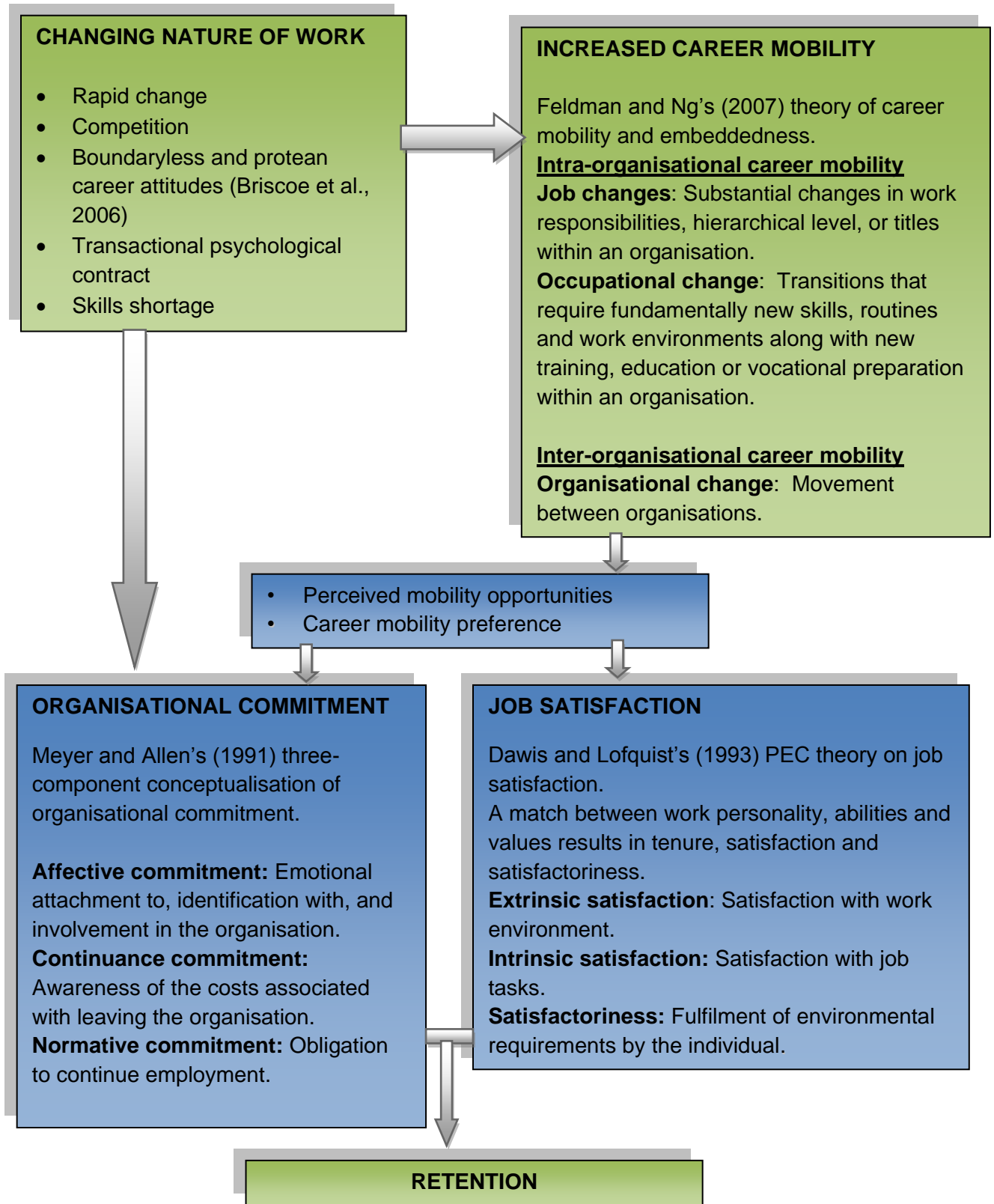


Figure 2.3. Theoretical relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Organisations are presented with the challenge of providing career patterns facilitating organisational growth and profitability, and patterns facilitating employee growth and development (Murrell et al., 1996). The decision regarding the provision of career patterns is further complicated by inconsistent views regarding the outcomes of mobility opportunities. Goffee (1992) proposes that career mobility expectations increase employee motivation, commitment and organisational loyalty. According to Murrell et al. (1996), frequent lateral moves have a negative impact on job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009) found a negative correlation between organisational mobility preference and organisational commitment. Kondratuk et al. (2004) found that the relationship between career mobility and organisational commitment differed for inter- and intra-organisational mobility and was dependent on the time (before or after the move).

External career mobility history is negatively related to normative commitment, and affective and continuance commitment are lower prior to an inter-organisational move (Kondratuk et al., 2004). On the other hand, continuance commitment is significantly lower prior to an inter-organisational move and affective commitment increases significantly after inter- and intra-organisational moves (Kondratuk et al., 2004). More longitudinal research may be required in order to better understand differences in the levels of organisational commitment prior and post career mobility. Kondratuk et al. (2004) did not, however, find a relationship between continuance commitment and the overall career mobility rate. Individuals may have a history of high mobility, but may not perceive current mobility opportunities due to their situational factors (for example, a technical employee with outdated skills). It therefore is important to assess an individual's perception of his or her current career mobility opportunities (as opposed to their mobility history) and the relationship of this perception with organisational commitment. In light of the preceding findings, the measurement of preference for career mobility seems to be an important consideration in understanding the relationship between the constructs included in this study. Career mobility preference was included in this study as an individual's preference for career mobility may be important in understanding whether they would be committed or satisfied if they desired and perceived many career mobility opportunities within the organisation or the labour market.

From the preceding discussion it is clear that greater insight into the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment is required, as an individual with a high intra-organisational mobility preference may

be more satisfied and committed within an organisation that is perceived to offer the opportunity for career development, and hence intra-organisational mobility. Liu (2004) (cited in Foong-ming, 2008) identified that development opportunities within an organisation have been shown to enhance knowledge workers' loyalty. Increased loyalty in response to perceived development opportunities can be understood in light of the idea that the provision of career development opportunities by organisations provides the impression of their willingness and effort to care for and support employees (Foong-ming, 2008). The perception that the organisation is willing to invest in employees is important, as people want career progress and therefore become frustrated when they believe that their path is blocked (Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007). The view that individuals want career progress and do not want to be stagnant within their career is aligned with that of Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), who suggest that developmental opportunities increase employee motivation and confidence in their work, which may lead to increased self-fulfilment and, in turn, reduced turnover. Knowledge of the relationship between turnover and the provision of developmental opportunities by organisations is important for organisations and workers alike, as the shortage of skilled workers (as is the case with accountants, auditors and financial staff) creates career instability (Kondratuk et al., 2004).

The model in Figure 2.3 diagrammatically presents and summarises the relationships found in the literature discussed above. It is firstly put forward that the changing nature of work has led to increased mobility and decreased commitment within organisations. Increased mobility may be linked to increased job satisfaction for those individuals who have a preference for career mobility. Organisational commitment has been shown to be related to job satisfaction, and both organisational commitment and job satisfaction have been shown to be strongly related to the retention of employees.

2.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR TALENT RETENTION

There is a plethora of research regarding the role of job satisfaction and organisational commitment in yielding employee turnover (Martin & Roodt, 2007). Job satisfaction and organisational commitment have been shown to be antecedents of turnover (Levy, 2006). Brown (1998) reports that job dissatisfaction is one of the major initiating factors in job transitions. Whilst the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover has received much support (DeConinck & Stilwell, 2004; Hellman, 1997; Martin & Roodt, 2007; Price & Mueller, 1981; Scandura & Lankau, 1997), recent studies have suggested that the relationship between

employee satisfaction and intention to leave is weakening, as highly satisfied employees are increasingly leaving their organisations for new opportunities (Corporate Leadership Council, 1999; Sutherland & Jordaan, 2004). Although the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover or turnover intention will not be measured empirically in this study, insight into the relationship between perceived career mobility opportunities, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment may contribute to an understanding of the relationship of these constructs with turnover. A lack of organisational commitment has been shown to be an important contributor to turnover intention and turnover behaviour (Martin & Roodt, 2007). A relationship has been found between career mobility and job satisfaction, as well as between career mobility and organisational commitment (Kondratuk et al., 2004; Swaen, Kant, Van Amelsvoort & Beurskens, 2002), and it therefore seems necessary to examine whether greater job satisfaction and a high perception of career mobility opportunities are related to lower organisational commitment.

The wealth of support for the significance of organisational commitment and job satisfaction in turnover intention and actual turnover behaviour (DeConinck & Stilwell, 2004; Hellman, 1997; Martin & Roodt, 2007; Price & Mueller, 1981; Scandura & Lankau, 1997) highlights the importance of this relationship for employee retention. Commitment appears to influence behaviour independently of other motives or attitudes, and individuals experiencing commitment might therefore persist in a course of action despite conflicting motives or attitudes (Döckel, 2003).

It is expected that individuals with a preference for intra-organisational career mobility may be more satisfied if they perceive that their organisation provides career mobility opportunities. This expectation is formulated on the basis of a person-environment fit perspective, in terms of which the organisational fulfilment of an individual's needs and values results in job satisfaction. Employee perceptions that the organisation cares for and supports them are related to increased job satisfaction (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armelo & Lynch, 1997) and affective organisational commitment (Allen et al., 2003; Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997). Higher perceived organisational support (which may include perceived mobility opportunities) is related to decreased likelihood in seeking out and accepting alternative employment opportunities (Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-LaMastro, 1990). From the preceding findings it seems that the perception of mobility opportunities by individuals experiencing a preference for career mobility and growth may result in perceived organisational support and, in turn, increased job satisfaction

and organisational commitment. Researchers have found that perceived organisational support, job satisfaction and organisational commitment are negatively related to turnover (Allen et al., 2003).

Organisational commitment and job satisfaction are separate yet complementary concepts (Cohen, 1993). Job satisfaction and organisational commitment have been proven to positively correlate with one another: the greater the job satisfaction and organisational commitment, the lower the predictive turnover intention (Martin & Roodt, 2007). Retention practices aimed at satisfying the said preference may be utilised to decrease the turnover of talent. Likewise, employees who perceive the organisational fulfilment of the aforementioned preference may be more committed.

Research on technological employees has identified that a high demand for employees, due to labour market trends, has led to higher career opportunities and, in turn, greater challenges in retaining these employees (Kochanski & Ledford, 2001). In order to reduce the high costs incurred in employee turnover and to maintain a competitive advantage (Kaplan et al., 2000), informed talent retention practices are required. Informed talent retention practices refer to the development of talent retention strategies based on insight into all phenomena related to employee turnover. From the preceding theoretical integration of the literature, it follows that research on the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, as well as differences between biographical groups with regard to these constructs, may potentially inform talent retention practices. The empirical investigation of the theoretical relationship dynamics between the variables of concern to the present study is outlined in Chapter 3.

2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the literature review of the study at hand. Perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment were conceptualised in this chapter. These constructs were conceptualised by summarising previous views and definitions of the constructs, and the main concepts relevant to these constructs were also identified and explained briefly. The antecedents and consequences of these constructs were identified and the implications for talent retention discussed. Based on an overview of previous literature, a model regarding the relationships between these constructs was suggested. Chapter 3 discusses the empirical findings of the study in the form of a research article.

CHAPTER 3

¹RESEARCH ARTICLE

The relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment

ABSTRACT

Orientation: A skills shortage of financial staff, accountants and auditors has recently been reported. The changing nature of work and organisations has brought with it skills shortages and increased career mobility opportunities. The concern about skills shortages in the financial sector has resulted in an increasing concern about retaining staff.

Research purpose: The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between perceived career mobility (measured by a perceived career mobility scale), career mobility preference (measured by a career mobility preference scale), job satisfaction (measured by the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire) and organisational commitment (measured by the Organisational Commitment Scale).

Motivation for the study: Research on the perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment of various biographical groups is deemed as important in the light of organisational concerns about retaining staff in the current financial environment.

Research design, approach or method: A quantitative survey was conducted on a convenience sample (N = 82) of auditors, accountants and financial staff in the South African financial sector.

Main findings: Correlational and inferential statistical analyses revealed significant relationships between the variables of concern to this study. Significance differences between age, gender, race and tenure groups were also found.

Practical implications in terms of Industrial/Occupational Psychology practices: Practitioners need to recognise how perceived mobility opportunities and preferences influence job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation in the design of talent retention strategies for employees from various biographical groups.

Contribution/value-add: These findings contribute valuable new knowledge to the field of Career Psychology that can be applied in the retention of staff in the financial sector.

Key words: affective commitment; career mobility; continuance commitment; job satisfaction; normative commitment; retention.

¹ Please note: The guidelines provided by the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology have been used as a very broad and general guideline for the framework of the research article.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The following section aims to clarify the focus and background of the study. General trends found in the literature will be highlighted, and the objectives and potential value-added by the study will be identified.

3.1.1 Key focus of the study

The changing nature of work and organisations has brought with it several challenges for talent retention, especially in the financial sector due to skills shortages. Modern-day careers encompass lateral and/or unpredictable movement within flatter organisations. In addition, globalisation and increased competition have brought with them the ability for individuals to move between organisations more easily than before (Lo Presti, 2009). Talent retention is further complicated by the diversity of employees within organisations. Whilst research has identified the role of job satisfaction and organisational commitment in retaining employees, disparity in differing biographical groups' experiences of job satisfaction and organisational commitment have been reported (Döckel, 2003; Martin & Roodt, 2007; Vallabh & Donald, 2001).

However, it is not clear from the research how perceived career mobility and career mobility preference relate to the job satisfaction and organisational commitment of various groups. It appears that, in the multicultural South African work context, it would be beneficial to gain insight into this relationship in order to inform effective talent retention practices.

3.1.2 Background to the study

The provision of lateral moves and developmental opportunities in exchange for longer work hours, added responsibility, broader skills and employee tolerance for change and ambiguity is evident in the new psychological contract between employers and employees (Baruch, 2002; Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007). Aligned with the new psychological contract, the boundaryless and protean career attitudes both focus on the need for individuals to adapt to their work environment and to manage their own careers (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). The new psychological contract emphasises the need for the mutual obligations of both employee and employer in career development (Bal, Jansen, van der Velde, de Lange & Rousseau, 2010).

The preceding section highlights the existence of intra-organisational career mobility opportunities in modern-day careers. In addition to opportunities for intra-organisational career mobility, modern-day careers are also characterised by an inclination toward the physical movement between organisational boundaries. With the occurrence of greater competition in response to globalisation, inter-organisational career mobility has been exacerbated. Research on employees in the technological field has identified that a high demand for employees, due to labour market trends, has led to increased career opportunities and, in turn, greater challenges in retaining these employees (Kochanski & Ledford, 2001). Specific to this study, the financial management, accounting and auditing skills shortage research report, commissioned by the South African Institute for Chartered Accountants (SAICA) (South African Institute for Chartered Accountants, 2008), reveals that an output of 22 030 financial management staff, accountants and auditors needs to be produced by educational institutions in order to fulfil current vacancies for these skilled workers. This report confirmed that organisations experience retention problems, with accounting professionals being the group that organisations struggle the most to retain (Pato & Spira, 2008). Against the preceding background, it appears important to consider perceived career mobility opportunities and preferences when devising talent retention strategies.

Lesabe and Nkosi (2007) propose that employees possess the need to progress and grow, and become frustrated when they perceive their path to progress to be blocked. Kochanski and Ledford (2001) identified that career opportunities yielded more significant predictors of retention than any other type of reward, followed by training opportunities and an employee's relationship with his or her supervisor. Likewise, Mncwango and Winnaar (2009) report that, after job security, South African employees value good advancement opportunities. The fore mentioned views highlight the need for the provision of organisational career mobility opportunities, such as advancement opportunities. The satisfaction of specific career mobility preferences through the provision of career mobility opportunities may assist in embedding employees (Ng et al., 2007), with the aim of talent retention. The provision of career development opportunities by organisations provide the impression that the organisation values the employees (Foong-ming, 2008). Employees respond to the caring and supportive work environment by reciprocating with feelings of attachment.

Employees with low levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment are more likely to experience the intention to leave their respective organisations (Hellman, 1997; Lee & Mowday, 1987; Price & Mueller, 1981; Martin & Roodt, 2007). The relationship between perceived career mobility, job satisfaction and organisational commitment should therefore be uncovered in order to inform talent retention strategies. It should be borne in mind, however, that the modern workforce, and in particular the South African workplace, comprises employees from various biographical groups. For this reason, possible differences between biographical groups' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment must be considered when adopting talent retention strategies.

3.1.3 Trends from the research literature

The following section provides a brief outline of the dominant trends in the research literature on the constructs perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Relevant theories and findings from previous literature will be utilised to explain these constructs.

3.1.3.1 Perceived career mobility

Although career mobility has been studied for several decades, differences in the conceptualisation of this construct have resulted in the lack of a single, commonly used term in the literature. There thus is a need for the construct to be clarified and refined. In this study, career mobility is utilised as an umbrella term encompassing inter- and intra-organisational career mobility. The former refers to an employee leaving the organisation to work for another organisation, whereas the latter refers to an employee changing jobs or occupations within an organisation. Job change refers to changes in an individual's work responsibilities, hierarchical level, or title within an organisation (Feldman & Ng, 2007). Occupational change refers to changes in the specific line of work that an individual engages in, in order to earn a living at a given point in time (Lee, Carswell & Allen, 2000). Occupational change requires certain transferable skills, knowledge and duties differentiating it from other occupations (Feldman & Ng, 2007). More specifically, as opposed to the measurement of actual career mobility, this study focuses on voluntary career mobility and the perception thereof. The perceptions of individuals of the extent to which they currently have the opportunity to move between jobs and organisations is therefore focused upon.

