

**JOB INSECURITY, JOB SATISFACTION, ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT,  
BURNOUT AND WORK ENGAGEMENT OF PERSONNEL AFTER AN  
INCORPORATION OF TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

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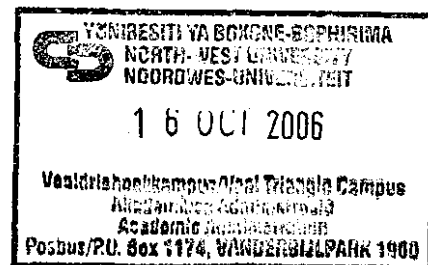
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## REMARKS

The reader is reminded of the following:

The references, as well as the editorial style as prescribed by the Publication Manual (*4<sup>th</sup> edition*) of the American Psychological Association (APA), were followed in this mini-dissertation. This practice is in line with the policy of the Industrial Psychology Programme of the North-West University.

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

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## SUMMARY

**Title:** Job insecurity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout and work engagement of personnel after an incorporation of tertiary educational institutions.

**Key words:** Job insecurity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, work engagement, tertiary education.

A new era dawned for the higher education system in South Africa, after approval was announced by Cabinet regarding the final proposals for the restructuring of the higher education institutional landscape in December 2002, which required merging to take place between various higher educational institutions. Mergers are intrinsically stressful for employees due to the potential for change and loss, as well as the perceived decline in the organisation and a highly competitive labour market. A stable and productive higher education system is of fundamental importance to any country to ensure continuous development at economic, social and political level, hence the importance of this research.

The objectives of this study were to establish the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement of personnel ( $N = 83$ ) after an incorporation of two tertiary educational institutions, and to determine whether job insecurity can be used to predict job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement. A cross-sectional survey design was used. The study population included both academic and non-academic staff members of the two institutions. Job insecurity was found to be practically significantly related to a reduction in intrinsic job satisfaction. No statistically significant relationship was found between job insecurity and extrinsic job satisfaction, between job insecurity and organisational commitment, and between job insecurity and the exhaustion component of burnout. Job insecurity was found to be practically significantly related to increased levels of cynicism and decreased levels of work engagement. Regression analyses, controlling for the influence of demographic

variables, indicated that job insecurity held predictive value with regard to intrinsic job satisfaction (10%), cynicism (7%), vigour (18%), dedication (7%) and absorption (10%).

## OPSOMMING

**Titel:** Werksonsekerheid, werkstevredenheid, organisasieverbondenheid, uitbranding en werksbegeestering van personeel na 'n samesmelting van tersiêre opvoedkundige instansies.

**Sleutelwoorde:** Werksonsekerheid, werkstevredenheid, organisasieverbondenheid, uitbranding, werksbegeestering, tersiêre onderwys.

'n Nuwe era het in Desember 2002 vir die Suid-Afrikaanse hoër onderderwys stelsel aangebreek nadat die Kabinet toestemming gegee het vir die finale voorleggings vir herstrukturering van die hoër onderderwys landskap, wat samesmeltings tussen verskeie hoër onderwys instellings vereis het. Samesmeltings is intrinsiek spanningsvol vir werknemers as gevolg van die potensiaal vir verandering en verlies, sowel as die potensiële afname in die organisasie en 'n hoogs kompeterende arbeidsmark. 'n Stabiele en produktiewe hoër onderwys sisteem is van onskatbare belang vir enige land om te verseker dat deurlopende ontwikkeling plaasvind op ekonomiese, sosiale en politieke vlak, vandaar die belangrikheid van hierdie navorsing.

Die doelwitte van hierdie studie was om die verhouding tussen werksonsekerheid, werkstevredenheid, organisasieverbondenheid, uitbranding, en werksbegeestering te ondersoek van personeel ( $N = 83$ ) na 'n samesmelting van twee tersiêre opvoedkundige instellings, sowel as om vas te stel of werksonsekerheid gebruik kan word om werkstevredenheid, organisasieverbondenheid, uitbranding, en werksbegeestering te voorspel. 'n Dwarssneeopname-ontwerp is gebruik. Die studiepulasie het beide akademiese en nie-akademiese personeel van beide instellings ingesluit. Werksonsekerheid was prakties betekenisvol verwant aan verminderde intrinsieke werkstevredenheid. Geen statisties beduidende verwantskap is gevind tussen werksonsekerheid en ekstrinsieke werkstevredenheid, werksonsekerheid en organisasieverbondenheid, en werksonsekerheid en die uitputting aspek van uitbranding nie. Werksonsekerheid het 'n prakties beduidende verband getoon met hoër vlakke van



sinisme en verminderde vlakke van werksbegeestering. Regressie analises wat gekontroleer is vir die invloed van demografiese veranderlikes het aangetoon dat werksonsekerheid voorspellingswaarde ingehou het met betrekking tot intrinsieke werkstevredenheid (10%), sinisme (7%), energie (18%), toewyding (7%) en absorpsie (10%).

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This mini-dissertation covers the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement of personnel after an incorporation of two tertiary educational institutions. In Chapter 1, the problem statement is discussed, as well as the research objectives and research methods. Chapter divisions are also laid out.

#### 1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The prospect of losing one's job as a result of corporate restructuring, mergers and acquisitions, or organisational downsizing looms in the foreground for many of today's employees (Probst & Brubaker, 2001). According to Habeck, Kroger and Tram (2000), the likelihood that employees will experience at least one merger during their working life has reached an all-time high globally and shows no sign of relenting. In December 2002, approval was announced by Cabinet regarding the proposals for the restructuring of the higher education institutional landscape, which required merging to take place between various higher educational institutions. Appelbaum, Gandell, Shapiro, Belisle and Hoeven (2000) are of the opinion that mergers are intrinsically stressful for employees as a result of the potential for change and loss. It is, however, not just the merger that makes employees anxious, but also the perceived decline in the organisation, the lack of jobs elsewhere or other constraints that prevent the employee from leaving, that create excessive stress (Appelbaum et al., 2000). As noted by Näswall, Sverke and Hellgren (2005), job insecurity has gradually become an important focus for research on working life.

Literature usually conceptualises **job insecurity** from three general points of view, being from a (i) global, a (ii) multidimensional or a (iii) stressor perspective. In most instances, job insecurity has been defined according to the global viewpoint, signifying the threat of job loss or job discontinuity (Caplan, Cobb, French, van Harrison & Pinneau, 1980). However, researchers who have adopted the multidimensional definition of job insecurity, are of the

opinion that besides referring to uncertainty, job insecurity is also related the continuity of certain dimensions of the job, for example opportunities for promotion (Borg & Elizur, 1992; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996). Van Vuuren (1990) conceptualises job insecurity as the concern felt by a person for the continued existence of his or her job. She identifies three components which are central to job insecurity. First of all it refers to a subjective experience or perception. Secondly, it refers to uncertainty about the future. Thirdly, doubts concerning the continuation of the job are central to job insecurity. According to Van Vuuren (1990), job insecurity consistently presents itself as a stressor. In terms of job insecurity's consequences, a distinction is made between stress reactions and coping behaviour. According to De Witte (1997), stress reactions refer to the consequences of the stressor for psychological well-being, while coping refers to the way in which the person deals with stress.

Yousef (1998) indicates that the importance of job insecurity is related to the fact that it has a critical influence on a wide variety of work-related outcomes. Research related to job insecurity has indicated that it leads to reduced work-related performance (De Witte, 2000), reduced trust in management (Ashford, Lee & Bobko; 1989), decreased workplace safety motivation (Probst & Brubaker, 2001) and reduced work effort (Brockner, Grover, Reed & De Witt, 1992). De Witte (1999) has found that job insecurity is related to a reduction in well-being, but notes that the effect of job insecurity is not limited to psychological variables only, but that it has also been linked to psychosomatic complaints, physiological variables and various physical strains. Research has indicated that job insecurity is strongly associated with lowered organisational commitment (Apisakkul, 2000; Ashford et al., 1989; Davy, Kinicki & Scheck, 1997) and a reduced level of job satisfaction (Ashford et al., 1989; Davy, et al., 1997).

According to the affective events theory perspective (Probst, 2002), characteristics of the work environment and work-related events are cognitively appraised in terms of the extent to which such work events and features will assist or hamper the achievement of goals. In the instance of goal obstruction being identified and if there is a perceived imbalance between the demands of the environment and the employee's ability to cope with those demands, stress results. The extent of the stress will vary according to dispositions and resources at the

employee's disposal. Such strain may become evident at a physiological, behavioural or psychological level – or any combination thereof. Probst (2002) explains that, for this reason, when stress exists, work attitudes and affective reactions are expected to be negative. According to this theory, job insecurity may thus be expected to lead to increased levels of burnout and decreased levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and work engagement.

Cranny, Smith and Stone (1992) explain that **job satisfaction** is an emotional reaction to a job, which stems from the employee's comparison of actual outcomes with required outcomes. Roberts and Roseanne (1998) note that employees would experience job satisfaction if they felt that their individual capacities, experiences and values could be utilised within their work environments and if their employing organisation could offer them opportunities and rewards. Locke (1976) distinguishes between the terms morale and job satisfaction, noting that job satisfaction is an individual's reaction to the job experience, whereas morale is about a whole group of workers and includes their general level of satisfaction with the organisation. Berry (1997) distinguishes between job satisfaction and job involvement, explaining that job involvement refers to the degree to which one is absorbed by one's job, which may be either satisfying or dissatisfying depending on the outcome of involvement (Berry, 1997).

The relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction is demonstrated in the research of Ashford, Lee and Bobko (1989), who have found a significantly lower level of job satisfaction among employees who felt insecure. Heany, Israel and House (1994), as well as Probst and Brubaker (2001), have found that job insecurity is associated with decreased levels of extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction. Selepe (2004), in a South African study, has found that affective job insecurity is related to decreased levels of intrinsic job satisfaction. According to Yousef (1998), job insecurity has been linked to numerous important outcomes including employee health, psychological well-being, turnover, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Pretorius and Rothmann (2001) have found that job dissatisfaction is related to patterns of behaviour such as tardiness, absenteeism and high labour turnover, whereas job satisfaction is related to behaviour that indicates a positive organisational orientation. Research such as that of DeCotiis and Summers (1987) and

Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982) demonstrates a consistent positive correlation between job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982) define **organisational commitment** as the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in an organisation, referring to a strong belief in and acceptance of the values and goals of the organisation, a willingness to exert considerable effort on the part of the organisation and a strong desire to maintain membership of the organisation. Allen and Meyer (1990) propose that there are three components of organisational commitment, namely affective, continuous and normative commitment. The affective component of organisational commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation. The continuance component refers to the commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organisation. The normative component refers to the employee's feeling of obligation to remain with the organisation.

