



Investigating the relationship between leadership styles and organisational commitment in selected South African universities: The mediating role of Ubuntu

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Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the relationship between authentic, participative leadership and employee affective commitment with the mediation role of Ubuntu within the selected South African universities. A lot of studies have been conducted to explore, investigate and measure the impact and or the influence of leadership, but the study was aimed at including Ubuntu as a mediator role to see whether Ubuntu can enhance the affective commitment of employees.

The problem which the study sought to investigate was the inclusion of employees from different ethnic backgrounds to work collectively as a team. The study used Ubuntu as an indicator to reveal whether employees recognise and embrace values Ubuntu.

The structured online questionnaires were distributed via email across the selected universities to be completed by support staff in all levels.

The online 205 questionnaires were completed, the majority of the participants were African ethnic group (67%) and females (61%) counterparts. The Anova, Pearson product-moment correlation and linear regression analysis were performed.

The linear regression found a significant correlation between both participative leadership and authentic leadership with employee affective commitment. But however the correlation of participative leadership, Ubuntu and employee affective commitment indicated medium effect whilst authentic leadership indicated a strong correlation with Ubuntu and employee affective commitment. The study concluded that authentic leadership was more effective in enhancing employee affective commitment rather than participative leadership.

The study recommends that the leaders should create within the workforce that practises activities which collaborative, participative, involvement, collective in nature to make participative leadership effective and successful.

Keywords: Participative leadership style, authentic leadership styles, affective commitment, Ubuntu, Higher educational sector.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AC – Affective commitment

AL – Authentic leader

PL – Participative leadership

SPSS – The statistical package for social science.

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TITLE

Investigating the relationship between leadership styles and organisational commitment in selected South African universities: The mediation of ubuntu.

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 presents the introduction and research proposal of the study together with the problem statement, research objectives and research questions. The chapter also covers the methodology which was carried throughout the study to answer the study's research question. It described the layout and procedural guidelines on how data was collected, considering the ethical clearance of research studies, the use of statistical analysis to describe the findings and the limitations of the study. The reader was also given an outline of the relationship between different styles of leadership and their effect on a company's organisational commitment through mediation with ubuntu. Therefore, the study investigates the relationship between leadership styles (authentic and participative) and organisational commitment (affective commitment) with ubuntu as a mediatory measure.

1.2. BACKGROUND

The concept of leadership is widely used in many domains like the corporate world, public services, social activities, academia, to name a few (Besen, Tecchio & Fiolho, 2017:6). Business enterprises, organisations and public domains require leadership to manage their processes and the procedures of an event or production. According to Northouse (2015:7), leadership in the work context is perceived as a social process where the leader seeks voluntary participation of the individuals to achieve certain objectives set out by the organisation. Leaders are demanded to transform the organisation to a required state of the business that is efficient in addressing the business' needs and providing proficient services and to become globally competitive in the business environment (Northouse, 2015:6).

Unfortunately, few organisations have realised the importance of leadership, especially those in higher educational institutions, which promptly ensure the development and training of academic staff. The main objective of higher educational institutions is to enable academic staff to educate and transform students into future leaders and active participants who contribute to economic growth (Amanchukwu,

Stanley & Ololube, 2015:6). According to Filho and Zint (2016:130), support staff in this sector receives less attention because academic staff forms part of the core business that is teaching and learning.

The South African educational sector encounters various challenges politically and technologically, among others. Since the post-apartheid era 1994, the country's objective has been to dismantle the imbalances that exist within organisations and to improve and empower disadvantaged groups whose access to certain resources had formerly been prohibited and limited, which prevented all individuals from being economically active (OECD, 2017).

South Africa, however, is characterised by diversity. Differences between cultures, backgrounds and languages are at times a challenge to leaders and managers. According to Feldman and Msibi (2014:4), leaders are challenged to incorporate Afrocentric styles of management with Eurocentric styles, and by doing so, ubuntu principles are anticipated to play an essential role in ensuring that diverse employees are able to function in a workforce that will produce an effectively operating organisation. Ubuntu compliments the Afrocentric management style, which fosters collective personhood and morality. This style of management encourages sharing, group support, caring, respect, and consensus. Ubuntu opposes the Eurocentric style of management, which promotes characteristics like competitive behaviour and individualism among employees (Nel, 2017:3).

Incorporating ubuntu in the organisation requires certain leadership characteristics and a consideration of the workplace climate and atmosphere. Prospective leadership styles should thus be identified according to their ability to transform an organisation to its desired and optimally functioning state and to influence the employees to produce their best and optimal performance (Olckers, Van Zyl & Van Der Vaart, 2017:30).