Terms such as alternative job opportunities (March & Simon, 1958), perceived employment alternatives (Baugh, Lankau & Scandura, 1996), external mobility (DiPrete, 1993), opportunities (Price & Mueller, 1981), career opportunities (Döckel, 2003, Kochanski & Ledford, 2001), job hopping (Vallabh & Donald, 2001) and mobility strategies (Murrell, Frieze & Olson, 1996) have been used by various authors when measuring actual and/or perceived career mobility.

Studies of intra-organisational career mobility have included factors such as career expectations, which refer to a respondent's expectations of future advancement in his or her employing organisation (Baugh et al., 1996; Scandura & Schriesheim, 1991), as well as opportunities for career development (Foong-ming, 2008; Murrell et al., 1996), internal promotion opportunities (Foong-ming, 2008, Gaertner & Nollen, 1989), developmental potential (Lin & Huang, 2005) and lateral moves (Murrell et al., 1996). Many studies have included the aforementioned factors in retention studies. In this study, these factors are measured as part of perceived career mobility by identifying to what extent the participants perceived opportunities for these factors within their current work environment.

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of career mobility, Feldman and Ng (2007) highlight the importance of forces embedding individuals in their job, organisation and occupation, despite the perception of other, and possibly better, opportunities elsewhere. Three factors have been identified as important forces toward job embeddedness, namely (a) fit, the extent a person's job meshes with, or complements, other areas of his or her life, (b) links, the extent of an individual's ties with other people and activities at work, and (c) sacrifices, the ease with which links can be broken (i.e. what individuals would have to give up if they left their current position) (Feldman & Ng, 2007; Mitchell et al., 2001a).

Feldman and Ng (2007) identify six perspectives to explain the motivating factors contributing to employee mobility and embeddedness (forces maintaining people in their current organisational situation). The strongest influencing factors include structural factors, which, according to Feldman and Ng (2007), contribute to mobility and embeddedness, as the likelihood of mobility is greater if there are more quality job opportunities. Major influences include macroeconomic conditions, as the greater the growth of an economy the more jobs are available. This may refer to both inter-organisational career mobility as well as intra-organisational career mobility, as existing organisations may expand under flourishing economic conditions. Due to the affirmative

action policies implemented in the South African context, skilled black professionals are in short supply and high demand (Vallabh & Donald, 2001). In addition, organisations experience difficulty in the retention of certain accounting and auditing professionals due to the high demand for these professionals (Pato & Spira, 2008). Due to South African affirmative action and employment equity legislation, certain race and gender groups may perceive greater opportunities for mobility. Various studies have explored the relationship between external career mobility, and more specifically intent to leave, and race (Martin & Roodt, 2007; Vallabh & Donald, 2001). However, the findings are inconsistent. Lumley (2009) found that white employees experienced greater levels of satisfaction for several job facets, including promotional opportunities, which form part of perceived intra-organisational career mobility.

From an occupational perspective, major labour market occupational factors include industry growth, human capital investments, and the rigidity and permeability of occupational mobility structures. The more permeable occupational boundaries are and the greater industry growth, the easier it would be for employees to move between occupations. Moreover, employee perceptions of these reduced boundaries may increase their confidence in their ability to successfully move between occupations (Feldman & Ng, 2007). According to Feldman and Ng (2007), human capital investment is an important influencing factor, as fewer opportunities due to bias and a higher degree of change in occupational responsibilities may result in greater willingness to exit.

Organisational policies and procedures may influence career mobility, as individuals are hesitant to incur the costs involved in leaving. In light of costs such as the loss of pension and insurance benefits, individuals are reluctant to leave an organisation, and these considerations play an important role in the decision to leave an organisation (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

From a work group perspective, intra-organisational mobility, social capital and social support are important factors in embedding employees. In instances in which an individual is demographically different from others at work and external labour is utilised, weak emotional attachment to the organisation and job mobility are found. Task interdependence amongst employees results in reduced inter-organisational career mobility (Feldman & Ng, 2007). The lack of clarity on the effects of virtual work arrangements on mobility and embeddedness is highlighted by Feldman and Ng (2007).

Major personal life factors include the amount and predictability of time demands and support for resolving work-life conflict. Inter-organisational career mobility is higher where the time demands are unpredictable and there is a lack of organisational support for resolving work-life conflict (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

In addition to the preceding factors highlighted by Feldman and Ng (2007), these authors point out that decisions regarding career mobility are dependent on career and life stage considerations. Older employees nearing retirement may perceive less inter-organisational career mobility opportunities for themselves, although greater tenure may lead to higher perceived intra-organisational career mobility. Aligned with the preceding view, Schreuder and Theron (2004) report that some individuals only move into senior positions during late adulthood.

3.1.3.2 Career mobility preference

Voluntary turnover, with a focus on inter-organisational career mobility, has been studied by analysing job hopping by employees (Fallic et al., 2006; Khatri et al., 2001; Vallabh & Donald, 2001). Intra-organisational career mobility has commonly been studied by focusing on the need for advancement opportunities in the understanding of career mobility (Brown, 1998) and retention (Sutherland & Jordaan, 2004). Recently, Briscoe et al. (2006) and Ng et al. (2007) proposed that employees have job mobility preferences. Career mobility preference refers to an individual's preference for inter-organisational career mobility (movement between organisations) and intra-organisational career mobility (changing jobs and occupations within an organisation). Employee values are critical determinants of career mobility preference, specifically confidence in one's ability to initiate career changes (Ng et al., 2007). In addition to values, personality traits, career interests and attachment styles also influence career mobility preferences (Ng et al., 2007).

3.1.3.3 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been studied from different perspectives, including dispositional, situational and person-environment fit perspectives (Van der Walt, 2007). Proponents of the dispositional perspective view job satisfaction as a reflection of a biologically-based trait predisposing individuals to focus on positive or negative aspects of their lives (Staw & Cohen-Charash, 2005; Staw & Ross, 1985). In contrast to their views on the dispositional perspective, advocates for the situational perspective argue that job satisfaction is dependent on situational variables within the work environment. Factors such as challenging work, equitable rewards, working conditions and relationships with co-workers and bosses have been identified as some of the factors in the work environment that are conducive to job satisfaction (Theron, 2009c). The person-environment fit perspective can be understood in view of Dawis and Lofquist's (1993) perspective of job satisfaction as an attitude that is found when there is correspondence between an individual's abilities and the ability requirements of their work. Moreover, the extent to which an individual's needs correspond to the reinforcers in the work environment available in the work environment are important.

In addition to the aforementioned perspectives, authors have focused on (a) the affective versus attitudinal perspectives of job satisfaction, and (b) job satisfaction as a global construct versus complex interrelated facets (Spector, 1997). When defining job satisfaction, Locke (1979) focuses on the positive emotional state experienced by individuals upon evaluating their job or job experiences. Brief (1998) views job satisfaction as a favourable or unfavourable internal state experienced as a result of the affective and/or cognitive evaluation of one's job. The attitudinal perspective has become the predominant one (Spector, 1997).

According to Spector (2000), a global approach treats job satisfaction as a single, overall feeling toward the job, while a facet approach focuses on different aspects of the job, such as rewards, interpersonal interaction and the nature of the job itself. There is a lack of consensus on whether the sum of the job facets are equal to global job satisfaction, or whether global job satisfaction indicates something else. The job satisfaction measurement instrument utilised for this study is based on the conception of global job satisfaction, and this is justified by the fact that facets often correlate well with overall job satisfaction (Spector, 2000).

In this study, job satisfaction is understood according to the framework of Dawis and Lofquist's (1993) person-environment-correspondence theory (PEC). The work environment requires the completion of tasks by the individual (*ability requirements*), and individuals utilise their skills to complete tasks in exchange for compensation and favourable work conditions (*reinforcer factors*) (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). The degree to which environmental and individual requirements are met determines the degree of correspondence. An increase in correspondence increases the probability of tenure, and vice versa. Substantial tenure infers that satisfaction and satisfactoriness exist. Satisfaction is a manifestation of the environment's fulfilment of an individual's requirements, and satisfactoriness is the individual's fulfilment of the environment's requirements (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). According to Dawis (2005), satisfaction and satisfactoriness result from correspondence, which in turn predicts tenure.

Of relevance to this study is the differentiation made by the theory of work adjustment (TWA) between intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction (Weiss et al., 1967):

- *Intrinsic satisfaction*: Occurs as a result of performing work and consequently experiencing feelings of satisfaction.
- *Extrinsic satisfaction*: Is derived from factors relevant to the work environment.

Various variables influencing job satisfaction have been identified in career mobility literature. Differences between various age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups' levels of job satisfaction have been studied for several years, yielding inconsistent findings (Martin & Roodt, 2007). Whilst the results remain inconsistent (Lumley, 2009; Martin & Roodt, 2007; Mncwango & Winnaar, 2009; Vallabh & Donald, 2001), several recent South African studies have found white participants to report greater levels of job satisfaction, although this may be effected by economic status (Mncwango & Winnaar, 2009) and pay and advancement opportunities (Schultz & Schultz, 2010).

Whilst several authors have identified a relationship between tenure and job satisfaction, these findings are inconsistent (Martin, 2007). According to Schultz and Schultz (2010), the relationship between job satisfaction and tenure parallels that of the relationship between job satisfaction and age, while Martin (2007) found no significant difference between tenure and the different groups' job satisfaction.

According to Schultz and Schultz (2010), research has revealed that job satisfaction is positively related to the capacity to utilise one's abilities in the work environment. In addition to utilising one's abilities, job satisfaction may be related to intra-organisational career mobility opportunities. This supports the view that employee perceptions of growth and promotion opportunities are related to job satisfaction (Levy, 2006; Schultz & Schultz, 2010).

Employee relationships with supervisors and co-workers seem to be important antecedents to job satisfaction (Levy, 2006). Feelings of organisational justice can lead to increased job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Mayer et al., 2007; Wiesenfeld et al., 2007). According to Spector (2000), the fairness with which pay is distributed is a greater determinant of satisfaction than pay itself.

Whilst research suggests that satisfied employees are better adjusted, the cause-effect relationship is not clear (Schultz & Schultz, 2010). Individuals who can exercise greater control over their job duties will be more motivated to perform and will experience greater job satisfaction (Schultz & Schultz, 2010).

Job satisfaction has been shown to be higher amongst higher-level incumbents, and this includes certain job categories such as entrepreneurs, technical staff, professionals and people in managerial jobs (Schultz & Schultz, 2010). According to Levy (2006), job satisfaction is affected by the structure of the job and what it provides. More specifically, the more jobs provide autonomy, task identity, task variety, task significance and job feedback, the more satisfied employees are. On the other hand, role ambiguity and role conflict have been shown to be negatively related to job satisfaction (Spector, 2000).

Both extrinsic and intrinsic job dimensions influence job satisfaction. The former includes promotion opportunities (Castro & Martins, 2010), which form part of intra-organisational mobility. From this it can be deduced that, if an individual's need for promotion is not met, for instance, extrinsic job satisfaction may not be experienced. A strong negative relationship has been found between job satisfaction and turnover or turnover intention (Martin, 2007).

3.1.3.4 Organisational commitment

A plethora of research exists on organisational commitment, yet there is little consensus on the conceptualisation of this construct. In this study, organisational commitment refers to an attitude in terms of a stable mindset to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

There are five approaches to conceptualising and measuring organisational commitment. The golden thread in all of these conceptualisations and measurements is that organisational commitment is a bond or linkage to the organisation (Roodt, 2004), and that a particular focus has the potential to fulfil salient needs (Martin & Roodt, 2007). Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) highlight the following commonalities in the definitions of commitment: (a) it is a stabilising and obliging force; and (b) it provides direction to behaviour (e.g. restricts freedom and binds a person to a course of action). The differences involve details concerning the nature or origin of the stabilising force that gives direction to behaviour (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

The normative approach focuses on congruency between employee goals and values and organisational aims, which in turn result in an employee feeling obligated to their organisation (Suliman & Iles, 2000). There are both attitudinal and behavioural approaches to organisational commitment. The attitudinal approach refers to the process by which employees think about their relationship with the organisation, whereas the behavioural approach refers to the process by which employees become locked into an organisation and how they deal with this problem (Mowday et al., 1982; Scholl, 1981).

According to the multi-foci approach, organisational commitment is directed toward different foci, such as the occupation, top management, supervisors, the team, co-workers, the union and customers (Reichers, 1985; Wasti & Can, 2008). Whilst the multi-foci approach focuses on different contingencies within an organisation, the multidimensional approach turns the focus toward the different forms of commitment. Meyer and Allen's (1991) multidimensional conceptualisation of organisational commitment integrates normative, attitudinal and behavioural commitment to form a three-component model of organisational commitment, comprising of a cognitive, affective and conative component. Affective commitment arises from a sense of emotional attachment, continuance commitment is rooted in a sense of economic necessity, and normative commitment occurs out of a sense of moral obligation to remain (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007). Employees experiencing the different components remain with the

organisation for different reasons. Those experiencing affective commitment remain because they desire to do so, those experiencing continuance commitment remain because they need to, and those experiencing normative commitment remain due to a sense of obligation to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). There is critique of the multidimensional approach on the basis of a possible conceptual overlap between the affective and conative components (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Roodt, 2004), the possible unidimensional nature of continuance commitment (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001), and the possible diminished parsimony, clarity and precision due to the multidimensionality of this conceptualisation (Roodt, 2004). From this, Roodt (2004) proposed a motivational unidimensional conceptualisation whereby organisational commitment is operationalised as a cognitive predisposition.

Despite the criticism, support exists for the dimensionality of the three-component model, as studies utilising confirmatory factor analyses have found that these are better explained as separate factors, despite the high correlation that exists between affective and normative commitment (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Meyer and Allen's (1991) conceptualisation is utilised in this study due to the wealth of support for and research on these authors' approach to organisational commitment.

In addition to the lack of consensus regarding the conceptualisation of organisational commitment, authors' views differ regarding the development of organisational commitment and how it affects behaviour (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) propose that affective commitment is developed through any variables, personal or situational, that contribute to the likelihood that an individual will become intrinsically motivated to a course of action, and recognise the value of and/or develop identity from association with an entity or the pursuit of an action. These variables may include supervisor support and recognition (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Wayne et al., 2002); the perception of being treated fairly to enhance an employee's sense of personal importance and competence (Meyer & Allen, 1997); age, whereby older employees, or those with longer tenure, tend to be more committed (Levy, 2006); and gender (Mguqulwa, 2008).

According to Spector (2000), affective commitment occurs as a result of job conditions and met expectations, while continuance commitment occurs as a product of benefits accumulated from working for the organisation and by a lack of alternative jobs. The latter is of particular interest to

this study. Meyer and Allen (1991) propose that continuance commitment may develop as a result of the perception of a lack of alternatives. Whilst this view has received criticism, the implications of this argument are an interesting consideration for this study. It is argued that the relationship between continuance commitment and tenure is stronger than that between tenure and affective commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Findings regarding the relationship between tenure and organisational commitment are inconsistent (Martin & Roodt, 2007; Mguqulwa, 2008). Likewise, as discussed in the preceding section, studies regarding the relationship between gender and organisational commitment have yielded inconsistent results (Martin, 2007).

Meyer and Allen (1997) hypothesise that early socialisation processes may have an impact on employee normative commitment, as there is indirect evidence that suggests that employees with a need to fulfil their obligations to others are more likely to be normatively committed.

3.1.3.5 The relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment

Today's workplace is characterised by constant change, which has an impact on an individual's inter- and intra-organisational career mobility (Kondratuk et al., 2004). Research on employees in the technological sector has identified that a high demand for employees due to labour market trends has led to increased career opportunities and, in turn, greater challenges in retaining these employees (Kochanski & Ledford, 2001). The link between high demand for scarce skills and retention challenges highlights the connection between external career mobility and retention. From this it follows that, in order to retain employees, external career mobility must be considered. In addition to this, internal career mobility must also be taken into account, as it may play an important role in satisfying and hence retaining employees. The retention of satisfied employees may be facilitated through activities aimed at the organisational fulfilment of employee internal career mobility preferences.

An awareness of protean and boundaryless career attitudes, a shift to a more transactional psychological contract (Baruch, 2004), and hence increased mobility, have resulted in the need for employees to take full ownership of their careers through career self-management activities

and continuous learning. In addition, organisations need to offer career development practices, thus supporting career growth and employee satisfaction.

Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009) found a negative correlation between organisational mobility preference and organisational commitment. Kondratuk et al. (2004) propose that the relationship between career mobility and organisational commitment differs for inter- and intra-organisational mobility and is dependent on time (before or after the move). Individuals may have a high mobility history, but may not perceive current mobility opportunities due to situational factors, and therefore it is important to assess an individual's perception of his or her current career mobility opportunities and the relationship of this perception with organisational commitment. In light of the preceding findings, the measurement of preference for career mobility seems to be an important consideration in understanding the relationship between the constructs included in this study. An individual's preference for career mobility may therefore be important in understanding whether they would be more or less committed or satisfied if they perceived that they had few or many career mobility opportunities within the organisation or the labour market.

From the preceding discussion it is clear that greater insight into the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment is required, as an individual with a high intra-organisational career mobility preference may be more satisfied and committed within an organisation that is perceived to offer the opportunity for career development and hence intra-organisational mobility. Not only do career development opportunities by organisations provide the impression that organisations value employees (Foong-ming, 2008), but they may lead to increased self-fulfilment and thus to reduced turnover (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

A plethora of research exists regarding the role of job satisfaction and organisational commitment in yielding employee turnover (DeConinck & Stilwell, 2004; Hellman, 1997; Martin & Roodt, 2007; Price & Mueller, 1981; Scandura & Lankau, 1997). A lack of organisational commitment has been shown to be an important contributor to turnover intention and turnover behaviour (Martin & Roodt, 2007). In addition, a relationship has been found between career mobility and job satisfaction, as well as between career mobility and organisational commitment (Kondratuk et al., 2004; Swaen et al., 2002).

