INVESTIGATION OF LEADERSHIP EMPOWERMENT BEHAVIOUR, PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT, WORK ENGAGEMENT AND TURNOVER INTENTION IN A CHEMICAL INDUSTRY

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COMMENTS

The reader is reminded of the following:

- The references as well as the editorial style comply with the requirements prescribed by the *Publication Manual (6th edition)* of the American Psychological Association (APA).

- The mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article.

- This research was conducted in a chemical organisation and the views and opinions expressed in this article are not necessarily the same as those of the chemical organisation.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, in particular my husband Johan, children, Gerhard, Quenene and Christo, who have been a great source of motivation and inspiration.

To my loving parents, Gert and Kitty Emmenis, who have always supported me in everything.

Your words, ‘Where there is a will, there is a way’, will always remain with me.
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Globalisation radically changed the way in which talent is sourced, organised and managed. The chemical industry as competitor in the global landscape is increasingly faced with challenges to attract and retain talent. The success and global competitiveness of the chemical industry largely depends on its employees, their ideas and intellectual resources. Highly talented employees are targeted by competitor companies and head hunters with substantial financial incentives and benefits. Leadership plays a vital role in creating a stimulating, empowered and challenging work environment that will attract and retain employees. Employees need to experience a sense of meaning, have the resources to do their jobs and most importantly, need to be empowered beyond being asked to meet performance goals.

The aim of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention in a chemical industry. The study secondly examined whether leadership empowerment behaviour affected turnover intention via psychological empowerment and thirdly the study investigated if leadership empowerment behaviour affected work engagement via psychological empowerment.

A random cross-sectional design with paper-based surveys as the primary method of data collection was used to accomplish the research objectives. The measuring battery for this study consisted of the Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire (LEB), the Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire (MEQ), the Work Engagement Scale (WES) and the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS). The simulation and statistical analysis was carried out using the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences IBM SPSS version 21 and Mplus. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) which is theory driven was used in the study.

The results showed that a significant relationship existed between leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention. Regression analysis indicated that leadership empowerment behaviour had significant predictive value towards
psychological empowerment and work engagement. The results showed that leadership empowerment behaviour did not affect turnover intention via psychological empowerment, but rather had a direct effect on employee’s turnover intention. The results further showed that psychological empowerment did have an indirect effect on the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour and work engagement. The results indicated that it would be worthwhile if organisations develop leader’s competence and skills to empower their workforces. This would lead to higher levels of psychological empowerment, work engagement and retention of talent. Recommendations for future research were made.
**OPSOMMING**

**Onderwerp:** Ondersoek van leiersbemagtigingsgedrag, sielkundige bemagtiging, werksbegeestering en bedankingsgeneigdheid in ‘n chemiese bedryf.

**Sleutel terme:** Leiersbemagtigingsgedrag, sielkundige bemagtiging, werksbegeestering en bedankingsgeneigdheid.

Globalisering het die manier waarop talent verkry, georganiseer en bestuur word, radikaal verander. Die chemiese bedryf as deelnemer in die globale landskap word toenemend gekonfronteer met uitdagings rakende die behoud en aantrekkingskrag van talent. Die sukses en globale mededingendheid van die chemiese bedryf hang grootliks af van hul werknemers, hulle idees en intellektuele hulpbronne. Hoogs talentvolle werknemers word gelok deur mededingende maatskappye wat aansienlike finansiële pakette en voordele bied. Leierskap speel ‘n belangrike rol in die skep van ‘n stimulerende, bemagtigende en uitdagende werksomgewing wat ‘n individu sal lok en ook behou. Werknemers moet ‘n sin van betekenis ervaar, genoeg hulpbronne hê om hulle werk te doen en die belangrikste van alles is dat hulle moet voel dat hulle bemagtig work om hulle werksdoelwitte te bereik.

Die doel van hierdie studie was om te bepaal of ‘n verhouding bestaan tussen leierskap-bemagtigingsgedrag, sielkundige bemagtiging, werksbegeestering en bedankingsgeneigdheid in ‘n chemiese bedryf. Die studie het tweedens ondersoek of leierskapbemagtigings gedrag, bedankingsgeneigdheid via sielkundige bemagtiging beinvloed en derdens het die studie ondersoek of leierskapbemagtigingsgedrag, werksbegeestering deur sielkundige bemagtiging beinvloed.

Om die navorsingsdoelwitte te bereik is ‘n ewekansige deursnee-ontwerp met papier-gebaseerde opnames as die primêre metode van data-insameling gebruik. Die metings- batterye wat vir hierdie studie gebruik is, is as volg: Die “Leadership Empowerment Behaviour”- (LEB) vraelys, “Measuring Empowerment”- (MEQ) vraelys, “Work Engagement”- (WES) vraelys en die “Turnover Intention”- (TI) skaal. Die simulasie en statistiese analyse is met behulp van die Statistiese program vir sosiale studies IBM (SPSS) version 21 program en Mplus weergawe 6,12 uitgevoer. Bevestigende faktorontleding (CFA) wat teorie-gedrewre is, is in die studie gebruik.

Die resultate het getoon dat daar ‘n beduidende verband bestaan tussen leierskapbemagtigingsgedrag, sielkundige bemagtiging, werksbegeestering en bedankingsgeneigdheid. Regressie-analises het aangedui dat leierskap bemagtigingsgedrag ‘n
beduidende voorspellende waarde het op sielkundige bemagtiging en werks begeesterings. Die resultate dui daarop dat werknemers se vlak van werksbegeesterings verhoog kan word deur leiers wat op ‘n bemagtigende manier leiding gee. Die resultate het ook getoon dat leierskap bemagtigingsgedrag nie via sielkundige bemagtiging ‘n invloed het op bedankingsgeneigdheid het nie maar eerder dat leierskapbemagtigings gedrag ‘n direkte invloed het op werknemers se bedankingsgeneigdheid het. Die resultate dui daarop dat dit die moeite werd sal wees vir organisasies om leiers se bevoegdheid en vaardighede te ontwikkel om sodoende hulle werksmag te bemagtig. Dit sal lei tot hoër vlakke van sielkundige bemagtiging, werksbegeesterings en behoud van talent. Aanbevelings vir verdere navorsing is gemaak.
CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This mini-dissertation focuses on the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention in a chemical organisation in South Africa. The study investigated whether psychological empowerment is an intervening variable in the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour and turnover intention and psychological empowerment behaviour and work engagement respectively.

In this chapter, the problem statement is discussed, after which the research objectives are set. Following that, the research method is explained, and the division of the chapters is presented.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH

The global business environment is becoming increasingly fast pace and competitive; the challenges of globalisation being only one of the many factors with which business have to cope (Chipunsa & Berry, 2010). One of the critical areas of focus that globalisation brought about is the mobility of employees and with that subsequent challenge of retaining employees. It is for this reason that talent management has become a top priority for organisations worldwide. In an intense global world, companies on the one end call for employees to be progressively more emotionally and cognitively loyal to their organisation, clients and their work (Talent Mobility 2020, 2010). On the other end, globalisation changed the mobility of employees with the younger generation having mind sets, ambitions and expectations noticeably different from any other generation before (Talent Mobility 2020, 2012). Nationally talent management has become a top priority for organisations worldwide. As stated by many (Beechler & Woodward, 2009; Bhatnagar, 2007; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Ulrich, Brockbank, Johnson, Sandholtz, & Younger, 2008) national businesses need to invest greatly in the skills, talent and knowledge of their human capital to compete globally.

There is increasing pressure on corporate leaders to be competitive, retain talent and at the same time keep the hearts and minds of their workforces engaged (Ashford & Dieck, 2012; Vaiman, Scullion, & Collings, 2012). Leaders increasingly play a critical role in building a strong pool of talent that is central to organisational success (Bhatnagar, 2007; Druskat & Wheeler, 2003; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Yukl & Becker, 2006). The World Economic Forum is of the opinion that South African organisations, as part of the global world, are not on par when it comes to employee-employer relations (Competitiveness Report 2011–2012).
The chemical industry in South Africa contributes significantly to the global chemical industry (Peralta & Stark, 2006) and face similar talent challenges as other global companies. Added challenges, however, are major skills shortages and employment equity targets imposed by the South African government (Van Schalkwyk, Du Toit, Bothma, & Rothmann, 2010). Leaders all over the world need to understand and manage psychological mechanisms that will prevent their talent from fostering intentions to leave (Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008).

Various literature exists on leadership practices and the impact thereof on engagement, psychological empowerment and employees’ intention to leave (Alam & Mohammad, 2009; Albrecht & Andreetta, 2010; Bhatnagar, 2012; Cho, Spence-Laschinger, & Wong, 2006; Grego, 2006; Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008; Mare, 2007; May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004; Pieterse-Landman, 2012; Raub & Robert, 2010). In the current organisational reality, it is argued that conventionally dominated leadership practices should be balanced with management practices directed at the empowerment of employees (Dewettinck & Van Ameijde, 2011).

Konczak, Stelly, and Trusty (2000) conceptualise leadership empowerment behaviour (LEB) as the ability of leaders to delegate authority to employees, inspire accountability for results, encourage self-directed decision-making, share and enhance skills development, and coach employees to perform in an innovative manner. Building on this, Arnold, Arad, Rhoades, and Drasgow (2000) confirm that empowerment is a set of practices or managerial techniques in which empowering leadership behaviours play a central role. If leaders empower their employees, benefits for both the organisation and employees are improved economic performance, reduced role conflict (Greasley, Bryman, Dainty, Price, Naismith & Soetanto 2008); increased commitment, better decision-making and higher levels of job satisfaction (Ergeneli, Ari, & Metin, 2006; Yukl & Becker, 2006); decreased turnover intention (Mare, 2007); and empowerment practices creating an engaged and satisfying workforce (Grego, 2006; Spence-Laschinger & Wong, 2006). Mare (2007), Albrecht and Andreetta (2010), as well as Tjosvold and Sun (2010) in their studies showed that employee’s feel more empowered when they perceive their leaders to have an empowering leadership style.