In South African studies, Heymans, (2002) have not found a practically significant relationship between job insecurity and organisational commitment, although Laba (2004) has found that job insecurity shows an association with decreased organisational commitment, particularly with regard to decreased affective/normative commitment, but also to decreased continuance commitment (albeit to a limited extent). Westman, Etzion and Danon (2001) have found that the prolonged chronic exposure to job insecurity can lead to a wearing out of resources and a feeling of exhaustion.

Stordeur, D'hoore and Vandenberghe (2001) note that when an individual becomes unable to cope with an enduring source of stress, **burnout** may result. Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998, p. 36) define burnout as "a persistent, negative, work-related state of mind in 'normal' individuals that is primarily characterised by exhaustion, which is accompanied by distress, a sense of reduced effectiveness, decreased motivation, and the development of dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours at work."

Burnout is conceptualised as consisting of three dimensions, these being (i) exhaustion, (ii) cynicism, and (iii) reduced efficacy. According to Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001), the

exhaustion component of job burnout relates feelings of being overextended and depleted of one's emotional and physical resources. The cynicism (depersonalisation) component refers to negative, callous, or excessively detached responses to various aspects of the job. The reduced efficacy (accomplishment) component is related to feelings of incompetence and a lack of achievement and productivity at work.

Maslach et al. (2001) indicate that research has demonstrated a relationship between burnout and heightened absenteeism, intention to leave the job, actual turnover, lower productivity and effectiveness for those who stay at work and a spill-over effect into the employees' home life. Westman et al. (2001), who have researched job insecurity and crossover of burnout in married couples (98 couples), have found a positive correlation between job insecurity and burnout, with regard to both males and females. In a South African study, Bosman (2005) has found that increased levels of job insecurity were statistically significantly associated with higher levels of burnout.

**Work engagement** is viewed as the antithesis of burnout. In the case of burnout, what started out as important, meaningful, and challenging work becomes unpleasant, unfulfilling, and meaningless. Energy turns into exhaustion, involvement into cynicism, and efficacy into ineffectiveness. Work engagement is thus characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy. According to Maslach et al. (2001), the violation of the psychological contract caused, amongst others, by job insecurity, can produce a reduction in work engagement, because it erodes the notion of reciprocity, which is crucial in maintaining well-being. Schaufeli and Bakker (2002) define engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption. Vigour (the opposite pole of exhaustion) is characterised by high energy levels, mental resilience when working, willingness to exert effort into one's work and to persist even in the face of adversity; dedication (the opposite pole of cynicism) is related to enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, challenge and a sense of significance; and absorption refers to a state where time passes quickly and where the individual has difficulty in detaching him/herself from work (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzáles-Romá & Bakker, 2002). In a South African study, Bosman has (2005) found that job insecurity is related to a reduction in work engagement.

At present, numerous tertiary institutions across South Africa are undergoing mergers imposed by government, for example the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and Vista University, where this research will take place. In recent years, the Australian University sector also underwent large-scale organisational change, including restructuring, downsizing and government funding cuts. In research conducted by Gillespie, Walsh, Winefield, Dua and Stough (2001), the majority of groups have reported that job-related stress was having an adverse impact on their professional work and personal welfare. Winefield (2000) notes that research from across the globe reports an alarming increase in the occupational stress experienced by university staff. During an incorporation of tertiary institutions, as is the case in the present study population and many other tertiary institutions across South Africa, changes in working life related to such incorporations may cause feelings of insecurity on the employees' parts regarding the nature and future existence of their jobs. Research, as cited above, has indicated that job insecurity holds numerous negative implications, both at an individual and at an organisational level, hence the importance of researching the prevalence and impact of job insecurity on personnel after an incorporation of tertiary educational institutions.

On the basis of the above-mentioned problem statement, the following research questions can be formulated:

- How are job insecurity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement and the relationship between these constructs conceptualised in the literature?
- What are the relationships between job insecurity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement of personnel after an incorporation of tertiary educational institutions?
- Can job insecurity predict job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement of personnel after an incorporation of tertiary educational institutions?

## **1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

### **1.2.1 General objectives**

The general objective of this research is to establish the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement of personnel after an incorporation of tertiary educational institutions, and to determine whether job insecurity can be used to predict job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement.

### **1.2.2 Specific objectives**

- To conceptualise job insecurity, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, burnout and work engagement and the relationship between these constructs from the literature;
- to determine the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout and work engagement of personnel after an incorporation of tertiary educational institutions; and
- to determine whether job insecurity can be used to predict job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout and work engagement of personnel after an incorporation of tertiary educational institutions.

## **1.3 RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method consists of two phases, namely a literature study and an empirical investigation.

### **1.3.1 Phase 1: Literature review**

In the literature review, the focus will be on previous research that has been done on job insecurity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement.



The following databases will be consulted.

- Internet
- Emerald
- Reportorium of South African Journals
- Library Catalogues

### **1.3.2 Phase 2: Empirical study**

The empirical study entails that the specifically stated objectives can be achieved as follows:

#### **1.3.2.1 Research design**

A cross-sectional survey design will be used. This design can be used to assess interrelationships among variables at one point in time, without any planned intervention. According to Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1997), this design is ideally suited when the aim of the study is predictive and descriptive by nature.

#### **1.3.2.2 Study population**

The entire population of the tertiary educational institution will be targeted, including both academic and non-academic staff. Unskilled personnel members will be excluded due to poor reading and writing abilities, which may contaminate data.

#### **1.3.2.3 Measuring instruments**

The following measuring instruments will be used in this study:

The *Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ)*, developed by De Witte (2000), will be used to investigate the feelings of job insecurity of participants. With inspiration received from Borg and Elizur (1992), De Witte has developed a questionnaire consisting of 11 items. The items are arranged along a 5-point Likert-type scale with 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= unsure,

4= disagree and 5= strongly disagree. According to de Witte (2000), the questionnaire items refer to cognitive assessments (the possibility of becoming unemployed) and emotional reactions (affective insecurity). An example of a question relating to cognitive job insecurity would be, "I think that I will be able to continue working here", whereas an example of a question relating to affective job insecurity would be, "I fear that I might lose my job". In his research, De Witte, (2000) has reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,92 for global job insecurity. Furthermore, De Witte has found that the overlap between both predictive factors (cognitive and affective) is significant, making it difficult to distinguish between the two dimensions. In South African research, Heymans (2002) has obtained a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,81 for the total job insecurity scale and Bosman (2005) has obtained an alpha coefficient of 0,70 for the cognitive job insecurity scale and 0,72 for the affective job insecurity scale.

The *Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)* (Weiss, Dawis, England & Lofquist, 1967) consists of two versions, namely a long version consisting of 100 items and a short revised version consisting of 20 items. The short version does not measure specific aspects, although its advantage is that it determines the level of job satisfaction in general, distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction and is less time consuming to complete. Choices on the end (5) of the scale indicate total agreement with the item, suggesting high job satisfaction whereas choices at the beginning of the scale (1) indicate total disagreement with the statement made in the item, suggesting a low degree of job dissatisfaction. The revised Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire measures intrinsic job satisfaction and extrinsic job satisfaction using questions like: "The chance to be 'somebody' in the community", "The way my supervisor handles his/her workers", and "The praise I get for doing a good job". Hirschfeld (2000) has found that a two-factor model (intrinsic and extrinsic) is superior to a one-factor model. Alpha coefficients for both the revised and the original MSQ were higher than 0,82 (Hirschfeld, 2000). Weiss et al. (1967) have reported reliability coefficients varying from 0,87 to 0,92. Lam, Baum and Pine (1998) have supported this finding by reporting Cronbach alpha coefficients, which ranged from 0,87 to 0,95, indicating high internal consistency. Yousef (1998) has found a reliability coefficient of 0,92 in his study of job satisfaction in a cross cultural context. Kaplan (1990) has reported a reliability coefficient of

0,90 for the total job satisfaction scale. In a South African study, Selepe (2004) has obtained an alpha coefficient of 0,92 for the intrinsic scale and 0,86 for the extrinsic scale.

The *Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)* (Allen, Meyer & Smith, 1996) will be used to measure organisational commitment levels. The Organisational Commitment Questionnaire can be administered individually or in groups (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). This questionnaire consists of 18 items and is based on the premise that organisational commitment is a multi-dimensional construct consisting of three scales namely affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Examples of items include "I do not feel emotionally attached to this organisation" (affective commitment), "Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation right now" (continuance commitment), and "I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer" (normative commitment). The multi-dimensionality of the construct has been confirmed in different populations, as well as the congruence of the combined factor given that inter-correlations between populations were often found to be above 0,90 (Allen & Meyer, 1990). In South Africa, Heymans (2002) has obtained a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,80 for the total scale, 0,69 for the affective scale, 0,53 for the continuance scale and 0,74 for the normative scale.

The *Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)* (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996), which will be used as a measure of burnout, is simple to fill out and takes only 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The MBI-GS has three sub-scales: Exhaustion (five items; e.g. "I feel used up at the end of the workday"), Cynicism (five items, e.g. "I have become less enthusiastic about my work") and Professional Efficacy (six items, e.g. "In my opinion, I am good at my job"). All items are scored on a 7-point frequency rating scale ranging from "0" (never) to "6" (daily). Together the sub-scales of the MBI-GS provide a three-dimensional perspective on burnout. Internal consistencies (Cronbach alpha coefficients) reported by Maslach et al. (1996) vary from 0,87 to 0,89 for exhaustion, 0,73 to 0,84 for cynicism and 0,76 to 0,84 for professional efficacy. High scores on exhaustion and cynicism, and low scores on professional efficacy are indicative of burnout. In a South African study, Storm (2003) has obtained Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0,88 for exhaustion; 0,79 for cynicism; and 0,78 for professional efficacy.