The concept of leadership has emerged in categories which, according to Resin's Likert, includes: benevolent-authoritative, explorative-authoritative, consultative and participative leadership styles (Purch. 2018). Lewin's model includes the democratic/participative and autocratic leadership style (Ibrahim, Nurzahit & Turker, 2010). Koech and Namusonge (2012:2) also mentioned that among the vast spectrum and variety of leadership styles, there are also transformational, laissez-faire and

transactional leadership styles to mention a few. This study's focus was on the authentic and participative leadership styles which are of interest for this research.

Authentic leadership involves traits like genuineness, truthfulness and sense of morality and, according to Achua and Lussier (2013:354), authentic leaders act with true-self beliefs, from core values, with emotion and some personal preference (truthfulness). Authentic leadership is best described as true-self leadership which influences its followers through perceived authentic behaviour and comprises of transparency and a strong reciprocal relationship with others (sense of morality) (Achua & Lussier, 2013:355). This leadership style yields positive behavioural outcomes like psychological capital and work engagement.

The participative leadership style comprises with the incorporation of subordinates in the decision-making process and problem-solving, where leaders value consultation, consensus, and delegation, which require teamwork and encourage collectivism or consensus (Bell & Mjoli, 2014:452). According to Lumbasi, KAol & Ouma (2016:4), participative leadership influences employees through power-sharing, delegation, and skills development. Participative leadership encourages collaboration, shared information and knowledge, and joint decision making (Yukl, 2013). The previous study confirms that participative leadership has positive behavioural outcomes like job satisfaction, organisational commitment, a sense of perceived organisational support and organisational citizenship (Bell & Mjoli, 2014:455).

Considering the characteristics of authentic leadership (genuineness, truthfulness, and sense of morality) and participative leadership (collectivism, teamwork, and consensus), one can conclude that they touch base with the principles of ubuntu, namely compassion, a spirit of solidarity, survival, respect, and dignity. In this light, the purpose of this study was, therefore, to explore the relationship between the authentic leadership style, the participative leadership style and employee commitment. Further, the study investigated the mediatory role of ubuntu between relationship styles and employee organisational commitment in selected South African universities.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In any given South African organisation, managers are confronted with difficulties when dealing with culturally diverse teams. These challenges include religious beliefs,

trust, group behaviour, and language barriers, which add significant pressure on leaders who must manage employees from diverse backgrounds. If not effectively managed, these challenges can result in teams losing sight of goals, missing deadlines, being ineffective and stalled projects (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2014:140). Therefore, it is important to acknowledge individuals' differences and incorporate them in a way that will benefit the group to attain effective functioning within an organisation (Ngcamu, 2017:2).

The democratisation of South Africa enforced the incorporation of values, ethics, attitudes, education and the skills and knowledge that employees need to function as a part of a group, community, and society (Metz, 2011:544). Therefore, the need to incorporate western leadership styles with Afrocentric (African) style of leadership is crucially important to address the effectiveness of leadership styles within the dynamic workforce characterised by different ethnicities. Considering that leaders are trusted to merge the western leadership pragmatism with African humanism leadership in an environment confronted by emerging markets and trends, ubuntu principles are regarded as the key elements that will enable the leader to introduce a cooperative and supportive form of leadership where compassion, solidarity, survival, respect and dignity of the group are valued and respected.

Though a great deal of studies has examined the theoretical and practical link between the participative and authentic leadership styles and ubuntu within an African context (Munyaka, *et al*, 2017; Taylor, 2014; Agote, Aramuburu & Lines, 2016; Besen, Tecchio & Fialhio, 2017), however, considering the continuous influence of the business sector on the educational sector and how it constantly changes, it is equally important to determine the influence of ubuntu on the educational sector in addressing the aforementioned challenges, because studies with a focus on the educational sector are hardly traceable. Since South Africa is characterised by different ethnicities, managing employees while incorporating ubuntu has become a challenge and a need to develop theoretical knowledge to combat such a challenge.

1.4. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment and to explore the mediatory role of ubuntu between leadership styles and affective employee commitment.

1.5. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific research objectives are:

1. To determine the extent to which phenomena of ubuntu is perceived among university employees
2. To measure the influence of authentic leadership style on employees' affective organisational commitment
3. To measure the influence of the participative leadership style on employees' affective organisational commitment
4. To determine the mediatory role of ubuntu in the relationship between the selected leadership styles and employee affective organisational commitment.

1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was conducted to explore the mediatory use of ubuntu between the participative and authentic leadership style and organisational (affective) commitment and to explore whether the adopted leadership style is effective in the selected higher education institution (HEI) namely the North West Province. Therefore primary research questions of the study emerged as follows:

Q1: To what extent is the phenomena of ubuntu perceived among university employees?

Q2: What is the influence of authentic leadership on employee affective organisational commitment?

Q3: What is the influence of participative leadership on employees' affective organisational commitment?

Q4: What is the mediation role of ubuntu between selected leadership styles and employee's affective organisational commitment?

