

**EMPOWERMENT AND JOB INSECURITY IN A STEEL
MANUFACTURING ORGANISATION**

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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 (4th edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA) were followed in this thesis.
- This practice is in line with the policy of the programme in Industrial Psychology at the North-West University.
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SUMMARY

Title: Empowerment and Job Insecurity in a steel-manufacturing organisation.

Key words: Leader Empowering Behaviour, Job Insecurity, and Psychological Empowerment.

The South African work situation is continuously changing due to globalisation, and most organisations embark on strategies that are geared to ensure survival. The political, economical, social and demographical situation of the country encourages the changing work environment to be aligned with the international community. Strategies and tactics such as restructuring, down sizing, re-organisation, and technological changes are deployed by most organisations with the hope of profit making, survival and to remain competitive in this changing world of work. While organisations embark on these strategies, employees are facing massive job loss, which results in employees experiencing feelings of job insecurity. Employees, who feel psychologically empowered through leadership empowering behaviour, endue a sense of job security and thus contribute towards a healthy work organisation.

Employees from four business units in a steel-manufacturing organisation were targeted. The study population included employees from managerial and non-managerial categories. A cross-sectional survey design was used to obtain the research objectives. Three standardised questionnaires were used in the empirical study, namely Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire, Job Insecurity Inventory and the Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire.

The results indicated average mean scores on the scales of leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity and psychological empowerment when compared to previous studies. Strong negative correlations were found between leader empowering behaviour and job insecurity and between job insecurity and psychological empowerment. Strong positive correlation was found between leader empowering behaviour and psychological

empowerment. Regression analyses showed that leader empowering behaviour predicts job insecurity and psychological empowerment. It was also found that job insecurity predicted psychological empowerment. This research indicates that leadership has a positive impact on employees' feelings of security and empowerment. Based on the results, recommendations were made and can be implemented by this organisation.

OPSOMMING

Titel: Bemagtiging en werksekeriteit in 'n staal vervaardigingsorganisasie.

Sleutelwoorde: Leier Bemagtigingsgedrag, Werksonsekerheid, en Sielkundige Bemagtiging.

Die Suid-Afrikaanse situasie verander deurlopend weens globalisering, en meeste organisasies poog om strategieë in werking te stel wat hul oorlewing sal bewerkstellig. Die politiese, ekonomiese, sosiale en demografiese omstandighede van die land moedig die veranderende werksomstandighede aan om sodoende aansluiting te vind by die internasionale gemeenskap. Strategieë en taktieke soos herstrukturering, getallevmindering, herorganisasie, en tegnologiese veranderinge word deur meeste organisasies in werking gestel met die uiteindelijke doel van winsmaking, oorlewing en om mededingend te bly in hierdie veranderende werkswêreld. Terwyl organisasies hul toespits op hierdie strategieë, staar werknemers enorme werksverlies in die gesig, wat lei tot werknemers wat gevoelens van werksonsekerheid ervaar. Werknemers, wat sielkundig bemagtig voel deur leier bemagtigingsgedrag, voorsien 'n gevoel van werksekerheid en sal dus bydra tot 'n gesonde werksorganisasie.

Werknemers van vier besigheidseenhede in 'n staal vervaardigingsorganisasie is geteiken. Die studiebevolking sluit werknemers van bestuurs- en nie-bestuurskategorieë in. 'n Kruisdeursnit opname-ontwerp is gebruik om die navorsingsobjektiewe te bekom. Drie gestandaardiseerde vraelyste is gebruik in die empiriese studie, naamlik die Leier Bemagtigingsgedrag Vraelys, Werksonsekerheid Inventaris en die Meet van Bemagtiging Vraelys.

Die resultate het gemiddelde gemene tellings op die skale van leier bemagtigingsgedrag, werksonsekerheid en sielkundige bemagtiging aangedui wanneer vergelyk met vorige studies. Sterk negatiewe korrelasies is gevind tussen leier bemagtigingsgedrag en werksonsekerheid en tussen werksonsekerheid en sielkundige bemagtiging. 'n Sterk

positiewe korrelasie is gevind tussen leier bemagtigingsgedrag en sielkundige bemagtiging. Regressie-analises het aangetoon dat leier bemagtigingsgedrag werksonsekerheid en sielkundige bemagtiging voorspel. Daar is ook gevind dat werksonsekerheid sielkundige bemagtiging voorspel. Hierdie navorsing dui aan dat leierskap 'n positiewe invloed het op werknemers se gevoel van sekuriteit en bemagtiging. Gebaseer op die resultate, is aanbevelings gemaak wat deur hierdie organisasie geïmplementeer kan word. .

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity, and psychological empowerment in a steel manufacturing organisation.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Working life continues to undergo rapid change that introduces a new and diverse set of complexities that differ widely in levels of demand and sophistication. These new conditions require new organisational design and restructuring on a global and national level. These working environments have created greater flexibility and learner structures and maximised productivity (Millet & Sandberg, 2005).

South African companies are being exposed more than ever to the effects of the world economy, technological advancement and tough international competition. Tremendous pressure is placed on organisations to improve their performance and to become increasingly competitive; and in such competitive environments the first fundamental consideration for most organisations is their profitability. In order for such organisations to gain a competitive advantage they need to determine sources of cost saving (Buitendach & De Witte, 2005).

This study takes place in an organisation that has undergone several changes over the past decade in the form of re-organisation, restructuring, downsizing, outsourcing, unbundling, mergers and consolidation. In all the changes that took place for the survival of the organisation in the 1990s through cost cutting exercises to the current situation of consolidation, globalisation and continuous improvement drive, half of the manpower has lost its job due to these processes of restructuring through forced retrenchments and voluntary severance packages (Sauer, 2003).

The working situation has dramatically changed with employees subjected to a rotation system of work, multi-tasking and multi-skilled performance. Emphasis is more on team performance and incentives, and rewards are paid based on team performance.

According to Hartley (1991) changes such as economic uncertainty, global competition and an increase in mergers and acquisitions in the past decade organisations have been forced to improve organisational effectiveness and streamline operations through down sizing, outsourcing and restructuring and these actions are associated with large-scale workforce reductions. For many employees these changes in working life cause feelings of insecurity regarding the nature and existence of their jobs (Buitendach & De Witte, 2005).

The organisation experiences a general disengagement among the surviving employees, job dissatisfaction, low commitment and a high level of employee turnover as well as a deterioration of employees' health. The decrease of union representation may have resulted in a lack of information and involvement in the decisions made by the organisation. As a result, employees are more vulnerable than ever to the effects of unilateral decisions from which they have little recourse. The consequence of the organisational trend is the growth of job insecurity among the employees. Canaff and Wright (2004) found that the experience of job insecurity had more detrimental effects on the individual than actual termination. To change the situation for the better, current leadership must be strong and must have a vision.

According to Bell (2004), the biggest challenge facing management today is how to encourage an atmosphere of camaraderie in the business environment; how to relate to one's staff on a personal level while maintaining a stringent attitude towards performance. These challenges call for leaders, who challenge the status quo, create visions of the future and inspire followers to achieve the vision (Bell, 2004).

Harvey-Jones (2004) states that leadership is about charisma, strategy, directedness, personal validity, human connectivity and innovation. “It is certainly about a multiplicity of traits, attitudes and skills. When these are integrated into the culture of a company, the results are constructive change for the organisation. She proposes that the leader starts with a vision, with dreams of growth and sustainable development and action plans to make it all happen – but not alone. “It is only when the team ascribes to the vision and implements the plans that leadership occurs” (Harvey-Jones, 2004). Leadership dimensions such as the delegation of authority, accountability of outcomes, participative decision-making, information sharing, skills development and coaching, form the cornerstone of strong leadership, (Konczak, Stelly & Trusty, 2000). Konczak et al. (2000) further indicate that the responsibility for outcomes should be placed with individuals and teams.

The success and failure in any organisation depend on how its leadership optimises the use of its human capital (Robbins, 2003). According to Friedman (2001) the global economy is shifting, bringing with it numerous unprecedented challenges that require a new kind of leadership. The global business manager has to achieve an efficient distribution of assets and resources while protecting the competence at hand (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2003). However, this desired competence is often shaken by the job security of employees within organisations.

Buitendach & De Witte (2005) indicate that South African companies are being exposed more than ever to the effects of the world economy, technological advancement and tough international competition that lead organisations to consider profitability and cost savings to gain a competitive advantage over competitors. Hellgren, Naswall and Sverke (2005) point out that job insecurity, like any other stressor, is associated with a number of detrimental consequences for both the individual and the organisation and that includes strain such as mental health complaints, lower levels of job satisfaction, lower levels of job involvement, decreased trust in organisation, decreased organisational commitment and an increased intention to leave the organisation. Similarly a positive relationship has been identified between job insecurity and self-reported physical health complaints and

research suggests that mental health complaints follow job insecurity perceptions rather than the other way round (Hellgren et al., 2005).

De Witte (1999) points out that job insecurity can be defined in different ways and consensus must still be reached regarding a standardised definition of job insecurity. De Witte (1999) indicates that job insecurity relates to people in their work context who fear they may lose their jobs. Van Vuuren (1999) conceptualises job insecurity as the concern felt by a person for the continued existence of his or her job and identifies three components. The first refers to a subjective experience or perception. The second to the uncertainty about the future and the third component includes doubts concerning the continuation of the job.

Lim (1997) as cited in Canaff and Wright (2004) identified job insecurity as a work stressor that results in detrimental job attitudes and behaviours. Lim (1997) differentiated between the terms *job stressor* and *job strain* in his study of work-based support and job insecurity. Job stressor is defined as “causes of or inputs to job stress” and job strain as “the individual outcomes associated with the stressor”.

Davy, Kinicki and Scheck (1997) defined job security as the expectations regarding the continuity in a job situation. Job insecurity of individual employees may threaten productivity, which may decrease, while absenteeism increases and can result in the undermining of the company’s competitive strengths (Sauer, 2003). Vahtera, Kivimaki and Pentti (1997) report that the health of employees who kept their jobs depended on the extent to which staffing levels were reduced and that medically certified long-term sickness and absences were twice as common after downsizing. It appears therefore that one of the causes for this increase in absenteeism is the increase in perceived job insecurity, job demands, decreasing job control and alterations in the characteristics of work.

Menon (2001) defines leadership as leaders who energise and empower their subordinates to act, when the leaders provide an existing vision for the future. According

to Mugyabuso (2000), numerous studies revealed that democratic styles of leadership are likely to produce more effective work performance for an organisation when compared to non-democratic styles. Conger and Kanungo (1988) typify empowerment as a process that entails a manager sharing power with subordinates. Mugyabuso (2000) mentions that delegation, empowerment and good relationships between manager and subordinates are some of the most important leadership aspects that influence productivity.

Kemp and De Villiers (2003) emphasise that the manner in which managers empower employees plays a major role in how employees perform and feel about themselves. It is therefore imperative that leadership empowering behaviour is looked at in an attempt to entrench the concept of empowerment to deal with insecurity in the workplace. Meyer (1996) mentions that managers should allow their employees autonomy, including encouraging independent decision-making, ownership at work and independence of work.

To effectively manage this situation, which threatens organisational productivity and profitability, requires employee empowerment. Empowerment aims to mobilise frail and disempowered individuals and groups in order to improve their situation and enable them to take control of their own lives (Arneson & Ekberg, 2006). According to Arneson and Ekberg (2006) development of empowerment can be accomplished at all levels simultaneously. The organisation will affect the individual by offering freedom to act, and by providing a power base, while empowered individuals, through their proactive approach, can affect the organisation. Arnold, Arad, Rhoades and Drasgow (2000) indicate that to increase speed, efficiency and reduce costs, organisations have flattened the hierarchical structures to replace the traditional hierarchical management structures with empowered work teams.

Savery (2001) indicates that recently there has been an emergence of employee empowerment to get workers to do what needs to be done rather than telling them what is expected. Hasson (2003) strongly supports this statement and adds that employees must have global attitudes if their companies are to survive. Interest in research on

empowerment has increased and indicates that empowerment has become a vital construct for understanding the development of individuals, organisations and communities (Perkins, 1995). Menon (2001) mentions that empowerment is classified into three broad categories based on the underlying thrust and emphasis of the various streams of research. These are: the structural approach, motivational approach and leadership approach.