It is expected that individuals with a preference for intra-organisational career mobility may be more satisfied if they perceive that their organisation provides career mobility opportunities. Job satisfaction and organisational commitment have been proven to correlate positively with one another; the greater the job satisfaction and organisational commitment, the lower the predictive turnover intention (Martin & Roodt, 2007).

In order to reduce the high costs incurred through employee turnover and to maintain a competitive advantage (Kaplan et al., 2000), informed talent retention practices are required. Informed talent retention requires insight into all phenomena related to employee turnover. From the preceding theoretical integration of the literature it follows that research on the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, as well as on differences between biographical groups with regard to these constructs, should inform talent retention practices.

In the light of the foregoing, the following hypotheses will be tested empirically.

H1: A statistically significant relationship exists between individuals' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

H2: Groups differing in age, gender, tenure, marital status and race will differ significantly in their levels of perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

3.1.4 Research objectives

The primary objective of this study was to critically explore, analyse and evaluate the nature of the relationship between individuals' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The secondary objective was to determine whether individuals from different age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups differ with regard to their perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

It is vital that organisations consider the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in the design of their

retention strategies. The problem is that, despite the need for better understanding of the relationship between the constructs of relevance to this study, it is not clear from the literature how these variables relate to one another, particularly in the South African organisational context (Martin, 2007; Vallabh & Donald, 2001). Furthermore, there seems to be a paucity of research addressing employees' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment within the financial environment. In addition to this problem, there is little information regarding how different age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups (in South Africa and abroad) differ with regard to their perceived career mobility and career mobility preference, and a lack of consensus exists regarding differences between these groups' job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

3.1.5 The potential value added by the study

The general purpose of this study is to generate new knowledge on the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, with a view to informing retention practices and strategies for employees within the financial environment. In addition, the findings will also allow future studies to further explore the utility of this information in better understanding the role of these factors in retaining employees from different age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups. This study is the starting point for assessing perceived career mobility and career mobility preference in the South African context.

3.1.6 What will follow

To follow is an explanation of the research design utilised for this study. This will include an explanation of the approach and method used. The results will be presented, followed by a discussion of these results by highlighting significant findings and interpreting the findings in light of previous research. Conclusions regarding the study will be discussed, limitations will be identified and recommendations for future research will be made.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The review of the relevant literature presented in Chapter 2 briefly outlined in the preceding introduction constitutes the foundation for the research design and methodology presented in this section. According to Mouton (1997), a research design is a plan of how one intends to conduct research, formulating a research problem as a point of departure and focusing on the end point of the research. The research design bridges the research questions and the implementation of the empirical study (Durrheim, 1999). The aim of the design is to structure the study in such a manner that the eventual validity of the findings is maximised (Mouton & Marais, 1990). The research design will be explained in the following section by making reference to the research approach and method.

3.2.1 Research approach

An survey design was utilised to collect quantitative primary data with the use of self-administered questionnaires in order to achieve the objectives set out in this study (Fouché & De Vos, 2005). Although time consuming and sometimes costly, primary data allows for the collection of data from the original source. A quantitative approach was appropriate for this study, as it aided the accomplishment of the aims of the study in allowing for the conversion of concepts into operational definitions in order to obtain numerical results, which are reported in statistical language (Fouché & Delport, 2005). Moreover, the approach utilised allowed for the conceptualisation of constructs in accordance with specific measuring instruments, and the utilisation of such instruments in the measurement of the constructs in a controlled and systematic manner (Mouton & Marais, 1996). The approach was also chosen as it adds to the reliability of the study, as a quantitative design follows a fixed procedure and can therefore be replicated.

3.2.2 Research method

Neuman (2000) is of the view that it is the research methodology that makes social science a science. The method chosen refers to the specific approach adopted by the researcher. Each approach includes assumptions on and principles of how to conduct research (Neuman, 2000).

The research method used in this study consists of a literature review, in order to conceptualise concepts and to identify theoretical relationships and differences, and an empirical study, in order to operationalise the variables included in the study and to measure theoretical relationships and differences. This section will discuss the research method followed in this study in terms of the research participants, measuring instruments, research procedure and statistical analyses.

3.2.2.1 Research participants

The sample of participants consisted of financial management, accounting and auditing professionals. Due to the skills shortage of individuals in this field, it was believed that the sample should include some individuals who would perceive career mobility opportunities for themselves.

Of a total population of 280 000 professionals in the financial management, accounting and auditing field in South Africa, a non-probability convenience sample of 250 ($N = 250$) participants were invited to participate in the research study. A final sample of 84 participants ($N = 84$) was obtained, of which 82 ($N = 82$) completed questionnaires were useable, thus yielding a response rate of 33%.

As shown in Table 3.1, the final sample ($N = 84$) comprised of individuals mostly aged between 17 and 29 years (66%), individuals between 30 and 39 years (21%), and very few individuals older than 40 (13%). Due to the small number of participants over the age of 30 years, this group was clustered as one group during the analysis phase.

The sample was represented by 43% males and 57% females, indicating that the sample was fairly evenly split between gender groups. Seventy-nine percent of the sample had only worked for their employing organisation for five years or less. An additional 17% had worked for six to ten years, while only 3% had worked for longer. The majority of the participants were single (57%), 34% were married and 9% were divorced. The majority of the sample was white (70%), with few black (18%), coloured (6%) and Indian (6%) participants. Most of the participants were highly qualified, with a degree or higher (87%). High qualification levels generally are expected due to the nature of the work conducted by the participating sample.

Table 3.1

Biographical distribution of sample

Variable		N	Percentage of sample
Age	Career/life stage		
17-29	Early career life stage	54	66%
30-39		17	21%
40-59	Middle career life stage	11	13%
Gender			
Male		35	43%
Female		47	57%
Tenure			
Less than 5 years		65	79%
6 to 10 years		14	17%
11 to 15 years		2	2%
More than 15 years		1	1%
Marital status			
Single		47	57%
Married		28	34%
Divorced		7	9%
Race			
White		57	70%
Black		15	18%
Coloured		5	6%
Indian		5	6%
<i>Total</i>		<i>N = 82</i>	<i>100%</i>

3.2.2.2 Measuring instruments

In this study, the internal consistency of the instruments was measured utilising Cronbach's alphas reliability coefficients. The decision regarding which instruments to include in this study was guided by the theory regarding the constructs studied in the literature review. In addition,

the psychometric properties of the instruments, as identified by previous South African studies, were taken into consideration.

Four questionnaires were used to measure the relationship between the variables of concern in this study. These include a perceived career mobility scale based on Feldman and Ng's (2007) theory of mobility and embeddedness, and a career mobility preference scale based on selected items from Briscoe et al. (2006) boundaryless career attitudes scale and Feldman and Ng's (2007) theory on mobility and embeddedness. Job satisfaction was measured using the shortened version of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ20) (Weiss et al., 1967). Organisational commitment was measured using the Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS) (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

The *perceived career mobility scale* consists of 15 items divided into two scales: perceived inter-organisational career mobility opportunities (four items) and perceived intra-organisational career mobility opportunities (nine items). Questions are answered on a five-point rating scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The higher the aggregate of responses, the greater the perceived career mobility. An example of a question from the perceived inter-organisational career mobility opportunities scale is "There are many good jobs available for me in my organisation". The perceived intra- and inter-organisational career mobility scales each include a question (two items) to which respondents indicate whether or not they perceive inter- and intra-organisational career mobility opportunities for themselves, and the reasons are indicated on a list. Examples of reasons include "Due to high demand for employees within my field of work" and "Due to macro economic conditions". In terms of the present study, acceptable internal consistency reliabilities were yielded for the two sub-scales: perceived inter-organisational career mobility (0.85) and perceived intra-organisational career mobility (0.64).

The *career mobility preference scale* is a 10-item scale that includes two sub-scales measuring intra-organisational career mobility preference (five items) and inter-organisational career mobility preference (five items). Items are reverse scored on a five-point scale. Examples of items include, "In my ideal career, I would work for only one organisation" and "If I could stay in my current job for the rest of my career, I would not desire to change jobs". Briscoe et al. (2006) reported acceptable reliability levels (0.74). In the present study, the following internal

consistency reliability coefficients were yielded: intra-organisational career mobility preference sub-scale (0.85) and inter-organisational career mobility preference sub-scale (0.82).

The *Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (short form) (MSQ20)* consists of 20 items and three sub-scales: intrinsic satisfaction (12 items), extrinsic satisfaction (six items), and general satisfaction (20 items). An example of an intrinsic satisfaction question is, "On my present job this is how I feel about being able to keep busy all the time." An example of an extrinsic question is, "On my present job this is how I feel about the way my boss handles his/her workers." Satisfaction is measured on a five-point scale, ranging from very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (5). A higher score is indicative of higher levels of satisfaction experienced by the individual. Weiss et al. (1967) report a median internal consistency coefficient of 0.90 for the MSQ20. Several South African studies have yielded acceptable levels of reliability and validity (i.e. 0.88 and above) for the MSQ20 (Boshoff & Hoole, 1998; Buitendach & Rothmann, 2009; Martin & Roodt, 2007; Sempene, Rieger & Roodt, 2002). Internal consistency reliabilities of 0.90 (general job satisfaction), 0.84 (intrinsic job satisfaction) and 0.93 (extrinsic job satisfaction) were yielded in the present study. A South African study by Buitendach and Rothmann (2009) reported that exploratory factor analyses of the MSQ20 confirmed construct equivalence for the black and white race groups.

The *Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS)* is an 18-item scale that was used to measure organisational commitment in terms of the three dimensions set out by Meyer et al.'s (1993) three-component model of organisational commitment. The OCS measures total commitment and comprises three sub-scales: affective commitment (six items), continuance commitment (six items) and normative commitment (six items). According to Meyer and Allen (1997), the affective commitment scale measures the extent to which an individual is emotionally attached to, identifies with and is involved in the organisation. The continuance commitment scale measures the extent to which an individual perceives costs involved in leaving the organisation. The normative commitment scale measures the extent to which an individual feels obliged to stay with his or her current organisation. Certain reverse scoring items have been included. The scales are scored on a five-point Likert scale, with a higher score indicating greater commitment. Döckel (2003) reported acceptable internal consistency reliability estimates (Cronbach's alphas) for affective commitment (0.82), continuance commitment (0.74) and normative commitment (0.83). Another South African study, by Lumley (2009), reported reliability estimates from 0.82 to

0.68. Acceptable internal consistency reliabilities of 0.86 (total commitment), 0.74 (affective commitment), 0.86 (continuance commitment) and 0.89 (normative commitment) were yielded in this study.

In line with directives provided by Nunnally (1978) for measuring broad-based trends, the psychometric properties of the instruments were deemed acceptable for the purpose of this research.

3.2.2.3 Research procedure

Participants were approached directly and requested to participate. This was done with the use of South African Institute for Chartered Accountants' (SAICA) list of contact information for all members, which is available for use by the public. Only auditors employed by an organisation were included. In addition, the management of five South African organisations were informed regarding this study, the management of these organisations then informed relevant employees of the study. Participation was voluntary. This procedure ensured that the employees participated from their own free will. However, this procedure yielded a low response rate (34%).

Comprehensive instructions and details regarding confidentiality and the purpose of the questionnaires were provided to all the participants. In terms of ethics, clearance to conduct the research was obtained from the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology at the University of South Africa, and from the participating organisations. SAICA was informed of the use of the list of members for this study. Confidentiality and privacy were explained, as well as the purpose of the study and the feedback to be received. Written informed consent was obtained as the participants completed an informed consent form, and it was indicated to the participants that the completion and return of the questionnaire and consent form signified that they granted permission for their questionnaire to be utilised for research purposes. The participants were informed that they could voluntarily remove themselves from the study at any stage. The researcher was available for any questions and concerns. The confidentiality of the participants was maintained. Completed questionnaires were kept secure. Participants desiring feedback provided their contact information and received feedback on the results of the study.

Due to the possible sensitive nature of the study (as participants reported on their attitudes and feelings toward their organisations), the data collection method utilised seemed appropriate, as

the participants could complete the questionnaire anonymously. It was assumed that this could assist in obtaining honest answers from the participants, as they did not have to include their name and contact details if they so wished, although informed consent had to be provided in order to complete the questionnaire.

3.2.2.4 Statistical analyses

SPSS (version 17) (2008) was utilised to analyse the quantitative data of the empirical study by performing the statistical data analyses. Prior to beginning the analyses, the raw data was cleaned by means of double-checking a random sample of 30% of the data. The capturing and ranges of all codes were checked. No errors were found. Assumptions for normality were analysed. Based on the tests for normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests), which was interpreted at a $p > 0.01$ significance level, it was decided to continue with parametric statistics (Fields, 2005).

In terms of internal consistency, reliability estimates of the various instruments utilised were calculated with the use of Cronbach's coefficient alphas (Finchilescu, 2002). Descriptive statistics consisted of calculating the means in order to identify the central tendency of the scores, and the standard deviations were then calculated in order to identify the dispersion of scores (Terre Blanche, 2002).

Pearson product-moment correlations were determined to assess the direction and strength of the relationship between the variables. In order to counter the probability of a type I error, it was decided to set the significance value at a 95% confidence interval level ($p \leq 0.05$). For the purposes of this study, r values larger than 0.30 (medium effect) (Cohen, 1992) were regarded as practically significant.

The relationship between the four variables was further analysed by performing multiple regression analyses in order to investigate the proportion of variance in the dependent variable (organisational commitment) that is explained by the independent variables (perceived career mobility, career mobility preference and job satisfaction) (Lachenicht, 2002). Since a number of independent variables had to be considered, the value of the adjusted R^2 was used to interpret the results. R^2 values larger than 0.13 (medium effect) (Cohen, 1992) were regarded as practically significant.

T-tests and ANOVAs were performed to test for significant mean differences between the various biographical groups regarding the variables. T-tests were utilised to assess significant differences between the means of the age, gender, tenure and race groups' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment scores. ANOVAs were utilised to assess significant differences between the means of marital status groups' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment scores. Assumptions of homogeneity were tested for with the use of Levene's test for equality of variances (Fields, 2005). All tests satisfied the assumption, with the exception of differences between race groups' perceived inter-organisational career mobility, and for this reason the t-test for unequal means was utilised to interpret differences between the race groups for this variable.

3.3 RESULTS

The following section focuses on the results of the study.

3.3.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 3.2 summarises the descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the subscales of the measuring instruments. The perceived inter- and intra-organisational career mobility, as well as the inter-organisational career mobility preference scales, yield acceptable internal reliability levels ranging between 0.82 and 0.86. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the intra-organisational mobility preference scale falls just below Huyseman's (1996) suggested level of 0.65. Although the score for the intra-organisational career mobility preference scale falls just short of the 0.65 Cronbach's alpha value suggested by Huyseman (1996), it is regarded as being acceptable for research purposes (Nunnally, 1978). The internal reliability consistency is high for the job satisfaction questionnaire, yielding Cronbach's alpha values above 0.83 for the instrument as a whole, as well as for the individual job satisfaction dimensions. The total organisational commitment scale and the dimensions of this scale show high reliability (0.74 and above).

Table 3.2

Descriptive statistics: means, standard deviations and Cronbach's alpha coefficients (N = 82)

	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD	Cronbach's alpha coefficients
Total perceived career mobility	1.55	4.45	2.89	0.65	0.83
Perceived inter-organisational career mobility	1.00	5.00	3.24	0.88	0.85
Perceived intra-organisational career mobility	1.50	5.00	3.16	0.80	0.64
Total career mobility preference	1.22	5.00	2.75	0.79	0.86
Intra-organisational career mobility preference	1.00	5.00	2.86	0.83	0.85
Inter-organisational career mobility preference	1.00	5.00	2.67	0.89	0.82
General job satisfaction	1.30	4.95	3.66	0.69	0.90
Intrinsic job satisfaction	1.00	4.92	3.79	0.69	0.84
Extrinsic job satisfaction	1.67	5.00	3.35	0.85	0.93
Total commitment	1.28	4.78	3.06	0.71	0.86
Affective commitment	1.00	5.00	3.18	0.94	0.74
Continuance commitment	1.33	4.67	2.98	0.81	0.86
Normative commitment	1.00	5.00	3.01	0.91	0.89

3.3.1.1 Descriptive statistics: perceived career mobility

As summarised in Table 3.2, the mean scores for total perceived career mobility and total career mobility preference are just below the midway mark, at $M = 2.89$ and $M = 2.75$ respectively. The highest perceived career mobility dimension is perceived inter-organisational career mobility, at $M = 3.24$. Intra- and inter-organisational mobility preference are $M = 2.86$ and $M = 2.67$ respectively. The variability of the sub-scales ranges between $SD = 0.89$ and $SD = 0.80$, with inter-organisational mobility preference yielding the highest variability ($SD = 0.89$), and perceived intra-organisational mobility yielding the lowest variability ($SD = 0.80$).

In terms of the reasons reported for perceived career mobility, the majority (70%) of the sample indicated that they could easily find a job in another organisation. The majority of the aforementioned 70% indicated that the primary reasons for this perception included factors such as their knowledge and skills, and the high demand for employees in their field. Fewer employees indicated employment equity policies and macroeconomic conditions as reasons. Only 2% of the 70% indicated that other reasons existed for this perception.

Few participants (30%) indicated that they could not easily find a job in another organisation, and most of these participants indicated that this was due to employment equity policies and macroeconomic conditions. Twenty-eight percent indicated that it was due to a low demand for employees within their field of work, 12% indicated that it was due to a lack of knowledge and skills, and 24% indicated that it was due to other reasons.

The majority (79%) of the participants indicated that they perceived career development to be important to the organisation. Of these participants, the majority indicated that this was because training opportunities were provided by the organisation (85%), due to high demand (75%) and because of the availability of promotion opportunities (72%). Approximately half (57%) indicated that it was because job vacancies were filled internally, 46% said it was due to macroeconomic conditions, and 34% indicated employment equity policies. Only 5% indicated that it was due to other factors.