1.7. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY AND CONTRIBUTION

Leadership has a strong influence on employees in many aspects and on business success. South Africa faces challenges regarding leadership and organisational success, particularly when organisations are faced with multiculturalism, which poses

significant challenges for leaders in South African organisations. These organisations are troubled with the implementation of diverse ethnicity strategies when merging a Eurocentric management style with an Afrocentric style of management (Ngcamu, 2017:1).

This study seeks to make the following contributions:

The study seeks to expand the concept of leadership in many domains and sectors particularly to gain an understanding of the complementary leadership types applicable to various environments. Leadership has been studied expansively under western schools of thought, but few studies have been done within the African context. Therefore, this study seeks to expand the body of knowledge while considering the factors pertaining to the African style of management and the principles of ubuntu, which is pivotal in understanding the type of leadership needed in the organisational context characterised by diverse multicultural employees. In doing so, this study aimed to contribute to the literature toward developing improved models for developing an integrated approach of leadership in different sectors. The study focused on authentic leadership; therefore, the research seeks to contribute to Bill George's authentic leadership model by expanding the body of literature with its five components, namely behaviour, passion, consistency, connectedness, and compassion (Northouse, 2016:215).

The participative leadership model consists of four components, namely situational variables, decision procedures, potential benefits and decision procedures (Northouse, 2013:116). In the first place, this model contributes to an effective framework for dealing with contemporary issues experienced by institutions. In the second place, it expands on the conceptualisation of different domains, particularly with reference to those definitions of leadership styles that are not included in African context and literature. Lastly, the study will add to the body of literature on participative and authentic leadership styles and affective organisational commitment in South African educational institutions.

Expected contribution to leadership styles identified and organisational commitment literature:

The effectiveness of Afrocentric leadership styles in the South African context that are characterised by ubuntu principles is an ongoing exploration. Due to this study's focus on the educational sector, it arouses great anticipation to explore ubuntu as a management concept. Therefore, the identified gap between the leadership styles (participative and authentic) on affective organisational commitment allows the study to research leadership's effectiveness. Lastly, this study will add to the existing body of literature on participative and authentic leadership styles on affective organisational commitment to South African higher educational institutions. The reader will gain knowledge about the effectiveness of participative and authentic leadership styles in the organisation. Moreover, the leadership will explore the employee commitment levels within their departments and the organisation as a whole. This study might also raise awareness of the effectiveness of participative and authentic leadership styles on organisations. In addition, this might raise awareness of employee commitment within an organisation considering the effects of its present leadership styles on organisational commitment.

1.8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section of the study described the proposed approached and methods to be employed in the research study, the research methodology followed a structured quantitative research approach. The study comprised of structured correlation research, employing cross-sectional design and following convenience sampling method. The study followed a structured methodology, consisting of data collection through adopted questionnaires, and also the conceding the validity and reliability of the measurement instruments. The research methodology was employed to carry the procedure for data collection in a sophisticated and accurate manner and also abide ethical considerations which protected the rights of participants and guide the researcher in a certain direction proposed through the research objectives.

1.9. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review comprised of the selected constructs of the study with the literature being obtained from credible search engines for peer-reviewed accredited

journals and journal articles, research documents, and textbooks. Resources include international journals from Google Scholar, EBSCOHost, Academic Search Premier, ScienceDirect, Emerald published journals, NWU online-library, JSTOR, LexisNexis, Juta, Sabinet Reference and SAePublications.

1.10. ETHICS CONSIDERATION

Research ethics must be taken into consideration when data is collected, as ethics protects the rights of participants and secures confidentiality with regards to their involvement in the study. Therefore, it was important to ensure that data was collected ethically and fairly. In this regard, the North-West University's ethics committee was consulted to verify ethical compliance and granting permission to conduct the study. The research was guided by ethical principles which stipulate and includes but was not limited to the identified key principles when conducting research. As such the research was conducted with honesty and integrity to ensure that each participant's rights and personal dignity is protected, the subjects of the study were ensured that their involvement in the study was voluntary and that their participation was highly appreciated (Rose, Spinks & Canhoto, 2015:147).

In addition to transparency and honesty, the participants must also be genuine and open to participate under their informed consent. The researcher ensured that the study remains free of any unethical influence and deception, and the participant's involvement within the study was conducted with the assurance that participant's rights to privacy and anonymity are considered with utmost importance. Respondents were asked to participate with no promises and unrealistic expectations from the researcher, and considerable measures were taken to ensure data protection and the participant's confidentiality. Accordingly, the researcher vowed to ensure that the interpretation and representation of findings were truthful and access to the results were provided by means of a complete study/dissertation.