Leadership empowerment behaviour focuses on managerial styles that share authority with employees at all levels; and the psychological perspective focuses on how employees experience empowerment at work (Lawler, Mohrman, & Benson, 2001; Raub & Robert, 2010). According to Raub and Robert (2010), there are solid theoretical grounds for the argument that empowering leadership behaviours stimulate psychological empowerment.
Psychological empowerment centres on how employees experience empowerment in the workplace. Do they experience powerlessness or do they feel in control? (Kang, Stewart, Kim, & Lim, 2012). Psychological empowerment can also be described as the perception by members that they have the change to help define work roles, accomplish meaningful work, and impact important decisions (Spence-Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, & Wilk, 2004; Yukl & Becker, 2006). Psychological empowerment is defined by Spreitzer (1995) as an individual’s subjective experience of empowerment based on cognitions about oneself in relation to one’s work role. It is characterised as a four-dimensional psychological state, consisting of meaning (subjective valuation of the significance of the job), competence (personal sense of worth), self-determination (one’s sense of control, independence, and freedom of choice) and impact (belief in the ability to influence the environment). Together these four understandings echo one’s active (an orientation in which the individual wishes and feels able to shape his or her work role and environment) rather than inactive orientation to a work role (Spreitzer, 1995).

Increased psychological empowerment leads to better employee attitudes and work behaviour (Seibert, Wang, & Courtright, 2011), it influence positively affective commitment (Brunetto et al., 2012), decrease turnover intention (Albrecht & Andreetta, 2010; Bhatnagar, 2012; Cho, Spence-Laschinger, & Wong, 2006) and affect work engagement positively (De Villiers & Stander, 2011; Stander & Rothmann, 2010).

According to Kahn (1990), personal engagement is “the harnessing of organisation members’ selves to their work roles where people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance” (p. 694). Based on Kahn’s (1990) conceptualisation of engagement, May, et al., (2004) developed a measurement model and found that three determinants, namely meaningfulness, safety and availability significantly influenced engagement. Their study also revealed that supervisor relations particularly had the strongest effect on engagement. Building on previous literature, Tuckey, Bakker, and Dollard (2012) in their research concluded that leaders had a significant effect on follower engagement. Engagement refers to the degree to which employees are focused and engrossed in their roles (Saks, 2006). Kahn (1992) views the concept of engagement from a different perspective and describes it as “being fully there”.

The Corporate Leadership Council’s (2011) research conducted among 59 organisations spread across 10 industries and 27 countries (50 000 respondents), has shown that employee engagement is crucial to driving performance and employee retention. It found that much of employee commitment to day-to-day work, team and organisation runs through commitment to an
individual’s direct manager. Devi (2009) is of the opinion that engagement is one step from commitment and that it is in the interest of all organisations to understand the drivers of engagement. Multiple measures of engagement demonstrated significant relationships with work outcomes, turnover intention, job satisfaction and affective commitment (Wefald, Reichard, & Serrano, 2011). Furthermore, Devi (2009) reports that engaged workers are conscious of the organisational situation and work with colleagues to improve performance within their roles. Baskin (2007) states than an employee who is not engaged is more likely to leave the organisation.

Employee voluntary turnover is a phenomenon that produces serious problems for organisations and their leaders, because it could have an adverse effect on various organisational outcomes. A number of studies have shown that low employee engagement results in intention to leave (Albrecht & Andreetta, 2010; De Villiers & Stander, 2011; Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010). Van Schalkwyk et al. (2010) are of the opinion that the importance of understanding turnover intention is critical when considering the competition for talented employees among companies.
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The chemical industry in question had to rely on restructuring and downsizing to remain competitive. Downsizing or restructuring as a response to business challenges has become a common practice for organisations operating in the current global economy (Chipunsa & Berry, 2010). The restructuring and downsizing was done through a process of voluntary retrenchments, restructuring and re-engineering of jobs. A recent survey employed in this environment assessed the current culture of the organisation. The survey provided an understanding of the personal motivations of employees, their personal experience and an indication of where employees felt the organisation should be heading. The outcome of the survey highlighted feelings of powerlessness, lack of trust, role conflict and extreme bureaucracy. Kurebwa (2011) is of the opinion that organisational downscaling has significant negative consequences; not only for employees who leave the organisation, but also for those who stay.

The organisation has fewer people to deal with existing expectations; whilst new demands are being placed upon employees that remain behind. As mentioned in the opening paragraphs, those feelings may increase employees’ intention to leave the organisation. Ugboro (2006) is of the opinion that if unchecked and without the appropriate organisational interventions, these feeling may lead to voluntary turnover of high performing survivors on whose long-term commitment, motivation and devotion the success of restructuring and downsizing depends.

Bordin, Bartram, and Casimir (2007) indicated the significance of leadership empowerment behaviour, because it correlated positively with psychological empowerment, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Albrecht and Andreetta (2010) found that leadership empowerment behaviour influences employee empowerment which in turn impacts employee engagement, affective commitment and turnover intention. Furthermore, Mendes and Stander (2010) found that leader empowering behaviour, role clarity and psychological empowerment predicted a large percentage of the variance in engagement. Mare (2007) and Van Schalkwyk et al. (2010) found that leadership empowerment behaviour correlated negatively with turnover intention which implies that when leadership empowerment behaviour increases, turnover intention decreases. Leadership, according to Aarons (2006), plays an important role in forming employees’ perceptions and responses to organisational change.

Based on the discussion, the empirical study will be placed within the Job Demand and Resources model (JD-R) where leadership empowerment behaviour is viewed as a job resource (Demerouti &
Bakker, 2011). Job resources include those occupational resources that facilitate the attainment of organisational outcomes and goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006). To build on this, Bakker, Demerouti, and Verbeke (2004) viewed interpersonal and social relations like manager and co-worker support, role clarity and involvement in decision-making as job resources which are drivers of work engagement. Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Roma, and Bakker (2002) investigated the advantages of having engaged employees. They described engaged workers as active agents who believe in themselves and generate their own positive feedback. Engaged workers have values that match those of the organisation, and they are also engaged outside the work environment (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Engagement is assumed to yield positive results at both individual and organisational levels. De Villiers and Stander (2011) found that higher levels of psychological empowerment are associated with higher levels of work engagement. In Bhatnagar’s (2007) view, employee engagement is the most effective way in which to hold talent.

The literature review indicated that leaders of today should ask what can be done to obtain optimal performance and prevent employees from fostering intentions to leave. This study expected to find support for a hypothesised model in which leadership empowerment has an impact on psychological empowerment and work engagement, which will have an influence on turnover intention in the chemical industry. The substance in exploring this relationship rests in the valuable insight it could deliver to organisations in terms of where they should, through retaining their human capital, focus their attention to become or remain competitive in the global market.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions may be formulated based on the research problem:

- How are the constructs and relationships for leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention conceptualised in literature?
- What is the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention?
- What is the intervening effect of psychological empowerment in the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour and turnover intention?
- What is the intervening effect of psychological empowerment in the relationship between leadership empowerment and work engagement?
1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.5.1 General and specific objectives

The general objective of this study is to explore the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention in a chemical industry in South Africa. The specific objectives of this research are to:

- Conceptualise the constructs and relationships of leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention from literature.
- Investigate the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention.
- Determine the intervening effect of psychological empowerment in the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour and turnover intention?
- Determine the intervening effect of psychological empowerment in the relationship between leadership empowerment and work engagement?

1.6 RESEARCH METHOD

In order to achieve the specific objectives, this research study consists of two phases, namely a literature review and an empirical study. In the first phase a literature review will be conducted where the main aim will be to focus on the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention. A wide range of relevant articles (1995 – 2013) will be consulted; however the main focus will be on more recent literature (2005 – 2013). To depict information relating to leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention, the following literature sources will be consulted:

Library catalogues, internet search engines, text books, dissertations and theses, data bases that will be utilised, are Ebscohost, Emerald, Nexus, PsycArticles, PsycInfo, SAePublications, Sabinet and Science Direct. Relevant journals on the topic will be consulted.

The empirical study consists of the research design, research participants, research procedure, measuring instruments and the statistical analysis using the SPSS 21 program (IBM Corporation, 2012) and Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 2010).
1.6.1 Research design

The data for this study will be obtained through a quantitative research approach. Quantitative research is a form of conclusive research involving large representative samples and a structured data collection process will be employed (Struwig & Stead, 2001). The researcher will use a cross-sectional survey design using convenience sampling to reach the research objectives as all data will be gathered at a single point in time (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, & Delport, 2005). The researcher will have sessions with groups of people where the questionnaire will be handed out and explained.

1.6.2 Research participants

A convenience/availability sample will be used to collect the data in all operations departments in a chemical company. The population consists of 700 participants. The sample will include employees on all levels within the organisation. The participants will include men and women from different racial groups (African, Indian, Coloured and White). All participants must be proficient in English as all questionnaires will be administered in English. Participants will have a minimum qualification level of grade 10.

1.6.3 Research procedure

Permission from the governing body of the chemical organisation will be requested. During these meetings the researcher will address confidentiality, anonymity of results along with ethical considerations. The researcher will explain the nature of the research study along with the measuring instruments to be used. The researcher will also discuss the motivation and the ethical considerations of the study before disseminating the questionnaires.