The structural approach of empowerment emphasises power and decision-making authority; it means moving decision-making authority down the organisational hierarchy and the employee has the ability to affect organisational outcomes. The motivational approach illustrates the internal process or cognitions of the employee that are actually empowered. It is also viewed as psychological empowerment. The leadership approach focuses on the leader who energises his followers to act with the leader providing the future vision (Menon, 2001).

Gupta and Kurian (2006) suggest that empowerment is not simply another way of getting something; it is a condition that supports us in living life to the full. There is a psychological framework characterised by 'concern to accomplish' tasks rather than delegating formal authority through status. Empowerment is not a personality disposition; it is a dynamic construct that reflects individual beliefs about person/environment relationships (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998). Empowerment involves an innovative approach to working with people and a shift from the top-down management styles, which have dominated control mechanisms and managerial concepts in both theory and practice since the industrial revolution (Baruch, 1998).

According to Ford and Fottler (1995), empowerment requires from managers to share information and knowledge that enable employees to contribute optimally to organisational performance. Frey (1993) mentioned that if employees know where an organisation is headed, it will create a feeling of ownership towards the company and will contribute to the understanding of work roles and behaviour of employees. Through empowerment, employees would most likely be psychologically empowered and thereby

gain a sense of self-reliance in the execution of their daily duties, despite the ongoing changes within their organisations.

The term empowerment according to Liden & Tewksbury (1995) refers to psychological aspects, which consist of a set of conditions necessary for intrinsic motivation. Spreitzer (1995) states that a major premise of empowerment theory is that empowered individuals should perform better than those who are relatively less empowered and bases her measuring questionnaires on four facets - meaning, competence, self – determination and impact. Menon (2001) defines psychological empowerment as a cognitive state characterised by a sense of perceived control, competence, and goal internalisation. Psychological empowerment reflects an individual's active orientation to his or her work role, and a working environment shapes his or her cognitions (Spreitzer, 1995).

Liden and Tewksbury (1995) state that over the past decade, many researchers and practitioners have embraced psychological empowerment as a means of increasing decision-making at lower organisational levels while at the same time enriching the work lives of employees. Menon (2001) points out that if psychological empowerment is considered a psychological state it provides a mediating link between empowering acts and employee outcomes such as satisfaction, involvement and organisational commitment. Through development, the leader already starts empowering employees. This is a vital competency for the successful leader to ensure that employee outcomes such as satisfaction, involvement and organisational commitment are entrenched to the empowered employee (Sauer, 2003).

The theoretical framework used in this research stems from the Person-Environment Fit Theory of Stress, which emphasises the match between person and environment characteristics. This theory suggested that environmental events are not universal stressors, but, rather, the stress value depends on the perceived imbalance between (a) an individual's perceptions of the demands being made by the environment (i.e., the potential stressor), and (b) the individual's perceived ability and motivation to cope with those demands (Landy as cited in Probst, 2002).

Probst (2002) developed an integrated model of job insecurity, stating that job insecurity occurs as a result of multiple antecedents that may stimulate the perception that the future of one's job is endangered. Failure to cope with potential future unemployment may have significant consequences. One of the objectives of this study is to determine the role of leadership behaviour on the perceptions of job insecurity and psychological empowerment.

The organisation involved has undergone changes over the past decade in the form of restructuring, re-engineering, unbundling the business and recently the Organising for Improved Corporate Performance and Restructuring for Operational Performance. These changes had an impact on employees' security of employment. These changes involved a change in management and leadership style, it involved a total change in the way the organisation was led, to a multi-skilled workforce, rotation programme for employees and empowered work teams. The leader empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment could play a major role in the upliftment of employees' morale and reduce insecurity among the employees. The results of the research will be used to design programmes that will help the organisation to adopt a holistic approach towards the empowerment of its employees.

In this organisation, the relationship between the leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity and psychological empowerment, does exist. This assumption stems from the changes this organisation has undertaken, which have already been mentioned in the discussions above. The leaders have a role to play in curbing of the increase in job insecurity among the employees through their empowering actions. In this way, employees' minds would become positive, as a result this could lead to employees feeling psychologically empowered.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives consist of general and specific objectives.

1.2.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVES

With reference to the above formulation of the problem, the general objective of the research is to measure and to determine the relationship between leader empowerment behaviour, job insecurity and psychological empowerment of employees within a steel-manufacturing organisation after restructuring.

1.2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of this research are as follows:

- To conceptualise leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity and psychological empowerment and the relationship between these constructs in literature.
- To determine the differences in the level of psychological empowerment of different demographic groups in a steel-manufacturing organisation.
- To determine the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity and psychological empowerment within a steel-manufacturing organisation.
- To determine whether leader empowering behaviour can predict job insecurity of employees within a steel-manufacturing organisation.
- To determine whether leader empowering behaviour and job insecurity (affective job insecurity & cognitive job insecurity) can predict psychological empowerment of employees within a steel-manufacturing organisation.

1.3 RESEARCH METHOD

The research method consists of two parts, namely a literature review and an empirical study.

1.3.1 Literature Review

The literature review focuses on previous research on Leader Empowerment Behaviour, Job Insecurity and Psychological Empowerment. An overview is given of the conceptualisation of the constructs and their relationship.

1.3.2 Empirical Study

1.3.2.1 Research design

The research design that will be used in this study can be classified as a survey design or correlation design (Huysamen, 1993). For the purpose of this study, a correlation design will be used to determine the relationship between the constructs of leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity, and psychological empowerment without any planned intervention.

1.3.2.2 Study population

The study population will include employees from the management and non-management categories. The sample will be from different departments representing all levels within the two categories. The sample will consist of 350 randomly selected respondents.

1.3.2.3 Measuring instruments

Three measuring instruments will be used in the empirical study, namely the Leader Empowering Behavior Questionnaire (LEBQ) (Konczak et al., 2000), Job-insecurity Inventory (JII) (De Witte, 2000), and Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire (MEQ) (Spreitzer, 1995).

The *Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire (LEBQ)* (Konczak et al., 2000).

This scale contains six dimensions namely, delegation of authority, accountability, self-directed decision-making, information sharing, skill development and coaching for innovative performance (Konczak et al., 2000). This questionnaire consists of seventeen items and is scored on a 7-point likert scale with (1 indicating *strongly disagree* and 7 *strongly agree*). Konczak, et al. (2000), found Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.92 for delegation, 0.82 for accountability, 0.85 for self-directed decision-making, 0.93 for information sharing, 0.86 for skill development and 0.89 for coaching.

The *Job Insecurity Inventory (JII)* (De Witte, 2000) was developed to primarily measure employees' feelings towards job insecurity. De Witte (1999) observed the intention to balance the experience of unemployment with job insecurity as a choice of a global measuring instrument. The questionnaire distinguishes between cognitive job insecurity (concerns) and emotional job insecurity (worry). The questionnaire consists of eleven items that are scored on a 5-point scale with one indicating *strongly disagree* and five indicating *strongly agree*.

The items of the JII, measuring global job insecurity are reported to have a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.92 and both scales (cognitive and affective) were shown to be highly reliable, with the six items measuring cognitive job insecurity, displaying a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0,90; and the five items of the affective job insecurity having a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0,85 (De Witte, 2000). According to De Witte (2000) the content of these two do not overlap, but nevertheless has a high underlying correlation ($r = 0,76$; $p < 0.0001$).

The *Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire (MEQ)* (Spreitzer, 1995) will be used to measure empowerment. The twelve (12) items of the questionnaire refer to a motivational construct manifested in four cognitions namely, impact, competence, meaning, and self-determination. The questionnaire consists of twelve items that are scored on a 7-point scale with one indicating *strongly disagree* and seven indicating *strongly agree*. Spreitzer

(1995) found a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.72 on the industrial sample and 0.62 on insurance sample.

Liden, Sparrow & Wayne (2000) reported that the construct validity of each of the four sub-dimensions of the scale found to contribute to the overall degree of felt empowerment: meaning (0, 92); competence (0, 77); self-determination (0, 85) and impact (0, 86). Convergent and discriminant validity of the empowerment measures in the industrial sample indicates an excellent fit [(AGFI) (adjusted goodness-of-fit index)] = 0.93, RMSR (root-mean-square residual) = 0.04, NCFI (non-centralised normal fit index) = 0.98. Spreitzer, (1995) suggested the need for continued work on discriminant validity.

1.3.2.4 Statistical analysis

The SPSS (2003) programme will be used to carry out the statistical analysis. The description of the results will be done by arithmetic means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis. The arithmetic mean is the best-known measurement of locality (Steyn, 1999) and is used to indicate the mean (average) score of the study population on each questionnaire and standard deviation indicates the extent to which individual scores differ from the mean obtained.

Skewness is a descriptive indication of symmetry, which gives an indication of the level of skewness (positive or negative) of a population, whereas kurtosis indicates the level of pointedness of a distribution of scores (Steyn, 1999).

Reliability and validity of the instruments will be tested. A Factor analysis will be used to determine the validity of these measuring instruments. Construct validity will be used to measure the theoretical construct of the measuring instrument. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient as a means of reliability will be used to determine the internal consistency of each of the items of the questionnaires used in this study. This index indicates the extent

to which all the items in the questionnaire measure the same characteristics consistently (Huysamen, 1993).

Pearson's correlation will be used to determine the relationship between the constructs. The cut-off points for practical significance according to Steyn (1999), are $r = 0.30$ (medium effect) and $r = 0.50$ (large effect and of practical importance). Multiple regression analysis will be used to describe the relationship between variables (Wisniewski, 1997). According to Cohen (1993) a correlation (r) can be better understood by determining its square (r^2). Regression analysis will be used to determine the proportion of the total variance of one variable that is explained by another variable (Moore, 1995). In this study, a multiple regression analysis will be conducted to determine whether Leader Empowering Behaviour predicts Job Insecurity and Leader Empowering Behaviour and Job Insecurity predict Psychological Empowerment.

1.3.2.5 Research Procedure

The relevant line managers will be informed of the aims and objectives of this research. These aims and objectives will also be devolved down to the unions and employees in general. Anonymity will be guaranteed as far as employees' responses are concerned. The researcher himself will distribute questionnaires with the assistance of HR consultants in the respective areas where research is to be conducted.

1.4 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

- Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement and objectives.
- Chapter 2: Research article: *Empowerment and Job insecurity in a steel-manufacturing organisation.*
- Chapter 3: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations.

1.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the problem statement and motivation for the research were discussed and the general and specific objectives formulated. The research method, literature review, empirical study, research design, study population, measuring battery, data analysis and research procedure were discussed. A division of chapters followed this.

In chapter 2, the researcher presents a research article in which leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity and psychological empowerment will be conceptualised, and the empirical study as well as the results will be discussed in detail.

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CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH ARTICLE

EMPOWERMENT AND JOB INSECURITY IN A STEEL-MANUFACTURING ORGANISATION

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity, and psychological empowerment of employees in a steel-manufacturing organisation. The Leader Empowerment Behaviour Questionnaire (LEBQ), Measuring Psychological Empowering Questionnaire (MEQ) and Job Insecurity Survey Inventory (JII) were administered. A cross-sectional survey design was conducted among 207 employees at a steel manufacturing business. The results demonstrated a practically significant relationship between leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity, and psychological empowerment. The results also showed a significant negative correlation between leader empowering behaviour and job insecurity and between job insecurity and psychological empowerment. The regression analysis indicated that leader empowering behaviour predicts job insecurity and leader empowering behaviour and job insecurity predict psychological empowerment. This study provides additional support and guidance to organisations in general, in particular those that went through restructuring and aim towards a healthy work organisation.

OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie studie was om die verwantskap tussen leierbemagtigingsgedrag, werksonsekerheid en psigologiese bemagtiging van werknemers in 'n staalvervaardigings-organisasie te ondersoek. Die LeierBemagtigings Vraelys (LBV), Bemagtigings Gedrag Vraelys (BGV) en Werksansekerleir Onsekerheids Opname (WO) is gebruik. 'n Kruisseksieopname ontwerp is gedoen onder 207 werknemers by die Staalvervaardigings-onderneming. Die resultate dui op 'n beduidende verwantskap tussen leierbemagtigingsgedrag, werksonsekerheid en psigologiese bemagtiging. Die resultate toon 'n beduidende negatiewe korrelasie tussen leierbemagtigingsgedrag, werksonsekerheid en psigologiese bemagtiging. Die regressie analise toon dat leierbemagtigingsgedrag werksonsekerheid voorspel, en dat leierbemagtigingsgedrag en werksonsekerheid, psigologiese bemagtiging voorspel. Hierdie studie verleen addisionele ondersteuning en leiding aan organisasies in die algemeen, maar spesifiek aan organisasies wat deur herstruktureringprosesse is en streef om 'n gesonde werksorganisasie te wees.

Working life continues to undergo rapid change and these changes produce a new and diverse set of complexities that differ widely in levels of demand and sophistications. These new conditions require new organisational design and restructuring on a global and national level (Millet & Sandberg, 2005). Many South African organisations are faced with continuous challenges in order to survive in this changing world of work. Such challenges include re-engineering, restructurings, downsizing, continuous improvement, mergers and acquisitions and strategic focusing of the business (Van Tonder, 2005).

“Tremendous pressure is placed on organisations to improve their performance and to become increasingly competitive. South African companies are being exposed more than ever to the effects of the world economy, technological advancement and tough international competition which lead organisations to consider profitability and cost savings to gain competitive advantage over competitors” (Buitenbach & De Witte, 2005). According to Bell (2004) the biggest challenge facing management today is how to encourage an atmosphere of camaraderie in the business environment; how to relate to one’s staff on a personal level while maintaining a stringent attitude towards performance. These challenges call for leaders who challenge the status quo, create visions of the future and inspire followers to achieve the vision (Bell 2004).

Wilson, Dejoy, Vandenburg, Richardson, and McGrath (2004) developed a healthy work organisation model, which is proposed as a model to follow in this research article. Wilson et al. (2004) defined *healthy organisation* as one characterised by intentional, systematic, and collaborative efforts to maximise employee well-being and productivity by providing well-designed and meaningful jobs, a supportive social-organisational environment, and accessible and equitable opportunities for career and work – life enhancement.

The model by Wilson et al. (2004) conceptualises a healthy work organisation consisting of six interrelated components. These components are as follows:

Organisational attributes; entail organisational values, organisational beliefs and organisational policies and procedures, *organisational climate*; consists of organisational

support, co-worker support, communication, participation with others and supervisors, and safety and health climate, *job design*; includes workload, control autonomy, job content, role clarity, work scheduling and environmental and physical work conditions, *job future*; includes job security, procedural and distributive equity, learning opportunities, and flexible work arrangements, *psychological work*; adjustment consists of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and efficacy and job stress, and *employee health and well-being*; component consists of measures of employees' perceived general health, psychological health, attendance behaviours (e.g., likelihood of turnover) and engagement in health risk behaviours (Wilson et al., 2004).

According to Wilson et al (2004) the healthy work organisation concept is based on the premise that it should be possible to identify the job and organisational characteristics of healthy organisations and such organisations should have a healthier and more productive workforce. For an organisation to have such a healthy and more productive workforce, it must have leaders that empower their followers in all aspects of the business in pursuit of a healthy organisation (Wilson et al., 2004). The first (organisational attributes) and second (organisational climate) components of this model deal with Leader empowerment behaviour.

According to Spreitzer (2005) empowerment enables employees to participate in decision-making, helping them to break out of stagnant mindsets to take a risk and try something new. Empowering practices allow employees to decide on their own how they will recover from a service problem and surprise customers by exceeding their expectations rather than waiting for approval from a supervisor. Leader empowering behaviour therefore is part of the two components of organisational attributes and organisational climate in Wilson's (2004) model of healthy work organisation.

Pitts (2005), in his article on leadership, empowerment and public organisations, cites the definition of empowerment by Pette et al. (2002), which defines empowerment as one that includes seven dimensions as follows: power, decision-making, information, autonomy, initiative and creativity, knowledge and skills and responsibility. Avolio, Zhu,

Koh & Bhatia (2004) state that transformational leaders get followers involved in envisioning an attractive future and inspire them to be committed to achieving that future. Ayalio et al., (2004) further indicates that transformational leaders build team spirit through their enthusiasm, high moral standards, integrity, and optimism and provide meaning and challenge to their followers' work, enhancing followers' level of self-efficacy, confidence, meaning, and self-determination.

Robbins (2003) indicates that the success and failure in any organisation is how its leadership optimises the use of its human capital. According to Friedman (2001) the global economy is shifting, bringing with it numerous unprecedented challenges that require a new kind of leadership. The global business manager has to achieve an efficient distribution of assets and resources while protecting the competence at hand (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2003). However, this desired competence is often shaken by the security of employees within organisations. Harvey and Jones (2004) indicate that creative leadership excludes manipulation of thoughts and feelings, but rather entails the inspiration towards originality. He points out that leadership is about empowering the team and each individual team member by helping them to open their minds to new options, new opportunities and new methods.

According to Pitts (2005), leaders who focus on the human aspect of leadership, treating subordinates equally and valuing their work, serve to empower those beneath them in the formal hierarchy. Democratic leaders who value the input of subordinates and provide only general supervision empower employees to make good decisions, take risks, and do their work well. Spreier, Fontaine, & Malloy (2006) identified six styles of leadership that managers and executives use to motivate, reward, direct and develop others. These are directive, which entails strong, sometimes coercive behaviour, visionary, which focuses on clarity and communication, affiliative, which emphasises harmony and relationships, participative, which is collaborative and democratic, pacesetter, which is characterised by personal heroics and coaching, which focuses on long-term development and mentoring (Speier et al, 2006).

Konczak, Stelly & Trusty (2000) indicate that leadership dimensions such as the delegation of authority, accountability of outcomes, participative decision-making, information sharing, skills development and coaching form the cornerstone of strong leadership. Konczak et al. (2000) further suggest that the responsibility for outcomes should be placed with individuals and teams.

Leaders who assign jobs to employees that provide a variety of tasks, autonomy, control, opportunities and low levels of routines are more likely to increase the employee's sense of self-worth and competence (Robbins, 2003). Arneson (2005) found, in a problem-based intervention of workplace health promotion that leadership and management have a central role in the process of empowerment in order to enable employees to become empowered. Leadership empowering behaviour is therefore seen as a vehicle towards empowering the employees. Based on the discussion above a broader definition of the leader empowering behaviour is proposed by the researcher.

The researcher's proposed definition of leader empowering behaviour: The leader-empowering behaviour means that "there should be a gradual transfer of power, resources, autonomy and responsibility from a competent leader who can coach subordinates, create a space for subordinates and growth by allowing participative decision making, and must be seen as a role model and a visionary by his subordinates and must be able to let subordinates accept accountability for their judgement and discretion.

According to Wilson's (2004) model, the third component, job future, indicates the employees' concerns about their future state with the organisation in terms of their perceptions about the likely continuity of their employment, fairness, learning opportunities and flexible working arrangements. De Witte (2005) defined job insecurity as a subjective perception of feelings of insecurity about the future of one's employment. This definition is in line with the component of job future in Wilson's (2004) model of healthy work organisation. Sauer (2003) points out that job insecurity of individual employees may threaten productivity, which may decrease, while absenteeism increases

and can result in the undermining of the company's competitive strengths. According to Sparks, Faragher and Cooper (2001) heightened employee perceptions of job insecurity may cause organisations to suffer financially due to the associated costs of increased absenteeism and sickness resulting from lowered employee well-being.

Rocha, Crowell and McCarter (2006) point out that that perceived job insecurity occurs when "workers come to doubt the continued existence of their jobs in the future" due to economic or organisational change. Rocha et al. (2006) suggest that the term "job insecurity" can be used to represent feelings associated with an actual threat to one's job, such as a lay-off notice, or a more general perception by workers of job risk. As the phenomena of corporate downsizing, restructuring, and redefinition of job roles continue to occur, job insecurity will be a common experience felt by employees (Canaff & Wright, 2004).

Bartley (2005) points out that persons who experience frequent job changes are more likely to smoke, consume more alcohol and exercise less and workers who experience job insecurity experience significant adverse effects on their physical and mental health. According to Fuller, Moorman & Nierhoff (2001) restructuring or downsizing has been found to have a negative influence on survivors' loyalty and is perceived as a violation of psychological contract held by the surviving employees within an organisation. Fuller et al. (2001) further indicate that perceived violations of psychological contracts have been shown to prompt a number of attitudinal and behavioural responses that may reduce survivor motivation and performance and this may lead to increased voicing of complaints, neglecting important duties including health and safety and opting to leave the organisation.

The multidimensional definition of job insecurity holds that job insecurity refers not only to the affective level of the measure of uncertainty that an employee feels about his or her job continuity (fear of job loss), but also on a cognitive level to the continuity of certain dimensions of the job (job certainty) (Mauno & Kinnunen, 2002). Van Vuuren (1999) conceptualises job insecurity as the concern felt by a person regarding the continued

existence of his or her job and identifies three components. The first refers to a subjective experience or perception, the second to the uncertainty about the future and the third component includes doubts concerning the continuation of the job.

Vahtera, Kivimaki and Pentti (1997) reported that the health of employees who kept their jobs depended on the extent to which staffing levels were reduced and that medically certified long-term sickness and absences were twice as common after downsizing. It appears therefore that one of the causes for this increase is the increase in perceived job insecurity, job demands, decreasing job control and alterations in the characteristics of work.

“Job insecurity like any other job related stressors is associated with a number of detrimental consequences for both the individual and the organisation. This includes job insecurity to strain such as mental health complaints, lower levels of job satisfaction and involvement, decreased trust in an organisation, decreased organisational commitment and an increased intention to leave the organisation” (Hellgren, Naswall & Sverke, 2005). To effectively manage this situation, which threatens organisational productivity and profitability, requires psychological empowerment to drastically change the mindset of followers, (Helgren, et al., 2005).

Psychological empowerment fits in with psychological work adjustment, which is the next component of Wilson’s (2004) model of healthy work organisation. Psychological empowerment is part of the psychological work adjustment component which includes the existence of an employee’s sense of efficacy, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment as well as being less stressful.

According to Geisler (2005), to increase individual and organisational effectiveness, organisations do not have to give power; they need to limit the amount of power they take away. Recently there has been an emergence of employee empowerment to get workers to do what needs to be done rather than telling them what is expected (Savery, 2001). Hasson (2003) strongly supports this statement and adds that employees must have global

attitudes if their companies are to survive. Empowerment is not a personality disposition; it is a dynamic construct that reflects individual beliefs about person/environment relationships (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998).

Arneson (2006) views the aim of empowerment as mobilising frail and disempowered individuals and groups to improve their situation and enabling them to take control of their own lives. According to Arneson (2006), empowerment as a goal is described in literature as power, control, ability, competence, self-efficacy, autonomy, knowledge, development, self-determination and strengthening of the position of one's own group in society.

Arnold, Arad, Rhoades & Drasgow (2000) indicate that to increase speed and efficiency and to reduce costs, organisations have flattened the hierarchical structures to replace the traditional hierarchical management structures with empowered work teams. Interest in research on empowerment has increased and indicates that empowerment has become a vital construct for understanding the development of individuals, organisations and communities (Perkins, 1995).

Peterson & Zimmerman (2004) view empowerment as an active, participatory process through which individuals, organisations, and communities gain greater control, efficacy, and social justice. Menon (2001) mentions that empowerment is classified into three broad categories based on the underlying thrust and emphasis of the various streams of research. The structural approach of empowerment emphasises power and decision-making authority. The motivational approach illustrates the internal processes or cognitions of the employee that is actually empowered. It is also viewed as psychological empowerment. Lastly, the leadership approach focuses on the leader who energises his followers to act with the leader providing the future vision (Menon, 2001).

According to Ford and Fottler (1995), empowerment requires from managers to share information and knowledge that enables employees to contribute optimally to organisational performance. The term empowerment according to Liden & Tewksbury

(1995) refers to psychological aspects, which consist of a set of conditions necessary for intrinsic motivation. Spreitzer (1995), states that a major premise of empowerment theory is that empowered individuals should perform better than those who are relatively less empowered.