1.11. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited to a selected university; therefore, it is difficult to generalise the findings produced in the analysis. The study does not represent the views of all the prospective leaders because the focus was on public educational sectors and not private and corporate sectors which thus limits its research. In addition, the study used

a cross-sectional survey to explore the phenomena in question within the given time and can be considered as a pilot study. Therefore, the study recommended a longitudinal study for future research and to explore the relationships between these variables at different times and in other sectors. Lastly, the study focused on two leadership styles, while there are other leadership styles available in the literature.

1.12. CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter 1 - The nature and scope of the study

Chapter one introduced the main objective/proposal of the study. This chapter comprised of a contextualised background/overview of the current influences between leadership styles on affective employee commitment and the mediatory role of ubuntu between the variables. The chapter outlined the study and the processes to be followed, including the problem statement, research objectives, research methodology, limitations and the layout of the study

Chapter 2 - Ubuntu, leadership styles and employee organisational commitment

This chapter provided a detailed discussion of the constructs ubuntu, participative leadership style, authentic leadership style and affective organisational commitment and included the historical background of the constructs and their impact on the current organisational trends.

Chapter 3 – Research methodology

The chapter outlines the empirical research design, data collection from the respondents, measuring instruments and data analysis methods used to formulate the results and how data was gathered and the ethical considerations thereof.

Chapter 4 – Results

This chapter provided the answers to the research questions that were derived from the problem statement. The results were accompanied by the biographical profiles of the participants and are produced with descriptive statistics used to analyse and interpret the constructs ubuntu, participative leadership style, authentic leadership style, and employee affective organisational commitment will be provided. Exploratory factor analysis and correlation coefficients were used to describe the possible

relationship between constructs and to assess the reliability of the measurement Cronbach's Alpha coefficient will be used.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion, recommendations, and limitations

The chapter concludes the study by discussing the results, revealing the limitations of the study and thereby providing recommendations for future studies. This chapter sought to describe the overall procedure of the study, the knowledge discovered from the research and to state the undiscovered answers the study intended to explore and therefore state the recommendations to complete the gap in the body of knowledge.

1.13. Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is evident that leadership has a bigger role to play in transforming organisations and their employees. Leaders must be effective in terms of engaging with stakeholders to ensure the success of the business and its participants. Therefore, leadership styles play an important role, considering that all forms of leadership influence organisations and specific circumstances. Whatever the style, leadership must ensure that employees produce exemplary work ethics that exceed the expectations of the organisation and improves the organisational commitment of employees. For an in-depth understanding of the variables, chapter 2 will focus on the literature on authentic and participative leadership styles, affective commitment and ubuntu within the organisation.

CHAPTER 2

2.1. Introduction

Chapter 2 provided a detailed exploration of the concepts leadership, leadership styles, affective commitment and principle of ubuntu as these concepts have been introduced in chapter 1. The main focus of chapter 2 was to reveal the literature available from the previous studies and also to expand on the relationships between the leadership styles authentic leadership, participative leadership and affective commitment. This chapter also revealed the theoretical link and the results between leadership styles and affective commitment, and lastly, the impact of ubuntu within the spheres where the identified leadership styles have been adopted.

2.2. Theoretical framework

The great man theory conveys that leaders are born and not made, the theory suggests that leaders are born with instincts and personality traits which are defined and describe the behaviour of leaderships (Nawaz & Khan: 2016:1). According to Raju (2018:131) leaders are groomed from an early age and are placed in an environment where they are thought to be influencers. Leaders are also destined by nature to display certain traits that are recognised of a potential leader and that leaders are the initiator of a certain course and they have the ability to change situations (Khan, Nawaz & Khan. 2016:1). The theories of contingency debates that no leadership style is precise and can stand-alone in all situations, this theory suggests that certain leadership can perform optimally in a different and suitable situation where a leader can exercise their strong behavioural traits but perform at a minimum as they are placed in unfavourable and adverse environment (Nawaz & Khan. 2016:2). The Implicit leadership theory implies that there are cognitive structures containing the traits and behaviours of leaders, the basic idea of the theory states that perceivers classify stimulus person by comparing them to a certain prototypes of a category (e.g. influential and effective leaders) (Sharifirad, Mortazavi, Rahimnia & Farahi. 2017:4). The followers perceive and put meanings to a certain behaviour, for an example, a leader that takes a decision might be perceived as dominant (if followers ought to be excluded in the process) or consultative (if followers are ought to be included in the process) (Schyns & Schilling. 2011:142). Mbigi (1997) created the collective finger's theory, the theory derives from an African proverb saying "a thumb, although it is strong, cannot kill aphids on its

own. It will require collective cooperation of the other fingers”. Firstly, the fingers are described as individuals who act together for a certain course which will, therefore, require the assistance of others to achieve certain goals, Second the finger may be perceived as a symbol that presents values that are important to create collective culture (Poovan, du Toit & Engelbrecht. 2006:18). According to Mbigi (1997), the values are survival, solidarity, compassion, respect, and dignity which will be discussed later in this chapter.