*The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)* (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonz  les-Rom   & Bakker, 2002) will be used to measure work engagement. This 17-item questionnaire is arranged along a seven-point frequency scale, ranging from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*daily*). The UWES has three scales, namely vigour (6 items), dedication (5 items), and absorption (6 items). Examples of items relating to the three dimensions are the following: "I am bursting with energy in my work" (vigour); "I find my work full of meaning and purpose" (dedication); and "When I am working, I forget everything around me" (absorption). High levels of vigour, dedication and absorption point to an individual who experiences a high level of work engagement. Regarding internal consistency, Cronbach coefficients have been determined between 0,68 and 0,91 (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Storm (2002) has obtained alpha coefficients of 0,78 (vigour), 0,89 (dedication) and 0,78 (absorption) for the UWES in a sample of 2 396 members of the South African Police Services.

#### **1.3.2.4 Research procedure**

The measuring battery will be compiled and a letter providing the motivation for the research, requesting participation and guaranteeing anonymity will be included. Questionnaires will be provided to personnel members and arrangements regarding the collection of the questionnaires will be communicated.

#### **1.3.2.5 Statistical analysis**

Statistical analyses will be carried out with the help of the SAS program (SAS Institute, 2000). Cronbach alpha coefficients ( $\alpha$ ) and inter-item correlation coefficients will be used to assess the internal consistency of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995). Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) will be used to analyse the data. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients will be used to specify the relationships between variables. The level of statistical significance is set at  $p < 0,01$ . Steyn (2002) criticises the sole uses of statistical significance testing and recommends that effect sizes be established to determine the importance of a statistically significant relationship. While reporting effect sizes is encouraged by the American Psychological Association (APA) in their Publication Manual (APA, 1994), most of these measures are seldom found in

published reports (Kirk, 1996; Steyn, 2002). Therefore, effect sizes will be computed to assess the practical significance of relationships in this study. A cut-off point of 0,30, which represents a medium effect (Cohen, 1988; Steyn, 2002), will be set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients. Regression analyses, controlling for the influence of demographic variables, will be carried out to determine the percentage variance in the dependent variables that is predicted by the independent variables.

#### **1.4 CHAPTER DIVISIONS**

Chapter 1 comprises an introduction to the research study. The problem statement briefly outlines the constructs and reasons for this study. Research objectives detail the general and specific objectives of the study. Finally research methods are discussed. In addition to the problem statement, Chapter 2 also deals with the empirical results of this study. Chapter 2 concludes with a discussion of limitations, and recommendations are suggested. Chapter 3 deals with the conclusion to this study. Research limitations and recommendations are also stated.

#### **1.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter an introduction to the research study was given. The problem statement briefly outlined the constructs and reasons for the study. Research objectives were given and the chapter was concluded by discussing the research methods.

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## CHAPTER 2

**\*JOB INSECURITY, JOB SATISFACTION, ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT,  
BURNOUT AND WORK ENGAGEMENT OF PERSONNEL AFTER AN INCORPORATION  
OF TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

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**ABTRACT**

The objectives of this study were to establish the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement of personnel ( $N = 83$ ) after an incorporation of tertiary two educational institutions, and to determine whether job insecurity can be used to predict job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement. A correlational survey design was used. The study population included both academic and non-academic staff members of the two institutions. Job insecurity was found to be practically significantly related to decreased intrinsic job satisfaction. Job insecurity was found to be practically significantly related to increased levels of cynicism and decreased levels of work engagement. Regression analyses, controlling for the influence of demographic variables, indicated that job insecurity held predictive value with regard to intrinsic job satisfaction (10%), cynicism (7%), vigour (18%), dedication (7%) and absorption (10%).

**OPSOMMING**

Die doelwitte van hierdie studie was om die verhouding tussen werksonsekerheid, werkstevredenheid, organisasieverbondenheid, uitbranding, en werksbegeestering te ondersoek van personeel ( $N = 83$ ) na 'n samesmelting van twee tersiêre opvoedkundige instellings, sowel as om vas te stel of werksonsekerheid gebruik kan word om werkstevredenheid, organisasieverbondenheid, uitbranding, en werksbegeestering te voorspel. 'n Dwarssneeopname-ontwerp is gebruik. Die studiepulasie het beide akademiese en nie-akademiese personeel van albei instellings ingesluit. Werksonsekerheid was prakties beduidend verwant aan verminderde intrinsieke werkstevredenheid. Werksonsekerheid het 'n prakties betekenisvolle verhouding getoon met hoër vlakke van sinisme en verminderde vlakke van werksbegeestering. Regressie analises vir die invloed van demografiese veranderlikes gekontroleer het, het aangetoon dat werksonsekerheid voorspellingswaarde ingehou het met betrekking tot intrinsieke werkstevredenheid (10%), sinisme (7%), energie (18%), toewyding (7%) en absorpsie (10%).

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With South Africa's new democratic government, organisations have felt the significant impact of government policies and programmes since 1994. The post-apartheid government of South Africa has been aiming to rectify the legacy of the previous government, with one focus area being the redress of the educational system (Cross, Mungadi & Rouhani, 2002). A new era dawned for the higher education system in South Africa, after approval was announced by Cabinet regarding the final proposals for the restructuring of the higher education institutional landscape in December 2002, which required merging to take place between various higher educational institutions. Appelbaum, Gandell, Shapiro, Belisle and Hoeven (2000) are of the opinion that, as a result of the potential for change and loss, mergers are intrinsically stressful for employees. It is, however, not just the merger that makes employees anxious, but also the perceived decline in the organisation, the lack of jobs elsewhere or other constraints that prevent the employee from leaving, that create excessive stress (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Gorshkov (1998) is of the opinion that a stable and productive support system in terms of higher education and training is of vital importance to any country to ensure sustainable economic, social and political reconstruction and development. As noted by Khwela (2000), employees are one of the major role players in organisations, and it is through their involvement and commitment that the organisations become competitive.

Job insecurity has been defined in numerous ways including a subjectively experienced worry about future involuntary job loss (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984), an individual's expectations about the continuity of his/her job situation (Davy, Kinicki & Scheck, 1997), and an overall concern about the future existence of the job (Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996). Job insecurity has usually been conceptualised from three points of view, i.e. as (i) a global concept, (ii) a multidimensional concept, and (iii) a job stressor. Most studies (Caplan, Cobb, French, van Harrison & Pinneau, 1980; Johnson, Messe & Crano, 1984) have measured job insecurity using global (focussing on the threat of job loss) rather than multidimensional (focussing on losing other valued features as well, e.g. promotional prospects) indicators. In this research, job insecurity was viewed from a global, two-dimensional perspective. Use was made of De Witte's (2000) Job Insecurity Questionnaire, which he developed based on Borg and Elizur's (1992) conceptualisation of job insecurity as a two-dimensional construct. From

this perspective, job insecurity is viewed as consisting of an affective and cognitive component. Cognitive job insecurity relates to the perceived likelihood of job loss (thinking about job loss), whereas affective job insecurity relates to fear of job loss (emotions regarding job loss).

Regardless of whether job insecurity is operationalised from either a global or a multidimensional point of view, it has generally been considered as a type of job stressor. According to Sverke et al. (2004), in terms of the stress theories, a stressor is considered to be the result of some type of strain reaction, with consequences for the health and well-being of the individual, as well as for the individual's work-related attitudes and behaviour.

According to the affective events theory perspective (Probst, 2002) characteristics of the work environment and work-related events are cognitively appraised in terms of the extent to which such work events and features will assist or hamper the achievement of goals. In the instance of goal obstruction being identified and if there is a perceived imbalance between the demands of the environment and the employee's ability to cope with those demands, stress results. The extent of the stress will vary according to dispositions and resources at the employee's disposal. Such strain may become evident at a physiological, behavioural or psychological level – or any combination thereof. Probst (2002) explains that, for this reason, when stress exists, work attitudes and affective reactions are expected to be negative. According to this theory, job insecurity may thus be expected to lead to increased levels of burnout and decreased levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and work engagement.

Individuals, who are less secure in their jobs, tend to experience increased levels of psychological distress and a greater number of health conditions. Larson, Weilson and Beley (1994) have found that increased levels of job insecurity are associated with decreased employee mental health and family well-being, while Dooley, Rook and Catalano (1987), Hellgren, Sverke and Isaksson (1999), Mohren, Swaen, van Amelsvoort, Borm and Galama (2003), and Roskies and Louis-Guerin (1990) have found that job insecurity leads to negative physical health outcomes. Dekker and Schaufeli (1995), as well as Probst (2002) have found that insecure employees have higher reports of psychological distress. Job insecurity is often

reported to result in reduced psychological well-being, characterised by symptoms such as anxiety, depression, irritation or strain-related psychosomatic complaints (Catalano, Rook & Dooley, 1986; Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995; Ferrie, Shipley, Marmot, Stansfield & Smith, 1998; Joelson & Wahlquist, 1987; Kuhnert, Sims & Lahey, 1989).

Job insecurity is consistently associated with a reduced level of job satisfaction. This relationship is illustrated in the research conducted by Ashford, Lee and Bobko (1989) who have found a significantly lower level of job satisfaction among employees who felt insecure. De Witte (2000) has found that job insecurity is related to satisfaction with promotional opportunities, opportunities to take initiative, employment circumstances and even leave planning. Heany, Israel and House (1994), as well as Probst and Brubaker (2001), have found that job insecurity is associated with decreased levels of extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction. In a South African study, Selepe (2004) has found that higher levels of affective job insecurity are associated with lower levels of intrinsic job satisfaction.

According to Hirschfeld (2000), job satisfaction relates to the extent to which people like their jobs. Job satisfaction can be described as an affective or emotional reaction to the job, resulting from the incumbent's comparison of actual outcomes with the required outcomes (Cranny, Smith & Stone, 1992; Hirschfeld, 2000; Locke, 1976). Job satisfaction, thus, has to do with individuals' perceptions and evaluations of their jobs, and these perceptions are influenced by unique circumstances such as needs, values and expectations. People will therefore evaluate their jobs on the basis of factors, which they regard as being important to them (Sempane, Rieger & Roodt, 2002).

A survey of the literature suggests that situational, dispositional and interactionist approaches can be used to understand job satisfaction. Arvey, Carter and Buerkly (1991) have found that situational factors accounted for 40-60% of the variance in job satisfaction. Several prominent theories suggest that various features of the job environment are causes of job satisfaction. These features include characteristics of jobs and job tasks, role variables, organisational constraints and work schedules which include long shifts. The dispositional approach suggests that work attitudes and behaviours are determined by, or are at least directly linked, to individual attributes. House, Shane and Herold (1996) describe

dispositions as psychological (rather than having physical dimensions or being objectively assessable), namely: personality characteristics, needs states, attitudes, preferences, and motives, which result in tendencies to respond to situations, or classes of situations in a particular predetermined manner. The interactionist approach can be viewed as a combination of the dispositional approach and the situational approach in determining attitudes and actions of individual employees (Roberts & Foti, 1998, Smith, 1992). The interactionist approach views the individual and situation as central issues concerning the outcomes of work, in other words, job satisfaction.