Consent letters will be attached to the questionnaires, along with a formal letter from the North-West University regarding the purpose of this research. The letter of consent will sketch the goal of the research, the rationale behind the importance of this research, who the participants will be, and how both the individual and the university will benefit from this research. Confidentiality will be promised. The questionnaire will take more or less 30 minutes to complete. Data collection will take place over a period of 1 month to ensure all shifts are covered, followed by the data analysis process. The participating business units will receive feedback on the findings of this research.
1.6.4 Measuring instruments

The measuring batteries that will be applied consist of four standardised measures as well as a biographical questionnaire that will be developed by the researcher.

A self-constructed *Biographical questionnaire* will be used to establish the biographical characteristics of the participants as well as demographic information relevant to the sample and the objectives of this research study. Participants will be asked to provide information pertaining to their race, gender, age, service years, occupational level and department while still allowing for the participants to remain anonymous.

The *Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire* (LEBQ: Konczak et al., 2000) will be used to measure employee empowerment. The instrument is a multidimensional 19 item scale with six subscales. The scale is rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The original scale consists of 17 items. Example of an item in the “Authority” subscale is: ‘My manager gives me the authority I need to make decisions that improve work processes and procedures’ (Konczak et al., 2000, p. 307). Arnold et al. (2000) increased the number of items for the subscale ‘information sharing’ and added two items. These items are ‘My manager explains his/her decisions and actions to my work group’; and ‘My manager explains company goals to my work group’. Konczak et al. (2000) reported reliability coefficients that ranged between 0.82 and 0.88 with the exception of one score that measured 0.70. Higher scores indicated higher perceptions of leader empowering behaviours. Results indicate that a six factor model provides a good description of the relationship among the LEBQ items (Arnold et al., 2000).

The *Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire* (MEQ: Spreitzer, 1995) will be utilised to measure the level of psychological empowerment experienced by employees. This instrument is scored on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale consists of four sub-dimensions of psychological empowerment with three items each. Examples of items are “The work I do is very important to me” (meaning); “I am confident about my ability to do my job” (competence); “I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work” (self-determination); and “My impact on what happens in my department is large” (impact). Alpha coefficients for the subscales are reported by Spreitzer (1995) as 0.92 for meaning; 0.90 for competence; 0.85 for self-determination; and 0.84 for impact, with an overall Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.92.
The Work Engagement Scale (WES: Rothmann, 2010) measures work engagement on a seven-point frequency scale varying from 1 (almost never or never) to 7 (always or almost always). The items reflect the three components of Kahn’s (1990) conceptualisation of work engagement, namely cognitive, emotional and physical engagement. Cognitive engagement will be measured by three items (e.g. “I am very absorbed in my work”); emotional engagement will be measured by four items (e.g. “I am passionate about my work”); and physical engagement will be measured by four items (e.g. “I feel alive and vital at work”). Rothmann (2010) reported evidence for the construct validity of the WES with the following alpha coefficients for the three scales of the WES: physical engagement = 0.80; emotional engagement = 0.82; and cognitive engagement = 0.78.

The Turnover Intention Scale (TIS: Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000) will be used to measure turnover intention. The scale is a five-point likert scale and ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) with high scores measuring the respondents’ probability to leave the organisation. The scale consisted of three items and an example of an item was “If I was completely free to choose, I would leave this job”. The Cronbach alpha co-efficient for the TIS was 0.83 (Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000). Principal component analysis of the TIS in this study supported a unifactorial solution explaining 74% of the variance. The component loadings varied from 0.73 to 0.94 (Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000).

1.6.5 Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis will be carried out with the SPSS 21 program (IBM Corporation, 2012) and the Mplus statistical modelling program (Muthén, & Muthén, 2010). All statistical techniques will be utilised in order to obtain answers to the research questions.

Confirmatory factor analyses will be conducted to confirm that the measures were different from one another. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) will be used to describe the data. Cronbach alpha coefficients will be reported as an indication of the construct reliability of the measuring instruments. Values range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater reliability (Pallant, 2010). The cut-off point for alpha coefficients used will be $\alpha = 0.70$ (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Pearson correlation coefficients will be used to determine the relationships between variables. Effect sizes as set out in Steyn (1999) will be used to decide on the practical significance of the findings. The practical significant cut-off point for correlation coefficients was set at $r \geq 0.30$ which represents a medium effect and $r \geq 0.50$ for a large effect (Cohen, 1992; Steyn, 1999).
To answer the research questions and to test the fit of the hypothesised model (Figure 1), the researcher will utilise structural equation modelling (SEM) as implemented by Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 2010). To test the hypothesised model, the researcher will follow a two-step, model-building procedure: The measurement model and the structural model will be tested by calculating the maximum likelihood analysis (Muthén & Muthén, 2010). Indices in the study will be as follow: Absolute fit indices include the Chi-square (indicates the absolute fit of the model); and Root-Means-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). The incremental fit indices that will be used will be: Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI); Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Acceptable values for the TLI and CFI indices are >0.90. RMSEA values of <0.05 indicate a close fit between the model and the data (Hair et al., 2010). Hierarchical multiple regression analyses will be conducted to determine the amount of variance in the dependent variable, predicted by the independent variables. Indirect effects will be assessed using the procedure explained by Hayes (2009). Bootstrapping will be used to construct two-sided bias-corrected confidence intervals to determine mediation effects (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Optentia Focus Area of the NWU (Vaal Triangle Campus’) ethics checklist was used as a guideline to make sure that the study does not hold any harm for any of the participants in any way. The Ethics Committee of the North-West University approved the proposed research. In addition, the proposed study was presented to the psychological forum of the chemical industry where it was accepted and signed off. A consent form stating that the information obtained via the research would be used for research purposes only was provided by the researcher.

1.8 CHAPTER DIVISION

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

- Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement, research objectives, research design and research methodology.
- Chapter 2: Research article.
- Chapter 3: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations.
1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter sets out to provide a contextual background for investigating the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention in terms of the value it could bring to organisations, identifying where organisations should focus their attention in their attempts to sustain economic competitiveness through their people. This chapter also outlined the research problem and objective of this study.

Chapter 2 will provide a comprehensive review of the literature related to leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention culminating in the conceptual model and the hypothesised relationships between the constructs.

Chapter 3 outlines limitations of the study and provides recommendations for future research.
REFERENCES


CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH ARTICLE
ABSTRACT

In an era of globalisation, talent management remains a critical item on the agenda. Leadership plays a vital role in employee empowerment, engagement and talent retention. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention. The study further investigated whether psychological empowerment is an intervening variable in the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour and turnover intention and psychological empowerment behaviour and work engagement respectively.

A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was used in a chemical industry in South Africa ($N = 322$). The Leader Empowering Behaviour, Measuring Empowerment, Work Engagement and Turnover Intention scales were administered.

Main findings: The results showed significant positive relationships between leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and a negative correlation with turnover intention.

Key Terms: Leadership, talent management, leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement, turnover intention.
South Africa has proven itself as a potential competitive role player in the global world and, although small in the global perspective, the Chemical Industry in South Africa significantly contributes to the global chemical industry (Peralta & Stark, 2006). In this era of on-going global expansion, business leaders are continuously more concerned with the intensifying competition for talent (Beechler & Woodward, 2009). “Talent is not a ‘soft’ skill anymore: it has a positive and quantifiable connection to a company’s financial performance” (Ernst & Young, 2012, p. 3).

Talented employees from companies all over the world are targeted with ample employment opportunities (Ulrich, Brockbank, Johnson, Sandholtz, & Younger, 2008) and physical boundaries are no longer seen as challenging for talented workers who would like to spread their wings (Vatcharasirisook & Henschke, 2011). More and more highly talented employees are approached with considerable higher remuneration packages to join companies in direct opposition outside the South African borders (Talent Mobility 2020, 2012). In an ever changing global village, attraction and retention strategies are key focus points on the agendas of highly competitive companies (Ulrich et al., 2008). Managing human capital effectively provides a major competitive advantage for companies and leaders, boards and their committees need to be increasingly thoughtful and meticulous about monitoring their organisation’s human capital strategy (Ashford & Dieck, 2012; Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008).

Successful organisations have one major quality that sets them apart from ineffective organisations, namely dynamic and effective leadership (Druskat & Wheeler, 2003; Sauer, 2003). In an era where nothing is more certain than change, leaders not only are responsible for guiding their employees through change (De Poel, Stoker, & Van Der Zee, 2012) but they increasingly play a critical role in building a strong pool of talent that is central to organisational success (Bhatnagar, 2007; Druskat & Wheeler, 2003; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Yukl & Becker, 2006). Nowack (2005) is of the opinion that leadership and management practices are critical to a psychological healthy workplace and directly lead to measurable and meaningful business outcomes. Successful and effective leadership is important because it is closely associated with organisational outcomes such as enhanced employee attitudes, increased performance and motivation (Kelloway, Turner, Barling, & Loughlin, 2012).

Given the current organisational reality, it is argued that traditionally dominated leadership practices should be balanced with leadership practices that are aimed at the empowerment of employees (Dewettinck & Van Ameijde, 2011). Leadership empowerment behaviour (LEB) is seen as an enabling process, rather than a delegating process and is conceptualised as the ability of
leaders to delegate authority, encourage accountability and self-directed decision-making, developing skills and coaching of followers (Hakimi, Van Knippenberg, & Giessner, 2010; Konczak, Stelly, & Trusty, 2000).