2.3. Empirical literature

The empirical literature of the study derived from the previously done studies. The objective of empirical is to disclose the research that has been done that comprise of variables including authentic leadership, participative leadership, Ubuntu and affective commitment. The study derived the empirical evidence of quantitative and qualitative studies from journals and articles of management and social studies, though much of the studies containing the relationship between these variables are difficult to be traced, the literature review of this study outlined the traceable studies conducted and their results in this chapter.

2.4. Leadership

The past decades have seen a rapid increase in the topic of leadership in higher educational institutions. Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2015:141) describe this to be a very complex topic that demands attention. According to Jooste, Frantz and Waggie (2018:692), leadership in higher educational institutions is comprised of additional competencies to ensure proficient services to all the stakeholders, including the student, staff, the government, and society at large. Many universities in South Africa provide their distinct value proposition to attract students nationally and globally. Thus it has become a great challenge to ensure better stakeholder satisfaction to continue attracting more students given that other universities are also seeking competitive advantage (Lesenyeho, Barkhuizen & Schutte, 2018:1).

Universities are led by three different domains of leadership in higher educational institutions, namely traditional senior executive (vice-chancellor, deputy vice-chancellor, chief executive and executive roles – deans and directors within the

faculties – and professional services departments) managers, practitioners, administrators in parallel with the core business of the universities, which is teaching and learning. However, the study focuses on the execution and types of leadership for professional services (Black, 2015:55).

Leadership is a process whereby an individual seeks voluntary participation from subordinates to attain the goals of the organisation. Leadership is perceived as the resource that influences the outcomes of the organisation (Cochran *et al.*, 2014). Leaders motivate, encourage, collaborate and share information with employees, they align followers based on their personality, knowledge, abilities, and strengths and they go with the notion to do things right rather than to do the right things (Aalateeg, 2017:37).

The theory of leadership began with the ancient theory of “great man”, which stated that leaders are born, not made, and the male species are the only gender capable of becoming leaders. However, leadership has been shown to depend on behavioural patterns and personality traits which can be trained and learned (Javed, 2014:189). The primary purpose of leaders is to articulate the vision and mission of the organisation, to create meaning and clarify the reason certain goals are important to the organisation and seek how and when the goals should be achieved (Aalateeg, 2017:37).

In recent decades, leadership in organisations has been a major topic because of the need to drive organisational improvement, as is notable from the current and available research on the definition and traits of leadership in HEIs and the increasing number challenges that leaders face (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017:1). According to Northouse (2016:55), organisational success require a specific leadership style, and effective leadership is achieved by implementing a leadership strategy that is efficient and will enable the organisation to achieve its goals. Jooste *et al.* (2018:692) suggest that leadership in HEIs has additional competencies and therefore have a responsibility to lead not only the stakeholders but also to play a crucial part in ensuring proper leadership that support the needs of the HEIs.

According to Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016:140), leadership in professional services focuses on supporting functions of the HEI, and the effectiveness of leadership is measured through the proficient execution of HEI objectives, values and

goals primarily in recruiting and retaining the best academic staff to ensure proficient teaching and learning. Despite the different challenges that universities face (like merging universities, structures, diversity implementations, pressures of external demand, transformation policies), Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016:140) argues that in the academic sector, major research has been conducted within the spectrum of traditional leadership, but which only includes vice-chancellor, deputy vice-chancellors, deans, directors and managers in the faculties. Not much attention and research have been focused on the support staff of universities, which play important roles in the background by ensuring the universities operate and perform optimally. Therefore, the research was conducted to explore the adoption and effectiveness of leadership in professional services, which is regarded as a continuous journey that constantly seeks undivided attention.

2.5. Authentic leadership

The Authentic leadership was proposed by Avolio *et al.*, May (2004) and Garner *et al.* (2005) (cited by Swain, Cao, & Gardner, 2018:121). These authors concluded that authenticity involves one being true to oneself and relying on internal values and principles as opposed to being influenced by external factors. The authors further explain that leaders who achieve authentic behaviour within the workplace will be able to foster an environment that is conducive of a positive ethical climate and fosters positive self-development (Swain, Cao & Gardner, 2018:122).

Effective, authentic leadership will, therefore, be measured by how sincere leader can execute certain qualities of authentic leadership in a rapid and fast-growing work environment (Weiss *et al.*, 2016:310). The Universities are largely affected by external policies to encourage diversity, and so HEIs need ethical and authentic leadership which involves the ability to accommodate different ethnicities and uphold the values and missions of the organisation (Duigan, 2014:152).