The majority of the participants who perceived that career development was not important to the organisation, indicated that this was due to a lack of promotion opportunities provided by the

organisation (83%). Half (50%) indicated that it was due to a lack of training opportunities, 39% indicated that it was due to macroeconomic conditions, 33% indicated low demand and 28% indicated that it was because job vacancies were filled externally. Only 6% indicated that it was due to other factors.

3.3.1.2 Descriptive statistics: job satisfaction

As summarised in Table 3.2, the ranges of the participants' mean scores for job satisfaction were analysed. The mean score yielded for general job satisfaction was $M = 3.66$. When compared, the range for intrinsic job satisfaction revealed a higher mean score than extrinsic satisfaction ($M = 3.79$ vs. $M = 3.35$). The variance of the sample, as indicated by the standard deviation, ranges between $SD = 0.69$ and $SD = 0.85$, with higher variability on the extrinsic job satisfaction scale.

3.3.1.3 Descriptive statistics: organisational commitment

As summarised in Table 3.2, the average score for organisational commitment was $M = 3.06$. The highest commitment dimension was affective commitment at $M = 3.18$. Both continuance and normative commitment were lower, at $M = 2.98$ and $M = 3.01$ respectively. The variability on the total scale was $SD = 0.71$ and the sub-scales ranged between $SD = 0.94$ and $SD = 0.81$. The standard deviations of the affective and normative commitment scales were slightly higher than that of the continuance commitment scale, at $SD = 0.94$ and $SD = 0.91$ compared to $SD = 0.81$.

3.3.2 Correlational statistics

As indicated in Table 3.3, no significant relationships were found between the perceived career mobility and career mobility preference subscales.

Table 3.3

Correlation analysis between perceived career mobility and career mobility preference

		Total career mobility preference	Inter-organisational mobility preference	Intra-organisational mobility preference
Total perceived career mobility	Pearson correlation	0.13	0.13	0.11
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.23	0.25	0.31
	<i>N</i>	82	82	82
Perceived inter-organisational career mobility	Pearson correlation	-0.05	-0.03	-0.06
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.68	0.80	0.58
	<i>N</i>	82	82	82
Perceived intra-organisational career mobility	Pearson correlation	0.16	0.15	0.14

Table 3.4 shows that, with the exception of perceived inter-organisational career mobility and intrinsic job satisfaction, the job satisfaction variables correlated significantly and positively with the perceived career mobility and career mobility preference variables.

The correlations vary from $r = 0.22$ (small practical effect size) to $r = 0.57$ (large practical effect size). The strongest significant correlations ($r \geq 0.50$, large practical effect size) were observed between total perceived career mobility and extrinsic job satisfaction ($r = 0.57$), and between perceived intra-organisational career mobility and extrinsic job satisfaction ($r = 0.57$).

Table 3.4

Correlation analysis between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference and job satisfaction

		Total perceived career mobility	Perceived inter- organisatio nal career mobility	Perceived intra-organ- isational career mobility	Total career mobility preference	Inter- organ- isational mobility preference	Intra- organ- isational mobility preference
General job satisfaction	Pearson correlation	0.49++	0.24+	0.44++	0.32++	0.31++	0.26+
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.03*	0.000***	0.004**	0.004**	0.02*
	<i>N</i>	82	82	82	82	82	82
Intrinsic	Pearson correlation	0.32++	0.20	0.30++	0.33++	0.33++	0.27+
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003**	0.07	0.01**	0.002**	0.002**	0.01**
	<i>N</i>	82	82	82	82	82	82
Extrinsic	Pearson correlation	0.57+++	0.25+	0.57+++	0.28+	0.29+	0.22+
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.02*	0.01**	0.01**	0.000***	0.05*
	<i>N</i>	82	82	82	82	82	82

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$ (two-tailed)

+++ $r \geq 0.50$ (large practical effect size) ++ $r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$ (medium practical effect size)

+ $r \leq 0.29$ (small practical effect size).

Strong significant correlations of medium practical effect size ($r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$) were observed between total perceived career mobility and general job satisfaction ($r = 0.49$), perceived intra-organisational career mobility and general job satisfaction ($r = 0.44$), inter-organisational career mobility preference and intrinsic job satisfaction ($r = 0.33$), total career mobility preference and intrinsic job satisfaction ($r = 0.33$), total perceived career mobility and intrinsic job satisfaction

($r = 0.32$), total career mobility preference and general job satisfaction ($r = 0.32$), inter-organisational career mobility preference and general job satisfaction ($r = 0.31$), and perceived intra-organisational career mobility and intrinsic job satisfaction ($r = 0.30$).

Weak significant correlations of small practical effect size ($r \leq 0.29$) were observed between inter-organisational career mobility preference and extrinsic job satisfaction ($r = 0.29$), total career mobility preference and extrinsic job satisfaction ($r = 0.28$), intra-organisational career mobility preference and intrinsic job satisfaction ($r = 0.27$), intra-organisational career mobility preference and general job satisfaction ($r = 0.26$), perceived inter-organisational career mobility and extrinsic job satisfaction ($r = 0.25$), perceived inter-organisational career mobility and general job satisfaction ($r = 0.24$), and intra-organisational career mobility preference and extrinsic job satisfaction ($r = 0.22$).

Table 3.5 shows that, with the exception of total perceived career mobility and continuance commitment, perceived inter-organisational career mobility and total, affective and normative commitment and perceived intra-organisational career mobility and continuance commitment, the organisational commitment variables correlated significantly with the perceived career mobility and career mobility preference variables. Significant correlations between perceived career mobility and career mobility preference and organisational commitment variables were all positive, with the exception of the relationship between perceived inter-organisational career mobility and continuance commitment.

The correlations vary from $r = -0.28$ (small practical effect size) to $r = 0.60$ (large practical effect size). The strongest significant correlations ($r \geq 0.50$, large practical effect size) are observed between inter-organisational career mobility preference and total organisational commitment ($r = 0.60$), total career mobility preference and total organisational commitment ($r = 0.59$), inter-organisational career mobility preference and normative ($r = 0.52$) and continuance organisational commitment ($r = 0.51$), and total career mobility preference and normative commitment ($r = 0.50$).

Table 3.5

Correlation analysis between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference and organisational commitment

		Total perceived career mobility	Perceived inter- organisational career mobility	Perceived intra- organisational career mobility	Total career mobility preference	Inter-organisational mobility preference	Intra-organisational mobility preference
Total commitment	Pearson correlation	0.38++	-0.02	0.43++	0.59+++	0.60+++	0.46++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.83	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
	<i>N</i>	82	82	82	82	82	82
Affective	Pearson correlation	0.48++	0.21	0.48++	0.45++	0.42++	0.41++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.06	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
	<i>N</i>	82	82	82	82	82	82

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$ (two-tailed)

+++ $r \geq 0.50$ (large practical effect size) ++ $r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$ (medium practical effect size)

+ $r \leq 0.29$ (small practical effect size)

		Total perceived career mobility	Perceived inter- organisational career mobility	Perceived intra- organisational career mobility	Total career mobility preference	Inter-organisational mobility preference	Intra-organisational mobility preference
Continuance	Pearson correlation	0.03	-0.28+	0.11	0.47++	0.51+++	0.32++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.77	0.01**	0.31	0.000**	0.000***	0.004**
	N	82	82	82	82	82	82
Normative	Pearson correlation	0.36++	-0.03	0.41++	0.50+++	0.52+++	0.39++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001***	0.81	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
	N	82	82	82	82	82	82

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$ (two-tailed)

+++ $r \geq 0.50$ (large practical effect size) ++ $r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$ (medium practical effect size)

+ $r \leq 0.29$ (small practical effect size).

Strong significant correlations of medium practical effect size ($r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$) were observed between perceived intra-organisational career mobility and affective commitment ($r = 0.48$), total perceived career mobility and affective commitment ($r = 0.48$), total career mobility preference and continuance commitment ($r = 0.47$), intra-organisational career mobility preference and total commitment ($r = 0.46$), total career mobility preference and affective commitment ($r = 0.45$), perceived intra-organisational career mobility and total commitment ($r = 0.43$), inter-organisational career mobility preference and affective commitment ($r = 0.42$), intra-organisational career mobility preference and affective commitment ($r = 0.41$), perceived intra-organisational career mobility and normative commitment ($r = 0.41$), intra-organisational career mobility preference and normative commitment ($r = 0.39$), total perceived career mobility and total ($r = 0.38$) and normative commitment ($r = 0.36$), and intra-organisational career mobility preference and continuance commitment ($r = 0.32$).

A weak and negative significant correlation of small practical effect size ($r \leq 0.29$) was observed between perceived inter-organisational career mobility and continuance commitment ($r = -0.28$).

Table 3.6 shows that, with the exception of continuance commitment and the job satisfaction dimensions, organisational commitment variables correlated significantly and positively with the organisational commitment variables.

The correlations vary from $r = 0.44$ (medium practical effect size) to $r = 0.62$ (large practical effect size). The strongest significant correlations ($r \geq 0.50$, large practical effect size) were observed between affective commitment and general ($r = 0.62$), intrinsic ($r = 0.58$), and extrinsic job satisfaction ($r = 0.58$), normative commitment and extrinsic job satisfaction ($r = 0.53$), total commitment and extrinsic job satisfaction ($r = 0.53$), total commitment and general job satisfaction ($r = 0.51$), and normative commitment and general job satisfaction ($r = 0.50$).

Strong significant correlations of medium practical effect size ($r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$) were observed between total commitment and intrinsic job satisfaction ($r = 0.48$) and normative commitment and intrinsic job satisfaction ($r = 0.44$).

Table 3.6

Correlation analysis between job satisfaction and organisational commitment

		Total commitment	Affective	Continuance	Normative
General job satisfaction	Pearson correlation	0.51+++	0.62+++	0.09	0.50+++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	0.40	0.000***
	N	82	82	82	82
Intrinsic job satisfaction	Pearson correlation	0.48++	0.58+++	0.09	0.44++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	0.40	0.000***
	N	82	82	82	82
Extrinsic job satisfaction	Pearson correlation	0.53+++	0.58+++	0.13	0.53+++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	0.26	0.000***
	N	82	82	82	82

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$ (two-tailed)

+++ $r \geq 0.50$ (large practical effect size) ++ $r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$ (medium practical effect size)

+ $r \leq 0.29$ (small practical effect size).

3.3.3 Inferential statistics: multiple regression

Table 3.7 indicates that the regression models explained large ($R^2 \geq 0.26$) practical effect percentages of variance in the dependent variable (Cohen, 1992).

A percentage of the large practical effect ($R^2 = 50\%$) of the variance in total organisational commitment is explained by the regression model. Inter-organisational career mobility preference ($\beta = 0.49$; $p = 0.000$), extrinsic job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.27$; $p = 0.000$) and perceived intra-organisational mobility ($\beta = 0.20$; $p = 0.000$) contributed significantly to the variance in total organisational commitment. The beta-weights indicate that inter-organisational career mobility preference contributes the most in explaining the total commitment variable.

A percentage of the large practical effect ($R^2 = 47\%$) of the variance in affective organisational commitment is explained by the regression model. Intrinsic job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.42$; $p = 0.000$), perceived intra-organisational career mobility ($\beta = 0.31$; $p = 0.000$) and intra-organisational mobility preference ($\beta = 0.25$; $p = 0.000$) contributed significantly to the variance in affective organisational commitment. The beta-weights indicate that intrinsic job satisfaction contributes the most in explaining the affective commitment variable.

A percentage of the large practical effect ($R^2 = 31\%$) of the variance in continuance organisational commitment is explained by the regression model. Inter-organisational mobility preference ($\beta = 0.50$; $p = 0.000$) and perceived inter-organisational mobility preference ($\beta = -0.26$; $p = 0.000$) contribute significantly to the variance in continuance organisational commitment. The beta-weights indicate that inter-organisational career mobility preference contributes the most in explaining the continuance commitment variable. The results also show that high scores on the perceived inter-organisational career mobility variable were significantly related to lower scores on the continuance commitment variable.

A percentage of the large practical effect ($R^2 = 41\%$) of the variance in normative organisational commitment is explained by the regression model. Extrinsic job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.42$; $p = 0.000$) and inter-organisational mobility preference ($\beta = 0.39$; $p = 0.000$) contribute significantly to the variance in normative organisational commitment. The beta-weights indicate that extrinsic job satisfaction contributes the most in explaining the normative commitment variable.

Table 3.7

Regression model summary with organisational commitment as dependent variable and perceived career mobility, career mobility preference and job satisfaction dimensions as independent variables

Model	Variable	Unstandardised coefficient		Standardised coefficient	t	P	F	Adjusted R ²	R
		B	Std. Error	Beta (β)					
Total	(Constant)	0.70	0.28		2.51	0.000	27.72	0.50+++ ***	0.72 ***
	Inter-organisational career mobility preference	0.39	0.07	0.49	5.91	0.000			
	Extrinsic job satisfaction	0.23	0.08	0.27	2.74	0.000			
Affective	Perceived intra-organisational career mobility	0.18	0.09	0.20	2.06	0.000			
	(Constant)	-0.94	0.48		-1.96	0.000	25.34	0.47+++ ***	0.70 ***
	Intrinsic job satisfaction	0.57	0.12	0.42	4.82	0.000			
	Perceived intra-organisational career mobility	0.37	0.10	0.31	3.69	0.000			
	Intra-organisational mobility preference	0.28	0.10	0.25	2.96	0.000			

Model	Variable	Unstandardised coefficient		Standardised coefficient	t	P	F	Adjusted R ²	R
		B	Std. Error	Beta (β)					
		Continuance	(Constant)	2.55					
	Inter-organisational mobility preference	0.45	0.08	0.50	5.47	0.000	19.51	0.31+++ ***	0.58 ***
	Perceived inter-organisational career mobility	-0.24	0.08	-0.26	-2.86	0.000			
Normative	(Constant)	0.45	0.35		1.31	0.000			
	Extrinsic job satisfaction	0.45	0.10	0.42	4.70	0.000	29.28	0.41+++ ***	0.65 ***
	Inter-organisational mobility preference	0.40	0.09	0.39	4.42	0.000			

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$

+ $R^2 \leq 0.12$ (small practical effect size) ; ++ $R^2 \geq 0.13 \leq 0.25$ (medium practical effect size); +++ $R^2 \geq 0.26$ (large practical effect size)

3.3.4 Integration: relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment

As depicted in Figures 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3, the results indicated a significant relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. A strong positive relationship is represented in Figures 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 with a green line, a medium positive relationship in orange, a weak positive relationship in purple and a weak negative relationship in red.

As indicated in Figure 3.1, significant positive correlations were yielded between all perceived career mobility and career mobility preference and job satisfaction dimensions, with the exception of perceived inter-organisational career mobility and intrinsic job satisfaction. Strong positive correlations were found between total perceived career mobility and perceived intra-organisational career mobility and extrinsic job satisfaction. Moderate positive correlations were found between general job satisfaction and total perceived career mobility, perceived intra-organisational career mobility, total career mobility preference and inter-organisational mobility preference. Intrinsic job satisfaction was found to correlate moderately and positively with total perceived career mobility, perceived intra-organisational career mobility, total career mobility preference and inter-organisational career mobility preference. In addition, extrinsic job satisfaction was also found to weakly and positively correlate with perceived inter-organisational career mobility and total, inter-organisational and intra-organisational career mobility preference.