Leadership empowerment practices seem to consistently show trends of increased autonomy, economic performance, psychological empowerment, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, engagement, and decreased turnover intention (Albrecht & Andreetta, 2010; Bordin, Bartram, & Casimir 2007; Greasley et al., 2008; Mendes & Stander, 2011; Tuckey, Bakker, & Dollard, 2012; Yukl & Becker, 2006). A number of studies imply that when leadership empowerment behaviour increases, turnover intention decreases (Chen & Silverthorne, 2005; Tuckey, et al., 2012; Van Schalkwyk, Du Toit, Bothma, & Rothmann, 2010). The challenge, therefore, greatly lies with leaders to rather empower employees than to control them (Appelbaum, Hébert, & Le Roux, 1999). Raub and Robert (2010) argue that there is a solid theoretical rationale for the argument that empowering leadership behaviours should stimulate psychological empowerment.

While leadership empowerment behaviour focuses on managerial practices, psychological empowerment focuses on how employees experience empowerment at work (Lawler, Mohrman, & Benson, 2001; Raub & Robert, 2010). Advantages of empowerment as proposed by Ergeneli, Ari, and Metin (2006), include increasing problem solving ability on employee level, helping employees to realise their full potential, sharing ideas regarding organisational performance, offering information that will affect organisational performance as well as giving employees the authority to make decisions. Psychological empowerment focuses on employees’ perceptions that they can perform their work on their own (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). According to Martin and Bush (2006), the psychological climate and level of psychological empowerment experienced within organisations are influenced by leadership and can be characterised by the delegation and passing of power from higher organisational levels to lower levels. Cho, Spence-Laschinger, and Wong (2006), Stander and Rothmann (2010), and De Villiers and Stander’s (2011) research support the proposition that empowerment has a significant impact on work engagement.

Over the years work engagement evolved as a core construct in industrial and organisational psychology and is used to define the psychological state underlying high degrees of work motivation (Bledow, Schmitt, Frese, & Kühnel, 2011). Work engagement comprises fundamental features like high involvement, liveliness, and self-presence at work (Macey & Schneider, 2008). It is generally believed that relationships exist between engagement and positive organisational and business results (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Tuckey et al., 2012). Based on Kahn’s (1990)
conceptualisation of engagement, May, Gilson, and Harter (2004) developed a measurement and found that three determinants, namely meaningfulness, safety and availability, had significant influences on engagement, but their study also revealed that supervisor relations particularly had the strongest effect.

Work engagement, according to Marchington and Kynighou (2012), is seen as instrumental for organisational survival, while Tuckey et al. (2012) found overwhelming support that leaders influence work engagement to a great extent. Engagement approaches can help organisations deal with the challenges of the global environment. Through establishing trust, leaders can unlock knowledge and commitment of individual employees (MacLeod & Clarke, 2009). According to Tuckey et al. (2012), leaders have a big impact on follower engagement and organisations should not take too lightly the role that leaders have in shaping the work environment to enhance worker well-being, increase productivity, improve performance and stimulate motivation. A number of studies have shown that low work engagement is a significant predictor of employees’ turnover intention (Albrecht & Andreetta, 2010; De Villiers & Stander, 2011; Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010; Saks, 2006).

Turnover intention is the degree to which an employee considers leaving or seeking another job (Aarons, Sommerfeld, & Willging, 2011). An employee’s intention to leave is a powerful forecaster of that employee’s future behaviour (Carmeli & Weisberg, 2006). Employee voluntary turnover creates serious challenges for organisations and their leaders, because it could have a negative effect on various organisational outcomes such as “high economic costs and disrupted social and communicative structures” (Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney, & Taylor, 2009); increased cost in terms of recruitment and training (Abbasi, Hollman, & Hayes, 2008); and decreased excellence, efficiency, innovation and competitiveness (Miller, 2010).

Hwang and Kuo (2006) believe that by recognising the causes of employees’ intention to leave, turnover behaviours could be projected more precisely, and processes to prevent turnover could be taken in advance. Aarons et al. (2011) found that an empowering climate negatively correlated with turnover intention and suggested that strong leadership is particularly important in times of organisational change.

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention in a chemical organisation in South Africa.
Leadership empowerment behaviour (LEB)

According to Srivastava, Batrol, and Lock (2006), various leadership behaviours have been studied, but empowering leader behaviour has assumed special importance. The six dimensions of leader empowering behaviour, introduced by Konczak et al. (2000), are as follow: Delegation of authority, where empowering leaders share information and knowledge with their followers to enable them to fully contribute and make quality decisions that are valuable to the organisation (Hakimi et al., 2010). Accountability for outcomes focuses on leaders redistributing power and giving new responsibilities to followers, holding them accountable for outcomes (Hakimi et al., 2010; Konczak et al., 2000). Self-directed decision-making is described as allowing and involving subordinates to participate in problem solving processes (Konczak et al., 2000; Van Dierendonck & Dijkstra, 2012). With information sharing, managers share information with employees and employees also share information with one another (Arnold, Arad, Rhoades, & Drasgow, 2000; Konczak et al., 2000; Pearce & Sims, 2002). Leaders are required to offer employees opportunities for skills development which will enable them to make decisions and take actions that will affect their work positively (Jordaan, 2007). Furthermore, leaders play a vital role in coaching for innovative performance where they create opportunities for training and enhancing skills of subordinates (Konczak et al., 2000; Pearce & Sims, 2002).

In addition, other dimensions of empowering leader behaviours that were identified are leading and demonstrating concern for employees (Arnold et al., 2000; Pearce & Sims, 2002), encouragement, interacting with team and group management (Arnold et al., 2000), as well as leading by example (Pearce & Sims, 2002).

Extended research has examined leadership empowerment behaviour and the advantages thereof on employee and organisational deliverables (Chen & Silverthorne, 2005). Leadership empowerment unleashes potential, increases motivation and allows employees to be more adaptive and receptive of their environments (Forester, 2000). Pearce and Sims (2002) state that employees will, in response to empowering leader behaviours, feel more empowered and will have enhanced role-related feelings of contribution, control, competence, connectedness and meaningfulness. Leadership empowerment behaviour creates an environment that fosters success (Johnson, 1994); increases work engagement (Tuckey et al., 2012); influences turnover intention (Chen & Silverthorne, 2005; Mare, 2007); improves the economic performance of an organisation and lessons role conflict and role vagueness amongst employees (Greasley et al., 2008). Empowered employees have increased commitment, they make better decisions, and they have higher levels of
job satisfaction (Yukl & Becker, 2006). Thus, there is a fundamental belief that leadership empowerment behaviour stimulates psychological empowerment (Raub & Robert, 2010).

**Psychological empowerment**

Employee empowerment was first introduced in literature about 30 years ago by Kanter (1977). The fundamental belief of those campaigning empowerment is that empowerment initiatives improve employee performance, well-being, and positive attitudes (Forrester, 2000; Hempel, Zhang, & Han, 2012; Mathieu, Gilson, & Ruddy, 2006; Wallace, Johnson, Mathe, & Paul, 2011). Studies on empowerment conceptualised empowerment into structural empowerment which is concerned with organisational conditions, and psychological empowerment which focuses on employees’ perceptions regarding empowerment (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Menon, 2001; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

Psychological empowerment, according to Spreitzer (1995), is an individual’s subjective experience of empowerment based on cognitions about him/herself in relation to his/her work role and it is characterised as a four-dimensional psychological state consisting of meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. Together these four thoughts reveal one’s active (an orientation in which the individual wishes and feels able to form his or her work role and environment), rather than inactive orientation to a work role (Spreitzer, 1995).

*Meaning* is seen as a subjective assessment of the significance of the job and it reflects a sense of personal connection to work (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). High levels of meaning, according to Thomas and Velthouse (1990), result in increased commitment, involvement and concentration. Meaning is described by Arnold et al. (2000), as finding purpose in one’s job that is greater than external outcomes of the work.

*Competence* refers to a sense of self-efficacy or beliefs by individuals that they have the expertise and ability needed to perform their goals (Dierendonck & Dijkstra, 2012; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). High levels of competence result in an increased sense of confidence which in turn leads to higher effort and perseverance in the face of difficulties (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

*Self-determination* refers to a sense of control, autonomy and freedom of choice to fulfil tasks that make sense and to perform in ways that seem appropriate (Dewettinck & Van Ameijde, 2011). High levels of self-determination have a positive effect on individual and organisational levels (Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000).
Impact refers to the belief of individuals that they possess the ability to influence the work environment and results at work (Dewettinck & Van Ameijde, 2011; Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997). Individuals have a greater ability to recognise opportunities and are more motivated (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

Bhatnager (2012) in his study found that psychological empowerment had a powerful influence on work engagement and innovation. Increased levels of psychological empowerment has been found to be associated with lower turnover intention and greater feelings of empowerment (Avey, Hughes, Norman, & Luthans, 2008; Bhatnagar, 2012); increased control over aspects that are important in retaining talent (Kaminski, Kauffman, Graubarth, & Robins, 2000); as well as an engaged, satisfying and committed workforce (Cho, Spence-Laschinger, & Wong, 2006; De Villiers & Stander, 2011; Grego, 2006).

Work engagement

Kahn (1990) defines personal engagement as “the harnessing of organisation members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance” (p. 694). Work engagement is described by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (p. 295). In this state one experiences difficulties with detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). If these views are combined, engagement is seen as the physical, cognitive, and emotional energy employees devote to their work, which helps them continue through difficulties and allows them to become engrossed in their work activities (Steger, Littman-Ovadia, Miller, Menger, & Rothmann, 2013).

According to Kahn (1990), the cognitive aspect of employee engagement deals with the employee’s viewpoint on how and by whom the organisation is led as well as working conditions within the organisation; whereas the emotional element deals with how the employee experiences each of the three said factors. The physical aspect of Kahn’s definition relates to the physical drives employed by individuals in order to carry out their organisational roles (Knight, 2011). Engagement, according to Kahn (1990), is strongest when all three dimensions are present.