Menon (2001) defines psychological empowerment as a cognitive state characterised by a sense of perceived control, competence, and goal internalisation. Spreitzer (1995) defines psychological empowerment as a motivational construct manifested in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. Together these four cognitions reflect an active, rather than a passive, orientation to a work role. Active orientation suggests an orientation in which an individual wishes and feels able to shape his/her work role or context (Spreitzer, 1995).

The first individual expectancy in the process of empowerment is meaning and it refers to the subjective assessment of the importance of the job (Spreitzer, 1995). Liden and Sparrow (2000) mentioned that of the four-empowerment dimensions, the strongest theoretical argument for a positive relation to work satisfaction has been made for meaning.

The second individual expectancy is competence. According to Spreitzer (1995), competence refers to a personal sense of efficacy. Sauer (2003) described competence as perceptions of an individual's skills to enhance decision-making, problem solving, leadership, self-esteem, and capabilities to perform activities with skill. Competence represents a sense of a person's ability to perform adequately in new situations. According to Menon (2001), perceived competence denotes self-efficacy and confidence with regard to role demands. The individual believes that he/she can successfully meet routine task demands as well as non-routine challenges that might arise.

The third individual expectancy is choice or self-determination. Self-determination refers to one's sense of control and autonomy (Spreitzer, 1995). Sauer (2003) indicates that when self-determination is not present, individuals feel helpless because they are not

allowed to take work-related actions that they deem appropriate. Menon (2001) emphasised that people have the freedom to choose, that the physical environment is driven by feelings, circumstances and conditions, and that behaviour reflects the importance of perceived control for psychological empowerment.

The fourth individual expectancy in the process of empowerment is impact, which refers to the belief in an employee's ability to influence the environment where he/she is working (Spreitzer, 1995). Thomas & Velthouse (1990) indicate that impact refers to the degree to which behaviour is seen as making a difference in terms of accomplishing the purpose of the task that is producing the intended effects in one's task environment.

Bhatnagar (2005) indicates that the four dimensions are argued by many researchers to combine additively to create an overall construct of psychological empowerment, meaning that the lack of any single dimension will deflate, though not completely eliminate, the overall degree of felt empowerment. Thus the four dimensions specify 'a nearly complete set of cognitions' for understanding psychological empowerment (Bhatnagar, 2005). The four dimensions of meaning, competence, self-determination and impact represent the psychological perspective of empowerment, while a relational perspective of empowerment is represented by the social-structural components of empowerment. Organic structure, organisational support, access to strategic information, access to organisational resources and organisational culture are identified as social structural antecedents of psychological empowerment. Innovation, upward influence and self and managerial effectiveness are identified as the behavioural outcomes of empowerment (Bhatnagar 2005).

Sandberg & Millet (2005), in support of Wilson's model, indicate that organisations can empower their workers psychologically if they change their structure, routine, and culture, allowing for increased worker autonomy at the workplace. According to the model by Wilson et al (2004), an employee's psychological empowerment will be determined by the employee's observation of the leader's behaviour; if the leader involves employees in decision-making processes, has open communication, gives them

support and ensures that employees work in a safe and healthy climate. In these circumstances, employees will feel psychologically empowered.

Previous research on demographic groups and psychological empowerment indicates that there are differences that exist between psychological empowerment and demographic groups. Riger (1993) argues that women would be more willing to share information and power, promote values of egalitarianism in the work-oriented relationships and generally empower their subordinates than men (Riger, 1993; Browne, 1995). Itzhaky and York (2000) found that gender did not have an impact on empowerment. Pitts (2005) found no difference between men and women with regard to psychological empowerment in his study of leadership, empowerment, and public organisation.

Over the past decade, many researchers and practitioners have embraced psychological empowerment as a means of increasing decision-making at lower organisational levels while at the same time enriching the work lives of employees (Liden & Tewksbury, 1995). Mugyabuso (2000) mentions that delegation, empowerment and good relationships between manager and subordinates are some of the most important leadership aspects that influence productivity. Kemp and De Villiers (2003) emphasise that the manner in which managers empower employees plays a major role in how employees perform and feel about themselves. It is therefore imperative that leadership empowering behaviour is emphasised in an attempt to entrench the concept of empowerment to deal with insecurity in the workplace.

The theoretical framework used in this research stems from the *healthy work organisation* model by Wilson (2004). This theory suggests that as a start, employees must experience *organisational attributes* dimension, which entails organisational values, organisational beliefs and organisational policies and procedures.

The organisation then has the basis to move towards the *organisational climate* dimension in which leader empowerment behaviour, organisational and co-worker support, communication and health and safety exist within the working environment, that

will lead to *job future* of which job security, learning opportunities, flexible work arrangements and procedural and distributive equity for an employee are components; that will subsequently lead to *psychological work adjustment* of which psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, efficacy and job stress are the outcomes for the employee.

Wilson (2004) concludes that if all components are involved within the work environment this will lead to *a healthy work organisation* that has less turnover, less absenteeism, less stress, more cooperation among employees at all levels, an improvement of safety, health, environment as well as an improvement in employees' physical and psychological health. To this end, the model by Wilson et al (2004) will be followed in this study; there is, however, another perspective to this study.

A perspective that is applicable to this study is that of Probst (2002), who developed an integrated model of job insecurity, stating that job insecurity occurs as a result of multiple antecedents that may stimulate the perception that the future of one's job is endangered. Failure to cope with potential future unemployment may have significant consequences. Stasser, Steward and Witterbaum (1995) found few or no differences among ethnic groups with regard to psychological empowerment. Pitts (2005) found that white males are more likely to empower subordinates than other cultural groups.

The organisation involved in this research has undergone a major change over the past decade in the form of restructuring, re-engineering, down sizing, unbundling the business, organising for improved corporate performance and is currently involved in restructuring for organisational performance. More than twelve thousand employees were retrenched during this period, either forcefully or voluntarily. These changes have an impact on employees' security of employment.

These changes involved a change in management and leadership style, it involved a total change in the way the organisation was run- The organisation changed into a multi-skilled workforce, with a rotation programme for employees and empowered work teams.

Leader empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment could play a major role in lifting employees' morale and reducing insecurity among the employees. The results of the research would be used to design programmes that will assist the organisation towards the empowerment of its employees.

This research is undertaken in a steel-manufacturing organisation and the respondents include representatives consisting of males and females, on management and non-management levels, different cultural groups, different age groups, business units, trade union members and possessing different levels of qualification. The aim of this research is to establish whether a relationship exists between Leader Empowering Behaviour, Job Insecurity, and Psychological Empowerment.

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

H1: Practically significant relationships exist between leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity, and psychological empowerment.

H2: There are significant differences in the levels of psychological empowerment of different demographic groups in a steel-manufacturing organisation.

H3: Leader empowering behaviour predicts job insecurity.

H4: Leader empowering behaviour predicts psychological empowerment.

H5: Job insecurity predicts psychological empowerment.

METHOD

Research design

A cross-sectional survey design was used to reach the objectives of the study. No interventions were used for this study; hence a correlation design was used (Huysamen,

1993). This design can be used to assess interrelationships among variables at a specific time. According to Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1997), the design is ideally suited when the aim of a study is predictive and descriptive by nature.

Study population

The researcher targeted 350 employees working at a steel-manufacturing organisation in four business units. A response rate of 207 participants (59%) was obtained. The study population included employees from management to non-management. The lowest level employees had adequate levels of literacy to allow for valid completion of the questionnaires. The biographical characteristics of the study population are detailed in Table 1, which indicates that almost 85% of participants in this study were male respondents. The white cultural group represented 59% of the study population. The prevalent age group of the participants is between 25 – 46 years of age. The majority of the participants (65.7%) were non-management.

Table 1

Characteristics of the participants (N = 207)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	175	84.5
	Female	32	15.4
Cultural Group	Black	82	39.6
	Whites	122	58.9
	Missing Response	1	0.4
Age	24 years & younger	7	3.38
	25 - 35 years	78	37.6
	36 - 45 years	74	35.7
	46 - 55 years	39	18.8
	56 years & older	8	3.86
	Missing Response	1	0.4
Qualifications	Lower than Grade 10	6	2.8
	Grade 10 - 12	141	68.1
	Diploma/Degree	51	24.6
	Post Graduate	6	2.8
	Missing Response	3	1.4
Business Units	Iron Making	82	39.6
	Steel making	34	16.4
	Shared Services	34	16.4
	Engineering	57	27.5
Tenure	Less than 1 year	10	4.8
	2 - 5 years	19	9.1
	6 - 10 years	34	16.4
	11 - 20 years	99	47.8
	Longer than 20 years	45	21.7
Category	Management	42	20.28
	Non - Management	136	65.7
	Missing Response	29	14
	Total	207	100

Measuring instruments

The following standardised measuring instruments were used in this empirical study:

- Leader Empowerment Behaviour Questionnaire (LEBQ) (Konczak et al., 2000)
- The Job Insecurity Inventory (JII) (De Witte, 2000)
- Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire (MEQ) (Spreitzer, 1995)

The *Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire* (Konczack et al., 2000) has been developed to determine the relationship between leader behaviour and the experienced psychological empowerment (Konczak et al. 2000). The LEBQ consists of 17 items and is scaled on a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree). This scale contains six dimensions (Delegation of authority i.e. “My manager gives me the authority to make changes necessary to improve things”, Accountability i.e. “My manager holds me accountable for performance and results”, Self-directed decision-making i.e. “My manager encourages me to develop my own solutions to problems I encounter in my work”, Information-sharing i.e. “My manager shares information that I need to ensure high quality results”, Skill development i.e. “My manager provides me with frequent opportunities to develop new skills”, and Coaching for innovative performance i.e. “I am encouraged to try out new ideas even if there is a chance they may not succeed”) (Konczack et al., 2000).

Three items measure each construct, except for the construct ‘information sharing’, which is measured by two items. Konczak, et al. (2000), found Cronbach Alpha coefficients of 0.92 for delegation, 0.82 for accountability, 0.85 for self-directed decision-making, 0.93 for information sharing, 0.86 for skill development and 0.89 for coaching and total leader empowering behaviour obtained a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0,86. Dwyer (2001) obtained a high Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.95 (Malan, 2002), and Graca (2002) found a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.91. Sauer (2003) reported a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.97 on the leader empowering behaviour questionnaire in his study.

Konczak et al. (2000) recommended that future investigators should explore additional items to assess the dimensions of empowering leader behaviours. They emphasised the need for additional items for the information-sharing dimension because the current questionnaire only contains two items for information sharing. Dwyer (2001), Rugg (2002), and Buckle (2003) indicated that the construct validity of the questionnaire was acceptable.

The *Job Insecurity Inventory* (De Witte, 2000) distinguishes between cognitive job insecurity (concerns) and emotional job insecurity (worry) (De Witte, 2000). The questionnaire consists of eleven items and is scored on a 5-point scale with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 indicating strongly agree. An example of a question relating to affective job insecurity would be “I am worried about keeping my job”, whereas an example of a question relating to cognitive job insecurity would be, “I am sure I can keep my job” (De Witte, 2000).

The items of the JII, measuring global job insecurity, are reported to have a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.92 and both scales (cognitive and affective) were shown to be highly reliable, with the six items measuring cognitive job insecurity, displaying a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0, 90; and the five items of the affective job insecurity having a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.85 (De Witte, 2000). According to De Witte (2000) the contents of these two scales do not overlap, but nevertheless have a high underlying correlation ($r = 0, 76$; $p < 0, 0001$). Heymans (2002) obtained a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0, 84. Sauer (2003) obtained a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.75 in his studies and obtained 0, 83 for the cognitive scale and 0, 85 for the affective scale. De Witte (2000), Sauer (2003) and Moeletsi (2003) reported acceptable levels of validity for the questionnaire.

The *Measuring Empowerment questionnaire (MEQ)* (Spreitzer, 1995) was used. This scale consists of twelve items that measure psychological empowerment. Three items measure each construct. There are four sub-dimensions of the construct (meaning i.e. “My Job activities are meaningful to me”, competence i.e. “I am confident about my

ability to do my job”, self-determination i.e. “I can decide on my own how to do my work”, and impact i.e. “I have significant influence over what happens in my department”) (Spreitzer, 1995). Spreitzer’s (1995) purpose with this instrument was to contribute to the growing literature on empowerment by developing and validating a measure of psychological empowerment in a workplace context.