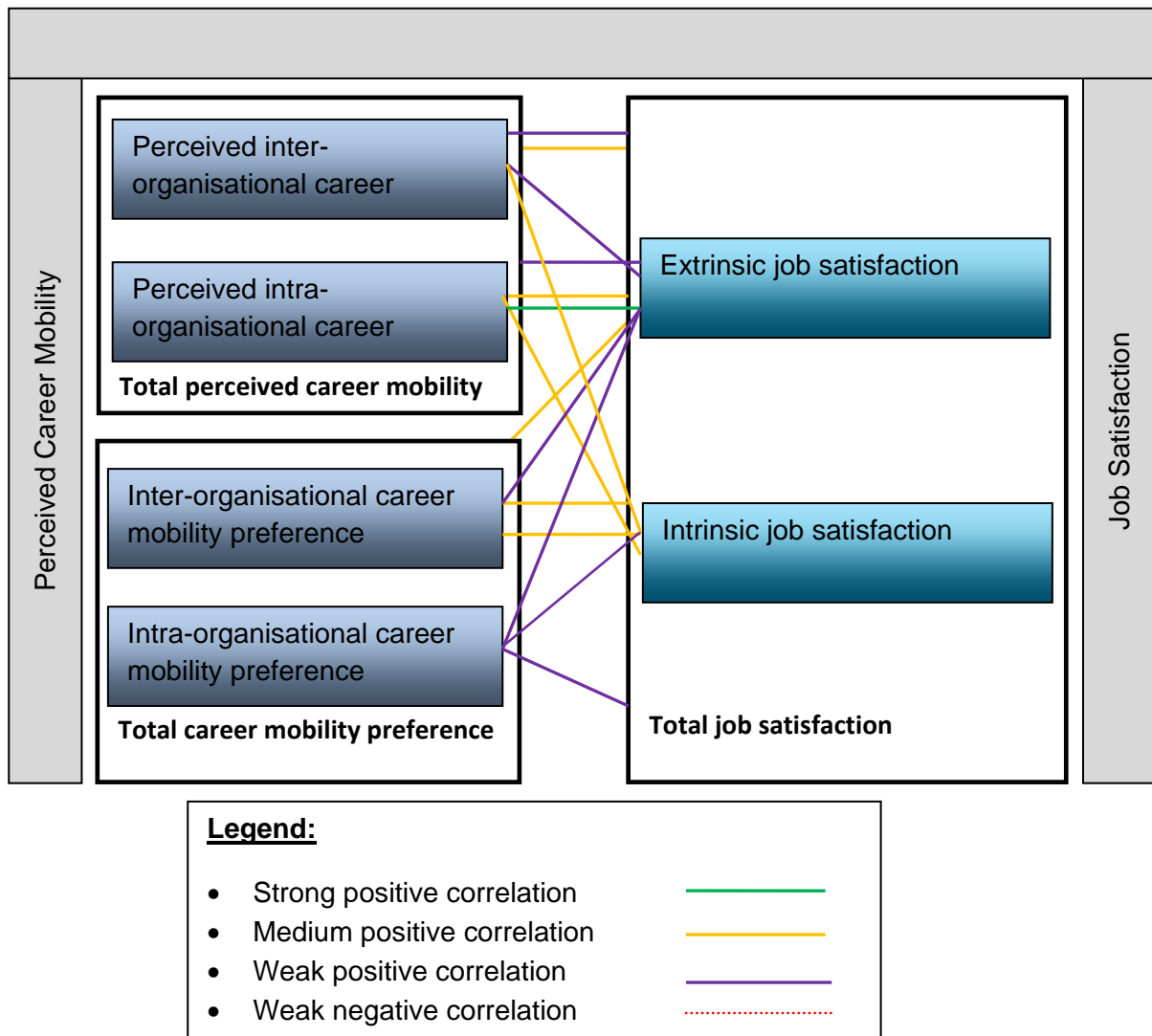
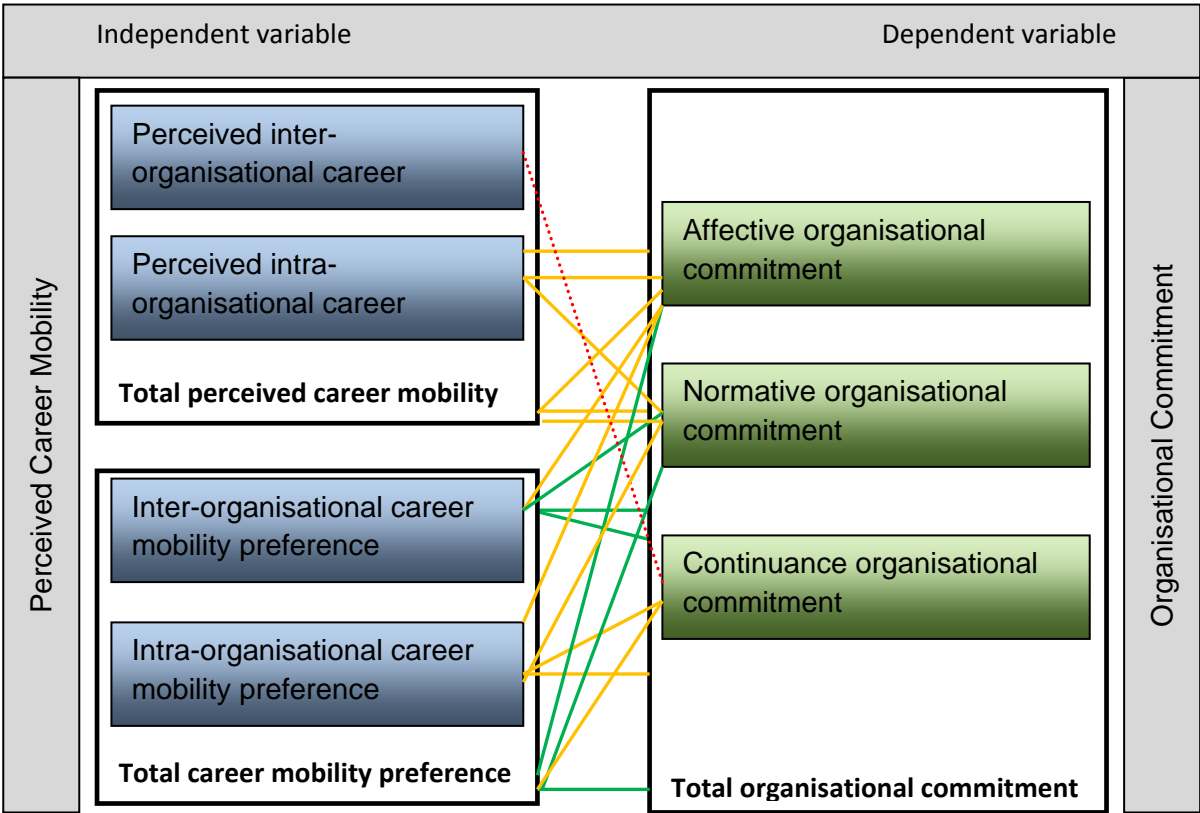


Figure 3.1. Relationship between perceived career mobility and career mobility preference, and job satisfaction.

As indicated in Figure 3.2, significant correlations were yielded between all perceived career mobility and career mobility preference and organisational commitment dimensions, with the exception of total perceived career mobility and continuance commitment, perceived inter-organisational career mobility and total and affective organisational commitment, and perceived intra-organisational career mobility and continuance commitment. With regard to the organisational commitment dimensions, total organisational commitment was found to correlate strongly with total and inter-organisational career mobility preference. Strong positive correlations were yielded between normative commitment and total and inter-organisational career mobility preference. Continuance commitment was found to correlate strongly and positively with inter-organisational mobility preference. Moderate positive correlations were yielded between total organisational commitment and total and perceived

intra-organisation career mobility, and intra-organisational career mobility preference. Moderate and positive correlations were yielded between affective commitment and total and perceived intra-organisational career mobility, and affective commitment and total, inter- and intra-organisational career mobility preference. Continuance commitment was found to correlate moderately and positively with total and intra-organisational career mobility preference. Moderate positive correlations were yielded between normative commitment and total and perceived intra-organisational career mobility and normative commitment and intra-organisational career mobility preference. Continuance commitment was found to correlate weakly and negatively with perceived inter-organisational career mobility.



- Legend:**
- Strong positive correlation —————
 - Medium positive correlation —————
 - Weak positive correlation —————
 - Weak negative correlation

Figure 3.2. Relationship between perceived career mobility and career mobility preference, and job satisfaction.

As indicated in Figure 3.3, significant positive correlations were yielded between all job satisfaction and organisational commitment dimensions, with the exception of continuance commitment. The statistical findings indicate that a strong positive relationship exists between general job satisfaction and total, affective and normative organisational commitment. Intrinsic job satisfaction was found to correlate strongly with affective commitment. Extrinsic job satisfaction was found to correlate strongly with total, affective and normative commitment. Moderate correlations were yielded between intrinsic job satisfaction and total and normative commitment.

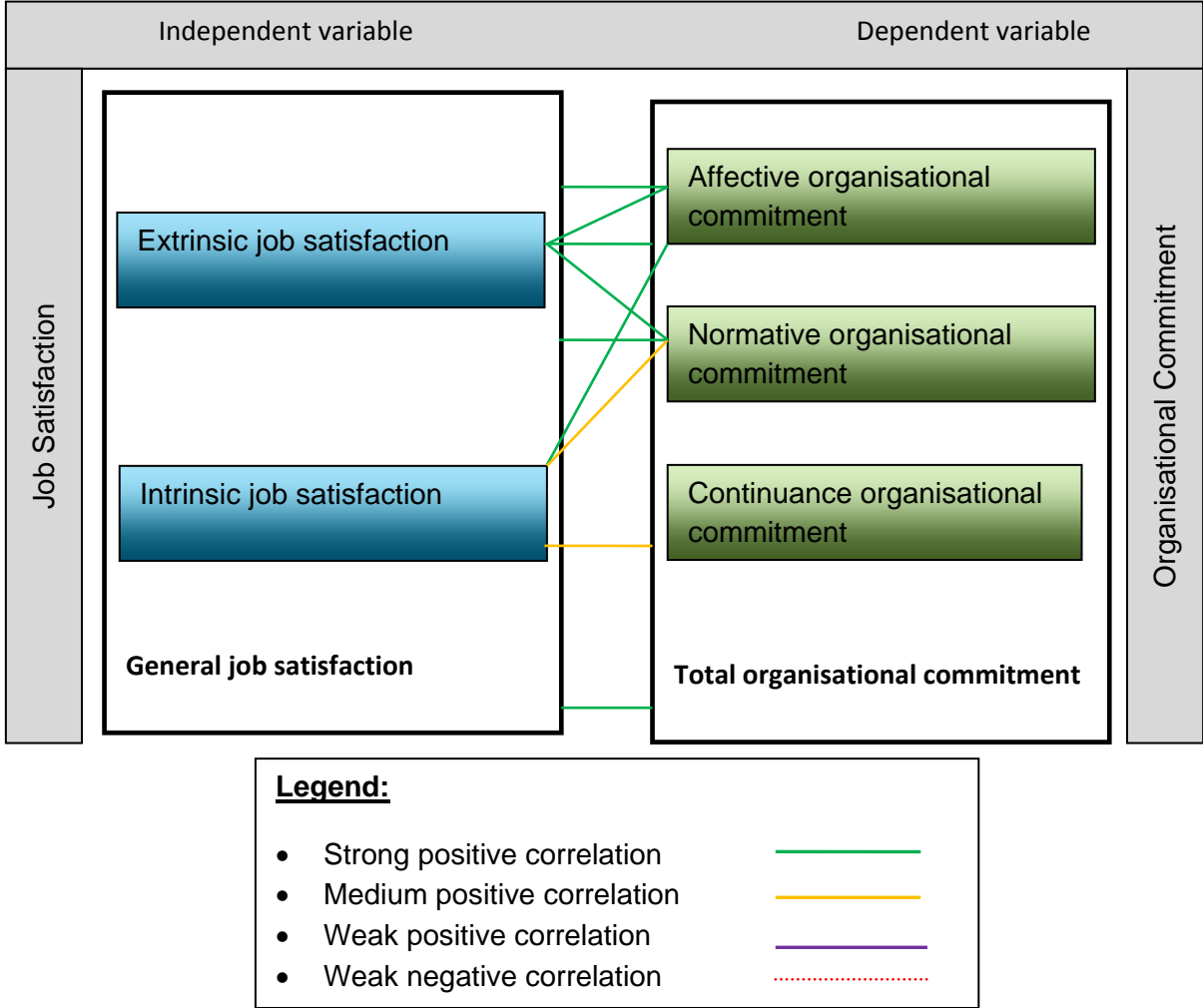


Figure 3.3. Relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

3.3.5 Inferential statistics: tests for significant mean differences

Due to the predominately younger sample, with 66% of the participants aged younger than 30 years, the age groups above 30 were combined for the purposes of this analysis. The means and standard deviations of the groups displaying significant differences at the

$p \leq 0.01$ and $p \leq 0.05$ were identified. Table 3.8 shows that significant differences exist between the group younger than 30 years and the group older than 30 years in terms of total perceived career mobility ($p = 0.05$), perceived inter-organisational career mobility ($p = 0.02$), total organisational commitment ($p = 0.02$), affective commitment ($p = 0.02$) and continuance commitment ($p = 0.02$).

Table 3.8

Differences in age groups' scores on the measurement dimensions: independent t-test results

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means		
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Total perceived career mobility	1.95	0.17	2.12	80	0.04*
Perceived inter-organisational career mobility	0.77	0.38	2.40	80	0.02*
Perceived intra-organisational career mobility	2.00	0.16	1.68	80	0.10
Total career mobility preference	0.09	0.76	-0.58	80	0.64
Intra-organisational mobility preference	0.05	0.82	-0.71	80	0.48
Inter-organisational mobility preference	0.20	0.66	-0.40	80	0.69
General job satisfaction	1.59	0.21	0.15	80	0.88
Intrinsic	0.65	0.42	-0.37	80	0.71
Extrinsic	2.79	0.10	0.69	80	0.50
Total organisational commitment	1.06	0.31	-2.49	80	0.02*
Affective	0.12	0.73	-2.43	80	0.02*
Continuance	0.61	0.44	-2.42	80	0.02*
Normative	2.29	0.13	-1.17	80	0.25

** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$

As indicated in Table 3.9, older participants (the age group of 30 years and older) scored significantly lower than the age group of 30 years and younger in terms of perceived inter-organisational career mobility ($M = 2.93$; $SD = 0.94$) and higher on total commitment ($M = 3.32$; $SD = 0.76$), affective commitment ($M = 3.52$; $SD = 0.99$) and continuance commitment ($M = 3.27$; $SD = 0.85$).

Table 3.9
Mean scores of age groups on dimensions where significant differences exist

		N	M	SD
Perceived inter-organisational career mobility	Younger than 30 years of age	54	3.41	0.81*
	30 + years of age	28	2.93	0.94
Total organisational commitment	Younger than 30 years of age	54	2.92	0.65
	30 + years of age	28	3.32	0.76*
Affective commitment	Younger than 30 years of age	54	3.00	0.87
	30 + years of age	28	3.52	0.99*
Continuance commitment	Younger than 30 years of age	54	2.83	0.75
	30 + years of age	28	3.27	0.85*

* Higher mean

As indicated in Table 3.10, males and females differed significantly only in terms of inter-organisational career mobility preference. Table 3.11 indicates that the female participants scored significantly higher on inter-organisational career mobility preference compared to the males ($M = 2.83$ vs. $M = 2.44$) at the $p \leq 0.05$ confidence limit.

Table 3.10

*Differences between the scores of gender groups on the measurement dimensions:
independent t-test results*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means			
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Total perceived career mobility	0.02	0.89	0.16	80	0.87	
Perceived inter-organisational career mobility	1.37	0.25	-1.41	80	0.16	
Perceived intra-organisational career mobility	1.05	0.31	0.57	80	0.57	
Total career mobility preference	0.66	0.42	-1.86	80	0.07	
Intra-organisational mobility preference	0.10	0.75	-1.29	80	0.20	
Inter-organisational mobility preference	1.75	0.19	-2.01	80	0.05*	
Job satisfaction total	0.15	0.70	-1.01	80	0.32	
Intrinsic	0.06	0.80	-0.79	80	0.43	
Extrinsic	0.66	0.42	-1.48	80	0.14	
Commitment total	0.000	0.98	-1.30	80	0.20	
Affective	0.37	0.54	-1.14	80	0.26	
Continuance	3.30	0.07	-0.67	80	0.50	
Normative	0.09	0.77	-1.28	80	0.20	

** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$

Table 3.11

Mean scores for gender on preference for inter-organisational career mobility

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Inter-organisational mobility preference	Male	35	2.44	0.98
	Female	47	2.83	0.79*

* Higher mean

Table 3.12 shows that a comparison of the married and single participants indicated that marital status played no role in job satisfaction, organisational commitment or perceived career mobility ($p > 0.05$ in all cases).

Table 3.12

Mean scores for marital status groups on perceived inter-organisational career mobility

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means		
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Total perceived career mobility	2.94	0.09	1.18	73	0.24
Perceived inter-organisational career mobility	0.05	0.83	1.35	73	0.18
Perceived intra-organisational career mobility	2.69	0.12	0.93	73	0.35
Total career mobility preference	0.36	0.55	-1.62	73	0.11
Inter-organisational mobility preference	0.35	0.56	-1.66	73	0.10
Intra-organisational mobility preference	0.31	0.58	-1.25	73	0.21
General job satisfaction	0.17	0.68	-0.57	73	0.57

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means		
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Intrinsic	0.02	0.90	-1.03	73	0.31
Extrinsic	0.06	0.81	0.16	73	0.87
Total commitment					
Affective	0.49	0.49	-0.33	73	0.75
Continuance	0.16	0.69	-1.18	73	0.24
Normative	0.74	0.39	-0.56	73	0.58

The participants comprised two tenure groups that included individuals employed within the organisation for five years or less, and those working within the organisation for six to 10 years. Table 3.13 indicates that the two tenure groups did not differ on job satisfaction and perceived career mobility. Significant differences are observed between the groups in terms of the inter-organisational mobility preference, and total and affective commitment variables at the $p \leq 0.01$ confidence level, and in terms of the continuance and normative commitment variables at the $p \leq 0.05$ confidence level. The results closely mirror that of age, as the group with less than five years' experience obtained significantly lower scores on the commitment variables than those with more than five years' experience. The similarity between age and tenure scores is to be expected, as the results indicate a strong relationship between age and tenure (chi-square = 12.67; $p = 0.000$). Cross-tabulation results, which are provided in Table 3.14, indicate that the majority of individuals younger than 30 years (75%) reported tenure of five years or less, and the majority (71%) of participants older than 30 years reported tenure of six years or more. As indicated in Table 3.15, the six- to 10-year tenure group scored significantly higher on all organisational commitment dimensions.

Table 3.13

*Differences between the scores of tenure groups on the measurement dimensions:
independent t-test results*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means		
	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
Total perceived career mobility	0.02	0.88	-0.21	80	0.83
Perceived inter-organisational career mobility	0.11	0.75	0.97	80	0.34
Perceived intra-organisational career mobility	0.09	0.77	-0.50	80	0.62
Total career mobility preference	1.42	0.24	-2.44	80	0.02
Inter-organisational mobility preference	0.70	0.40	-2.54	80	0.01**
Intra-organisational mobility preference	0.58	0.45	-1.82	80	0.07
Job satisfaction total	0.01	0.91	-0.20	80	0.84
Intrinsic	0.01	0.91	-0.36	80	0.72
Extrinsic	0.000	0.99	0.01	80	0.99
Total organisational commitment	1.05	0.31	-2.84	80	0.01**
Affective	2.81	0.10	-2.71	80	0.01**
Continuance	0.90	0.35	-2.05	80	0.04*
Normative	0.11	0.74	-1.99	80	0.05*

** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$

Table 3.14

Cross-tabulation between age and tenure

		Tenure		
		Less than 5 years	6 + years	Total
Age	Younger than 30 years of age	75%	29%	66%
	30 + years of age	25%	71%	34%
Total		100%	100%	100%

Table 3.15

Mean scores of tenure groups on dimensions where significant differences exist

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Inter-organisational mobility preference	Less than 5 years	65	2.54	0.10
	6 + years	17	3.14	0.24*
Total organisational commitment	Less than 5 years	65	2.95	0.70
	6 + years	17	3.48	0.62*
Affective	Less than 5 years	65	3.04	0.94
	6 + years	17	3.71	0.72*
Continuance	Less than 5 years	65	2.89	0.76
	6 + years	17	3.33	0.90*
Normative	Less than 5 years	65	2.91	0.88
	6 + years	17	3.39	0.93*

* Higher mean

Table 3.16 shows that race groups differed significantly in terms of perceived inter-organisational career mobility at the $p \leq 0.001$ confidence limit. Table 3.17 indicates that the black participants scored significantly higher than their white counterparts on perceived inter-organisational career mobility ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.41$).