In their study, Bakker and Bal (2010) found that engagement levels are predictive of performance levels. Employees that are engaged are aware of organisational context and with colleagues increase performance to the benefit of the organisation (Devi, 2009). Maslach and Leiter (2005) are
of the opinion that engaged employees are energetic employees which is beneficial to the organisation. In addition, various authors in their studies found that engagement is a significant predictor of turnover intention (Albrecht & Andreetta, 2010; Baskin, 2007; De Villiers & Stander, 2011; Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010; Mendes & Stander, 2011; Saks, 2006).

**Turnover intention**

Turnover intent is a powerful predictor of an employee’s future behaviour and actual turnover (Carmeli & Wiesberg 2006; Harter et al., 2002; Park & Kim, 2009). The intention to leave is an individual’s view that he/she would leave the organisation (Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008) and is viewed as the absolute stage in the decision-making process of an employee to look for other employment (Park & Kim, 2009). Turnover intention is of critical importance to organisations as turnover can influence stability and productivity and it proves to be very costly (Firth, Mellor, Moore, & Loquet 2004; Siong, Mellor, Moore, & Firth, 2006). Understanding and managing the factors that influence employee turnover and the costs associated with it could be beneficial for companies (Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010).

Turnover intention has been reported to decline when leadership empowerment increases (Mare, 2007; Van Schalkwyk et al., 2010). Psychological empowerment, according to Seibert, Wang, and Courtright (2011), improves employee attitudes and work behaviour; whereas Bhatnager (2012) in his research found that psychological empowerment led to lower turnover intention and had a positive effect on work engagement. Adding to this, employee engagement proved to be a significant predictor of turnover intention (Baskin, 2007; Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The chemical industry in question responded to business challenges by means of downsizing and restructuring. After the organisational change, the company’s culture had been assessed by means of a survey that provided insight into the personal motivations of employees and their experiences, giving an indication of where the employees felt the organisation should be heading. The survey highlighted feelings of powerlessness, lack of trust, and extreme bureaucracy. Ugboro (2006) is of the opinion that uncertainties induced by restructuring or downsizing can increase turnover intention if organisational interventions of empowerment are not employed. Firth et al. (2004) found that a sense of powerlessness and lack of engagement are organisational aspects that influence employees’ turnover intention. Recognising the causes of employees’ turnover intention will allow organisations to predict turnover behaviours more accurately, taking proactive actions to prevent it (Hwang & Kuo, 2006).
**JD-R Model**

This study will be placed within the job demand and job resources model (JD-R) where job resources include those occupational resources that have a positive effect on organisational outcomes and goals (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). The JD-R model proposes that all occupations have certain job characteristics that can be divided into two broad groupings, which are job demands and job resources (Demerouti, & Bakker, 2011). According to the JD-R model, job resources predict work engagement and job resources such as supervisory coaching and performance responses have a major inverse relation to turnover intention (Schaufeli, Bakker & Van Rhenen, 2009).

Recent studies indicate that the dimensions of leader empowering behaviours lead to various outcomes such as employee empowerment (Albercht & Andreetta, 2010; Chen, Sharma, Edinger, Shapiro, & Farh 2011; Dierendonck & Dijkstra, 2012; Hunter, 2010; Raub & Robert, 2010; Zhang & Bartol, 2010); employee engagement (Mendes & Stander, 2011; Stander & Rothmann, 2010); and turnover intention (Albrecht & Andreetta, 2010; Chen et al., 2011; Dhladhla, 2011; Van Schalkwyk et al., 2010). This study views leadership empowerment behaviour as a job resource and tests the influence of leadership empowerment behaviour on psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention in a chemical organisation in South Africa.

The population that was used for the study was drawn from only a part of the organisation and is not necessarily representative of the entire organisation. It also needs to be highlighted that information can vary in other industries.
AIM

The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention in a chemical industry in South Africa.

HYPOTHESES

Based on the model the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H₁: Leadership empowerment behaviour is positively related to psychological empowerment.
H₂: Leadership empowerment behaviour is positively related to work engagement.
H₃: Leadership empowerment behaviour is negatively related to turnover intention.
H₄: Leadership empowerment behaviour affects turnover intention indirectly via psychological empowerment.
H₅: Leadership empowerment behaviour affects work engagement indirectly via psychological empowerment.

Based on the review of literature, the hypothesised conceptual model of this study is graphically depicted in Figure 1:

*Figure 1. Theoretical hypothesised model.*
METHOD

Research design

The data for this study was obtained through a quantitative research approach. Quantitative research is a form of conclusive research involving large representative samples and relatively structured data collection processes (Struwig & Stead, 2001).

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher adopted a cross-sectional convenience survey design as all data was gathered at a single point in time (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, & Delport, 2005). The accessibility of the respondents, their availability, time constraints and the fact that it was relatively inexpensive were determining factors in the choice of the method used. The paper based questionnaires were administrated to various groups that gathered in training venues. The researchers explained the purpose of the research and the fact that it was voluntary.

Participants, procedure and ethics

Ethical guidelines as set out by the NWU were followed and research was approved by Optentia research focus area and ethics committee. Informed consent was obtained from the governing body of the organisation. Participation in the research was voluntary. All responses were anonymous and confidentiality was maintained at all times. A cover letter explained the purpose of the study and stated that participation was voluntary. The objectives of the study were explained and written consent obtained from the participants. The population consisted of 700 employees in various production areas and included managers, supervisors, administrative personnel as well as professional human resources personnel. Of the 700 questionnaires that were distributed 385 questionnaires were returned (response rate 55%). Of the 385 questionnaires 322 questionnaires were usable for data-analysis. 63 Questionnaires could not be used due to sections that were incomplete, too many missing data values and more than one answer per question. The questionnaires were administered in English.

Table 1 displays the characteristics of this sample of the population. The study population mainly consisted of male participants (92.5%) with females representing 7.5% of the participants. A total of 53.7% of the participants were White and 42.2% of the participants were Africans. The majority of the participants were between the ages of 26-35 years (32%). A total of 29.5% reported a grade 12 qualification and 31.7% of the population reported NQF 4 levels which indicated qualified
artisans. Of the participants, 22.7% reported higher qualifications; 30.7% participants reported less than 5 years’ experience, and only 9% reported more than 31 years’ experience.
Table 1
Characteristics of the Participants (N=322)

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>L4 &amp; up</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L 5-6C</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L 6-7</td>
<td>66</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>L 8</td>
<td>136</td>
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<td></td>
<td>L 9-12</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of service</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>11-20 years</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>16.1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>21-30 years</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-40 years</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measuring instruments

The Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire (LEBQ; Konczak et al., 2000) was developed as a multidimensional 19-item scale with six subscales. The scale is rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicated higher perceptions of leader empowering behaviours. The original scale consists of 17 items. An example of an item in the ‘authority’ subscale is: ‘My manager gives me the authority I need to make decisions that improve work processes and procedures’ (Konczak et al., 2000, p. 307). Two items from Arnold et al. (2000) were added to increase the number of items that demonstrated the ‘information sharing’ element. These items were ‘My manager explains his/her decisions and actions to my work group’; and ‘My manager explains company goals to my work group’. Konczak et al. (2000) reported reliability coefficients that ranged between 0.82 and 0.88 with the exception of one score that measured 0.70.

The Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire (MEQ; Spreitzer, 1995) is a 12-item scale that measures an individual’s experience of psychological empowerment. This instrument is scored on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale consists of four sub-dimensions of psychological empowerment with three items each. Examples of items are “The work I do is very important to me” (meaning); “I am confident about my ability to do my job” (competence); “I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work” (self-determination); and “My impact on what happens in my department is large” (impact). The Cronbach alpha for the overall empowerment construct in Spreitzer’s study indicated acceptable scores of 0.72 and 0.62 for the respective samples (Spreitzer, 1995).

The Work Engagement Scale (WES; Rothmann, 2010) measures work engagement on a seven-point frequency scale varying from 1 (almost never or never) to 7 (always or almost always). The items reflect the three components of Kahn’s (1990) conceptualisation of work engagement, namely cognitive, emotional and physical engagement. Cognitive engagement will be measured by three items (e.g. “I am very absorbed in my work”); emotional engagement will be measured by four items (e.g. “I am passionate about my work”); physical engagement will be measured by four items (e.g. “I feel alive and vital at work”). Alpha coefficients for the three scales of the WES were found: Physical engagement = 0.80; emotional engagement = 0.82; and cognitive engagement = 0.78 (Rothmann, 2010).

The Turnover Intention Scale (TIS; Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000) was used to measure respondents’ intention to leave the company. The scale is a five-point likert scale and ranges from 1 (strongly
disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) with high scores measuring the respondents’ probability to leave the organisation. The scale consisted of three items and an example of an item was “If I was completely free to choose, I would leave this job”. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the TIS was 0.83 (Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000). Principal component analysis of the TIS in this study supported a unifactorial solution explaining 74% of the variance. The component loadings varied from 0.73 to 0.94 (Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000).

**Statistical analysis**

The statistical analysis was carried out with the SPSS 21 program ((IBM Corporation, 2012) and the Mplus statistical modelling program (Muthén & Muthén, 2010). Descriptive statistics (including means and standard deviations) were used to analyse the distribution of the scores. Cronbach alpha coefficients (α) were computed to determine the reliability of the measuring instruments in this study. Pearson correlation coefficients were used to determine the relationships between variables. Effect sizes as set out in Steyn (1999) were used to decide on the practical significance of the findings. The practical significant cut-off point for correlation coefficients were set at $p \geq 0.30$ which represents a medium effect and $p \geq 0.50$ for a large effect (Cohen, 1992; Steyn, 1999).