The items of the Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire are reported to have a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.72 for the industrial sample and 0.62 for the insurance sample as measured in Spreitzer’s (1995) study. This information is significant enough to believe that the overall reliabilities are acceptable. Internal consistency and test–retest reliability was established for the empowerment items and Konczak et al. (2000) found a high alpha reliability coefficient of 0.86 in their study. Rugg (2001) found a Cronbach Alpha of 0,84 for reliability, Laschinger (2001) between 0,87 – 0,92, Stander and Rugg (2001) 0,84, Graca (2002) found 0,79, Dee, Henkin and Demer (2002) 0,89, Hencer and George (2003) 0,87, Avalio (2004) 0,84, Hencer, George and Kim (2005) 0,89 and Moye and Henkin (2006) 0,87 for the overall empowerment scale.

Siegal and Gardener (2000) found four-empowerment dimension in support of Spreitzer’s four-empowerment dimension. Vardi (2000) confirmed the four-factor structure, explaining 77% of the variance. Liden, Sparrow and Wayne (2000) reported that the construct validity of each sub-dimension of the scale found to contribute to the overall degree of felt empowerment, meaning (0,92); competence (0,77); self-determination (0,85) and impact (0,86). The study by Dee et al. (2002) supports the four- factor structure. Henkin and Moye (2006) confirmed the four sub-scales.

Statistical analysis

The SPSS programme was used to carry out the statistical analysis (SPSS, 2004). The statistical description of the results was done by arithmetic means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis. Reliability and validity of the instruments were tested. A Confirmatory Factor analysis was used to determine the validity of these measuring

instruments. Construct validity was also used to measure the theoretical construct of the measuring instrument. Cronbach Alpha coefficient as a means of reliability was used to determine the internal consistency of each of the items of the questionnaires used in this study.

The Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were determined to indicate the extent to which one variable was related to another. The cut-off points for practical significance according to Steyn (1999), are $r = 0.30$ (medium effect) and $r = 0.50$ (large effect and of practical importance). MANOVA was used to indicate significant differences between the group means. A probability level was set at $p < 0, 05$. Tukey's intervals were used to determine between which specific groups differences occurred at p-value of $p < 0,05$. Effect sizes will be reported in each comparison where significant differences occurred (Cohen, 1998).

According to Cohen (1993) a correlation (r) can be better understood by determining its square (r^2). A regression analysis was used to determine the proportion of the total variance of one variable that is explained by another variable (Moore, 1995). Multiple regression analysis was used to describe the relationship between variables (Wisniewski, 1997). In this study, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the proportion for the total variance of Leader Empowering Behaviour and Job Insecurity as dependent variables and Psychological Empowerment as independent variable.

RESULTS

The mean (X), standard deviation (SD), skewness and kurtosis as well as the Cronbach Alpha coefficients were determined for the questionnaires and their sub-scales. Cronbach Alpha coefficients (α) were determined, so as to provide an indication of the internal consistency of the various measuring instruments. Factor analysis was done on the data to determine the validity of the instruments. The core focus of this study is on psychological empowerment and for that reason the Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire (MEQ) will be discussed in more detail.

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted for Leader Empowering Behaviour to verify the construct validity of the components of the questionnaire. Analysis of the eigenvalues (larger than one) and scree plot indicated that three factors could be extracted, explaining a high percentage (62%) of the total variance. The results of the instrument indicate that the questionnaire could condense its six sub-scales into three sub-scales. Konczak et al. (2000) are aware of this and stated in their research that a parsimonious model (e.g. three to four factors) was not considered, because they felt that the six-factor model provided managers with very prescriptive feedback. For the purpose of this study the total scale of leader empowering behaviour will be used for statistical analysis.

A confirmatory factor analysis was done on Job Insecurity. Analysis of eigenvalues (larger than 1) and scree plot indicated that two factors could be extracted explaining 55% of the total variance. From the literature, (De Witte, 2000; Sauer, 2003; Moeletsi, 2003) it is confirmed that job insecurity, as measured by the JII, has a two-factor structure, namely cognitive job insecurity and affective job insecurity. These results indicate therefore that the questionnaire is valid.

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the items of the psychological empowerment questionnaire on the total sample of employees at the steel-manufacturing organisation. Table 2 reflects the results of factor analysis for psychological empowerment as measured by the MEQ.

Table 2

Factor analysis – Measuring Empowerment

Eigenvalues Extraction: Principal components				
Value	Eigenvalue	% Total variance	Cum. Eigenvalue	Cum %
1	5.605194	46.70995	5.605194	46.70995
2	1.656615	13.80513	7.261809	60.51507
3	1.129453	9.41211	8.391262	69.92718

Analysis of eigenvalues (larger than one) and scree plot indicated that three factors instead of four were identified. The items for self-determination and impact loaded as in the original questionnaire of Spreitzer (1995). Items relating to (meaning) and items relating to (competence) emerge as a single factor and together with self-determination and impact explained a high percentage (69%) of the total variance.

Vardi (2000), Dee, Henkin and Duemer (2002), Moya and Henkin (2006) found four subscales for the MEQ. The results are in line with the original study of Spreitzer (1995).

Fulford and Enz (1995) found a three-factor structure for MEQ. These findings are supported in the literature by Kraimer, et al. (1999); Siegal and Gardener (2000); Hencer and George (2003); Boudrias, Gaudreau and Laschinger (2004) and Hencer (2005). Hencer, George and Kim (2005) reported a two-factor structure named Attitude (Meaning + Competence) and Influence (Self-determination + Impact) in their examination of dimensions of a psychological empowerment scale for service employees.

From the above it is clear that the results of other studies can mainly be grouped into those that found two factors, and those that found three factors and those that identified four factors as in the original studies of Spreitzer (1995). Further analyses of the above results indicate that it is possible that organisational level, type of job and work experience or a lack of experience may play a role. The factor analysis results of this study support Spreitzer (1995) when she suggested that more work is necessary on the discriminant validity of the four scales.

The researcher found the three-factor structure, meaning, competence together, self-determination, and impact. The combining of meaning and competence is in line with Hencer et al. (2005) and the researcher decided to name it attitude. For the purpose of this study the three-factor structure will be used in statistical analysis.

The results of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the leader empowering behaviour subscale 'information sharing' are not applicable in this study because the original

questionnaire with only two items for this construct was used, as a result, it is difficult to determine the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the construct. Although the descriptive statistics for all the subscales are reported, the statistical analysis in this study will be limited only to leader empowering behaviour total scale. The results of this study showed a high reliability on all the constructs, which are supported by previous researchers (Dwyer, 2001, Rugg, 2002, Buckle, 2003).

It is not the purpose of this study to research the psychometrics of the Leader Empowering Behaviour, however, the construct validity should be explored in more detail in other studies.

The results of the mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis and Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the Leader Empowering Behaviour total scale and its sub-scales (delegation of authority, accountability, participative decision making, information sharing, skills development and coaching and developing), Job Insecurity total scale and its sub-scales (affective job insecurity and cognitive job insecurity) and Measuring Empowerment total scale and its sub-scales (attitude, self-determination and impact) are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Cronbach Alpha coefficients and descriptive statistics of the measuring instruments.

Scale & Subscale	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
Delegation of authority	4.8	1.32	-0.53	0.09	0,83
Accountability	4.49	1.55	-0.35	-0.81	0,71
Participative decision-making	5.07	1.31	-0.66	0.15	0,77
Information-sharing	4.6	1.53	-0.35	-0.5	n/a
Skills development	4.85	1.29	-0.45	-0.09	0,81
Coaching and developing	4.51	1.47	-0.38	-0.5	0,73
Total: Leader Empowering Behaviour	4.69	1.17	-0.36	-0.25	0,92
Affective	2.8	1.03	0.1	-0.59	0,70
Cognitive	2.57	0.83	0.26	-0.27	0,81
Total: Job insecurity	2.67	0.79	0.09	-0.14	0,81
Attitude	5.96	1.09	-1.72	4.32	0,89
Self-determination (choice)	5.27	1.3	-0.89	0.68	0,76
Perceived impact	4.66	1.54	-0.68	0.24	0,80
Total: Measuring Empowerment	5.48	1.01	-1.24	2.66	0,88

According to Steyn (1999), skewness is a descriptive indication of symmetry, which gives an indication of the level of skewness (positive or negative) of a population, whereas kurtosis indicates the level of pointedness of a distribution of scores. The values for skewness and kurtosis must ideally be as close as possible to zero for normal distribution (Steyn, 2000). Table 3 indicated a normally distributed population, except for attitude (4.32), which indicates a peak point in the normal distribution and (2,66) for measuring empowerment total scale.

The reliability of each questionnaire is determined by Cronbach Alpha coefficients. A Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0,70 is an adequate indication of reliability of the instrument (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995). All Alpha coefficients in this study range from 0,70 to 0,92.

A Cronbach Alpha coefficient for Leader Empowering Behaviour obtained from the study is 0,92. Dwyer (2001) obtained a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0,95, Rugg (2002) found a reliability coefficient of 0.98 and Buckle as well as Sauer (2003) obtained 0,97 coefficient.

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for JII in this study is 0,81; which is the same coefficient obtained by Heymans (2000). De Cuyper & De Witte (2006) obtained an Alpha coefficient of 0,89 from the industrial, service and government sector study. De Witte (2000) reported an Alpha coefficient of 0,92 and Sauer (2003) reported a coefficient of 0,75.

For Psychological Empowerment the Cronbach Alpha obtained is 0,88. Malan (2001) found a reliability coefficient of 0.82, Graca (2002) obtained 0.87, Rugg (2002) found 0.89, and Sauer (2003) obtained a coefficient of 0,92.

The mean score for total Leader Empowering Behaviour obtained in this study is 4,62 with a standard deviation of 1,17. These results indicate the average score on a 7- point scale of the Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire. These results are in line with the findings of Konczak et al. (2000), Dwyer, (2001), Rugg (2001), Buckle (2003) and Hartmann (2003).

For Job Insecurity the mean score obtained in this study is 2.67 with a standard deviation of 0,79. Both cognitive and affective job insecurity subscales were above the average score on a 5 - point scale with cognitive job insecurity at 2.57 and affective job insecurity at 2.8. This indicates that employees are experiencing higher levels of uncertainty about their job continuity (affective job insecurity) than about the continuity of certain dimensions of their job (cognitive job insecurity). Sauer (2003) reported a mean score of 2,33 for total job insecurity, with mean scores of 2,26 for cognitive job insecurity and 2,52 for affective job insecurity and Buitenbach and De Witte (2005) reported a mean

score of 2,51 for total job insecurity in their study of the maintenance workers in a parastatal in Gauteng.

The average mean score for psychological empowerment in this study is 5,48, with a standard deviation of 1,01, indicating that employees in the organisation experience an above average level on a 7-point scale of Psychological Empowerment Questionnaire. The mean scores of psychological empowerment sub-scales were above average, with attitude (5,96), self-determination (5,27) and impact (4,66). Hlalele (2003) reported a mean score for total psychological empowerment of 4,87, with mean scores for meaning (5,01), competence (5,59), self-determination, (4,77) and for impact (4,10). Hartmann (2003) obtained a mean score for total psychological empowerment of 4.14, for meaning 4,71, for competence 5,72, for self-determination 3,23 and for impact 2,89.

Next, the results of the correlation coefficient between LEBQ, JII and MEQ for employees working in the steel-manufacturing organisation will be discussed. The results are reported in Table 4.

The discussion of Table 4 will focus on the total scales of the three measuring instruments of leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity and psychological empowerment with an overview of the job insecurity and psychological empowerment sub-scales.