In a sample of university lecturers, Oshagbemi (2000) has found no relationship between gender and job satisfaction, although it was found that gender and rank interact to affect job satisfaction levels. Overall, female academics at higher ranks were more satisfied with their jobs than male academics of comparable ranks. García-Bernal, Gargallo-Castel, Marzo-Navarro and Rivera-Torres (2002) have found that ‘personal development on the job’ and economic aspects were statistically significantly related to job satisfaction levels of both males and females. Although the ‘interpersonal relationships’ component was found to have a statistically significant influence on the males’ levels of job satisfaction, this was not found to be the case with regard to the females’ job satisfaction levels. With regard to the relationship between culture and job satisfaction, some studies have found that black employees reported higher levels of job satisfaction than did white employees (Brenner & Fernsten, 1984). On the other hand, there are studies in which white participants reported higher levels of job satisfaction than black participants (Davis, 1985; Gold, Webb & Smith, 1982; Milutinovich, 1977; O’Reilly & Roberts, 1973; Slocum & Strawser, 1972, Tuch & Martin, 1991). In a South African study, Labuschagne (2005) has not found any significant differences in the job satisfaction levels of different cultural groups. Luthans and Thomas (1989) have found a positive curvilinear relationship between age and job satisfaction. With regard to the relationship between educational level and job satisfaction, Rogers (1991) has found a positive relationship. Falcon (1991) has also found that more highly educated managers expressed more job satisfaction (in both public and private sectors). Al-Ajmi has (2001) found that managers with a post-graduate degree experienced higher levels of job satisfaction compared to managers with a high-school diploma.



According to Lussier (1996), high job satisfaction is a hallmark of a well-managed organisation. Low job satisfaction is often the cause of wildcat strikes, work slowdowns, absenteeism, and high employee turnover. It may also result in grievances, low performance, poor product quality, employee theft, disciplinary problems, and a variety of other organisational problems (Lussier, 1996). Although most people assume a positive relationship between job satisfaction and productivity, most research evidence indicates that there is no strong linkage between satisfaction and productivity (Robbins, 1998). Regarding the relationship between job satisfaction and performance, Luthans (1995) states that there are many possible mediating variables, the most important of which seem to be rewards. If people receive rewards they feel are equitable, they will be satisfied and this is likely to result in greater performance efforts. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are likely to be better ambassadors for the organisation and show more organisational commitment (Agho, Price & Mueller, 1992).

According to Luthans (1998), organisational commitment is most often defined as (1) a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organisation; (2) a willingness to exert a high level of effort on behalf of the organisation; and (3) a definite belief in, and acceptance of, the values and goals of the organisation. Allen and Meyer (1990) propose that there are three components of organisational commitment, namely affective, continuous and normative commitment. The affective component of organisational commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation. The continuance component refers to the commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organisation. The normative component refers to the employee's feeling of obligation to remain with the organisation.

Kampfer, Boshoff and Venter (1994) mention that an abundance of research has been conducted on the relationship between commitment and various hypothesised consequences of commitment. Research relating to various outcomes of organisational commitment including performance (Wiener & Vardi, 1980), staff turnover (McDonald & Makin, 2000), and absenteeism (Hulin, 1991) can be found in literature.

According to Suliman and Iles (2000), organisational commitment has been found to improve employees' performance; to foster better superior-subordinate relationships; to enhance organisational development, growth and survival; to reduce withdrawal behaviours such as turnover, tardiness and absenteeism, and to have a positive impact on employees' readiness to innovate and create. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) note that as a consequence organisational commitment has been linked to several personal characteristics, role states and aspects of the work environment ranging from job characteristics to dimensions of organisational structure. In a South African study, Buitendach, Heymans and De Witte (2005) have not found a practically significant relationship between job insecurity and organisational commitment, although Laba (2004) has found that job insecurity showed an association with decreased organisational commitment, particularly with regard to decreased affective/normative commitment, but also to decreased continuance commitment (although only to a limited extent).

Numerous studies have been directed at determining its casual antecedents of organisational commitment (Clugston, 2000; DeCotiis & Summers, 1987; Mottaz, 1981). Aspects such as age (Allen & Meyer, 1990), gender (Angle & Perry, 1981), tenure (Pheffer & Lawler, 1980) and qualifications (Angle & Perry, 1981) have been shown to have an impact on the levels of organisational commitment experienced. In general, according to the domestic literature, age tends to be positively related to organisational commitment (Allen & Meyer 1993, Gregerson & Black, 1992). Meyer and Allen (1993) suggest that older employees become more attitudinally committed to an organisation for a variety of reasons, including greater satisfaction with their jobs, having received better positions, and having "cognitively justified" remaining in an organisation. Johnston, Parasuraman, Futrell and Black (1990) argue that older employees typically have made a considerable "investment" in the organisation which makes the thought of leaving unattractive. The position of greater respect given to older employees in the workplace is expected to result in more positive experiences for them and thus, greater commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1993).

In terms of tenure, Mathieu and Zajac (1990), as well as Lease (1998) are of the opinion that as individuals accumulate more years with an organisation, they are likely to acquire greater investment, and therefore be more committed. Gregerson and Black (1992) add to this by

stating that as employees remain with an organisation longer, alternative employment opportunities and personal investments in the firm tend to increase, thus enhancing employees' commitment. This finding is also consistent with Wallace's (1997) study using a Canadian sample, who has found that length of service is positively associated with organisational commitment. Conversely, Tsui and Farh (1997) have not found a significant correlation between commitment and length of service in a sample of Mainland Chinese supervisors and subordinates.

According to Mazibuko (1994), qualifications have been found to be inversely related to commitment, in other words organisational commitment decreases as qualifications increase. This inverse relationship may be attributed to three reasons (Mazibuko, 1994). Firstly, highly educated individuals may have higher work expectations than those which the organisation is able to meet. This may lead to feelings of dissatisfaction, which encourage them to think about leaving. Secondly, more highly educated individuals may also be more committed to a profession or trade rather than an organisation. Thirdly, more highly qualified employees may think that they have more employment opportunities outside the organisation than those who are not so well qualified. In a large sample of hospital employees, Steers (1977) has also found support for the notion that organisational commitment decreases as qualifications increase.

In addition to leading to a reduction in organisational commitment levels, job insecurity is expected to be associated with increased burnout and decreased work engagement. Burnout is a psychological syndrome caused by chronic daily stressors. Maslach (1982) describes burnout as including emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment. Shirom (1989) is of the opinion that exhaustion is the most important dimension underlying burnout, a claim which is corroborated by Lee and Ashforth's (1996) meta-analysis of the correlates of burnout. Whereas burnout was initially associated with persons working in a helping environment, the concept has since been extended to include all other professional and occupational groups (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). When people describe themselves or others as experiencing burnout, they are most often referring to the experience of *exhaustion*. *Depersonalisation* is an attempt to put distance between oneself and service recipients by actively ignoring the qualities that make them unique and engaging

people. Distancing is such an immediate reaction to exhaustion that a strong relationship from exhaustion to cynicism (depersonalisation) is found consistently in burnout research, across a wide range of organisational and occupational settings. *Reduced personal accomplishment* (or reduced efficacy outside the helping professions) is characterised by a tendency to evaluate oneself negatively. Individuals suffering from feelings of reduced efficacy experience a decline in feelings of job competence and successful achievement in their work, as well as in interactions with people. Frequently there is the perception of a lack of progress or even of lost ground (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998).

According to Burke (1997), burnout has been associated with various forms of job withdrawal including absenteeism, intention to leave the job, and actual turnover. However, for the people who stay on the job, burnout leads to lower productivity and effectiveness at work. People who are experiencing burnout can have a negative impact on their colleagues, both by causing greater personal conflict and by disrupting job tasks. Westman, Etzion and Danon (2001), who have researched job insecurity and crossover of burnout in married couples (98 couples), have found a positive correlation between job insecurity and burnout, with regard to both males and females. These researchers conclude (p. 478) that their findings corroborate the results of Dekker and Schaufeli (1995) and Landsbergis (1988) that the prolonged chronic exposure to job insecurity could lead to a wearing out of resources and a feeling of exhaustion. In her study of employees working in a government organisation, Bosman (2005) found that increased levels of job insecurity are statistically significantly associated with higher levels of burnout.

People do not simply respond to the work setting; rather, they bring unique qualities to the relationship. These personal factors include demographic variables (such as age or formal education), enduring personality characteristics, and work-related attitudes Maslach, (2001). Several of these individual characteristics have been found to be related to burnout. However, these relationships are not as great in size as those for burnout and situational factors, which suggest that burnout is more of a social phenomenon than an individual one (Maslach et al., 2001). Maslach et al. (2001) indicate that of all the demographic variables that have been studied, age is the one that has been most consistently related to burnout. Among younger employees the level of burnout is reported to be higher than it is among

those over 30 or 40 of age. Age is confounded with work experience, so burnout appears to be more of a risk earlier in one's career. The reasons for such an interpretation have not been studied very thoroughly. However, these findings should be viewed with caution because of the problem of survival bias - i.e. those who burn out early in their careers are likely to quit their jobs, leaving behind the survivors who consequently exhibit lower levels of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001).

The demographic variable of gender has not been found to be a strong predictor of burnout (despite some arguments that burnout is more of a female experience). According to Maslach et al. (2001), some studies show higher burnout for women, while others show higher scores for men, and others find no overall differences. The one small, yet consistent difference is that males often score slightly higher on exhaustion. These results could be related to gender role stereotypes, but they may also reflect the confounding of gender with occupation (e.g. police officers are more likely to be male, nurses are more likely to be female) (Maslach et al., 2001).

Work engagement, although theoretically related to burnout, is viewed as the antithesis of burnout. Maslach and Leiter (1997) redefine burnout as an erosion of engagement with the job. To be productive in one's work requires engagement with work – the sense of energetic and effective connection with one's activities. When engaged, individuals see themselves as able to deal competently with the demands of their job. Work engagement is defined as an energetic state in which the employee is dedicated to excellent performance at work and is confident in his or her effectiveness (Schutte, Toppinen, Kalimo & Schaufeli, 2000).