In the Journal of Business and Management Review, Durie and Beshir (2016:2) explain that HEIs are advocating a move towards leadership that is enticed with a higher degree of personal integrity and transparency. Alilyyaniet *et al.* (2016:355) recently found that authentic leadership includes but is not limited to the characteristics of a value-based, notable servant and of self-regulated positive behaviour that promotes positive self-development. Moreover, the leaders in HEIs play an essential

role in ensuring proficient services delivery to their stakeholders, to which the type of leadership must be receptive. Inherently, such traits of authentic leadership, Stone (2016:515) argues, hold that the leader should subject themselves to the needs of the organisation and its constituents.

South Africa has a history of imbalances and inequalities which institutions are on a journey on to dismantle. As one of the economy's leading contributors, HEIs are obligated to comply with the statutory policies which govern South African organisations as a whole (Lesenyeho, Barkhuizen & Schutte, 2018:1). For the complexity and risks of procurement of employees together with other problems like diversity in the workplace. Cletus *et al.* (2018:39) have so far tested authentic leadership as a tool for taking on the challenges of dissolving imbalances, the perception and existence of inequalities within the organisation and prominent transparency and ethical behaviour, which are identified as solutions to the diversity problems.

A considerable amount of studies has found leadership in the educational sector to be multifunctional as it possesses the competencies needed to address many challenges like implementing multicultural and diverse structures and addressing increasingly challenging external environment factors. This is similarly to such challenges include an individual's consideration and organisational objectives (Lesenyeho, Barkhuizen & Schutte, 2018:2). With considered notions to dismantle inequalities, Pavlovic (2015:309) claims that authentic leadership promotes both a positive ethical climate and positive psychological capacities.

Acknowledging the growth of South African HEIs has demanded true leadership with traits that enable growth, prosperity and such proven behavioural qualities as transformation, individual consideration, transparent and inspiration. The research by Swain *et al.* (2018:122) has also found authentic leadership to have comprised different characteristics. Moreover, this leadership style is more prominently based on self-awareness, transparency, balanced information processing and displays of moral perspective within its behavioural traits.

Research has been conducted within the spectrum of teaching and learning which focuses on academic staff, primarily educators, lectures, teacher and the perceptions of learners or students (Singh, 2015:1; Lichy & Pon, 2015:2) on leadership.

Considering the core business surrounds education and learning, the development of leadership has been primarily focused on the skills and competencies of academic leaders (Saurombe, Barkhuizen & Schutte, 2017:2). No research exists on academic and support staff in HEIs, and more emphasis on the subject of authentic leadership deliberately concerned with leaders in the faculty rather than on supporting department and its leadership has been done (Singh, 2015:2). Realising the embedded challenges in academic institutions, transforming diversity has been found to pose a greater challenge in the supporting departments (Lesenyeho, Barkhuizen & Schutte, 2018:2).

Jaiva *et al.* (2015:220) conducted a study to examine the relationship between AL, job attitudes and employee behaviour in various public and private organisations, and the findings revealed that AL influences affective organisational commitment, creativity and job resourcefulness, which results in increased job performance. The study also suggested that organisations should recruit and or develop leaders with AL features in order to succeed. Ribeiro (2016) supports the above findings by underlining that AL promotes and influences employee performance, and in turn, employees experience an attachment to the Organisation. The study of Shahrukh and Iqqbal (2016) found that employees who work with and experience AL features (transparency, integrity, authenticity, and character) are more satisfied and want to extend their duration with the organisation.

A considerable amount of literature has been published on leadership in many corporate organisations, businesses and healthcare sectors, and other several studies investigating authentic leadership as a construct has proven to be associated with the constructs of: psychological capital (Laschinger & Fida, 2014:743), trust (Stander *et al.*, 2015:11), employee extra-role behaviour (Malik & Dhar, 2017:280) and organisational citizenship behaviour (Coxen *et al.*, 2016:11). In contrast, other outcomes of authentic leadership were negatively associated with bullying (Laschinger *et al.*, 2012:1260), emotional exhaustion (Laschinger & Fida, 2014:743) and stress (Rahminia & Sharifirad, 2015:362). Yet, few studies have been conducted in HEIs with authentic leadership style as a construct, and those studies are untraceable within the South African organisational context.

In this study, the relationship between the authentic leadership style and affective organisational commitment was established through the mechanism of social

exchange theory. Social exchange theory states that subordinates reciprocate a leader's behaviour that is beneficial to the follower and the organisation as a whole, which in return increase subordinates' emotional attachment and fulfilment in their responsibilities (Javaid *et al.*, 2015:220). The study by Alilyyani, Wong and Cummings (2018:59) showed that a leader's behaviour that is perceived as authentic enables employees to reciprocate the same behaviour. The finding is consistent with the findings of Coxen, Van Der Walt and Stander (2016:13), who also found that the behaviour which the followers adapt is perceived as beneficial towards addressing the problems and challenges that the organisation faces. Not only are leaders able to reach the organisation's objectives, but their behaviour is deemed admirable, to produce satisfactory results and portray behavioural traits of a true leader which is desirable to followers. Authentic leaders portray high levels of self-awareness, balanced processing abilities, transparency, and rational transparency, and through revealing these characteristics, the followers experience a sense of belonging and attachment. Therefore, leaders establish followers' affective organisational commitment (Jaivad *et al.*, 2015:220).