Table 4

Correlation Coefficients between the LEBQ, JII and MEQ.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Leader Empowering Behaviour Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Affective Job Insecurity	-0.18	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Cognitive Job Insecurity	-0.46†	0.55††	-	-	-	-	-
4. Job Insecurity Total	-0.36†	0.88††	0.88††	-	-	-	-
5. Attitude	0.34*	-0.08	-0.31*	-0.22	-	-	-
6. Perceived impact	0.49†	-0.35†	-0.49†	-0.47†	0.47†	-	-
7. Self-determination	0.44†	-0.10	-0.23	-0.18	0.52††	0.51††	-
8. Measuring Empowerment Total	0.51††	-0.21	-0.41†	-0.35†	0.85††	0.79††	0.80††

* $p \leq 0,05$ is statistically significant

† Correlation is practically significant $r \geq 0,30$ (medium effect)

†† Correlation is practically significant $r \geq 0,50$ (large effect)

Table 4 indicates that there are practically significant correlations of medium effect between Leader Empowering Behaviour and cognitive job insecurity ($r = -0,46$), job insecurity total scale ($r = -0,36$), attitude ($r = 0,34$), perceived impact ($r = 0,49$) and self-determination ($r = 0,44$). A practically significant correlation of large effect was found between Leader Empowering Behaviour and total psychological empowerment ($r = 0,51$).

A practically significant correlation of medium effect was found between Job Insecurity and total psychological empowerment ($r = -0,35$), and perceived impact ($r = -0,47$). A practically significant correlation of medium effect was found between Cognitive Job insecurity and psychological empowerment ($r = -0,41$) and perceived impact ($r = -0,49$). A practically significant correlation of medium effect was found between Affective Job insecurity and perceived impact ($r = -0,35$).

The findings of the study indicate that each of the three sub-scales of psychological empowerment contributes strongly to the overall construct of psychological empowerment with significant correlation of large effect ranging from attitude ($r = 0,85$), perceived impact ($r = 0,79$) and self-determination ($r = 0,80$). The sub-scale that relates mostly to psychological empowerment is attitude ($r = 0,85$).

The sub-scales of affective job insecurity and cognitive job insecurity contributed significantly to total job insecurity with both sub-scales having significant correlation of large effect ($r = 0,88$).

Sauer (2003) obtained practically significant correlations of large effect between leader empowering behaviour and psychological empowerment ($r = 0,74$). Hartmann (2003) reported a practically significant correlation of large effect between leader empowering behaviour and psychological empowerment ($r = 0,86$). Moeletsi (2003) reported a practically significant negative correlation of medium effect between job insecurity total and psychological empowerment total scales ($r = -0,48$).

The discussion above indicates that there are practically significant negative correlations between leader empowering behaviour and job insecurity and practically significant positive correlations exist between leader empowering behaviour and psychological empowerment. A practically significant negative correlation was also found between job insecurity and psychological empowerment.

This implies that the higher the levels of leader empowering behaviour and psychological empowerment, the lower the level of job insecurity the employees in the steel-manufacturing organisation experience. This can be translated into an assumption that the more the employee's feel empowered through leadership behaviour, the more job secure they become and the more they perceive themselves to be psychologically empowered. This assumption is confirmed by the literature of Speitzer et al. (1999); Liden et al. (2000); Seibert, Silver and Radolph (2004).

Based on the above-mentioned discussion, hypothesis 1 stating that practically significant relationships exist between leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity, and psychological empowerment, can be accepted.

Next, MANOVA, AVOVA and Tukey HSD analyses followed to determine the different levels with regard to psychological empowerment of various demographic groups.

Table 5

Differences in levels of Psychological Empowerment of Demographic Groups

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Den df (error)</i>	<i>P</i>
Gender	0,94	2,97	4	202	0,020*
Culture	0,89	0,99	8	400	0,002*
Age	0,90	1,26	16	605,5376	0,215
Qualifications	0,94	2,31	4	167	0,059
Business Unit	0,87	2,29	12	529,4418	0,007*
Tenure	0,94	1,03	12	529.4418	0,418
Category	0,92	3,63	4	173	0,007*

* Statistically significant difference: $p < 0.05$

In an analysis of Wilk's Lambada values ($p < 0,05$), no difference between demographic groups could be found for age, qualifications, and tenure. Statistically significant differences were found between the different gender groups, cultural groups, organisational business units and employee's category ($p < 0.05$). The levels of psychological empowerment for gender, culture, business units and category were further analysed to determine practical significance using ANOVA and Tukey's HSD test.

Following is the difference in terms of the degree of psychological empowerment experienced by employees of the two gender groups. The Tukey HSD test was conducted and the results indicate that significant differences exist between the two gender groups as indicated by the p value $p = 0, 01^*$. It appears that the male group experiences a higher level of psychological empowerment with the reflection of a higher level on the impact

sub-scale. Itzhaky and York (2000) found that gender did not have an impact on empowerment. Pitts (2005) found no difference in his study of leadership, empowerment and public organisation.

With regard to culture, the results of Tukey's HSD test, indicate that significant differences exist between the three cultural groups of black, white and other as indicated by the p value $p = 0,000^*$. The results indicate that the white group experiences a higher level of psychological empowerment than the other two cultural groups on the impact sub-scale, and no differences could be found between blacks and others. Previous research found few or no differences between ethnic groups with regard to psychological empowerment (Stasser, Steward & Witterbaum, 1995). These results correlate with the previous researchers' results. In our South African situation, this could be because of the historical background whereby black people were regarded as inferior to their white counterparts when coming into leadership positions.

Tukey's test was done on the business units. The business units are divided into Iron Making, Steel Making, Shared Services and Engineering. The results indicated significant difference $p = 0,010^*$, between Steel Making and Engineering. No previous research could be found regarding business unit differences. Holdsworth and Cartwright (2003) in their study with Call Centre Agents found lower levels of empowerment on meaning, self-determination and impact when compared to traditional office workers. Hencer and George (2003) indicate that wait-staff exhibit lower scores on all dimensions when compared with other employees. The impact sub-scale was indicated as having a significant difference in this study.

According to Draft (2001) organisations operating in an environment of uncertainty were more likely to be organic than mechanistic. Organic organisations focus on employee contributions to core tasks, teamwork, few rules, and little hierarchy, whereas mechanistic organisations focus on specialised tasks, rigid rules and order, and a strict hierarchy of authority (Draft, 2001). The difference between these business units could be

due to reasons mentioned like: Steel Making is more production focused and Engineering is more service focused.

Regarding category, the study group is divided into two categories, that is, management category and non-management category. The Tukey's results indicate that non-management category appears to have a higher level of psychological empowerment as indicated by the p value $p = 0,000^*$ and the impact sub-scale is indicated as having a higher level of significant difference. Vardi (2000) reported that managers felt significantly more empowered than non-managers. Dwyer (2001) found significant differences in the level of psychological empowerment between managers and specialists. The findings of the current study could be due to the continuously changing environment and where leadership is changing time to time, might be reason why the management category is found to have less psychological empowerment than the non-management category. It would be important to involve middle and lower management in decision making when the organisation is to undergo changes. This may alleviate the insecurity felt by management when there are changes within thin the organisation.

There were no significant differences found between employees' perceptions of empowerment in terms of different educational levels, tenure, age and union in this study. These results are in line with Vardi (2000) on perception of empowerment in terms of age groups, and different educational differences.

Based on the discussions above, hypothesis 2 indicating that there are significant differences in levels of psychological empowerment of demographic groups in a steel-manufacturing organisation can be partially accepted.

Following are the discussions about the multiple regression analysis conducted on the leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity and psychological empowerment.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to test firstly, whether demographic variables and leader empowering behaviour total scale, could predict job insecurity,

secondly, whether demographic variables and leader empowering behaviour could predict psychological empowerment, thirdly, whether affective job insecurity and cognitive job insecurity could predict psychological empowerment and fifth, whether job insecurity and leader empowering behaviour, could predict psychological empowerment of employees in a steel manufacturing organisation.

Following is the discussion about the predictive value of demographic variables and Leader Empowering Behaviour on Job Insecurity. The results are provided in Table 6.

Table 6

Regression analysis – Demographic variables and Leader Empowering Behaviour: Job Insecurity

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
Model 1: Demographic Variables and Job Insecurity					
R: 0,33	Source of variation		df	Sum of	Mean
R ² : 0,11				Squares	Squares
Adjusted R ² : 0,06	Regression		9	12,2717	1.3635
Standard Error: 0,79	Residual		152	95,0821	0,6303
	F = 2,16	p < 0,02755			
Model 2: Leader Empowering Behaviour and Job Insecurity					
R: 0,49	Source of variation		df	Sum of	Mean
R ² : 0,24				Squares	Squares
Adjusted R ² : 0,19	Regression		10	26,1357	2.613
Standard Error: 0,73	Residual		151	81,9464	0,542
	F = 4,81	p < 0,001			
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	B	SEB	Beta	t	p
Intercept	3,60	0,61		5,91	0,000
Gender	-0,29	0,17	-0,12	-1,71	0,089
Culture	0,07	0,14	0,04	0,50	0,615
Citizen	0,34	0,29	0,08	1,16	0,245
Age	-0,02	0,08	-0,02	-0,25	0,797
Qualifications	-0,26	0,15	-0,14	-1,67	0,096
Business Units	0,10	0,04	0,16	2,18	0,030*
Tenure	0,01	0,08	0,02	0,19	0,845
Category	0,07	0,16	0,03	0,44	0,656
Union	0,06	0,07	0,07	0,87	0,384
Leader Empowering Behaviour Total	-0,26	0,05	-0,38	-5,04	0,000*

* p ≤ 0,05 is Statistically significant

The regression analysis reflected in Table 6 indicates that 6% of the variance of Job Insecurity (as measured by JII) is explained by the demographic variables, especially

business units. An R-value of 0, 33 (medium effect) was obtained, and the model was found to be practically significant.

Upon the inclusion of the leader empowering behaviour total scale in the second model of the regression analysis, R^2 increased by 13%. A practically significant R-value of medium effect (0, 49) was obtained, indicating a significant amount of predictive value with regard to job insecurity.

Based on the above discussions, hypothesis 3, stating that leader empowering behaviour predicts job insecurity can be accepted.

Next are the regression analysis results of Leader Empowering Behaviour on Psychological Empowerment.

Table 7

*Regression Analysis – Demographic Variables, and Leader Empowering Behaviour:
Psychological Empowerment*

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
Demographic variables and Leader Empowering Behaviour: Psychological Empowerment					
<i>R</i> : 0,54	Source of variation	<i>df</i>	Sum of	Mean	
<i>R</i> ² : 0,29			Squares	Squares	
Adjusted <i>R</i> ² : 0,25	Regression	10	47,4944	3,7494	
Standard Error: 0,86	Residual	151	112,0173	0,7418	
	<i>F</i> = 6,40	<i>p</i> < 0,0000			
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	B	SEB	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	4,00	0,71		5,61	0,000
Gender	-0,11	0,20	-0,04	-0,57	0,568
Culture	-0,17	0,17	-0,08	-1,02	0,308
Citizen	-0,72	0,34	-0,14	-2,06	0,040
Age	-0,06	0,10	-0,05	-0,61	0,538
Qualifications	0,14	0,18	0,06	0,77	0,437
Business Units	-0,00	0,05	-0,01	-0,16	0,872
Tenure	0,08	0,10	0,08	0,84	0,398
Category	0,05	0,18	0,02	0,26	0,791
Union	0,05	0,09	0,04	0,54	0,586
Leader Empowering Behaviour Total	0,52	0,06	0,52	7,09	0,000*

* $p \leq 0,05$ is Statistically significant

Table 7's results of the regression analysis show that 25% of the variance in Psychological Empowerment (as measured by MEQ) is explained by Leader Empowering Behaviour. A significant *R*-value of 0, 54 (large effect) was obtained, indicating a significant amount of predictive value with regard to psychological empowerment.

Based on the discussions of the results of table above, hypothesis 4, stating that Leader Empowering Behaviour predicts psychological empowerment, can be accepted.

Next are the regression analysis results of Leader Empowering Behaviour on Psychological Empowerment.

Table 8

Regression Analysis – Demographic Variables, Affective job insecurity & Cognitive job insecurity: Psychological Empowerment.