Engagement is characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy. Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzáles-Romá and Bakker (2002) explain that work engagement has three dimensions, being vigour, dedication, and absorption. *Vigour* is characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, not being easily fatigued, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. *Dedication* is characterised by deriving a sense of significance from one's work, by feeling enthusiastic and proud of one's job, and by feeling inspired and challenged by it. *Absorption* is characterised by being totally and happily immersed in one's work and having difficulties detaching oneself from it. Time

passes quickly and one forgets about everything else. Maslach and Leiter (1997) are of the opinion that engagement is characterised by energy, involvement, and efficacy which are considered the direct opposites of the three burnout dimensions exhaustion, cynicism, and lack of professional efficacy, respectively. Engaged employees have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their work activities and they see themselves as able to deal completely with the demands of their job. In her research in a South African government organisation, Bosman (2005) has found a practically significant negative relationship between job insecurity and work engagement.

Regarding demographic differences and work engagement, Storm (2002) and Bosman (2005) have found no significant difference in the work engagement levels of different cultural groups. Regarding educational levels, Bosman (2005), however, has found that participants with post-graduate degrees experience the highest levels of work engagement, although this finding has not been replicated in the research of Storm (2002). Bosman (2005) has also found that participants with tenure of less than one year consistently demonstrate increased levels of work engagement, hypothesising that newly employed employees (as compared to employees who have been following the same routine for a number of years) still find their work to be challenging, hence exerting a high level of energy into their work or that newly joined employees have more resources at their disposal as part of their induction.

This research was conducted amongst employees of two tertiary educational institutions (the former Vaal Triangle Campus of the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and the Sebokeng-campus of the Vista University) which had recently undergone a merger. Khwela (2000) notes that for higher education to make a valuable contribution to the reconstruction and development of South Africa, it will be of the utmost importance to look after the staff employed at tertiary institutions, for they are the “human capital” that will enable service delivery to all stakeholders, including students, government and the community, hence the importance of this research.

Based on the above-cited research, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: A practically significant negative relationship exists between job insecurity and job satisfaction, and job insecurity holds predictive value with regard to job satisfaction.
- H2: A practically significant negative relationship exists between job insecurity and organisational commitment and job insecurity holds predictive value with regard to organisational commitment.
- H3: A practically significant positive relationship exists between job insecurity and burnout and job insecurity holds predictive value with regard to burnout.
- H4: A practically significant negative relationship exists between job insecurity and work engagement and job insecurity holds predictive value with regard to work engagement.

## **AIM OF THE STUDY**

The primary aims of this study were to investigate the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement of personnel after an incorporation of tertiary educational institutions, and to determine whether job insecurity can be used to predict job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement.

## **METHOD**

### **Research design**

A correlational survey design was used to describe the information on the population collected at that time. This design is typically used by researchers for the purpose of exploring relationships among variables that are not manipulated or cannot be manipulated (Fitzgerald, Rumrill & Schenker, 2004).

## Sample

The total study population ( $N = 84$ ) includes academic personnel ( $N = 42$ ) and non-academic staff ( $N = 36$ ) from the two tertiary institutions. According to Sekaran (2000), sample sizes of between 30 and 5000 are adequate for most purposes of research. 57 (68%) of the respondents were from one campus, whilst 26 (31%) were from the other campus. The sample consisted of both males (50%) and females (49%). 43 (51%) of the participants were Afrikaans-speaking, whilst 18 (21%) were Sesotho-speaking and 10 (12%) were English-speaking. Levels of education ranged from Grade 10 – 12 to PhD-level, with the majority (23%) holding a Master's Degree. 50 (60%) of the participants held a permanent position, whilst 30 (36%) were temporarily employed. 17 (20%) of the participants had been employed for 11 to 15 years, and 15 (18%) for 5 to 10 years.

**Table 1**  
***Characteristics of the Participants ( $N = 83$ )***

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Home Language	Afrikaans	43	51
	English	10	12
	Sesotho	18	21
	Tswana	3	4
	Other	8	10
	Total	82	96
Gender	Male (1)	42	50
	Female (2)	41	49
	Total	83	99
Age	24 years and younger (1)	7	8
	25 – 35 years (2)	26	31
	36 – 45 years (3)	18	21
	46 – 55 years (4)	23	27
	56 years and older (5)	9	11
	Total	83	98
Qualification	Grade 10 to 12 (1)	11	13
	Diploma (2)	9	11
	Degree (3)	14	17
	Honours (4)	16	19
	Masters (5)	19	23
	PhD (6)	14	17
	Total	83	100
Campus	Former PU for CHE, Vaal Triangle	57	68
	Former Vista, Sebokeng	26	31
	Total	83	99



Position	Permanent (1)	50	60
	Temporary (2)	30	36
	Total	80	96
Staff	Academic	42	50
	Non – Academic	36	43
	Total	78	93
Campus	Campus 1	57	68
	Campus 2	26	31
	Total	83	99
Service	1 year	15	18
	1-2 years	12	14
	3-4 years	10	12
	5-10 years	15	18
	11-15 years	17	20
	16-20 years	11	13
	20+ years	2	2
	Total	82	97
Tenure in present job	1 year	16	19
	1-2 years	12	14
	3-4 years	12	14
	5-10 years	22	26
	11-15 years	14	17
	16-20 years	4	5
	20+ years	2	2
	Total	82	97

## Measuring Instruments

The following measuring instruments were used in this study:

The *Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ)*, developed by De Witte (2000), was used to investigate the job insecurity levels of participants. With inspiration received from Borg and Elizur (1992), De Witte developed a questionnaire consisting of 11 items. The items are arranged along a 5-point Likert-type scale with 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= unsure, 4= disagree and 5= strongly disagree. According to de Witte (2000), the questionnaire items refer to cognitive assessments (the possibility of becoming unemployed) and emotional reaction (affective insecurity). An example of a question relating to cognitive job insecurity would be, "I think that I will be able to continue working here", whereas an example of a question relating to affective job insecurity would be, "I fear that I might lose my job". In his research, De Witte, (2000) has reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,92 for global job insecurity. Furthermore, De Witte has found that the overlap between both predictive factors (cognitive and affective) is significant, making it difficult to distinguish between the two

dimensions. In South African research, Heymans (2002) has obtained a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,81 for the total scale and Bosman (2005) has obtained an alpha coefficient of 0,70 for the cognitive job insecurity scale and 0,72 for the affective job insecurity scale.

The *Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)* (Weiss, Dawis, England & Lofquist, 1967) consists of two versions, namely a long version consisting of 100 items and a short revised version consisting of 20 items. The short version does not measure specific aspects, although its advantage is that it determines the level of job satisfaction in general, distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction and is less time consuming to complete. Choices on the end (5) of the scale indicate total agreement with the item, suggesting high job satisfaction whereas choices at the beginning of the scale (1) indicate total disagreement with the statement made in the item, suggesting a low degree of job dissatisfaction. The revised Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire measures intrinsic job satisfaction and extrinsic job satisfaction using questions like: "The chance to be 'somebody' in the community", "The way my supervisor handles his/her workers", and "The praise I get for doing a good job". Hirschfeld (2000) has found that a two-factor model (intrinsic and extrinsic) is superior to a one-factor model. Alpha coefficients for both the revised and the original MSQ were higher than 0,82 (Hirschfeld, 2000). Weiss et al. (1967) report reliability coefficients varying from 0,87 to 0,92. Lam, Baum and Pine (1998) support this finding by reporting Cronbach alpha coefficients, which ranged from 0,87 to 0,95, indicating high internal consistency. Yousef (1998) has found a reliability coefficient of 0,92 in his study of job satisfaction in a cross cultural context.. Kaplan (1990) has reported a reliability coefficient of 0,90 for the total job satisfaction scale. In a South African study, Selepe (2004) has obtained an alpha coefficient of 0,92 for the intrinsic scale and 0,86 for the extrinsic scale.

The *Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)* (Allen, Meyer & Smith, 1996) was used to measure organisational commitment levels. The questionnaire can be administered individually or in groups (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). This questionnaire consists of 18 items and is based on the premise that organisational commitment is a multi-dimensional construct consisting of three scales namely affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Examples of items include "I do not feel emotionally attached to this organisation" (affective commitment), "Too much of my life would be disrupted if I

decided I wanted to leave my organisation right now" (continuance commitment), and "I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer" (normative commitment). The multi-dimensionality of the construct has been confirmed in different populations, as well as the congruence of the combined factor given that inter-correlations between populations were often found to be above 0,90 (Allen & Meyer, 1990). In South Africa, Heymans (2002) has obtained a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,80 for the total scale, 0,69 for the affective scale, 0,53 for the continuance scale and 0,74 for the normative scale.

The *Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)* (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996), which was used as a measure of burnout, is simple to fill out and takes only 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The MBI-GS has three sub-scales: Exhaustion (five items; e.g. "I feel used up at the end of the workday"), Cynicism (five items, e.g. "I have become less enthusiastic about my work") and Professional Efficacy (six items, e.g. "In my opinion, I am good at my job"). All items are scored on a 7-point frequency rating scale ranging from "0" (never) to "6" (daily). Together the sub-scales of the MBI-GS provide a three-dimensional perspective on burnout. Internal consistencies (Cronbach alpha coefficients) reported by Maslach et al. (1996) vary from 0,87 to 0,89 for exhaustion, 0,73 to 0,84 for cynicism and 0,76 to 0,84 for professional efficacy. High scores on exhaustion and cynicism, and low scores on professional efficacy are indicative of burnout. In a South African study, Storm (2003) has obtained Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0,88 for exhaustion; 0,79 for cynicism; and 0,78 for professional efficacy.

The *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)* (Schaufeli et al., 2002) was used to measure work engagement. This 17-item questionnaire is arranged along a seven-point frequency scale, ranging from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*daily*). The UWES has three scales, namely vigour (6 items), dedication (5 items), and absorption (6 items). Examples of items relating to the three dimensions are the following: "I am bursting with energy in my work" (vigour); "I find my work full of meaning and purpose" (dedication); and "When I am working, I forget everything around me" (absorption). High levels of vigour, dedication and absorption point to an individual who experiences a high level of work engagement. Regarding internal consistency, Cronbach coefficients have been determined between 0,68 and 0,91 (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Storm (2002) has obtained alpha coefficients of 0,78 (vigour), 0,89 (dedication)

and 0,78 (absorption) for the UWES in a sample of 2 396 members of the South African Police Services.