Table 3.16

*Differences between the scores of race groups on the measurement dimensions:
independent t-test results*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means		
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Total perceived career mobility	0.64	0.43	-2.38	70	0.02
Perceived inter-organisational career mobility	11.79	0.001	-2.90	70	0.01**
(Equal variances not assumed)			-4.41	52.92	0.000***
Perceived intra-organisational career mobility	1.87	0.18	-1.87	70	0.07
Total career mobility preference	0.32	0.57	1.31	70	0.20
Intra-organisational mobility preference	0.69	0.41	1.19	70	0.24
Inter-organisational mobility preference	0.53	0.74	1.21	70	0.23
Job satisfaction total	1.048	0.31	-0.31	70	0.76
Intrinsic	1.060	0.31	0.62	70	0.53
Extrinsic	0.19	0.66	-1.57	70	0.13
Organisational commitment total	1.01	0.32	0.45	70	0.65
Affective	0.00	0.96	-0.56	70	0.58
Continuance	0.23	0.64	1.82	70	0.07
Normative	0.01	0.91	-0.06	70	0.95

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$

Table 3.17

Mean scores for race groups on perceived inter-organisational career mobility

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Perceived inter-organisational career mobility	White	57	3.08	0.93
	Black	15	3.80	0.41*

* Higher mean

3.3.6 Decisions regarding the research hypotheses

Based on the preceding results, the following decisions regarding the hypotheses could be made. The $p \leq 0.05$ (5% level) confidence level was utilised as a criterion for accepting the hypotheses or rejecting the null hypotheses. The null hypotheses (HO1: No statistically significant relationship exists between individuals' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment; and HO2: Groups differing in age, gender, tenure, marital status and race will not differ significantly in their levels of perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment) are rejected in instances where the criterion cut-off (significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ confidence level) was not met and the alternative hypotheses are accepted where the cut-off has been met. As indicated in Table 3.18, the null hypotheses of this study were rejected, as significant relationships between the variables and differences between groups were found in most instances.

Table 3.18

Overview of decisions regarding the research hypotheses

Hypotheses	Decision	Reasoning
H1: A statistically significant relationship exists between individuals' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.	Partially accepted	Relationships were yielded between the dimensions of the four constructs, with the exception of the relationship between perceived career mobility and career mobility preference, perceived inter-

a) <i>Individuals' perceived career mobility and career mobility preference are significantly related.</i>	Rejected	organisational career mobility and intrinsic job satisfaction, total and perceived intra-
b) <i>Individuals' perceived career mobility and career mobility preference is significantly related to their job satisfaction.</i>	Accepted	organisational career mobility and continuance commitment, perceived inter-
c) <i>Individuals' perceived career mobility and career mobility preference is significantly related to their organisational commitment.</i>	Accepted	organisational, career mobility and total and affective commitment, and
d) <i>Individuals' job satisfaction and organisational commitment are significantly related.</i>	Partially accepted	job satisfaction and continuance commitment.
HO1: No statistically significant relationships exist between individuals' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.	Rejected	
H2: Groups differing in age, gender, tenure, marital status and race will differ significantly in their levels of perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.	Partially accepted	With the exception of marital groups, significant differences were found between the biographical groups on some of the perceived career mobility, career mobility preference and organisational commitment dimensions.
HO2: Groups differing in age, gender, tenure, marital status and race will not differ significantly in their levels of perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.	Rejected	

3.4 DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this study was to critically explore, analyse and evaluate the nature of the relationship between individuals' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The secondary objective was to determine

whether individuals from different age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups differ with regard to their perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

3.4.1 The biographical profile of the sample

The sample consisted of mostly white participants younger than 30 years who were employed full time. Slightly more single participants (compared to married and divorced) were included in the sample, and this is understandable because the sample is younger. Gender was distributed fairly evenly. The majority of participants were well qualified, possessing an undergraduate degree or higher. The generally higher qualification level of the sample makes sense when interpreted in the light of the fact that the sample consists of accountants, auditors and financial staff. The majority of the sample indicated a tenure of five years or less, which should perhaps be interpreted in view of the younger age and higher qualification level of the sample. Individuals completing a degree after their secondary education may possibly enter the workforce only upon completion of their degree, or change jobs after completing their degree. Most of the participants work at staff level.

Regarding perceived career mobility, the participants in this study reported higher levels of perceived inter-organisational career mobility, indicating that they perceived the availability of job opportunities in other organisations. These results are not surprising, as a recent report by SAICA (South African Institute of Chartered Accountants, 2008) found a shortage of financial staff, accountants and auditors in the South African work context. Skills shortages, and hence a high demand for employees, result in greater career opportunities (Kochanski & Ledford, 2001). In this study, the majority of participants reported that they perceived that inter-organisational career mobility opportunities existed in their work environment. From a list, the main reasons reported for their high inter-organisational mobility perception included, firstly, due to their skills and knowledge, and secondly due to the high demand for employees within their field of work. The participants who perceived low inter-organisational career mobility opportunities within their work environment, indicated their skills and knowledge and the high demand for their skills as the least important reasons for a low perception of these opportunities. The preceding findings highlight that a high demand for skilled and knowledge workers could be an important reason for perceiving job opportunities in other organisations. The higher scores on perceived inter-organisational career mobility opportunities are interesting in the light of the lower means for normative and continuance commitment. Individuals perceiving that they have several job opportunities in the job market may not

experience the need to be committed to an organisation due to the costs involved in leaving the organisation.

This study found that intra- and inter-organisational career mobility preference was significantly associated with job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The relationship between career mobility preference and organisational commitment is in contrast to that found by Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009), who found organisational mobility preference to be correlated negatively with organisational commitment. Individuals with a boundaryless mindset experiencing promising development opportunities were found to experience greater levels of organisational commitment (Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009). Therefore, although not examined in this study due to the smaller sample size, it is suggested that perceived career mobility may act as a moderating variable in the relationship between career mobility preference and organisational commitment and job satisfaction. That is, individuals with a desire to move between jobs and/or organisations who perceive opportunities for mobility may be more satisfied and committed.

Lower means on the career mobility preference dimensions may be indicative of a lack of preference to be mobile within the organisation, although it should be borne in mind that the lower reliability on the intra-organisational mobility preference dimension is indicative that these results should be interpreted with caution. Although the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient (0.64) is considered lower when interpreted against Huysamen's (1996) guidelines, the three instruments utilised yielded generally acceptable levels of reliability, with Cronbach's alphas ranging between 0.64 and 0.93.

The current study was undertaken in a period when South Africa was experiencing an economic recession. The economic and social/legal climate must be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings. Of the research participants indicating that they did not believe that they could easily find a job in another organisation, the majority indicated employment equity policies as the primary reason, and macroeconomic conditions as the second reason. Feldman and Ng (2007) identify structural factors such as macroeconomic conditions as important contributors to career mobility. In addition to macroeconomic conditions, Feldman and Ng (2007) have identified factors relating to the social and legal environment as some of the most influential factors for embeddedness and mobility. Likewise, Netswera et al. (2005) identify economic, social and political factors as influential in mobility choice.

With regard to the sample's level of job satisfaction, the participants appeared to experience greater job satisfaction in terms of intrinsic factors, that is factors relevant to job tasks (Spector, 2008). Martin (2007) refers to a sense of achievement and task identity in response to the successful completion of tasks as contributors to a sense of intrinsic satisfaction. The results suggest that the participants seemed most satisfied with their type of work, achievement and ability utilisation (Weiss et al., 1967). Lumley (2009) found that individuals prefer work that is mentally challenging, thus affording them opportunities to utilise their skills and abilities. Research has generally found that job satisfaction is enhanced through mentally challenging work that entails a reasonable amount of variety and allows the freedom to utilise one's skills and abilities (Theron, 2009c). Compared to intrinsic satisfaction, the participants in this study seem to be slightly less satisfied with extrinsic satisfaction reinforcers. Extrinsic satisfaction reinforcers include factors related to the work environment, such as supervisor support, working conditions, pay and advancement opportunities. Similar to this study, Lumley (2009) found employees to be less satisfied with their promotional opportunities, benefits and communication within the organisation. In addition, Mncwango and Winnaar (2009) found employees to be more satisfied with aspects related to their job content than the ability of their jobs to fulfil their material needs.

In this study the participants reported higher levels of affective organisational commitment than normative and continuance commitment. The results therefore indicate that the participants experienced greater commitment in terms of their emotional attachment to the organisation than committed out of a sense of obligation to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The findings compare positively with those of Lumley (2009) and Swart (2009).

3.4.2 The relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment

Participants who perceive that they have career mobility opportunities may be more job satisfied and committed, and may not experience the need to stay with their current organisation simply due to the possible costs involved in leaving the organisation. Likewise, the results indicate that participants experiencing high levels of job satisfaction may be more committed to the organisation.

Overall, the results suggest that perceived career mobility is related to job satisfaction and organisational commitment. A significantly strong positive relationship exists between perceived intra-organisational career mobility and extrinsic job satisfaction. As both

perceived intra-organisational career mobility and extrinsic job satisfaction refer to aspects relevant to the work environment, such as advancement opportunities in the organisation (Feldman & Ng, 2007; Weiss et al., 1967), this relationship seems likely. Foong-ming (2008) found perceived organisational support to mediate perceived career mobility, highlighting the link between factors inclusive in extrinsic job satisfaction and perceived intra-organisational career mobility. Both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction were found to be related to affective organisational commitment and intra-organisational career mobility, and perceived intra-organisational career mobility preference was found to relate to affective and normative commitment in this study. The findings therefore support those of Allen et al. (2003) who reported that perceived organisational support, including growth opportunities, result in employees' perceptions that the organisation cares about them, leading to increased affective attachment to the organisation. The findings are contrary to those of Döckel (2003), who found training, development and career opportunities not to be related to organisational commitment. However, there is much support for the relationship between career opportunities and employee commitment (Kochanski & Ledford, 2001; Meyer & Allen, 1997).

The positive relationship observed between perceived intra-organisational career mobility and affective and normative organisational commitment suggests that the participants who perceived more career mobility opportunities experienced greater attachment to the organisation. It further appears that perceived inter-organisational career mobility is not related to normative commitment (attached due to obligation) and affective commitment (emotional attachment), but was weakly and negatively related to continuance commitment (costs involved in leaving). The findings may therefore suggest that an individual who perceives that there are many opportunities for him or her to find another suitable job in another organisation is unlikely to stay with the organisation due to the perceived costs involved in leaving, or to remain due to obligation. From the relationship observed between perceived inter-organisational career mobility and continuance commitment, it may be reasoned that an individual perceiving that there are many job opportunities for him/her may believe that there are other jobs available offering equal or better rewards or benefits than are currently being received. A weak relationship was also yielded between the perception of job opportunities external to the organisation and satisfaction with the work environment, including benefits and rewards. Vallabh and Donald (2001) found that job hopping is more prevalent among black managers, and that this group reported greater job satisfaction. It may therefore be argued that individuals with several job opportunities may have the opportunity to choose a job that satisfies their needs or values.

A weak negative relationship was found between perceiving appropriate job opportunities external to one's current organisation and experiencing the costs involved in leaving. Kondratuk et al. (2004) reported that employees tend to experience lower affective and continuance commitment prior to an inter-organisational move in comparison to non-movers. Considering that the current study focuses on perceived career mobility, it seems likely that individuals with the opportunity and the intention to move between organisations would perceive opportunities for such movement. Kondratuk et al.'s (2004) findings are similar to those of this study on continuance commitment. In addition, Kondratuk et al. (2004) propose that affective commitment increases after a move within or between organisations. A relationship was not found between affective commitment and perceived inter-organisational career mobility, and it is proposed that this relationship may be explained by the possibility that participants may perceive opportunities but may not actually have moved between organisations.

Affective commitment was observed to be related to perceived intra-organisational career mobility, indicating that individuals perceiving opportunities to be mobile within their organisation tended to experience emotional attachment to the organisation. All career mobility preference dimensions were found to be positively related to job satisfaction and organisational commitment, indicating that, despite desiring mobility, the participants may still be satisfied and committed. In light of the preceding findings it is proposed that Döckel's (2003) findings that training, development and career opportunities are not related to organisational commitment may be interpreted in view of the relationship between career mobility and organisational commitment. An individual with a preference for career mobility may be satisfied and committed when career mobility opportunities are provided by the organisation.

In addition, the results show that inter-organisational career mobility preference, extrinsic job satisfaction and perceived intra-organisation mobility contributed to explaining the participants' overall commitment to the organisation. Therefore, participants preferring to move between organisations but experiencing job satisfaction and perceiving career mobility opportunities in the organisation may be more committed. Intrinsic job satisfaction, perceived intra-organisational career mobility and intra-organisational mobility preference contributed to explaining the participants' affective commitment to the organisation. Inter-organisational mobility preference and perceived inter-organisational career mobility contributed in explaining the continued organisational commitment of the participants to the organisation.

Extrinsic job satisfaction and inter-organisational mobility preference appear to explain the normative commitment of the participants to the organisation.

The results reveal that individuals with a preference for intra-organisational career mobility, that is to advance or develop within the organisation, who perceive the possibility of such advancement opportunities within the organisation and are satisfied with their job tasks in their current organisation, are likely to experience emotional attachment to the organisation. In addition, a preference for inter-organisational career mobility, but a perceived lack thereof, results in increased continuance commitment. In other words, if an individual would like to change jobs to work for another organisation, but does not currently perceive appropriate alternative jobs within the work environment, he or she is likely to remain with their current organisation, as costs would be involved in leaving, for instance being unemployed. On the other hand, individuals may feel obliged to remain attached to their organisation if they prefer to move between organisations but experience extrinsic satisfaction reinforcement factors within their current organisation. Extrinsic satisfaction reinforcement factors include factors such as satisfaction with their supervisor, the enforcement of company policies, working conditions, pay, co-workers, advancement opportunities and recognition (Weiss et al., 1967).

Allen et al. (2003) propose that growth opportunities, among other factors, mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment. A lack of growth opportunities may therefore negatively influence an individual's attitude towards the organisation, which in turn influences the intention to leave, leading to turnover behaviour (Allen et al., 2003). Personal and organisational growth may be ensured through the availability and accessibility of training and career pathing by organisations (Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007). Participants identified the provision of training opportunities and internal promotion as factors positively or negatively contributing to their perceived intra-organisational career mobility opportunities. Individuals want career progress, as training provides employees with advancement opportunities, thereby building self-worth and affective organisational commitment (Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007). On a more general level, the results of this study suggest that individuals with a preference for movement between organisations, but who experience satisfaction with their current work environment and perceive opportunities for advancement within their organisation, are likely to experience increased levels of organisational commitment.

The significant positive relationship observed between job satisfaction and organisational commitment suggests that participants who were more likely to be highly satisfied with

aspects of their job reported greater organisational commitment. Several studies have found a relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Carmeli & Freund, 2004; Lumley, 2009; Martin & Roodt, 2007). In this study, all job satisfaction dimensions were found to be moderately to strongly positively related to total, affective and normative commitment. The relationship between extrinsic job satisfaction and affective organisational commitment is supported by research, as knowledge employees have been shown to appreciate supervisor support and recognition (Döckel, 2003), linking affective commitment to extrinsic job satisfaction. Normative commitment may develop when an employee receives benefits and experiences the need to reciprocate (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Martin (2007) explains that intrinsic satisfaction occurs as a result of self-actualisation experienced from doing one's job. From the preceding explanations it is suggested that satisfaction with the benefits obtained from working within the organisation may result in attachment to the organisation.

In contrast to Döckel's (2003) findings of a strong negative relationship between job characteristics and continuance commitment, no relationship was found between extrinsic job satisfaction and continuance commitment. These findings suggest that participants reporting greater satisfaction with the job task aspects and the work environment appear to experience high levels of emotional commitment to the organisation and a sense of obligation to remain with the organisation.

Perceived career mobility and career mobility preference were found to be related to job satisfaction and organisational commitment, and job satisfaction and affective (emotional attachment to the organisation) and normative (attachment due to obligation) commitment were found to be related. The relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment supports previous research findings (Lumley, 2009; Martin, 2007). The aforementioned relationship is important, as organisational commitment has been found to relate to factors such as turnover intention (Hellman, 1997; Martin, 2007; Mokoka, 2007), job performance, intention to stay, attendance, loyalty, creativity, co-operation, volunteerism and a decrease in turnover (Döckel, 2003). Dawis (1992) reported a relationship between job satisfaction and performance, turnover and absenteeism.

3.4.3 Significant differences between biographical variables

The present study explored broad trends regarding differences between various age, gender, tenure, marital and race groups in terms of their perceived career mobility, career mobility

preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Overall, no significant differences were found between the biographical groups' levels of job satisfaction. The results indicated a number of significant differences between the biographical groups with regard to their perceived career mobility, career mobility preference and organisational commitment, and these differences will be discussed in the following section. Age and race groups differed significantly with regard to their experiences of perceived career mobility. Gender and tenure groups differed significantly regarding their career mobility preference. Differences were found between age and tenure groups on the organisational commitment variables.