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
Demographic variables, Affective job insecurity and Cognitive job insecurity: Psychological Empowerment					
	Source of variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	
R: 0,49					
R ² : 0,24					
Adjusted R ² : 0,19	Regression	11	39,6649	3,6058	
Standard Error: 0,89	Residual	150	119,8473	0,7989	
	F = 4,51	p < 0,0000			
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	B	SEB	Beta	t	p
Intercept	6,64	0,76		8,66	0,000
Gender	-0,02	0,21	-0,00	-0,10	0,918
Culture	-0,02	0,17	-0,11	-1,24	0,214
Citizen	-0,38	0,36	-0,07	-1,05	0,291
Age	-0,10	0,10	-0,09	-0,97	0,332
Qualifications	0,12	0,19	0,06	0,67	0,503
Business Units	0,05	0,05	0,06	0,93	0,350
Tenure	0,18	0,10	0,18	1,73	0,083
Category	0,03	0,19	0,01	0,18	0,850
Union	0,08	0,09	0,07	0,85	0,391
Job Insecurity Affective	0,01	0,08	0,01	0,21	0,829
Job Insecurity Cognitive	-0,54	0,10	-0,46	-5,18	0,000*

* p ≤ 0,05 is Statistically significant

According to the results of Table 8, the regression analysis indicates that 19% of the variance in Psychological Empowerment (as measured by MEQ) is explained by affective job insecurity and cognitive job insecurity. A significant R-value of 0, 49 (medium effect) was obtained, indicating a significant amount of predictive value with regard to psychological empowerment.

On the basis of the above discussions, hypothesis 5, stating that affective job insecurity and cognitive job insecurity predict psychological empowerment, can also be accepted.

DISCUSSIONS

The objectives of this research were to determine the level of leader empowering behaviour; job insecurity and psychological empowerment experienced by employees within a steel-manufacturing organisation and secondly, to determine the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity and psychological empowerment, thirdly, to determine if there are significant differences in the levels of psychological empowerment of different demographic groups in a steel-manufacturing organisation. It was also the researchers' objective to determine whether leader empowering behaviour could predict job insecurity and psychological empowerment. Further objectives were to determine whether affective job insecurity and cognitive job insecurity could predict psychological empowerment of employees in a steel-manufacturing organisation.

The levels of leader empowering behaviour total scale looked similar to the previous reported research studies. The results indicated average levels when using a seven-point scale.

With regard to job insecurity a higher mean score on a five-point scale for affective job insecurity subscale was obtained. This suggests that employees experienced more uncertainty about his/her job continuity (fear of job loss), than about the continuity of certain dimensions of his/her job (job certainty). With regard to job insecurity sub-scales,

the previous studies also indicated the experience of higher levels of affective job insecurity than cognitive job insecurity. This implies that employees experience more uncertainty about the continuity (fear of job loss), than about continuity of certain dimensions of job certainty.

Psychological empowerment levels compared well with the previous results of other research. Higher levels of psychological empowerment were indicated on the subscale of attitude, indicating that employees had self-belief that they possess the necessary skills (competency) and abilities (efficacy) to do their job well and lower levels of psychological empowerment were indicated on the impact sub-scale. This generally suggests that employees feel psychologically empowered with regard to their work.

With regard to correlation, a practically significant negative correlation of medium effect was found between leader empowering behaviour and job insecurity and between job insecurity and psychological empowerment. Practically significant positive correlations of a large effect were found between leader empowering behaviour and psychological empowerment. This indicates that leader empowering behaviour can make employees feel more secure and job security makes employees feel more empowered, this is in line with Wilson et al. (2004) model of Healthy Work organisation.

With regard to the levels of psychological empowerment and the demographic variables, the results indicated a statistically significant difference in the gender, culture, and employee category. Upon closer analysis the results indicate that the white group experiences a higher level of psychological empowerment than the other two cultural groups on the impact sub-scale, and no differences could be found between blacks and others. This implies that white employees feel less job insecurity than the other cultural groups.

Also the results with regard to category indicate that the non-management category appears to have a higher level of psychological empowerment than the management

category. This means that employees on the lower level of the organisation feel more job security than management levels in this organisation.

There were no significant differences found between employees' perceptions of empowerment in terms of different educational levels, tenure, age, business units and union in this study.

Regression analysis indicated that demographic variables explained a lower percentage of the variance in job insecurity and the inclusion of leader empowering behaviour increased the percentage by thirteen in explaining the variance in job insecurity. Leader empowering behaviour had a significant contribution in predicting job insecurity. This indicates level of job security can be improved by certain behaviour of the managers who coach, share information, delegate responsibility and accountability to subordinates and this would lead to employees feeling more secure.

Leader Empowering Behaviour explained thirteen percent of the variance in Psychological Empowerment (as measured by MEQ) and Leader Empowering Behaviour indicated a significant amount of predictive value with regard to Psychological Empowerment. This indicates that leaders actions have an influence in employees feeling Psychological Empowered.

The results of the regression analysis also showed that affective job insecurity and cognitive job insecurity explained nineteen percent of the variance in Psychological Empowerment. Cognitive job insecurity indicated a significant amount of predictive value with regard to psychological empowerment. This means that creation of security can lead to employees experiencing higher levels of meaning, self-efficacy as well as impact and self-determination.

The discussion above is in line with the previous researchers and is in support of Wilson et al.'s (2004) Model of Healthy Work Organisation, which states that for a work

organisation to be healthy a number of components must interlink. This includes the existence of organisational attributes to ensure employees' understanding of the organisation, organisational climate that involves the leader empowering behaviour to empower employees, job design which is the work and its conditions that are satisfactory to employees, job future which involves job (in) security of employees and psychological work adjustment that ensures employees' satisfaction and commitment to the organisation which leads to psychological empowerment.

According to Wilson (2004) if all the components are observed within the organisation, this will lead to a healthy organisation, that is, employees feeling more secure in their jobs and empowered with less turnover and more commitment and engagement to an organisation, less absenteeism, stress, anger, depression and burnout and high levels of safety and environment awareness among the employees, which translates to less incidents of safety and less levels of alcohol and tobacco use as well as the high level of self-reported health among the employees within the organisation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results presented and discussions made, it is evident that leaders' behaviour plays an important role in people's perception of job insecurity leading to psychological empowerment. It is the researchers' understanding and interpretation as stated in the previous chapters that this model aims to help organisations to reach the state of a healthy organisation.

This means that an organisation must experience organisational attributes to ensure employees' understanding of the organisation, organisational climate that involves the leader empowering behaviour to empower employees, job design which is the work and its conditions that are satisfactory to employees, the job future which involves job security of employees and psychological work adjustment that ensures employees'

satisfaction and commitment to the organisation which leads to psychological empowerment.

The researcher is also of the view that the implementation of the following aspects by the organisation may go a long way in helping the organisation achieve a healthy work organisation state envisaged by Wilson et al. (2004):

Coaching, mentoring and development could be initiated whereby a dedicated senior person could be appointed to coach and mentor the junior employees with the aim of transferring skills and knowledge to subordinates. This will lead to employees feeling more secure in their jobs and more and more competent in what they are doing.

The training of employees should be a must and not an option for organisations that aspire for a healthy organisation state, therefore this should be made a priority. The employer can introduce learnership programmes on a large scale throughout the organisation as an encouragement of learning for qualifications.

Delegation of authority, accountability, and giving employees resources while executing their functions are important for many reasons, which include boosting the employees' confidence and building trust relationships.

Information sharing is an imperative tool in an organisation that adopted a continuous improvement approach striving to remain the market leader. Information must be shared among employees and must be available through the right communication medium.

Participative decision making allow employees to express themselves, and as a result it is vital that employees are involved in decision-making processes as this makes them feel important and creates a sense of ownership in whatever programme/project is to be implemented as well as in their daily execution of their duties.

Meaningful work: employees would feel more secured and committed to an organisation that makes their jobs meaningful for them. This means that the activities employees are doing must be seen to be meaningful and important in his/her eyes. Job enrichment, job enlargement, multi-skilling and multi-tasking could be an ideal way to increase employees feeling of meaningfulness.

Impact: employees feel that they make an impact to an organisation when they have a great deal of control over what happens in their department and when they have significant impact and are able to influence decisions where they work.

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CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the conclusions and limitations regarding the literature and empirical study are discussed. Recommendations for the organisation and future research are also made.

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions regarding specific theoretical objectives and the results of the empirical research are discussed.

Leader empowerment behaviour, job insecurity, and psychological empowerment were conceptualised from the literature and the relationship between the constructs discussed.

Spreier, Fontaine, & Malloy (2006) identified six styles of leadership that managers and executives use to motivate, reward, direct and develop others. These are directive, which entails strong, sometimes coercive behaviour, visionary, which focuses on clarity and communication, affiliative, which emphasises harmony and relationships, participative, which is collaborative and democratic, pacesetter, which is characterised by personal heroics and coaching, which focuses on long-term development and mentoring, (Spreier et al, 2006).

According to Pitts (2005), leaders who focus on the human aspect of leadership, treating subordinates equally and valuing their work, serve to empower those beneath them in the formal hierarchy. Democratic leaders who value the input of subordinates and provide only general supervision empower employees to make good decisions, take risks, and do their work well.

Van Vuuren (1999) conceptualises job insecurity as the concern felt by a person for the continued existence of his or her job and identifies three components. The first refers to a subjective experience or perception. The second to the uncertainty about the future and the third component includes doubts concerning the continuation of the job.

In this regard, Probst (2002) developed an integrated model of job insecurity stating that job insecurity occurs as a result of multiple antecedents that may stimulate the perception that the future of one's job is endangered. Failure to cope with potential future unemployment may have significant consequences. Such consequences may affect employees' psychological empowerment, (Probst, 2002).

Menon (2001) defines psychological empowerment as a cognitive state characterised by a sense of perceived control, competence, and goal internalisation, and Spreitzer (1995) defines psychological empowerment as: a motivational construct manifested in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. Together these four cognitions reflect an active, rather than a passive, orientation to a work role. He further said that empowerment has a great potential to contribute towards organisations reaching their objectives.

Wilson et al. (2004) defined psychological empowerment as the one characterised by intentional, systematic, and collaborative efforts to maximise employee well-being and productivity by providing well designed and meaningful jobs, a supportive social-organisational environment, and accessible and equitable opportunities for career and work – life enhancement.

According to Bell (2004) the biggest challenge facing management today is how to encourage an atmosphere of camaraderie in the business environment, how to relate to one's staff on a personal level while maintaining a stringent attitude towards performance. This challenge is placed at the hands of the leader who's expected to

display empowering behaviour. Robbins (2003) indicates that the success and failure in any organisation is how its leadership optimises the use of its human capital.

The model of healthy work organisation by Wilson et al., (2004) aligns further objectives of the study into context.

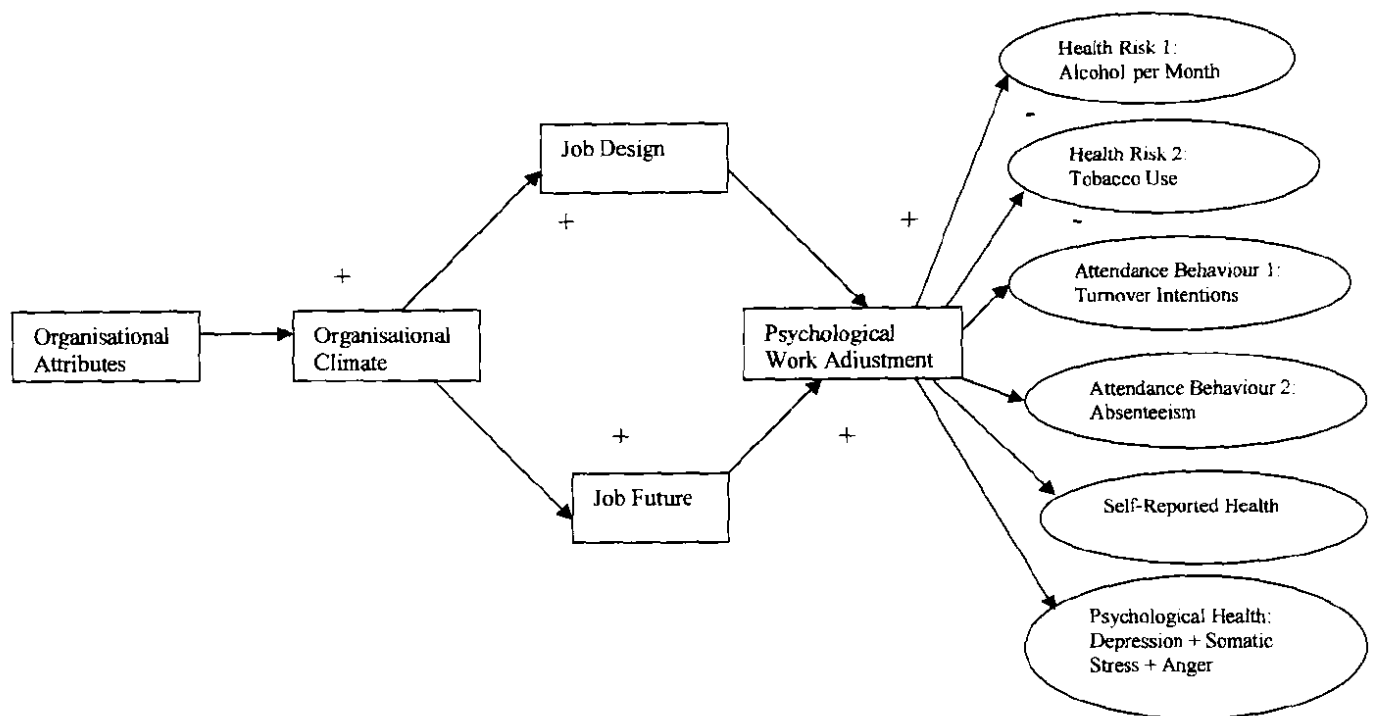


Figure 1: Mark G. Wilson et al. (2004) Model of Healthy Work Organisation.