### **Data Analysis**

Statistical analysis was carried out with the help of the SAS program (SAS Institute, 2000). Cronbach alpha coefficients ( $\alpha$ ) and inter-item correlation coefficients were used to assess the internal consistency of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995). Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were used to analyse the data. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were used to specify the relationships between variables. The level of statistical significance is set at  $p < 0,01$ . Steyn (2002) criticises the sole uses of statistical significance testing and recommends that effect sizes be established to determine the importance of a statistically significant relationship. While the reporting of effect sizes are encouraged by the American Psychological Association (APA) in their Publication Manual (APA, 1994), most of these measures are seldom found in published reports (Kirk, 1996; Steyn, 2002). Therefore, effect sizes will be computed to assess the practical significance of relationships in this study. A cut-off point of 0,30, which represents a medium effect (Cohen, 1988; Steyn, 2002), is set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients. Regression analyses, controlling for the influence of demographic variables, were carried out to determine the percentage variance in the dependent variables that were predicted by the independent variables.

## **RESULTS**

Descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha coefficients and the inter-item correlation coefficients of the JIQ, MSQ, OCQ, MBI-GS, and the UWES for employees ( $N = 83$ ) working in a tertiary institution after an incorporation are reported in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Alpha Coefficients, Inter-item Correlation Coefficients, and Descriptive Statistics of the JIQ, MSQ, OCQ, MBI-GS and UWES (N = 83)*

<i>Item</i>	<i><math>\alpha</math></i>	<i>(r)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>MIN</i>	<i>MAX</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>
Job Insecurity Total	0,89	0,44	82	2,53	0,78	1,00	4,27	0,18	-0,29
Job Insecurity Affective	<b>0,64</b>	0,27	82	2,58	0,72	1,00	4,80	0,21	0,80
Job Insecurity Cognitive	0,91	<b>0,65</b>	82	2,50	0,95	1,00	5,00	0,41	-0,17
Job Satisfaction Total	0,86	0,24	84	75,40	9,82	43,00	94,00	-0,59	0,91
Job Satisfaction Intrinsic	0,86	0,34	84	47,54	6,79	24,00	60,00	-0,73	<b>1,15</b>
Job Satisfaction Extrinsic	0,71	0,24	84	27,85	4,67	15,00	36,00	-0,30	0,03
Organisational Commitment Total	0,77	0,15	84	3,21	0,52	2,00	4,55	-0,06	0,29
Organisational Commitment Affective	<b>0,60</b>	0,22	84	3,26	0,65	1,83	5,00	-0,19	0,01
Organisational Commitment Continuance	<b>0,60</b>	0,20	84	3,23	0,69	1,33	4,67	-0,37	0,09
Organisational Commitment Normative	0,72	0,30	84	3,13	0,73	1,33	4,83	-0,19	-0,42
Burnout Total	0,74	0,16	84	51,34	12,40	12,00	79,00	0,13	0,41
Burnout Exhaustion	0,84	<b>0,53</b>	84	11,73	6,88	0,00	27,00	0,02	-0,74
Burnout Cynicism	0,80	0,46	84	11,30	7,19	0,00	27,00	0,36	-0,88
Burnout Professional Efficacy	0,84	0,50	84	28,32	6,65	2,00	36,00	<b>-1,39</b>	<b>2,56</b>
Work Engagement Total	0,93	0,50	83	4,59	1,09	1,47	6,00	-0,91	-0,04
Work Engagement Vigour	0,80	0,41	83	4,55	1,07	1,33	6,00	-0,68	-0,24
Work Engagement Dedication	0,90	<b>0,64</b>	83	4,81	1,19	1,60	6,00	<b>-1,09</b>	0,21
Work Engagement Absorption	0,84	0,47	83	4,41	1,22	1,16	6,00	-0,83	0,02

Table 2 shows that acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients were obtained on all the scales, with the exception of the affective and continuance commitment subscales, as well as the affective job insecurity subscales, which fell below the 0,70 cut-off point (see Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). For this reason it was decided to make use of the total organisational commitment scale and the total of the job insecurity scale. All of the inter-item correlation coefficients were acceptable (Clark & Watson, 1995), with the exception of dedication subscale of UWES, the exhaustion subscale of MBI-GS and cognitive subscale of JIQ. However, these inter-item coefficients fell only marginally above the 0,50 cut-off point and can consequently be considered acceptable. Scores on all the dimensions seem to be distributed normally (skewness and kurtosis were smaller than one), with the exception of skewness and kurtosis of the professional efficacy subscale of the MBI-GS, the skewness of the dedication subscale of the UWES and kurtosis of the intrinsic subscale of the MSQ. However, these scores were not extreme and can thus be considered acceptable.

The correlation coefficients between the JIQ, MSQ, OCQ, MBI-GS and UWES are reported in Table 3.

**Table 3*****Correlation Coefficients between the JIQ, MSQ, OCQ, MBI-GS and UWES***

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. JIQ total	1												
2. MSQ Total	-0,40**†	1											
3. MSQ Intrinsic	-0,44**†	0,89***††	1										
4. MSQ Extrinsic	-0,20	0,78***††	0,41**†	1									
5. OCQ Total	-0,07	0,19	0,09	0,26*	1								
6. MBI Total	0,15	-0,30**†	-0,29*	-0,21	-0,12	1							
7. MBI Exhaustion	0,14	-0,22*	-0,28*	-0,06	-0,14	0,76***††	1						
8. MBI Cynicism	0,34**†	-0,45**†	-0,48**†	-0,23*	-0,15	0,75***††	0,54***††	1					
9. MBI Professional efficacy	-0,24	0,15	0,28*	-0,08	0,08	0,27*	-0,19	-0,26	1				
10. UWES Total	-0,39**†	0,29*	0,42**†	0,01	0,38**†	-0,19	-0,33**†	-0,34**†	0,36**†	1			
11. UWES Vigour	-0,42**†	0,34**†	0,47**†	0,05	0,35**†	-0,29*	-0,40*	-0,41**†	0,32**†	0,95***††	1		
12. UWES Dedication	-0,30**†	0,26*	0,37**†	0,01	0,28*	-0,16	-0,34**†	-0,30**†	0,39**†	0,93***††	0,85***††	1	
13. UWES Absorption	-0,38**†	0,23*	0,35**†	-0,01	0,44**†	-0,11	-0,21	-0,26	0,30**†	0,94***††	0,83***††	0,78***††	1

\* Statistically significant  $p \leq 0,01$ † Correlation is practically significant  $r \geq 0,30$  (medium effect)    †† Correlation is practically significant  $r \geq 0,50$  (large effect)

Table 3 shows a practically significant negative relationship of medium effect between total job insecurity and intrinsic job satisfaction. No statistically significant relationship was found between job insecurity and extrinsic job satisfaction. A practically significant negative relationship of medium effect was obtained between job insecurity and total job satisfaction. No statistically significant relationship was found between total job insecurity and organisational commitment. Job insecurity did not display a statistically significant relationship with the exhaustion component of burnout, although results indicated a practically significant relationship of medium effect with the cynicism subscale of the MBI.

No statistically significant relationship was found between job insecurity and professional efficacy. Regarding the relationship between job insecurity and work engagement, job insecurity demonstrated negative correlations of medium effect with the vigour, dedication, and absorption subscales of the UWES.

Regression analyses were used to further examine the relationship between variables. The multiple regression analyses were conducted with job insecurity as independent variable, also controlling for the effects of age, gender, qualifications and race, and with intrinsic job satisfaction, cynicism, professional efficacy and work engagement as dependent variables respectively.



**Table 4*****Regression Analysis – Job Insecurity and Demographic Variables: Intrinsic Job Satisfaction.***

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
Model 1: Demographic variables					
<i>R</i> : 0,32					
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,10					
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,06					
Standard Error: 6,51					
<i>F</i> = 2,21					
<i>p</i> = 0,075					
Model 2: Demographic variables and job insecurity					
<i>R</i> : 0,46					
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,21					
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,16					
Standard Error: 5,73					
<i>F</i> = 3,91					
<i>p</i> = 0,003					
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	Beta	SEB	B	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Gender	-0,17	0,11	-2,23	-1,46	0,15
Race	-0,24	0,12	-1,18	-2,00	0,05*
Age	0,03	0,12	0,15	0,22	0,83
Qualifications	0,08	0,12	0,33	0,68	0,50
Gender	-0,10	0,11	-1,26	-0,92	0,36
Race	-0,14	0,12	-0,66	-1,23	0,22
Age	-0,03	0,11	-0,17	-0,29	0,77
Qualifications	0,07	0,11	0,26	0,62	0,54
Job insecurity	-0,36	0,11	-2,86	-3,29	0,00*

\*  $p \leq 0,05$ 

The regression analysis reflected in Table 4 indicates that the demographic variables (particularly race) contributed toward 6% of the variance in intrinsic job satisfaction. A *R*-value of 0,32 was obtained, which is considered to represent a medium effect . Upon inclusion of job insecurity, the adjusted *R*<sup>2</sup> increased by 10%. An *R*-value (0,46) of medium

effect was obtained. In the second step after inclusion of job insecurity, the impact of race, however, became insignificant.

**Table 5**

***Regression Analysis – Job Insecurity and Demographic Variables: Cynicism.***

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
Model 1: Demographic variables					
R: 0,26					
R <sup>2</sup> : 0,07					
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> : 0,02					
Standard Error: 7,15					
F = 1,38					
p = 0,249					
Model 2: Demographic variables and job insecurity					
R: 0,38					
R <sup>2</sup> : 0,14					
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> : 0,09					
Standard Error: 6,88					
F = 2,481					
p = 0,039					
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	Beta	SEB	B	t	p
Gender	0,11	0,12	1,52	0,91	0,37
Race	0,18	0,12	0,99	1,53	0,13
Age	-0,07	0,12	-0,41	-0,57	0,57
Qualifications	-0,06	0,12	-0,24	-0,46	0,64
Gender	0,08	0,11	1,09	0,66	0,51
Race	0,11	0,12	0,61	0,95	0,34
Age	-0,04	0,12	-0,22	-0,31	0,75
Qualifications	-0,03	0,12	-0,12	-0,24	0,81
Job insecurity	0,30	0,11	2,71	2,60	0,01*

\*  $p \leq 0,05$

The regression analysis reflected in Table 5 indicates that the demographic variables contributed toward 2% of the variance in cynicism, although none of the demographic variables predicted cynicism to a statistically significant extent. A R-value of 0,26 was obtained, which is considered to fall below what is considered to be the medium effect cut-

off point (0,30). Upon inclusion of job insecurity, the adjusted  $R^2$  increased by 7% and an R-value of 0,38 (medium effect) was obtained.