With structural equation modelling (SEM) a variety of data, designs and models can be analysed (Schreiber, 2008), and it was used to test the measurement and structural models. The measurement model, essentially Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), was conducted in Mplus 7 (Muthén & Muthén, 2004). When a CFA is conducted, “the researcher uses a hypothesised model to estimate a population covariance matrix that is compared with the observed covariance matrix” (Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow & King, 2006, p. 323). The structural model displays the interrelations between latent constructs and observable variables in the hypothesised model by running several regression equations (Schreiber et al. 2006). To test the hypothesised models, the researcher followed a two-step, model-building procedure. The measurement model and the structural model were tested by calculating the maximum likelihood analysis (Muthén & Muthén, 2010; Schreiber, 2008).

Indices used in the study were as follow: Absolute fit indices included the Chi-square (indicates the absolute fit of the model); and Root-Means-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). The incremental fit indices used were: Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI); Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Acceptable values for the TLI and CFI indices are >0.90. RMSEA values <0.05 and a SRMR value <0.08 indicate a close fit between the model and the data (Hair et al., 2010).
To determine whether mediation did take place between the constructs, the path coefficients direct effects were tested. Following the procedure explained by Hayes (2009), bootstrapping was used to construct two-sided bias-corrected confidence intervals so as to evaluate mediation effects.

RESULTS

Testing the measurement model

Using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), the hypothesised measurement model was tested to assess whether each of the measurement items would load significantly onto the scales used in the study. CFA is driven by the theoretical relationships among the observed and unobserved variables (Schreiber, 2008). Table 3 (correlations) was scrutinised for multicolinearity and no relationship >0.90 was found (Field, 2005). Five measurement models were tested. Model 1 consisted of four latent variables: a) Leadership empowerment behaviour consisted of six latent variables, namely authority (measured by three observed variables); accountability (measured by three observed variables); decision-making (measured by three observed variables); and information sharing (measured by three observed variables). The last two sub-scales of leadership empowerment behaviour, “skills development” and “coaching for innovative performance”, loaded together as development (measured by five observed variables). b) Psychological empowerment consisted of four latent variables, namely meaning; competence; impact; and self-determination (each measured by three observed variables). c) Work engagement consisted of three latent variables, namely cognitive engagement; emotional engagement; and physical engagement (each measured by three latent variables). d) Turnover intention (measured by three observed variables).

Model 1 was used as a baseline model to decide if the other four models represented a statistically significant improvement. No AIC, BIC or SRMR scores could be calculated, because categorical data was used in the study. However chi-square difference testing was used to test the fit statistics of competing measurement models using the procedure described by Satorra and Bentler (2010). Table 2 presents statistics for all five models.
Table 2

Fit Statistics of Measurement Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>$df$</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>2146.48</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>2817.83</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3</td>
<td>3349.39</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 4</td>
<td>5204.09</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 5</td>
<td>5212.12</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$df=$ degrees of freedom; TLI= Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI= Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA= Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

Models 2, 3, 4 and 5 followed the same template as Model 1. In Model 2, all observed variables used in the study were loaded onto one factor defined as “empowerment” for the purpose of this study. In Model 3, the 17 observed variables measuring leadership empowerment behaviour were loaded directly onto leadership empowerment behaviour without distinguishing between authority, accountability, decision-making, information sharing and development. In Model 4, the nine observed variables measuring work engagement were loaded directly onto work engagement without distinguishing between cognitive-, emotional- and physical engagement. Lastly in Model 5, the 12 observed variables measuring psychological empowerment and the nine observed variables measuring work engagement were loaded onto one factor, called “psychological engagement”, without distinguishing between the second order latent variables of psychological empowerment, meaning, competence, impact, and self-determination; and the second order latent variables of work engagement, namely cognitive-, emotional- and physical engagement. The fit statistics for testing the various models are presented in table 2.

A $\chi^2$ value of 2146.48 ($df = 801$) was obtained for model 1. TLI = 0.95, CFI = 0.95, and RMSEA = 0.07. The hypothesised model had an acceptable fit with the data. Standardised coefficients from items to factors ranged from 0.72 to 0.99. The results indicated that the relationship between each observed variable and its individual construct was statistically significant ($p<0.01$), establishing the relationship between indicators and constructs (Hair et al., 2010). Although the measurement models could not be directly compared (because maximum likelihood estimation cannot be used with categorical data), measurement model 1 had a good fit with the data.
Testing the structural model

Descriptive statistics, alpha coefficients and correlations

The descriptive statistics, alpha coefficients and correlations for all the constructs are illustrated in Table 3. Table 3 shows that, for the four scales, namely leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention, the Cronbach alpha coefficients were acceptable, varying from 0.72 to 0.92 respectively (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). In Table 3 the correlations for the sub-scales was reported and total scores for measuring instruments followed.

Table 3 indicates that leadership empowerment behaviour has statistically significantly correlations with all other constructs. Authority, accountability, decision-making, information sharing and development all correlated positively with meaning, competence, impact, self-determination, emotional and physical engagement; and negatively with turnover intention (practically significant - medium effect). Meaning has a practically significant correlation (medium effect) with cognitive work engagement; whilst a practically significant correlation (large effect) was found with emotional and physical work engagement. Competence correlated practically significantly (large effect) with emotional and physical work engagement; and practically significantly (medium effect) with cognitive engagement. Impact positively related with emotional engagement (large effect) and with cognitive and physical work engagement (medium effect). Self-determination correlated practically significantly with emotional and physical work engagement (large effect) and with cognitive work engagement (medium effect). Meaning, competence, impact, self-determination; and cognitive, emotional and physical work engagement have statistically significantly negative relations with turnover intention. Total LEB has practically significant relations with PE (large effect), WENG (medium effect) and a negative relationship with TI (medium effect).
### Table 3
**Descriptive Statistics, Alpha Coefficients and Pearson Correlations of the Scales (N=322)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>α</th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
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<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>LEBAUT</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>LEBACC</td>
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<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.63**++</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LEBDEC</td>
<td>4.99</td>
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<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.73**++</td>
<td>0.66**++</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>LEBINF</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.76***++</td>
<td>0.69***++</td>
<td>0.80***++</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>LEBDEV</td>
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<td>0.74***++</td>
<td>0.67***++</td>
<td>0.78***++</td>
<td>0.81***++</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>0.36***+</td>
<td>0.41***+</td>
<td>0.43***+</td>
<td>0.42***+</td>
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<td>PECOMP</td>
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<td>0.36***+</td>
<td>0.42***+</td>
<td>0.44***+</td>
<td>0.43***+</td>
<td>0.61***+</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>PEIMPACT</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>1.60</td>
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<td>0.33***+</td>
<td>0.38***+</td>
<td>0.39***+</td>
<td>0.39***+</td>
<td>0.55***++</td>
<td>0.56***++</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>PESELF</td>
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<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.81</td>
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<td>0.40***+</td>
<td>0.46***+</td>
<td>0.48***+</td>
<td>0.47***+</td>
<td>0.67***++</td>
<td>0.68***++</td>
<td>0.62***+</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>CENG</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.26***+</td>
<td>0.24***+</td>
<td>0.28***+</td>
<td>0.29***+</td>
<td>0.28***+</td>
<td>0.40***+</td>
<td>0.40***+</td>
<td>0.36***+</td>
<td>0.44***+</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>EENG</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.36***+</td>
<td>0.32***+</td>
<td>0.38***+</td>
<td>0.39***+</td>
<td>0.38***+</td>
<td>0.54***++</td>
<td>0.55***++</td>
<td>0.5***+</td>
<td>0.60***+</td>
<td>0.69***+</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>PENG</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.35***+</td>
<td>0.32***+</td>
<td>0.37***+</td>
<td>0.38***+</td>
<td>0.38***+</td>
<td>0.53***++</td>
<td>0.54***++</td>
<td>0.49***+</td>
<td>0.59***+</td>
<td>0.68***+</td>
<td>0.93***+</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Total TI</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>-0.56***+</td>
<td>-0.33***+</td>
<td>-0.38***+</td>
<td>-0.39***+</td>
<td>-0.39***+</td>
<td>-0.20***</td>
<td>-0.20***</td>
<td>-0.19***</td>
<td>-0.23***</td>
<td>-0.02***</td>
<td>-0.27***</td>
<td>-0.27***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Total LEB</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.83***++</td>
<td>0.76***++</td>
<td>0.88***++</td>
<td>0.90***++</td>
<td>0.89***++</td>
<td>0.47***+</td>
<td>0.48***+</td>
<td>0.43***+</td>
<td>0.53***+</td>
<td>0.31***+</td>
<td>0.43***+</td>
<td>0.42***+</td>
<td>-0.43***</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Total PE</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.51***+</td>
<td>0.46***+</td>
<td>0.54***+</td>
<td>0.55***+</td>
<td>0.54***+</td>
<td>0.77***++</td>
<td>0.79***++</td>
<td>0.71***+</td>
<td>0.87***+</td>
<td>0.51***+</td>
<td>0.70***+</td>
<td>0.69***+</td>
<td>-0.26***</td>
<td>0.61***+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Total WENG</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.37***+</td>
<td>0.33***+</td>
<td>0.39***+</td>
<td>0.40***+</td>
<td>0.39***+</td>
<td>0.55***+</td>
<td>0.56***+</td>
<td>0.51***+</td>
<td>0.62***+</td>
<td>0.71***+</td>
<td>0.97***+</td>
<td>0.96***+</td>
<td>-0.27***</td>
<td>0.44***+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
+Correlation is practically significant $r > 0.30$ (medium effect)
++Correlation is practically significant $r > 0.50$ (large effect)
Evaluating the hypothesised model

The structural model was tested using model 1 (see Table 2), which was the best fitting and most parsimonious measurement model. The hypothesised relationships were tested using latent variable modelling as implemented by Mplus 7 (Muthén & Muthén, 2004). Results indicated a fair fit of the structural model compared to the measurement model ($\chi^2 = 2146.48$, $df = 801$, TLI = 0.95, CFI = 0.95, and RMSEA = 0.07). Five competing models were tested: In Model 2b paths were included from leadership empowerment behaviour to turnover intention and psychological empowerment, and the path from work engagement to turnover intention was constraint to zero. In Model 2c a path was included from leadership empowerment behaviour to psychological empowerment, work engagement and to turnover intention, but the path from psychological empowerment to turnover intention was constraint to zero. In Model 2d paths were included from leadership empowerment behaviour to psychological empowerment and work engagement, and from psychological empowerment and work engagement to turnover intention, but the path from leadership empowerment to turnover intention was constraint to zero. In Model 2e paths were included from leadership empowerment behaviour to psychological empowerment and turnover intention. A further path from psychological empowerment and work engagement to turnover intention was included. The path from leadership empowerment to work engagement was constraint to zero. Model 2f included paths from leadership empowerment behaviour to psychological empowerment and from leadership empowerment to turnover intention. A further path was included from psychological empowerment to turnover intention. The path from psychological empowerment to work engagement was constraint to zero. The standardised path coefficients estimated by Mplus are illustrated in Table 4 and Figure 2. Table 4 indicates the fit statistics for model 1 that fitted the data best.