3.4.3.1 Age

Age groups consisted of individuals above and below the age of 30 years. The two age groups differed significantly on the perceived career mobility and organisational commitment variables. The participants older than 30 tended to experience less perceived career mobility and more total organisational commitment, affective commitment and continuance commitment. Several studies have reported a trend whereby older employees tend to report greater organisational commitment (Martin & Roodt, 2007). The findings are consistent with those of Levy (2006) and D'Manto and Herzfeldt (2008), who found older employees to be more committed. The differences between the groups should be interpreted in view of the categories (below and above 30 years of age).

Martin and Roodt (2007) suggest that the relationship between age and organisational commitment may be supported by the idea that fewer job opportunities, due to an increase in age and specialisation, may result in increased organisational commitment by these employees. The results of this study support Martin and Roodt (2007), as participants older than 30 reported lower perceived inter-organisational career mobility. It must be borne in mind, however, that due to the small number of participants older than 30 years this group was combined, and the results may have looked quite different had a larger, more representative sample been included in this study.

3.4.3.2 Gender

Female participants displayed greater preference for inter-organisational career mobility. However, this greater preference may appear contrary to the findings of studies conducted by Kniveton (2004), Lumley (2009) and Coetzee and Schreuder (2009), who found women to

place higher value on steady and stable work opportunities. The findings of this study support those of Beukes (2009), who found that females may experience a greater need to experiment with new career opportunities. A US study (Brown, 1998) on female managers reported that the glass ceiling phenomenon may result in the view that career advancement may only be achieved through voluntary turnover. In light of the aforementioned study, it is expected that such an explanation would be supported by significantly lower perceived intra-organisational career mobility opportunities displayed by female participants, although a perceived lack of advancement opportunities may contribute to the greater preference for inter-organisational career mobility. A significant difference was not yielded between the male and female participants, however, highlighting the need for further research on these differences.

3.4.3.3 Tenure

Tenure groups were found to differ significantly in terms of their inter-organisational mobility preference, as well as on all dimensions of organisational commitment. Participants with greater tenure (six to 10 years) reported significantly higher organisational commitment. Similarly, Levy (2006) reported a relationship between tenure and organisational commitment. A meta-analysis by Feldman and Ng (2009) supports the relationship between age and turnover, and identified race, tenure and educational level as moderators of this relationship.

3.4.3.4 Marital status

No significant differences were found between marital status groups on the variables of relevance to this study. A lack of consensus exists as to whether marital groups differ in their level of job satisfaction and organisational commitment, but the findings here are consistent with those of Martin (2007). Martin (2007) reported no differences between marital groups' job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The findings of this study are in contrast to those of Eddleston et al. (2004), who are of the view that women's career success and willingness to relocate, and their subsequent perceived marketability, are negatively impacted by the fact that they have children at home. Perceive marketability and willingness to relocate leads to career advancement and the possibility of an increase in compensation (Eddleston et al., 2004). Eddleston et al. (2004) seem to suggest that marital status may influence perceived career mobility and job satisfaction.

The lack of differences between marital status groups' perceived career mobility and job satisfaction may be understood in terms of Schreuder and Theron's (2004) explanation of working couples. The work environment is characterised by an increase in working couples, and hence more employees dealing with domestic responsibilities in addition to work obligations (Schreuder & Theron, 2004). The need for working couples to combine their work and family roles does not necessarily result in decreased job satisfaction, but can lead to a sense of satisfaction with the way in which they are managing their lives (Schreuder & Theron, 2004).

3.4.3.5 Race

Black participants were found to perceive greater inter-organisational career mobility opportunities. A study by Vallabh and Donald (2001) reported the possibility of job hopping to be greater for black managers compared to their white counterparts. Although significant differences were not found between race groups' career mobility preference, black participants reported significantly higher perceived career mobility. The Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (Republic of South Africa, 2003) in South Africa promotes increased black ownership of industrial organisations. In accordance with the aim of the Act, career opportunities may have arisen for black skilled workers due to organisations making provision for the Act and affirmative action practices in terms of ensuring the inclusion of black employees, therefore ensuring BEE (black economic empowerment) compliance. One of the main reasons identified for the perceptions of perceived inter-organisational career mobility include employment equity policies, and this supports the significant differences between race groups' perceived inter-organisational career mobility.

3.4.4 Conclusions: implications for practice

Overall it can be concluded that individuals' perceived career mobility and career mobility preference are significantly related to their job satisfaction and organisational commitment. There is a significant relationship between individuals' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Groups differing in age, gender, tenure and race will differ significantly in their levels of perceived career mobility, career mobility preference and organisational commitment.

The findings of the study contributed valuable new knowledge regarding the relationships found between the core variables, and focuses attention on the practical implications of

perceived career mobility in retaining satisfied and committed employees. The conclusions drawn from the results will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Conclusions derived from the findings indicate that practitioners can benefit from understanding the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in order to inform talent retention practices. Practical recommendations are to follow based on the argument that satisfied and committed employees display increased productivity and remain attached to the organisation, and that employees with greater mobility opportunities and mobility preferences may present retention challenges. Detailed recommendations for talent retention practices will be provided in Chapter 4.

3.4.5 Limitations of the study

Only the core limitations will be discussed in the following section. A comprehensive overview of all of the limitations identified will be provided in Chapter 4.

The main limitations of this study include the small sample size. Due to the small sample size it cannot be ascertained conclusively that the relationships and differences found in this study would be true of a larger, heterogeneous sample. The smaller sample size also precluded the use of a broad range of statistical analyses. In addition, the sample did not represent the South African population in age, gender, tenure, marital status and race, therefore reducing the power of this study and the potential to generalise the results to the diverse South African population. A random sampling method, as opposed to the non-probability method utilised, may have rendered more generalisable results.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the results of this study show potential for the analysis of the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, as well as differences between biographical groups' experiences of these constructs. This study may be utilised as a basis to understand these relationships and differences in order to inform the formulation of effective retention strategies.

3.4.6 Recommendations for future research

Only the core recommendations will be focused on in this section, as the recommendations will be elaborated on in more detail in Chapter 4.

Due to the small sample size and the limited scope of the study, reliable exploratory factor analyses could not be undertaken, it is however highly recommended that further studies are undertaken in order to address this limitation. In addition, it is recommended that embeddedness factors are analysed in order to add depth to the study, and that career mobility preference is analysed as a mediating variable in the relationship between perceived career mobility as an dependent variable and job satisfaction and organisational commitment as independent variables.

3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, core aspects of the literature and empirical study were discussed, the results of the study were interpreted by analysing the findings, conclusions were drawn, recommendations were presented and the limitations of the study were highlighted. Chapter 4 presents a more comprehensive discussion of the conclusions drawn, the limitations of the study, and the recommendations for practical application of the findings.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 4 focuses on the conclusions drawn from this research study. This chapter highlights the limitations of the literature study and the empirical results of the study, and presents recommendations for the practical application of the findings and for future research studies.

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

The following section focuses on the formulation of conclusions based on the literature and empirical study.

4.1.1 Conclusions regarding the literature review

The general aim of this study was, firstly, to critically explore, analyse and evaluate the nature of the relationship between individuals' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Secondly, it was to determine whether individuals from different age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups differ with regard to their perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The general aim of this study was accomplished through addressing and realising the specific aims of the study.

Conclusions were drawn in terms of each of the specific aims regarding the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

4.1.1.1 The first aim: Conceptualise career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment from the literature and determine the theoretical relationship between career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment

The first aim, namely to conceptualise career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment from the literature and to determine the theoretical relationship between career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, was achieved in Chapter 2.

A literature review was undertaken whereby the disciplinary and conceptual foundations of perceived career mobility, job satisfaction and organisational commitment were studied. From the literature review it is concluded that, despite the existence of research on career mobility, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, refinement of the conceptualisation of these concepts is required.

For the purposes of this study, perceived career mobility was approached from Feldman and Ng's (2007) view of career mobility. From the literature review it is concluded that a single common term needs to be conceptualised and operationalised in the light of a comprehensive overview of the literature on this construct. Feldman and Ng's (2007) view of career mobility appears to follow a comprehensive approach, encompassing job, career and organisational changes. Perceived career mobility is characterised by perceptions of the extent to which an individual currently possesses the opportunity to move between jobs, careers and organisations. Career mobility preference includes a desire for intra- and inter-organisational career mobility. Career mobility is influenced by the labour market, organisational policies and procedures, work group-level factors and personality and biographical factors.

It is concluded that job satisfaction can be viewed from a dispositional, situational or person-fit perspective. It is also studied from an attitudinal versus an affective perspective, and as a global construct versus a construct comprising of interrelated facets. Dawis and Lofquist's (1993) conceptualisation of job satisfaction was adopted for this study. Job satisfaction is an attitude that occurs when correspondence exists between an individual's abilities and the ability requirements of their work (Weiss et al., 1967). From the literature review it is concluded that job satisfaction is influenced by demographic factors, cognitive ability, job experience and characteristics, work opportunities, and social and personal factors.

Although organisational commitment is conceptualised from several approaches (normative, attitudinal, behavioural, multi-dimensional, multi-foci or motivational), the conclusion is drawn that organisational commitment is a bond to the organisation. Meyer and Allen's (1991) multidimensional approach to organisational commitment was utilised in this study, by acknowledging cognitive, affective and conative components of organisational commitment. The antecedents of the three components differ.

The relationship between all of the constructs of relevance to the study have not been researched before, although conclusions drawn from the literature review indicate that there

appears to be a relationship between these constructs. Individuals often possess preferences regarding job mobility (Ng et al., 2005). Individuals with a greater organisational mobility preference appear to be less organisationally committed (Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009). From the literature it is concluded that some employees may prefer to experience career mobility more than others, and that such a preference may influence an individual's attitude toward the organisation. Therefore, there appears to be a relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference and attitudes toward the organisation.

It can be concluded that the relationship between perceived career mobility and job satisfaction is important in practice, as the provision of career development practices by organisations is necessary in order to support employee career growth and improve employee satisfaction. A fit between an individual's values and abilities, and the requirements of the work environment, enhances the likelihood of job satisfaction. A relationship appears to exist between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference and job satisfaction, in that individuals preferring mobility and perceiving mobility opportunities may experience greater satisfaction with the job due to a match between the individual and his/her work environment and job tasks. Likewise, such an individual may experience a more positive attitude toward the organisation in terms of commitment to the organisation.

It is concluded that there are relationships between job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Lumley, 2009; Martin & Roodt, 2007), and career mobility and organisational commitment (Goffee, 1992; Kondratuk et al., 2004; Murrell et al., 1996), as well as a negative relationship between organisational mobility preference and organisational commitment (Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009). From the literature review it is concluded that individuals experiencing career mobility opportunities, particularly opportunities within the organisation, appear to experience more positive attitudes toward the organisation. Therefore it can be stated that perceived career mobility, job satisfaction and organisational commitment appear to be (directly or indirectly) related.

4.1.1.2 The second aim: To determine theoretically (based on a review of the literature) the role of age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups in perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment

The second aim, namely to determine theoretically (based on a review of the literature) the role of age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups in perceived career mobility,

career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, was achieved in Chapter 2.

From the literature review it is concluded that biographical variables are antecedents of the variables of relevance to this study. The literature review reveals that there is a lack of consensus about whether biographical variables (age, gender, tenure, marital status and race) act as antecedents to perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. South African studies have relatively consistently identified a relationship between race and career mobility, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, focusing on socio-legal factors as a possible explanation of this relationship. There are inconsistent findings regarding the differences between various age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups' job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

4.1.1.3 Third aim: To determine the implications of the theoretical relationship for employee retention practices.

The third aim, namely to determine the implications of the theoretical relationship for employee retention practices, was achieved in Chapter 2. From the literature review it can be concluded that job satisfaction (DeConinck & Stilwell, 2004; Hellman, 1997; Levy, 2006; Martin & Roodt, 2007; Price & Mueller, 1981; Scandura & Lankau, 1997), and organisational commitment (Levy, 2006; Martin & Roodt, 2007; Price & Mueller, 1981) yield turnover, indicating the importance of this relationship in employee retention practices. There is a relationship between career mobility and job satisfaction, as well as between career mobility and organisational commitment (Kondratuk et al., 2004; Swaen et al., 2002), which suggests that perceived career mobility may be an important consideration in employee retention.

Greater perceived organisational support (which may include perceived mobility opportunities) is related to decreased likelihood to seek out and accept alternative employment opportunities (Eisenberger et al., 1990). The provision of career development opportunities by organisations creates the impression of willingness and effort by the organisation to care for and support employees (Foong-ming, 2008). It therefore is concluded that, in order to retain employees, organisations can provide career support activities with the aim of improving perceptions of career mobility, in certain instances to satisfy employee preferences and values. Matching work environments to employee values appears to enhance experiences of job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

4.1.2 Conclusions regarding the empirical study

The empirical aim of this study was to complete two main tasks, namely:

- To empirically investigate the nature of the empirical relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment for a sample of participants in the South African organisational context.
- To empirically investigate whether differences exist in the perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment of individuals from different age, gender, tenure, marital status and racial groups, as manifested in the sample of participants.

Based on the empirical findings, null hypothesis H01 was rejected because of the evidence of statistically significant relationship between individuals' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Likewise, null hypothesis H02 was rejected on the basis of statistically significant differences between the levels of perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment of groups differing in age, gender, tenure, marital status and race.

The research findings and hypotheses warranting discussion will be presented as empirical conclusions in the section to follow.

4.1.2.1 The first aim: To empirically investigate the nature of the empirical relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment for a sample of participants in the South African organisational context

The following three conclusions were drawn:

- a) The participants' perceived career mobility relates significantly positively to their career mobility preference.*
- It is concluded that participants with a greater preference for career mobility do not tend to have specifically higher or lower perceptions of career mobility.

b) *The participants' perceived career mobility and career mobility preferences relate significantly positively to their job satisfaction.*

- Based on the findings it can be concluded that participants perceiving more opportunities to develop skills facilitating job change and/or change jobs within their organisation, or to find an acceptable job in another organisation, tend to experience greater satisfaction with aspects related to their work environment, including factors such as their supervisor, the enforcement of company policies, working conditions, pay, co-workers, advancement opportunities and recognition (extrinsic satisfaction). Participants perceiving opportunities to change jobs within their organisation also seem to experience satisfaction with their current job in terms of the tasks that they are required to perform, achievement and ability utilisation (intrinsic satisfaction).
- It is concluded that participants preferring opportunities to develop skills facilitating job change and/or change jobs within their organisation or to find an acceptable job in another organisation tend to experience greater satisfaction with aspects related to their current job in terms of the tasks that they are required to perform, achievement and ability utilisation (intrinsic satisfaction). They also seem to experience satisfaction with their work environment, including factors such as their supervisor, the enforcement of company policies, working conditions, pay, co-workers, advancement opportunities and recognition (extrinsic satisfaction).

c) *The participants' perceived career mobility and career mobility preference relate significantly positively and negatively to certain organisational commitment dimensions.*

- It is concluded that participants perceiving many opportunities to move between organisations (perceived inter-organisational career mobility) tend to feel less inclined to remain attached to their current organisation simply because there may be costs involved in leaving their current organisation (continuance commitment).
- Based on the findings it can be concluded that participants with a greater perception of opportunities for development and job change within their organisation tend to experience higher affective attachment and attachment to the organisation out of a sense of obligation.
- Based on the findings it can be concluded that participants with a greater career mobility preference tend to experience higher affective attachment to the organisation, attachment due to fear of costs incurred in leaving, and attachment to the organisation out of a sense of obligation.

- As depicted in Figure 4.1, the following can be concluded on the basis of the findings:
 - Participants who felt strongly committed to the organisation seemed to prefer to have the option available to move to another organisation, seemed to be more satisfied with aspects of their current work environment and perceived that they had the opportunity to change jobs within their current organisation.
 - Participants' emotional attachment to their current organisation tended to be influenced positively by their satisfaction with their current job in terms of the tasks that they have to perform (including the type of work, achievement and ability utilisation) and a perception of the option to change jobs within their current organisation, and a preference to change jobs within their current organisation. It is concluded that, if an individual's preference for growth opportunities within the organisation is met by the organisation, and if they are content with their current job, they may tend to be emotionally attached to the organisation.
 - Individuals who remain attached to their current organisation because of the higher costs involved in leaving when compared to staying, seemed to prefer the option available to move between organisations, but tended to perceive few opportunities for jobs in other organisations. It is concluded that the job market may influence an individual's commitment to the organisation.
 - Participants who tended to perceive opportunities to change jobs external to the organisation, and who preferred such opportunities, seemed to remain attached to the organisation despite preferring to move between organisations. Based on the findings it is concluded that, despite the availability of opportunities for movement between organisations and a preference for such a movement, these employees may remain attached to the organisation.