**Table 6**

***Regression Analysis – Job Insecurity and Demographic Variables: Vigour***

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
Model 1: Demographic variables					
<i>R</i> : 0,31					
$R^2$ : 0,10					
Adjusted $R^2$ : 0,05					
Standard Error: 1,05					
$F = 2,07$					
$p = 0,092$					
Model 2: Demographic variables and job insecurity					
<i>R</i> : 0,53					
$R^2$ : 0,28					
Adjusted $R^2$ : 0,23					
Standard Error: 0,95					
$F = 5,75$					
$p = 0,000$					
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	Beta	SEB	B	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
Gender	0,22	0,12	0,48	1,94	0,07
Race	0,15	0,12	0,12	1,26	0,21
Age	0,24	0,12	0,22	2,06	0,04*
Qualifications	0,14	0,12	0,09	1,22	0,23
Gender	0,26	0,11	0,56	2,44	0,02*
Race	0,26	0,11	0,20	2,29	0,02*
Age	0,21	0,11	0,19	1,98	0,05*
Qualifications	0,09	0,11	0,06	0,85	0,40
Job insecurity	-0,46	0,11	-0,63	-4,30	0,00*

\*  $p \leq 0,05$

The regression analysis reflected in Table 6 indicates that the demographic variables contributed toward 5% of the variance in vigour (age in particular (and race and gender in step 2, suggesting that the impact of race and gender on vigour may run through job insecurity)). An R-value of 0,31 was obtained, which is considered to represent a medium

effect. Upon inclusion of job insecurity, the adjusted  $R^2$  increased by 18% and an R-value of 0,53 (large effect) was obtained.

**Table 7**

***Regression Analysis – Job Insecurity and Demographic Variables: Dedication***

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
Model 1: Demographic variables					
<i>R</i> : 0,39					
$R^2$ : 0,15					
Adjusted $R^2$ : 0,11					
Standard Error: 1,13					
$F = 3,42$					
$p = 0,012$					
Model 2: Demographic variables and job insecurity					
<i>R</i> : 0,48					
$R^2$ : 0,23					
Adjusted $R^2$ : 0,18					
Standard Error: 1,09					
$F = 4,46$					
$p = 0,001$					
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	Beta	SEB	B	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Gender	0,16	0,11	0,38	1,42	0,16
Race	0,20	0,12	0,18	1,72	0,09
Age	0,36	0,11	0,36	3,16	0,00*
Qualifications	0,16	0,11	0,12	1,42	0,16
Gender	0,17	0,11	0,41	1,56	0,12
Race	0,26	0,12	0,23	2,27	0,03*
Age	0,34	0,11	0,35	3,11	0,00*
Qualifications	0,12	0,11	0,09	1,11	0,27
Job insecurity	-0,30	0,11	-0,46	-2,71	0,01*

\*  $p \leq 0,05$

The regression analysis reflected in Table 6 indicates that the demographic variables contributed toward 11% of the variance in dedication (age in particular). An R-value of 0,39 was obtained, which represents a medium effect. Upon inclusion of job insecurity, the adjusted  $R^2$  increased by 7% and an R-value of 0,48 (medium effect) was obtained. In step 2,

the influence of race became statistically significant, once again suggesting that the impact of race on dedication may run through job insecurity.

**Table 8**

***Regression Analysis – Job Insecurity and Demographic Variables: Absorption***

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
Model 1: Demographic variables					
<i>R</i> : 0,40					
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,21					
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,17					
Standard Error: 1,12					
<i>F</i> = 5,18					
<i>p</i> = 0,000					
Model 2: Demographic variables and job insecurity					
<i>R</i> : 0,56					
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,31					
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,27					
Standard Error: 1,06					
<i>F</i> = 6,71					
<i>p</i> = 0,000					
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	Beta	SEB	B	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
Gender	0,27	0,11	0,65	2,45	0,02*
Race	0,04	0,11	0,04	0,38	0,71
Age	0,26	0,11	0,27	2,37	0,02*
Qualifications	0,34	0,11	0,26	3,11	0,00*
Gender	0,29	0,10	0,71	2,78	0,01*
Race	0,12	0,11	0,11	1,08	0,28
Age	0,23	0,10	0,25	2,25	0,03*
Qualifications	0,30	0,11	0,23	2,88	0,01*
Job insecurity	-0,33	0,10	-0,52	-3,18	0,00*

\* *p* ≤ 0,05

The regression analysis reflected in Table 6 indicates that the demographic variables contributed toward 17% of the variance in absorption (gender, age and qualification). An *R*-value of 0,40 was obtained, which represents a medium effect. Upon inclusion of job

insecurity, the adjusted  $R^2$  increased by 10% and an R-value of 0,56 (large effect) was obtained.

## DISCUSSION

The objectives of this study were to investigate the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement of personnel after an incorporation of tertiary educational institutions and to determine whether job insecurity can be used to predict job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement. In terms of the affective events theory of stress, it was expected that job insecurity would constitute a goal obstruction leading to an imbalance in the demands of the environment and the employee's ability to cope with those demands, leading to strain becoming evident at a physiological, behavioural or psychological level.

Results indicated that job insecurity was related to decreased intrinsic job satisfaction (medium effect), but not to extrinsic job satisfaction. The finding that job insecurity is related to decreased intrinsic job satisfaction corresponds with the findings of numerous researchers including Ashford et al. (1989); Heany et al. (1994); Heymans (2002); and Probst and Brubaker (2001) with the exception of the finding that job insecurity is not related to extrinsic job satisfaction.

It was expected that job insecurity would have a negative impact on a work-related attitude such as organisational commitment. The results, however, indicated the contrary, as there was no statistically significant relationship between job insecurity and organisational commitment. This corresponds with the findings of Heymans (2002). Laba (2004), however, has found that job insecurity was associated with decreased organisational commitment. Based on this finding, hypothesis 2, which states that a practically significant negative relationship exists between job insecurity and organisational commitment and that job insecurity holds predictive value with regard to organisational commitment, is rejected.

Contrary to the findings of Bosman (2005), job insecurity did not have a statistically significant relationship with the exhaustion component of burnout. A practically significant relationship of medium effect was, however, found between job insecurity and the cynicism

subscale of the MBI. Participants experiencing job insecurity may thus display an increased tendency to put distance between themselves and service recipients by actively ignoring the qualities that make them unique and engaging people. No statistically significant relationship was found between job insecurity and professional efficacy, suggesting that in this study population, individuals suffering from job insecurity did not suffer from a decline in feelings of job competence and successful achievement in their work.

According to Maslach et al. (2001), the violation of the psychological contract caused, amongst others, by job insecurity, can produce a reduction in work engagement, because it erodes the notion of reciprocity, which is crucial in maintaining well-being. Job insecurity was found to be associated with reduced work engagement (as displayed in reduced vigour, dedication and absorption), which corresponds with the findings of Bosman (2005). Participants experiencing job insecurity thus tended to experience lower levels of energy and mental resilience while working, less willingness to invest effort in their work, became fatigued more easily, and found it more difficult to persist in the face of difficulties. They furthermore failed to derive a sense of significance from their work, feeling less enthusiastic and proud about their job, and feeling less inspired and challenged by their work. Participants experiencing job insecurity also tended to struggle to become totally and happily immersed in their work.

Regression analyses were conducted to determine whether job insecurity holds predictive value with regard to intrinsic job satisfaction, cynicism, and the three work engagement dimensions. Based on the literature, which suggests that various demographic characteristics such as gender, race, age and qualification may influence job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout and work engagement levels, the potential influence of such demographic variables were controlled during the analyses. Regarding the predictive value of job insecurity, regression analyses indicated that job insecurity held predictive value with regard to intrinsic job satisfaction (10%), and that race also held some predictive value with regard to intrinsic job satisfaction, although this impact became insignificant upon the inclusion of job insecurity. Based on this finding, hypothesis 1, which states that a practically significant negative relationship exists between job insecurity and job satisfaction and that job insecurity holds predictive value with regard to job insecurity, can be partially

accepted (given that job insecurity and extrinsic job satisfaction were not practically significantly related). It was furthermore indicated that job insecurity held a 7% predictive value with regard to the cynicism-subscale of the MBI-GS. Based on this finding, hypothesis 3, which states that a practically significant positive relationship exists between job insecurity and burnout and that job insecurity holds predictive value with regard to burnout, can be partially accepted (no practically significant relationships were found between job insecurity and exhaustion, as well as between job insecurity and professional efficacy). The demographic variables did not hold any predictive value with regard to cynicism levels. Regarding job insecurity and work engagement, regression analyses indicated that job insecurity held the most (18%) predictive value with regard to vigour (race, gender and age also held some predictive value). Job insecurity predicted 7% of the variance in dedication (age and race predicted 11% of the variance) and 10% of the variance in absorption (gender, age and qualification predicted 17% of the variance in absorption). Based on these findings, hypothesis 4, which states that a practically significant negative relationship exists between job insecurity and work engagement and that job insecurity holds predictive value with regard to work engagement, can be accepted. Age appeared to hold predictive value with regard to vigour, and race and gender also appeared to have an impact on vigour levels, although this impact appeared to run through job insecurity. With regard to dedication, age also appeared to have had an influence. Once again, race became significant in the second step of the regression analyses, implying that the impact of race on dedication may run through job insecurity. Gender, age and qualification were found to hold predictive value with regard to absorption levels.

## **LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

A limitation of this study was the sample size, which placed limitations on the statistical analyses that could be conducted, as well as the generalisability of the research findings. A further limitation of this study was the use of self report measures, which increased the likelihood that at least part of the shared variances between measures could be attributed to method variance (Schaufeli, Enzmann & Girault, 1993). In respect of research design, future studies should attempt to make use of designs where inferences in terms of cause and effect can be made. To date, a substantial amount of research has been done regarding the



consequences of job insecurity, both at individual and organisational level. Research investigating potential mediating factors in the job insecurity – outcome relationship is required, so as to enable researchers to identify mechanisms to reduce the severity of the stressor-outcome relationship. Findings indicated that race held some predictive value with regard to intrinsic job satisfaction, which became insignificant upon inclusion of job insecurity. Results also indicated that the impact of race and gender on vigour and the impact of race on dedication may run through job insecurity. Some further research is required in this regard.