Table 4  
Fit Statistics of Structural Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>$df$</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>2146.48</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$Df$ = degrees of freedom; TLI = Tucker-Lewis; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
Figure 2. The hypothesised model

\* p < .05. \*\* p < .01.
The following changes in chi-square ($\Delta \chi^2$) were found: Model 2b ($\Delta \chi^2 = 5.71$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < 0.02$), Model 2c ($\Delta \chi^2 = 1.59$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < 0.21$), Model 2d ($\Delta \chi^2 = 38.65$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < 0.00$), Model 2e ($\Delta \chi^2 = 5.71$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < 0.02$), and Model 2f ($\Delta \chi^2 = 3.00$, $\Delta df = 2$, $p < 0.22$).

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$\Delta \chi^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta df$</th>
<th>$p$ value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 2b</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2c</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 2d</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 2e</td>
<td>5.71</td>
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<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2f</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The obtained relationships of the best fitting and most parsimonious structural model (model 1a) are discussed with reference to the hypotheses of this study.

**Hypothesis 1**

For the portion of the model predicting relationships between leadership empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment ($\beta = 0.61$, $p = 0.01$), the path coefficients were significant and had the expected sign. Leadership empowerment behaviour related strongly with psychological empowerment. The ML-estimated equation counted for a large proportion of the variance in psychological empowerment ($R^2 = 0.37$). Hypothesis 1 is, therefore, accepted.

**Hypothesis 2**

For the portion of the model predicting the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour and work engagement, the path coefficient was significant ($\beta = 0.01$, $p > 0.01$). The ML-estimated equation counted for a large proportion of the variance in work engagement ($R^2 = 0.51$). These results provided support for Hypothesis 2.

**Hypothesis 3**

For the portion of the model predicting the negative relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour and turnover intention, the path coefficient was significant ($\beta = -0.44$, $p > 0.01$). It must be kept in mind that high turnover intention is negative. These results provided support for Hypothesis 3.
Hypotheses 4
To determine whether relationships in the model were indirectly affected by psychological empowerment, the bias-corrected confidence intervals were calculated using bootstrapping with 5000 samples (Hayes, 2009). Table 6 shows that the bootstrap-estimated indirect effects of psychological empowerment on leadership empowerment behaviour and turnover intention were not statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) and did include zeros (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). This suggests that psychological empowerment does not have an indirect effect on the relationship and hypothesis 4 could thus not be accepted.

Hypotheses 5
Table 6 further shows that the bootstrap-estimated indirect effects of psychological empowerment on leadership empowerment behaviour and work engagement were significant ($p = 0.01$). This suggests that psychological empowerment did have an indirect effect on the relationship between leadership empowerment and work engagement. These results provided support for Hypothesis 5.

Table 6
*Indirect (Mediation Effects) of LEB and Psychological Empowerment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEB</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>95%CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Engagement</td>
<td>0.43*</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>[0.32 to 0.55]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover Intention</td>
<td>0.08*</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>[-0.08 to 0.24]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to investigate whether relationships exist between leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention. The study further investigated if leadership empowerment behaviour affects turnover intention indirectly via psychological empowerment; and lastly it was determined if leadership empowerment behaviour affects work engagement indirectly via psychological empowerment.

Results showed that leadership empowerment behaviour correlated statistically significantly with psychological empowerment and work engagement; and negatively with turnover intention. The results implied that leadership empowerment behaviour influences employees’ perceptions of and experiences in the work environment to a great extent. When leaders empower their employees by delegating authority, sharing information, developing and coaching employees, allow greater decision-making power and hold employees accountable, employee’s will feel more competent and in control and they will experience meaning in their work. The results of this study are in line with previous studies and confirm that when leaders empower rather than control their employees, they will experience psychological empowerment (Appelbaum, et al., 1999; Greasley et al., 2008; Lawler et al., 2001; Mendes & Stander, 2010; Raub & Robert, 2010).

The results support the research of Gregory, Albritton, and Osmonbekov (2010), which suggests that employees experiencing psychological empowerment feel that their contributions are meaningful and that they possess the ability to shape their work environment. Bhatnagar (2012) and De Villiers and Stander (2011) in their studies found similar results and are of the opinion that psychologically empowered employees are more engaged, more loyal and less likely to engage in turnover intention. Leaders who create relationships with a style that is less about command and more about employee empowerment, accountability, involvement, feedback and development, will be more inclined to reach key business results like retention of talent.

Employees who are able to connect with the organisation and its leaders are seen to be physically, cognitively and emotionally engaged. Having an engaged workforce brings many advantages for organisations. Engagement levels are predictive of performance levels of employees (Bakker & Bal, 2010); indicating that employees are energetic (Maslach & Leiter, 2005); engagement also being a significant predictor of turnover intention (Albrecht & Andreetta, 2010; Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010; Mare, 2007).
The results of this study show that leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment and engagement predicted 20% of the variance in turnover intention. Organisations need to focus on development of leaders who are able to empower and lift engagement levels which will result in retention of talent. These results are in line with previous studies. Mare (2007) and Van Schalkwyk et al. (2010) found that if leadership empowerment behaviour increases, turnover intention decreases. Increased psychological empowerment, according to Seibert et al. (2011) and Bhatnager (2012), decreases turnover intention. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), Baskin (2007), and Du Plooy and Roodt (2010) found that engagement was a significant predictor of turnover intention. Retention of talent is a key outcome of a healthy organisation and leaders are largely responsible for creating a healthy work environment by empowering individuals and successively enhancing engagement.

The key contribution of this study is towards the leadership empowerment behaviour construct, examining and confirming the effect of leadership empowerment on psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention. Being empowered seems to contribute to employees’ level of emotional, cognitive and physical engagement.

The results in this study confirmed that psychological empowerment had an indirect effect on the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour and work engagement. This implies that increased leadership empowerment behaviour will result in higher levels of psychological empowerment which in turn will increase work engagement. When leaders thus increase employees’ degree of authority, decision-making and accountability, share information and support, develop and coach employees for innovative performance, employees will experience feelings of control. When individuals feel that their inputs are valued and that they make a meaningful contribution to the business strategy (impact), they will feel more engaged. Individuals will experience meaning, a sense of self-efficacy, control and autonomy which will have an impact on their commitment to stay in the organisation (Albrecht & Andreeta, 2010; Baskin, 2007; De Villiers & Stander, 2011; Mare, 2007; Mendes & Stander, 2010).

There are a number of practical implications that can be derived from the results of the present study. It appears that when leaders are trained, coached and developed to practise empowering behaviours, it can result in positive outcomes in terms of psychological empowerment, work engagement and decrease turnover intention in the chemical organisation. This may help to
counteract feelings of powerlessness, decrease bureaucracy and establish trust in the organisation and its leaders.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The results of this study extend previous research findings by highlighting how leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment and work engagement interrelate with turnover intention. The results extend and substantiate other previous findings by contributing an integrative model. In addition, the results of this study enrich literature with respect to the measurement of leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment and work engagement. Confirmatory factor analyses indicated that respondents were able to clearly distinguish between the constructs and the Cronbach alpha coefficients for each of the measures met criterion level. These constructs can thus be used with a degree of confidence in future research. It would be beneficial to study other leadership styles, e.g. positive, servant, and transformational leadership styles in relation to psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention.

Future studies should employ longitudinal studies as well as experimental designs to study the causality of relationships between leadership empowerment behaviour and individual and organisational outcomes. Other individual and organisational outcomes that could be included in future studies are the effect of leader empowering behaviour on absenteeism, wellbeing and satisfaction with life. The cross-sectional nature of the data limits the interpretation of the findings.
REFERENCES


CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
CONCLUSIONS FROM LITERATURE AND EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to present conclusions, recommendations and limitations according to the general and specific objectives. Firstly, conclusions are drawn from the research objectives. Secondly, attention will be drawn to the limitations of the study. Finally, recommendations will be made for future research as well as recommendations for the organisation.

3.1 CONCLUSIONS FROM LITERATURE AND EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The general objective of this study was to explore the relationships between leadership empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention.

The first objective was to theoretically conceptualise leadership empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention from available literature.