According to Wilson et al. (2004) the healthy work organisation concept centres on the premise that it should be possible to identify the job and organisational characteristics of healthy organisations and such organisations should have healthier and more productive workers. For an organisation to have such a healthy and more productive workforce, it must have leaders that empower their followers in all aspects of the business.

This model show the way employees experience *Organisational Attributes* which include values and belief systems and abide by the policies, procedures and standards of the organisation. This situation leads to *Organisational Climate* whereby a support for

employees and organisation is sought through Leader Empowering Behaviour that involves open communication and participative management in a safe and healthy environment.

This situation then leads to *Job Future* which includes job security whereby employees' perceptions about the likely continuity of their employment with the organisation, fairness, learning opportunities and flexible working arrangements are sought; following from here is *Psychological Work Adjustment* of which psychological empowerment is a key. This exists when employees feel a sense of efficacy, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and less stressful. This situation then leads to *Organisational Health* in which employees' attendance behaviours at work improve.

Bartlett and Ghoshal (2003) suggest that the global business manager has to achieve an efficient distribution of assets and resources while protecting the competence at hand. Harvey and Jones (2004) say that leadership is about empowering the team and each individual team member by helping them to open their minds to new options, new opportunities, and new methods. Wilson (2004) indicates that for an organisation to have a healthy and more productive workforce, it must have leaders that will be able to empower their followers in all aspects of the business in pursuit of a healthy organisation. Such empowered employees will feel more secured towards his/her job and a sense of commitment to the organisation.

Buitenbach and De Witte (2005) indicate that tremendous pressure is placed on organisations to improve their performance and to become increasingly competitive. South African companies are being exposed more than ever to the effects of the world economy, technological advancement and tough international competition which lead organisations to consider profitability and cost savings to gain competitive advantage over competitors (Buitenbach & De Witte, 2005).

“Job insecurity like any other job related stressors is associated with a number of detrimental consequences for both the individual and the organisation and includes job

insecurity to strain such as mental health complaints, lower levels of job satisfaction and involvement, decreased trust in an organisation, decreased organisational commitment and an increased intention to leave the organisation” (Hellgren, Naswall & Sverke, 2005).

According to Mauno & Kinnunen (2002) the multidimensional definition of job insecurity holds that job insecurity refers not only on affective level to the measure of uncertainty an employee feels about his or her job continuity (fear of job loss), but also on a cognitive level to the continuity of certain dimensions of the job (job certainty).

Arneson (2006) views the aim of empowerment as to mobilise frail and disempowered individuals and groups to improve their situation and enable them to take control of their own lives. This brings us to the question of a healthy work organisation concept, of which psychological empowerment forms one component. According to Ford and Fottler (1995), empowerment requires from managers to share information and knowledge that enable employees to contribute optimally to organisational performance.

It can be concluded that the first research objective of the study has been reached.

The first empirical objective was to determine the level of leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity and psychological empowerment experienced by employees within a steel-manufacturing organisation. The levels of leader empowering behaviour using a seven-point scale were average and these results looked similar to the previous research studies.

Similar average levels of job insecurity were obtained from employees in a steel-manufacturing organisation using a five-point scale, with higher levels obtained in affective job insecurity than obtained in cognitive job insecurity when compared to the findings of previous research.

The results indicated that employees in the organisation experience an above average level of psychological empowerment using a seven-point scale, which compared

favourable with other researchers' previous results. Higher levels of psychological empowerment were indicated on the attitude subscale.

The second empirical objective was to determine the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity and psychological empowerment within a steel-manufacturing organisation. A practically significant negative correlation of medium effect was found between job insecurity and leader empowering behaviour and between job insecurity and psychological empowerment. Practically significant positive correlations of a large effect were found between leader empowering behaviour and psychological empowerment.

This implies that the higher the levels of leader empowering behaviour, the higher the levels of psychological empowerment and the lower the levels of job insecurity among the employees in a steel-manufacturing organisation. Also, a higher level of leader empowering behaviour is associated with low levels of cognitive job insecurity. This discussion confirms that the empirical objective has been achieved.

The third empirical objective was to determine if there are significant differences in the levels of psychological empowerment of different demographic groups in a steel-manufacturing organisation. The results indicated a difference between the gender, culture, business units, and category with regard to psychological empowerment. The impact subscale was found to have a higher level of significance. This indicates that the empirical objective was achieved.

The fourth empirical objective was to determine whether the leader empowering behaviour could predict job insecurity and whether leader empowering behaviour could predict psychological empowerment of employees in a steel-manufacturing organisation. The results of the regression analysis confirmed that leader empowering behaviour predict job insecurity and psychological empowerment of employees in a steel-manufacturing organisation.

The last empirical objective was to determine whether affective job insecurity and cognitive job insecurity could predict psychological empowerment of employees within a steel-manufacturing organisation. The results of the regression analysis revealed that affective job insecurity and cognitive job insecurity predict psychological empowerment of employees in a steel-manufacturing organisation. Cognitive job insecurity and leader empowering behaviour had more predictive value with regard to psychological empowerment.

3.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is the view of the researcher that this study be viewed as a starting point for a longitudinal research purpose, which could focus on the levels of the job insecurity, leader empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment over a period of time.

The use of cross sectional survey design in this research study has certain limitations; no causal inferences could be drawn.

The sample size obtained was not fully representative of the organisation's population; a more representative sample would have been an ideal. Another limitation of this study is that measurements were based on self-reports only.

The other limitation is the validity of Psychological Empowerment Scale (MEQ). Factor analysis of eigenvalues and scree plot indicated a three-factor structure, whereby the subscales of meaning and competence were combined and called attitude. Psychological empowerment subscales therefore were attitude, self-determination, and impact. A four-factor structure of psychological empowerment as measured by the MEQ, namely meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact, was confirmed by literature (Spreitzer, 1995).

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.3.1 Recommendations for the organisation

In following Wilson et al (2004) model of Healthy Work organization, it is the researchers' understanding and interpretation as stated in the previous chapters that this model aims to help organisations to reach the state of a healthy organisation. The following elements are therefore imperative in this regard:

Coaching, mentoring and development could be initiated whereby a dedicated senior person could be appointed to coach and mentor the junior employees with the aim of transferring skills and knowledge and contribute in making leaders competent in leader empowering behaviour such as delegating work to employees more often, giving them space to express themselves, autonomy to take independent decisions and accountability on decisions taken, regardless of which level of employment the employee is in. This could be applied across the levels of employment. Structured coaching and mentorship programmes could be developed so as to give guidelines and guidance to the appointed leaders who would empower their subordinates through coaching and mentoring.

The Skills Development Act aims to uplift the skills levels of employees within organisations and throughout the country as a way of empowerment. It is therefore the duty of the employer to train its employees. This can be done in many ways such as encouraging employees to take long distance learning, take part-time studies and provide subsidy should the employee pass his/her relevant studies. Full-time and part-time studying should be encouraged with the employer nominating certain employees to attend certain relevant courses during their working time. The RPL process must be taken into account. The employer can also introduce learnership programmes on a large scale throughout the organisation as an encouragement of learning for qualifications. ABET classes should proceed, and e-learning should be introduced on a large scale to offer employees the opportunity for basic skills and life-long learning. Bursaries can be offered

to employees who show ability and potential to grow within the organisation in line with their disciplines across the business units.

Delegation of authority, whereby employees could be given specific project(s) to complete with necessary accountability and resources and feedback is given thereafter by the leader with the aim of reinforcing the good behaviour and skills acquired during the completion of the projects.

Accountability, where subordinates could be allowed to relieve on higher position and made responsible and accountable for performance, results and decisions made. This would build a level of confidence among employees and between the leader and subordinate.

Self-directed decision making, to allow employees space with regard to making own decisions about issues that affect how work gets done and how problems get resolved, rather than telling employees how things get done. This would help employees arrive at a solution where he/she would feel comfortable with decisions made. This also increases the trust relationship between leader and subordinate.

Information sharing is an imperative tool in an organisation that adopted a continuous improvement approach striving to remain the market leader. Information must be shared among employees and the labour movements as soon as is available through the right communication medium. Clarity must be given where employees do not understand, especially on issues of performance and profit, organisation vision and goals, and the *strategic initiative* of the organisation. Even though the organisation has adopted continuous improvement approach any small change in the form of new systems, technology or a change in procedure must be communicated. The one-on-one discussions between leader and subordinate are encouraged.

Participative decision making: it is vital that employees are involved in decision making processes, as this makes them feel important and provides a sense of ownership in

whatever programme/project is to be implemented and in their daily execution of their duties.

The researcher is in support of the model of Wilson et al. (2004), due to the results of this study, and believes that if the organisation attends to these recommendations, a healthy organisation environment could be created whereby the outcomes of which would include among others – lower absenteeism and turn-over rate, less stressful manpower, health and safety improvement among the employees as well as satisfied and committed workforce.

Talent search and retention of skills are imperative to organisations in general. It is important that the organisation conducts retention/stay-in interviews from time to time with the employees with the aim of identifying those with potential and willingness to acquire new skills to show that the organisation values their presence and contributions and that they feature in the long-term plans of the organisation. This approach can be incorporated in the talent management strategy of the organisation.

Meaningful work: employees would feel more secured and committed to an organisation that makes their jobs meaningful for them. This means that the activities employees are doing must be seen to be meaningful and important in his/her eyes. Job enrichment, job enlargement, multi-skilling, and multi-tasking would be an ideal way to increase employees feeling of meaningfulness.

Impact: employees feel that they make an impact to an organisation when they have a great deal of control over what happens in their department and when they have significant impact and are able to influence decisions where they work. It is therefore imperative that the organisation involves their employees in the process of running the business.

3.3.2 Recommendations for future research

The results of this research were obtained from a relatively small sample of a steel-manufacturing organisation in South Africa, which might probably have limited generalisation of the findings. It is therefore recommended that a larger population group that is representative of the organisation on a national level be used in a sample.

The MEQ needs further research on a larger sample group to determine the applicability and factor-structure within the South African context. The LEB sub-scale, information sharing, must also be paid more attention with the aim of improving the validity of the whole questionnaire.

More longitudinal studies should be conducted on the same constructs (leader empowering behaviour, job insecurity and psychological empowerment) to other steel-manufacturing organisations for the purpose of comparing the results and findings.

Studies with regard to empowerment should give more focus on psychological empowerment outcomes. This will give a general understanding of the impact of psychological empowerment on an organisation such as impact on turnover, absenteeism, level of drugs and alcohol use, and safety and environment.

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 for the steel-manufacturing organisation involved were made. Future research proposals were also made. All theoretical and empirical objectives formulated for this research, have been attained.

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