The results indicated that job insecurity was associated with reduced intrinsic job satisfaction and work engagement and increased cynicism. Given this finding, it is important to reduce job insecurity levels, so as to optimise intrinsic job satisfaction and work engagement levels and to minimise cynicism. Uncertainty or job insecurity during change processes is typically related to the perceived aim, process and expected outcomes of the change process, as well as the perceived implications that it holds for individual employees (Buono & Bowditch, 1993). Terry and Jimmieson (1999) note that knowledge is not only a pre-requisite to the ability of influencing the outcomes, but knowledge about the motives for change will also help to reduce uncertainty and create readiness for change. In that sense effective change communication can be viewed as a means to properly manage uncertainty (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998). DiFonzo and Bordia (1998) are of the opinion that there should be two goals for organisational communication. The first goal should be to inform the employees about their tasks and about the policy and other issues of the organisation. The second goal should be communication with the intention of creating community within the organisation. Sadri (1996) emphasises the importance of perceived fairness, which is encouraged through a process of open communication and which allows employees to place things in perspective. Smithson and Lewis (2000) suggest that the management of an insecure workforce could include specific training for career self-management, and encouragement for employees to acquire transferable skills, which will increase their employment security. Hiltrop (1996) notes that companies can no longer rely on traditional methods and techniques to attract and retain talented employees. He proposes that instead of career paths and job security, new kinds of incentives need to be applied. Kanter (1994) is of the opinion that companies need to switch incentives from careers, status and promotion, to personal reputation, teamwork and

challenging assignments, finding ways of making work challenging and involving so it becomes a source of loyalty, which translates into a new kind of security. Kanter (1994) labels this new type of security, "employability security".

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## CHAPTER 3

### CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter conclusions regarding the literature study and the results of the empirical research will be made. Limitations of the research will be discussed, and recommendations for organisations and future research will be provided.

#### 3.1 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions regarding the specific theoretical objectives and the results of the empirical research will be made.

##### 3.1.1 Conclusions regarding the specific theoretical objectives

In line with the first specific objective stated in chapter 1, job insecurity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout and work engagement, as well as the relationship between these constructs, were conceptualised from literature.

**Job insecurity** was conceptualised from literature as a subjectively experienced worry about future involuntary job loss (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). For the purpose of this study a global, two-dimensional perspective of job insecurity was adopted. The cognitive dimension relates to the perceived likelihood of job loss, as experienced by an employee. The affective dimension again revolves around the fear of job loss.

**Job satisfaction** was conceptualised as being related to the extent to which people like their jobs (Hirschfeld, 2000). In this research, job satisfaction was viewed as being two-dimensional, consisting of intrinsic job satisfaction and extrinsic job satisfaction components. Extrinsic satisfaction refers to satisfaction with aspects such as pay, working conditions and co-workers, whereas intrinsic satisfaction refers to aspects such as variety and autonomy.

**Organisational commitment** was defined as the strength of an individual's identification and involvement with his/her particular organisation, characterised by a strong belief in an acceptance of the organisation's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation and a definite desire to maintain organisational membership (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Hence, in this research organisational commitment was conceptualised and measured as a three-dimensional construct, consisting of affective, normative and continuance commitment dimensions. According to Meyer and Allen (1997) the affective component of organisational commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation. The continuance component refers to the commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organisation. The normative component refers to the employee's feeling of obligation to remain with the organisation.

**Burnout** was viewed as a psychological syndrome caused by chronic daily stressors, constituted by feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment. Exhaustion relates to extensive and intense physical, affective and cognitive strain, as a consequence of prolonged contact to specific work conditions/stressors. Depersonalisation/cynicism is an attempt to put distance between oneself and service recipients by actively ignoring the qualities that make them unique and engaging people. Reduced personal accomplishment/efficacy is characterised by a tendency to evaluate oneself negatively. (Maslach, 1982)

**Work engagement** was conceptualised as a positive, persistent affective-cognitive, and work-related orientation, characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2002). Vigour was conceptualised as being related to high energy levels, mental resilience, willingness to exert effort and persistence. Dedication was conceptualised as being related to enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, challenge and a sense of significance. Absorption was defined as referring to a state where time flies and where the individual finds it difficult for him or her to detach from work. Burnout and work engagement were conceptualised as opposite, yet independent constructs.

This research was conducted from the affective events theory perspective (Probst, 2002), wherein characteristics of the work environment and work-related events are cognitively appraised in terms of the extent to which such work events and features will assist or hamper the achievement of goals. When goal obstruction is identified and when there is a perceived imbalance between the demands of the environment and the employee's ability to cope with those demands, stress results, which may become evident at a physiological, behavioural or psychological level – or any combination thereof. It was indicated that from this perspective, job insecurity was expected to lead to increased levels of burnout and decreased levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and work engagement. Previous research that had established such relationships between job insecurity, job satisfaction (Heymans, 2002), organisational commitment (Laba, 2004), burnout (Westman, Etzion & Danon, 2001) and work engagement (Bosman, 2005) were cited.

### **3.1.2 Conclusions regarding the specific empirical objectives**

The second specific objective was to determine the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement.

Results suggested that job insecurity was related to decreased intrinsic job satisfaction, although no statistically significant relationship was found between job insecurity and extrinsic job satisfaction. The finding that job insecurity is related to decreased intrinsic job satisfaction corresponds with the findings of researchers such as Ashford, Lee and Bobko (1989); Heany, Israel and House (1994); and Probst and Brubaker (2001). The finding that job insecurity was not statistically significantly related to extrinsic job satisfaction however does not correspond with the above researchers findings.

No statistically significant relationship was found between job insecurity and organisational commitment, although it was expected that job insecurity would be related to decreased affective, normative and continuance commitment. Heymans (2002) however obtained similar results, in other words that job insecurity and organisational commitment was not statistically significantly related. Laba (2004), however, found that job insecurity was associated decreased organisational commitment. Accordingly, hypothesis 2 was rejected.

Contrary to the findings of Bosman (2005), job insecurity did not display a statistically significant relationship with the exhaustion component of burnout. A practically significant relationship was however found between job insecurity and the cynicism component of burnout. Job insecurity thus appears to hold implications for employees' interpersonal relationships. No statistically significant relationship was found between job insecurity and professional efficacy.

Job insecurity was found to be associated with reduced work engagement, displayed in reduced vigour, dedication and absorption. This finding corresponds with the findings of Bosman (2005).

The third specific objective was to determine whether job insecurity could be used to predict job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, and work engagement.

A literature review, suggested that demographic characteristics such as gender, race, age and qualification have been found to influence job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout and work engagement levels. For this reason, it was necessary to control for the influence of such demographic variables during the regression analyses. Regression analyses indicated that job insecurity held predictive value with regard to intrinsic job satisfaction (10%), and that race also held some predictive value with regard to intrinsic job satisfaction. Job insecurity was found to hold 7% predictive value with regard to cynicism and 18% predictive value with regard to vigour (race, gender and age also held some predictive value with regard to vigour). Job insecurity predicted 7% of the variance in dedication (age and race predicted 11% of the variance) and 10% of the variance in absorption (gender, age and qualification predicted 17% of the variance in absorption). Based on these findings, hypotheses 1, 3, and 4 were accepted.

### **3.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

Various limitations can be identified in this study.

- The sample size was small, limiting the generalisability of the findings, as well as the types of statistical analyses that could be used.
- A further limitation was that the study population was misbalanced in terms of representation from the two tertiary educational institutions.
- A limitation of this study was the use of self report measures; which increases the likelihood that at least part of the shared variances between measures can be attributed to method variance (Schaufeli, Enzmann & Girault, 1993).
- In respect of research design, future studies should focus on designs where inferences in terms of cause and effect could be made.
- The Job Insecurity Questionnaire could be considered as insufficient, given that it focuses only on the prospects of losing one's job and disregards other sources of job insecurity.

### **3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations are made with regard to the applicable organisation, as well as with regard to future research.

#### **3.3.1 Recommendations for the organisation**

Based on the negative impact that job insecurity was found to have on aspects such as intrinsic job satisfaction, cynicism and work engagement, it is important to reduce job insecurity levels. Uncertainty or job insecurity during change processes is typically related to



the perceived aim, process and expected outcomes of the change process, as well as the perceived implications that it holds for individual employees (Buono & Bowditch, 1993). DiFonzo and Bordia (1998) identify effective change communication as a means to properly manage uncertainty. DiFonzo and Bordia (1998) are of the opinion two goals should be kept in mind for organisational communication. The first goal should be to inform the employees about their tasks and about the policy and other issues of the organisation. The second goal should be communication with the intention of creating community within the organisation. Sadri (1996) emphasises the importance of perceived fairness, which is encouraged through a process of open communication and which allows employees to place things in perspective. Smithson and Lewis (2000) suggest that the management of an insecure workforce could include specific training for career self-management, and encouragement for employees to acquire transferable skills, which will increase their employment security.

Hiltrop (1996) notes that companies can no longer rely on traditional methods and techniques to attract and retain talented employees. He proposes that instead of career paths and job security, new kinds of incentives need to be applied. Kanter (1994) is of the opinion that companies need to switch incentives from careers, status and promotion, to personal reputation, teamwork and challenging assignments, finding ways of making work challenging and involving so it becomes a source of loyalty, which translates into a new kind of security. Kanter (1994) coins this new type of security, "employability security".

### **3.3.2 Recommendations for further research**

A lot of research has been done on the relationship between job insecurity and various individual and organisational outcomes. Research is however required regarding potential mediators of the job insecurity-outcome relationship, which will provide some insight on potential mechanisms of reducing the negative effects of job insecurity. Practical significance should be determined in addition to statistical significance and adequate statistical techniques (e.g. structural equation modelling) should be used. It is recommended that a more powerful sampling method be used and that longitudinal designs be employed, so as to enable causal inferences. Larger, more representative samples should be utilised.

### **3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter conclusions regarding the theoretical and empirical objectives were made. The limitations of the research were pointed out and recommendations were made for the organisation in which the study took place, as well as for future research. All theoretical and empirical objectives formulated for this research, have been attained.

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