Literature suggests that leadership empowerment behaviour (LEB) is an enabling process rather than a delegating process (Konczak, Stelly, & Trusty, 2000; Hakimi, Van Knippenberg, & Giessner, 2010). It is characterised by leaders who delegate authority, inspire accountability, encourage self-directed decision-making, develop skills and coach followers towards innovative performance (Konczak et al., 2000). A multitude of research on leadership empowerment behaviour shows benefits such as increased autonomy, economic performance, psychological empowerment, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, engagement, and decreased turnover intention (Albrecht & Andreetta, 2010; Bordin, Bartram, & Casimir, 2007; Greasley, Bryman, Dainty, Price, Naismith, & Soetanto, 2008; Mendes & Stander, 2011; Tuckey, Bakker, & Dollard, 2012; Yukl & Becker, 2006).

Psychological empowerment is conceptualised as an employee’s experience of empowerment in the workplace and is defined by Spreitzer (1995) as an individual’s subjective experience of empowerment, based on cognitions about him/herself in relation to his/her work role, and it is characterised as a four-dimensional psychological state consisting of meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. Psychological empowerment is an effective approach for improving employee attitudes and work behaviour (Seibert, Wang, & Courtright, 2011); influencing effective commitment (Brunetto et al., 2012); decreasing turnover intention (Albrecht & Andreetta, 2010; Bhatnagar, 2012; Cho, Spence-Laschinger, & Wong, 2006); and positively affecting work engagement engagement (De Villiers & Stander, 2011; Stander & Rothmann, 2010).
Kahn (1990) was the first to conceptualise work engagement and suggested that an employee’s performance is only as good as the amount of self that is presented in it. He defined work engagement as “the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s preferred self in task behaviours that promote connections to work and other, personal presence (physical, cognitive and emotional) and active full role performances” (p. 700). Research has indicated significant relationships with work outcomes, turnover intention, job satisfaction and effective commitment (Baskin, 2007; Devi, 2009; Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Wefald, Reichard, & Serrano 2011).

**Turnover intention** is one of the most important and immediate antecedents of turnover decisions (Aarons, Sommerfeld, & Willging, 2011; Carmeli & Weisberg, 2006; Firth, Mellor, Moore, & Loquiet, 2004). Employee turnover has negative effects on various organisational outcomes such as high economic costs and disrupted social and communicative structures (Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney, & Taylor, 2009); increased recruitment and training costs (Abbasi, Hollman, & Hayes, 2008); and decreased quality, productivity, innovation and competitiveness (Miller, 2010).

The second objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention.

Through statistical analyses conducted, it was found that a statistically significant relationship exists between all the variables. Leadership empowerment behaviour correlated statistically significantly with psychological empowerment. Increased leadership empowerment behaviour could have an impact on individuals beliefs that they possess the skills and competencies to perform optimally (competence); they experience a sense of control and understand the importance of their jobs (meaning); are able to perform in ways that are appropriate (self-determination); and in addition, individuals belief that they have the ability to influence their work outcomes (impact).

Leadership empowerment behaviour correlated positively with work engagement and had a strong statistically significant negative correlation with turnover intention. Leaders, who are able to keep their employees informed, give them authority, share decision-making, assist, coach and develop, and ensure that their people take accountability for outcomes, will have an engaged workforce who is willing to commit and stay with the organisation. The second objective of the study was achieved as there are definite relationships between all the constructs in the proposed theoretical model. Leaders in the chemical industry could employ leadership empowerment behaviour in their strategy to increase psychological empowerment and work engagement and reduce employees’ turnover intention.
Significant relationships were found between leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment and work engagement. Leadership empowerment behaviour had a statistically significant negative relation with turnover intention and the results are in line with other studies (Albrecht & Andreetta, 2010; Chen & Silverthorne, 2005; Cho, Spence-Laschinger, & Wong, 2006; De Villiers & Stander, 2011; Mare, 2007; Kaminski, Kauffman, Graubarth, & Robins, 2000).

The third objective was to determine whether leadership empowerment behaviour affects turnover intention via psychological empowerment.

Analysis showed that the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour and turnover intention was not indirectly affected by psychological empowerment. A strong direct relationship, however, was found between leadership empowerment behaviour and turnover intention. This relationship emphasises the importance of leadership empowerment behaviour in retention of talent. Leadership empowerment behaviour had a statistically significant negative relation with turnover intention and the results are in line with other studies (Albrecht & Andreetta, 2010; Chen & Silverthorne, 2005; Cho, Spence-Laschinger, & Wong, 2006; De Villiers & Stander, 2011; Mare, 2007; Kaminski, Kauffman, Graubarth, & Robins, 2000).

The fourth objective was to determine whether leadership empowerment behaviour affects work engagement via psychological empowerment.

Results showed that the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour and work engagement was indirectly affected by psychological empowerment. The results imply that if leaders have an empowering leadership style, people will feel psychologically more empowered and this will lead to increased work engagement. Organisations need to focus on leadership training that will give leaders the skills to empower their workforce.

3.2 LIMITATIONS

This study had various limitations that have been noted. The research design was cross-sectional and therefore limits the possibility of determining the causality of relationships.

The population that was used for the study was drawn from only a part of the organisation and is not necessarily representative of the entire organisation. It also needs to be highlighted that
information can vary in other industries. The study was designed to draw understanding from observation at a static point in time (here-and-now) and not over an extended period (longitudinal). Certain dynamics presented in the organisation at this point in time might have had an effect on the results. A longitudinal study may have presented additional information that could add to the body of research and further explain the relationships between the constructs in the study.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This research project provided unique insights relating to the content and relationships between experiencing leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, work engagement and turnover intention in a chemical industry. Recommendations based on the findings of the research are made to organisations and scholars for further research.

3.3.1 Recommendations for organisations

The chemical organisation in which this study was conducted has been characterised by problematic organisational dynamics as diagnosed in a motivational climate survey done in 2011. The survey reported on employee experiences regarding perceptions of management, work and organisational culture. Results drawn from this survey highlighted feelings of powerlessness and extreme bureaucracy, to mention but a few. The results of this research indicate that within the chemical business in question, leadership empowerment behaviour will reduce the levels of powerlessness experienced by employees and increase psychological empowerment.

The results of this study indicated that interventions in the organisation should focus on the development and strengthening of leadership empowerment behaviours. According to Spreitzer (1995), empowerment exists when employees perceive that they exercise some form of control over their work life which has great potential in contributing towards achieving organisational objectives. It is suggested that all individuals in leadership positions receive training and coaching on how their leadership style impacts the morale and motivation of their workforce. Leadership empowering behaviour may be increased by leaders who, rather than delegating tasks, enable their employees by:

- Delegating authority through clarifying expectations and results, offering employees resources and support to conduct their work more independently. Leaders must focus more on the outcome or results than on how the results were achieved (authority).
• Allowing accountability through giving employees a greater sense of responsibility and holding them answerable for end-results; while allowing individuals to think beyond the scope of the job. This will result in more innovative behaviour to reach set organisational and departmental goals (accountability).

• Allowing a certain degree of freedom to make decisions. This will give employees the belief that they are trusted and respected (decision-making).

• Supporting employees through sharing information and encouraging employees to share information with leaders and colleagues. If employees understand the “why”, they will most probably have a solution to the “how” (information sharing).

• Not only offering the necessary exposure for training and development towards becoming more competent, but also coaching individuals practically. Individuals need to see that coaching takes place throughout the organisation on all levels, from shop floor to leadership level. If individuals realise that coaching is not used as a remedial approach, but rather as a development tool, they will be keener to be coached (development).

• Investing in coaching and mentoring training for leaders, as coaching is not a natural style followed by all leaders.

While the survey highlighted feelings of powerlessness and extreme bureaucracy, leadership within the organisation needs to focus on interventions and behaviours that will improve employee attitudes and work behaviour, leading to employees having greater feelings of control and empowerment. This can be achieved by:

• Setting up departmental sessions where strategy is discussed and employees understand how their smaller teams and tasks link with the overall organisational strategy, goals and objectives. This will create a greater sense of belonging and employees will take personal ownership and accountability (meaning).

• Having sessions where employees take part in the generation of ideas to solve departmental and organisational problems (impact).

• Having regular team and individual feedback sessions those leaders can use to identify performance gaps, and motivate and reward employees and teams for their contributions. Teams need to take control of their own work environments (self-determination).

• Developing managers as people developers (competence).
If the chemical organisation wants to retain its talented employees, it will have to focus on the outcomes of the survey by taking into consideration the future of the organisation as seen by the employees. This can be achieved by:

- Aligning the values of employees to those of the organisation through break-away sessions where leaders can connect with employees.
- Using break-away sessions to inculcate a sense of identity, while bringing fun back into the workplace.
- Presenting awareness workshops for managers – facilitating the importance of the role of the manager/leader in leading people.

3.3.2 Recommendations for future research

A cross-sectional research design was utilised which limits the ability of this study to determine cause-and-effect relationships. It is recommended that the constructs used in this study be investigated in the chemical industry and other organisations, employing longitudinal research which could be utilised to establish causal effects among all the variables. This will also allow a broader understanding of how these constructs are perceived across organisations in different settings. Larger samples with other sampling methods may be used to enable generalisation and render more statistically significant results between different demographic groups.

It would be beneficial to investigate the effects that leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment and work engagement have on other outcomes such as absenteeism, wellness, trust and safety; as these factors are central to reaching organisational success. It is further recommended that different leadership styles be investigated in relation to psychological empowerment, work engagement and its outcomes on turnover intention. Organisational change is a given in the global world and it is necessary to reconsider and re-conceptualise leadership in the workplace.

3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the conclusions regarding the theoretical and empirical objectives were drawn. The limitations of the research were discussed and recommendations were made for the current organisation as well as for future research.
REFERENCES


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