As diversity, affirmative action and ethnic representation are the leading issues in the South African organisational context. The study includes the mediatory use of ubuntu, considering the amount of literature that has been conducted with the subject of ubuntu. There is no traceable theoretical relationship between authentic leadership and ubuntu. Ubuntu is also the topic of interest because previous research findings in principles of ubuntu have been indicated to foster, encourage and motivate an environment of understanding, sharing of information and reciprocal relationships through hospitality, sympathy, patience, and loyalty amongst members (Nimakwe, 2014:33). The above raised an interesting question to explore the relationship between authentic leadership style and affective organisational commitment mediated by ubuntu within the HEIs and the academic environment as a whole.

2.6. Participative leadership

Participative leadership is a leadership style established by Resins Likert, which explains that leadership includes the subordinates across different levels of hierarchy in decision-making (Bell & Mjoli, 2014:453). Leaders pay attention to individual contributions to problem-solving processes and ensure that all the subordinates'

insights are considered (Benniel & Barth, 2017:646). It is an approach of leadership that grants autonomy to subordinates to make decisions with shared values, vision and mission in mind (Borkowski, 2015:214). Participative leadership seeks the involvement of subordinates through motivation rather than coercion, and the leader achieves involvement through ensuring that all the subordinates participate; they influence the followers by creating opportunities for contribution (Dolyabadi & Safa, 2011:3).

Participative leadership tends to exhibit delegation, involvement, consensus, (Nemaei, 2012:29), empowerment, democratic management and decentralisation (Lang, 2014:78). It initiates a non-judgemental work environment, and followers are able to state their ideas and thoughts. Leaders achieve effective participation through encouragement, support, motivation, resource provision, and skills development (Dolayabadi & Safa, 2011:3), such leaders encourage collectivism and oppose individualism and prefer consultation and consensus over dictatorship (Lumbasi, KAol & Ouma, 2016:4).

In the past decade, publications on participative leadership have increased immensely in Asian and western countries, with the considerate amount of studies having been published in this subject being mostly focused on organisations and a sample that is subject to individualistic beliefs (Kumar & Saha, 2017:3; Lleo *et al.*, 2017:977). The significant current discussion lies in the importance of leadership that is effective and proficient for South African HEIs. While the topic on this form of leadership has grown in literature, over the past decades' much research has been conducted, including participants whose cultures are individualistic.

In the recent past, the South African government has encouraged the organisation to spread into a diverse and unitary workforce. Bell and Mjoli (2014:451) have highlighted the need for a culturally diverse working environment and also indicated the potential benefits of such environments as including but not limited to increased quality decisions, employees' work lives and an increase in employee satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Monolithic organisations, as opposed to multicultural organisations, have created distance between employees with different backgrounds. Edewor and Aluko (2017:189) also summarised the issues experienced in the context of diversity by

management and leadership. The works of Benoliel and Barth (2017:640) have found significant differences between the perception of the leadership of educational sectors that comprise different cultures and the perceptions of leadership effectiveness that are characterised by different cultural attributes.

The previous findings of Rogies, Segers and Witteloostuijn (2017) found the relationship between participative leadership and affective organisational commitment to be inconsistent and contradictory, their study revealed that participative leadership lowers affective organisational commitment for individuals experiencing high dominance. A similar study revealed that participative leadership increases affective organisational commitment for employees experiencing a high development orientation towards leadership. Hence the differences of races in cultural experience on affective organisational commitment are different when compared to the two organisational orientation settings such as power distance and dominance.

Adapting leadership styles to combat the ethnic inequalities in ethnicities within South African organisations of post-apartheid era has become primary objective, where the effectiveness of leadership is measured against whether it transforms organisations based on its perceived imbalanced racial preventative state. Having observed that organisations are poorly misrepresented racially, Benoliel and Barth (2017:642) highlight that diversity is not only influenced by power distance, individualism-collectivism and masculinity-femininity, but Lleo, Viles, Jurburg and Lomas (2017:2) highlighted that cultural differences play a major part in uniting prospective employees under one unitary model in the organisation. Although Borkowski (2015:214) and Benoliel and Barth's (2017:642) studies report that participative leadership has a positive significance to organisational outcomes, the majority of the studies were conducted in countries with individualistic cultures. Furthermore, despite the growth of leadership literature within the educational sector, little research has been conducted with intentions to discover the participative leadership within a diverse cultural setting.