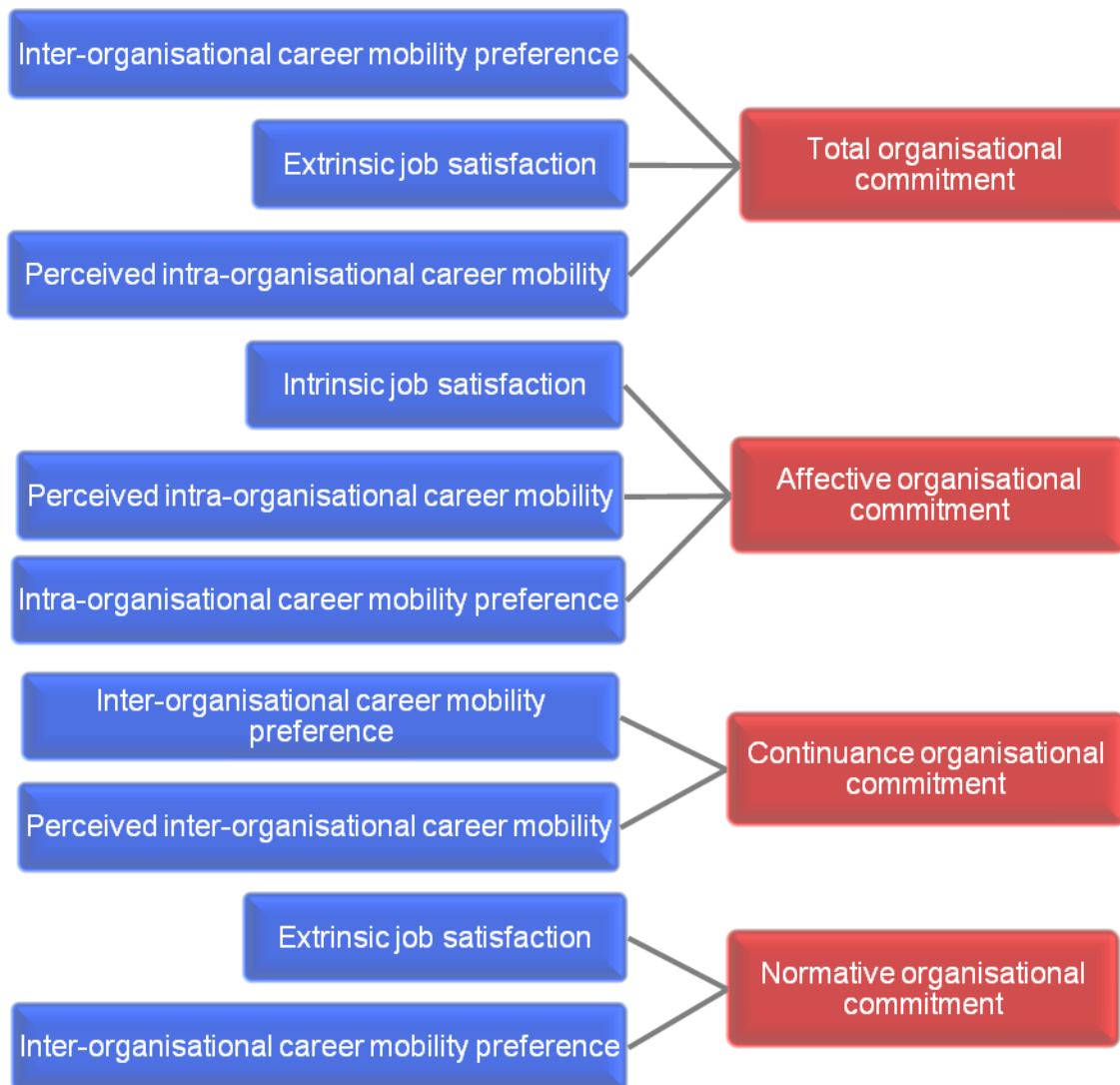


Figure 4.1. Summary of core results.

c) *The participants' job satisfaction seems to be related to their organisational commitment.*

- It is concluded that overall organisational commitment, as well as an emotional attachment to the organisation (affective commitment) and a sense of obligation toward the organisation (normative commitment), seem to be higher when an individual experiences greater job satisfaction with job tasks, including type of work, achievement and ability utilisation (intrinsic satisfaction), and with the work environment, including rewards and recognition (extrinsic satisfaction).

4.1.2.2 *The second aim: To empirically investigate whether differences exist in the perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment of individuals from different age, gender, tenure, marital status, employment status and racial groups as manifested in the sample of participants.*

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

a) *Age and race groups tended to differ significantly regarding their levels of perceived career mobility.*

- It is concluded that participants younger than 30 years of age and black participants tend to perceive more opportunities to find appropriate jobs in alternative organisations.

b) *Gender and tenure groups tended to differ significantly regarding their levels of career mobility preference.*

- Based on the findings it is concluded that female participants and those with greater tenure tend to prefer the availability of opportunities to move between different organisations.

c) *Age and tenure groups tend to differ significantly regarding their levels of organisational commitment.*

- It is concluded that participants older than 30 years of age seem to be more committed overall, more emotionally attached and attached to their organisation due to the cost involved in leaving the organisation compared to those younger than 30 years of age.
- From the results it is concluded that participants with greater tenure seem to experience greater commitment to the organisation (total, affective continuance and normative). The relationship between tenure and age seems likely to be interconnected in that older individuals may have been working for a longer time span and therefore may have a greater opportunity for longer tenure than an employee just entering the workforce.

4.1.3 Conclusions regarding the central hypothesis

Regarding the central hypothesis, it can be concluded that individuals' perceived career mobility and career mobility preference relate significantly to their job satisfaction and

organisational commitment. Furthermore, groups differing in age, gender, tenure and race differ significantly in their levels of perceived career mobility, career mobility preference and organisational commitment. The empirical study yielded statistically significant evidence to support the central hypothesis.

4.1.4 Conclusions regarding contributions to the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology

The findings of the literature review and the empirical study contribute unique new knowledge to the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, with particular focus on informing employee retention practices. The literature review provided new insight into the conceptualisation of the constructs of relevance to the study (perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment), the possible relationships between these constructs and the differences between biographical groups regarding these constructs. Despite suggestions by other researchers regarding the relationship between these constructs, to the researcher's knowledge the relationships between these three constructs have not been studied previously. This study is the first attempt to measure perceived career mobility and career mobility preference in the South African context and, as such, contributes valuable new knowledge and insights to the development of a measuring instrument for assessing perceived career mobility and career mobility preference in the South African context. Although the perceived career mobility and career mobility preference scales require a great deal more research in order to refine and develop them as instruments, the findings of this study provide an indication of the possible value-add of such scales and preliminary research into this area.

The conclusions drawn from the literature review indicate that practitioners should consider the theoretical models of career mobility, job satisfaction and organisational commitment when working within the field of career and organisational psychology. In addition, the theoretical relationship between these variables and differences between biographical groups need to be considered, as the findings have provided new insight into the value of these variables in retention practices and retention within the financial field. Previous research has yielded inconsistent results regarding differences between biographical groups in terms of the variables of relevance to this study. The findings of this study, however, provide some evidence to build on existing findings, which support the existence of these differences. In addition, several studies have indicated a relationship between race and job hopping, and the findings of this study suggest that career mobility opportunities and

preferences could provide valuable insight into this relationship, particularly in the South African context.

Practitioners utilising the instruments included in this study need to ensure the reliability and validity of the instruments prior to using them. The reliability of the instruments was analysed, and additional information to that which is available on the instruments within the South African context was therefore generated by this study. The conclusions drawn from this study indicate that the instruments utilised generally displayed acceptable levels of internal consistency reliability.

The results of the empirical study provide new information on the relationship between employee perceptions of and preferences for their career mobility opportunities, and how this may be related to their job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Furthermore, the possibility of an employee's career mobility perceptions and preferences and job satisfaction explaining organisational commitment was highlighted. Conclusions drawn from the empirical study indicate that there is a relationship between the constructs of relevance to this study, and that perceived career mobility, career mobility preference and job satisfaction experienced by an employee influence his/her commitment to the organisation. Organisations therefore can focus on encouraging a committed workforce through strategies centred on employee career mobility and satisfaction.

By focusing on factors that satisfy accounting auditing and financial professionals, including their preference for advancement opportunities within organisations, and ensuring that employees with such a preference experience the organisation as a supportive entity in their advancement and satisfaction, organisations may utilise this information to develop positive employee attitudes toward the organisation. Moreover, an understanding of professionals' satisfaction with and perceptions of their career mobility can be utilised to inform career pathing initiatives, as well as to provide insight into talent retention strategies specific to the individual and organisation. By understanding employee preferences and attitudes toward remaining with the organisation, organisations can tailor retention strategies accordingly (Lumley, 2009). Accounting, auditing and financial professionals with higher perceptions of intra-organisational career mobility tended to experience greater organisational commitment. Tailoring retention strategies to specific organisational circumstances may include considering the needs of various biographical groups within the organisation. Attitudes toward the organisation, perceived career mobility and the fulfilment of the preferences and values of individuals can be gauged by the organisation in order to determine whether

employees from different biographical groups experience organisational support for their preferences and values differently. The organisation can therefore gauge whether differences in attitude toward the organisation differ significantly between groups and subgroups. Differences between biographical groups in terms of their perceived career mobility, career mobility preference and organisational commitment can be utilised in practice to hone in on specific groups' needs, preferences and values in order to tailor retention strategies accordingly. The findings provide insight into factors that may add value to effective retention practices, for instance, and aligned with the literature, the findings of this study suggest that older employees experience greater commitment toward the organisation. In addition, the findings support recent studies that suggest that females prefer the availability of inter-organisational mobility opportunities.

The study highlights the possibility of differences between biographical groups' perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, and this finding is of particular relevance in the multicultural South African context.

4.2 LIMITATIONS

Several limitations in terms of the literature review and empirical study have been identified. The limitations of this study will be discussed in the following section.

4.2.1 Limitations of the literature review

Limitations regarding the literature review include a lack of research in the South African context and abroad on the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Although there is a broad research base on job satisfaction and organisational commitment, few studies have focused specifically on the relationship of these constructs with perceived career mobility. Furthermore, little research has been conducted on the perception of career mobility opportunities as a construct on its own and, when studied, it has been referred to differently by different authors.

An all-encompassing view of the factors influencing talent retention could not be provided, as only four variables were considered (perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment). Several additional factors may need to be considered in developing retention strategies.

4.2.2 Limitations of the empirical study

Some limitations regarding the empirical study have been identified in previous chapters. What follows is a summary of limitations specific to the empirical study. Limitations detected include, for example, the exclusion of various other environmental and individual factors, as only four work-related dimensions were measured in order to inform retention practices. For instance, the consideration of economic factors is an important consideration within the economic climate, as South Africa was experiencing an economic recession at the time of this study and this may have influenced the participants' perceptions of their current career mobility. The economic recession may also have influenced continuance commitment, as the participants may perceive greater risks in leaving their organisation because of the poor economic climate. The empirical study utilised a cross-sectional design, and therefore the results were obtained for only a single time period. This contrasts to the possible value that could be gained from longitudinal studies, which allow research to be conducted over an extended period of time. A longitudinal design would overcome the possible impact of economic conditions. In addition, bias analyses, although often neglected by many studies, could add value to the findings in terms of providing evidence on the validity of the study, or could highlight areas requiring improvement in this regard.

Although participants from various organisations were included in the study in order to avoid the influence of a single organisational climate, culture or other factors specific to the organisation, there are further factors that may have influenced the results. Due to the scope of this study, all factors could not be controlled for or measured, and therefore factors specific to the individual and the environment may also have acted as mediating variables. Possible influencing factors include antecedents to job satisfaction and organisational commitment, as mentioned in the literature review. Organisational factors could include factors such as organisational climate, culture and supervisor relationship. Individual factors include factors such as an individual's career anchors, which were not measured in this study. The scope of the variables measured limits the validity of the study in that the results may have been influenced by variables extraneous to those that were tested.

In addition, factors specific to the instruments utilised may have limited the study, including the reliability of the instruments. The age of the instruments should also be considered, in particular the MSQ, which is several decades old, and therefore the possibility of outdated language should be considered in order to determine whether the language needs to be refined. The argument concerning content redundancy and construct contamination of the

OCS needs to be analysed further. Further research is also required on the perceived career mobility and career mobility preference scales, in terms of validity, particularly construct validity. Reliable exploratory factor analyses needs to be undertaken by administering the scales to a larger sample. The instruments utilised are self-report instruments and so the results are dependent on the participant's perceptions and level of self-awareness, which could in turn affect response patterns and hence the validity of the findings.

Due to the small sample size, it cannot conclusively be ascertained that the relationships and differences found in this study would be true of a larger, heterogeneous sample. The sample was not heterogeneous, as the small sample and low level of participation precluded random sampling. In turn, the sample did not represent the South African population in terms of age, gender, tenure, marital status and race. Therefore, the nature of the sample may have a negative impact on the potential to generalise the results to the broader multicultural and diverse South African population. The small sample size also limited the scope of possible statistical analyses. The sampling method utilised was unavoidable, but although it is a scientific method, a random sampling method rather than the non-probability method utilised may have rendered the results more generalisable. With reference to the interpretation of differences between the biographical groups, the results should be interpreted with caution in instances where unequal group sizes exist (Field, 2000). Certain of the statistical tests utilised may not have performed as well as they could have, had the biographical groups been distributed more evenly.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the results of this study show prospects for the analysis of the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, as well as differences between biographical groups' experiences of these constructs. This study may be utilised as a basis to understand the relationships between the variables measured and differences between biographical groups in order to inform the formulation of retention strategies.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of this study, recommendations are made regarding talent retention within organisations and for future studies.

4.3.1 Practitioners working in the field of talent retention

The key to reducing turnover is firstly to understand the costs of turnover, and secondly to understand turnover behaviour from the employee's perspective (Kochanski & Ledford, 2001). The results of this study show that it is necessary to consider perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in order to understand turnover behaviour. Practical recommendations are to follow in view of the argument that satisfied and committed employees display increased productivity and remain attached to the organisation, and that employees with greater mobility opportunities may present retention challenges. The relationships observed between the three constructs of relevance to this study may provide insight into the development of retention strategies in the following manner:

- Ensuring perceived intra-organisational career mobility may be an important consideration in retention strategies in light of the view that employees may experience organisations as supportive entities that are willing to invest in them by providing career development opportunities. It therefore is suggested that the provision of career mobility opportunities could be utilised as an important career development support technique in order to retain committed and satisfied employees.
- The assessment of an employee's perceived career mobility, including his/her preference for career mobility, along with job satisfaction and organisational commitment, may be assessed by the organisation as part of career development practices. The assessment of career mobility preference and employee attitudes toward the organisation may enhance self-awareness, and this could be undertaken with the aim to satisfy specific employee values and preferences, providing insight into career-planning practices.
- Employee career development practices should be individualised, taking biographical factors into consideration.
- Employees may experience emotional attachment to the organisation when their abilities and values match those of the work environment and when their need for movement within the organisation is satisfied. Employee satisfaction may be enhanced by ensuring that reinforcers provided by the organisation are perceived by employees to be valuable, matching their abilities and values to the organisational reinforcers.
- Despite some employees experiencing a preference for moving between organisations, such employees may still be committed to the organisation if their mobility preferences are met and if they are matched to the job.

- Employees experiencing a preference for moving between organisations may remain committed to the organisation if satisfaction is experienced with factors within the job environment, including satisfaction with one's supervisor, the enforcement of company policies, working conditions, pay, co-workers, advancement opportunities and recognition.
- Organisations should explore the extent to which provision is made for advancement opportunities. Factors such as the provision of training opportunities and opportunities for internal promotion could be considered in creating a perception that the organisation values intra-organisational career mobility.

4.3.2 Future research

Against the conclusions and limitations of this study, the following recommendations are made for future research:

There is a need for further research on the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment within the South African context. It is recommended that future studies address the limitations identified in this study. This study was limited to a small sample of predominantly white employees within the career entry life stage, it therefore is recommended that future studies include a larger, more representative sample. The sample included in this study consisted of accounting, auditing and financial staff professionals as it was believed that these individuals may experience some form of perceived career mobility due to the skills shortage. It is recommended that the study is undertaken by selecting a larger, randomised sample from various industries, including professional and non-professional industries.

Due to the small sample size and the limited scope of the study, exploratory factor analyses could not be undertaken, but it is highly recommended that further studies are undertaken to address this limitation and to analyse the validity of the career mobility scales. In addition, it is recommended that embeddedness factors are analysed in order to add depth to the study, and that career mobility preference is analysed as a mediating variable in the relationship between perceived career mobility as an independent variable and job satisfaction and organisational commitment as dependent variables.

Due to the somewhat smaller pool of research on perceived career mobility and the lack of refinement of the construct, it is recommended that a qualitative approach to the study of this construct is taken in order to provide greater depth in the understanding of this construct.

The focus of this study was on perceived career mobility, and the results regarding this construct yielded valuable findings for the practice. In view of the value of the findings of this study it is recommended that actual career mobility in the South African context should also be explored. Kondratuk et al. (2004) reported post-move changes in organisational attitudes, thereby highlighting the need for future studies to explore differences between the influence of perceived and actual organisational career mobility on attitudes toward the organisation. It therefore is recommended that future studies explore differences in actual and perceived career mobility in terms of how these two variables influence employee attitudes and behaviours within an organisation. Furthermore, a longitudinal study on the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment may be of value.

The analysis of additional variables not measured in this study, such as organisational culture, career anchors and job search behaviours, may provide valuable insight into the findings of this study.

4.4 INTEGRATION OF THE STUDY

This study investigated the existence of a relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The results suggest that a relationship exists between the variables of relevance to this study, and that the aforementioned variables may provide insight into talent retention practices.

The literature review suggests that there is a relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Skills shortages and increased opportunities for career mobility resulting from globalisation and the changing nature of work have required organisations to turn their focus toward informed retention strategies. Globalisation and increased competition have brought with them the ability for individuals to move between organisations more easily than before. Job satisfaction and organisational commitment, as well as employee advancement opportunities, have been indicated as important when considering the retention of employees. Differences between biographical groups in terms of their attitudes to the organisation have to be considered.

The empirical study provided statistically significant support for the central hypothesis. The findings therefore suggest that a relationship exists between individuals' perceived career mobility, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. In addition, groups differing in age, gender, tenure and race were shown to differ significantly in their levels of perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

In conclusion, the findings of the study reveal that insight into the relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment may have practical significance in that knowledge of this relationship may inform talent retention. Talent retention has become a prominent focus in many organisations, due to the competitive nature of today's work environment. In addition, the multicultural South Africa context illuminates the need to consider differences between biographical groups regarding the variables of relevance to this study.

4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the conclusions drawn from this study, as well as the possible limitations of the study, by focusing on both the literature review and the empirical study. Recommendations were then made with reference to practical suggestions for talent retention and recommendations for future research. Finally, an integration of the study was presented by highlighting the support of the findings for the existence of a relationship between perceived career mobility, career mobility preference, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

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