This study encompasses trait and contingency theory and thus opposes so-called great man theories, observing that the South African workforce is diverse. Trait theory suggests that certain individuals inherit certain qualities suited to leadership and those who facilitate racial and cultural inclusion (Amachukwu, Stanley and Ololube, 2015:8). Contingency theory states that leadership adapts to a certain variable related to those

needed for a particular work situation (Otley, 2016:46). According to this theory, no single leadership is appropriate in all situations, but success depends on different variables like qualities of subordinates, situations features and leadership style. In addition, the theory states that an effective leadership style depends on the degree of fit between a leader's qualities and the leadership style demanded by a specific situation (Otley, 2016:46). 'Greatman' theory, however, suggests that leadership was thought of primarily as a male quality, which, according to the study, does not appeal to the leadership style with qualities such as diversity, inclusion and collaboration (Khan, Nawaz & Khan, 2016:1).

The study also drew from implicit leadership theory, which proclaims that individuals hold sharply different opinions about various qualities, skills, competencies, attributes and behaviours, which are embedded in outstanding leadership (Kim & Schachter, 2015:8). Considering the vast number of different ethnicities that exist in South African universities, perceptions of the best effective leadership will differ, but having a participative leadership style is the centre of attention (Rogiest, Segers & Witeloostuijn, 2018:3). There is a high probability that the studies will find two dominant leadership behaviour types, namely employee orientation (leadership showing concern for interpersonal relationship) and production orientation (leadership showing concern for organisation's success) (Vandenberghe, Bentein & Panaccio, 2017:2091).

The modern participative leadership style not only encourages participation, the contribution from subordinates and ensures commitment to the decision-making, but it also enables an environment that is conducive to constant feedback and integrates a core sustainable agenda with the hearts and minds of all followers (Kumar & Saha, 2017:3). Consequently, researches have shown the effects of participative leadership styles were related to empowerment (Ngotngamwong, 2012), performance (Lumbasi, K'Aol & Ouma, 2016:10), job satisfaction and burnout (Benoliel & Barth, 2017:649) and organisational commitment (Bell & Mjoli, 2014:456) to promote a network-based organisation.

Participative leadership has shown positive results in studies conducted on organisations that comprised individualistic cultures, while studies done of collective cultures have reflected a desire for interpersonal and moral leadership (Benoliel & Barth, 2017:649). This means that participative leadership has succeeded in

influencing organisations with individualistic cultures rather than collective cultures. This thus puts the question to South African literature and South African organisations as to where collectivism is important because South African organisations are in the process of transitioning to a more collective nature due to the diverse cultures they typically function in organisations. While the concept of participative leadership has been studied over the years together with its impact on private and public Organisations, it is relatively unexplored for support staff of South African universities.

According to Walker (2015), as cited by Benoliel and Barth (2017:641), leadership techniques and motivational techniques that are effective to one culture may be different from another. What has not clearly been developed in the literature is the theoretical relationship between participative leadership and affective commitment in the context of an ethnically diverse workforce. A recent development in the field of business has increased interest in leadership, but much of the literature has been developed using the western Eurocentric instruments, models, and techniques to measure leadership effectiveness in South African universities. The research is done in Company of the year in Kenya by Lumbasi, K'Aol, and Ouma (2016:2), who also found participative leadership to have a positive influence on employees' performance. They also included that this style of leadership is most effective when employees are highly trained and involved in their work. Other findings are inconsistent with individualistic and power-distance cultured countries, and several studies done in western and Asian cultures have found the participative model to be less effective than leadership styles that use coercion and force to motivate employees and which lead to positive employee attitudes, including affective organisational commitment (Kumar & Saha, 2017:3). However, the evidence for this scientific study is inconclusive, and no substantial evidence showing that participative leadership and affective organisational commitment to have significant effects within the South African context that can be generalised.

2.7. Affective commitment

Organisational commitment is described as the belief in and acceptance of organisational goals and values, the willingness to put effort into accomplishing the organisation's goals and a strong desire to maintain organisational membership (Vandenberghe, Bentein & Panaccio, 2017:2091). It is an individual emotional bond

with the organisation that fosters a desire to continue membership because they have accepted the organisation's values.

The membership constitutes an individual's self-definition and obedience to the culture, climate, rules, and characteristics of the organisation, and they link their sense of being with the organisation. According to Meyer and Allen (1991) as cited by Vandenberghe, Bentein & Panaccio, (2017:2091), three types of commitment exist, namely continuance commitment (commitment from necessity), normative commitment (commitment from obligation) and affective commitment (emotionally attached to the organisation), which is studied extensively and is the most relevant form in respect of to the organisation.

Organisational commitment is a multi-dimensional concept, and it has distinct components, namely linkage, identification, and obligatory, which in the workplace context are respectively termed as affective, normative and continuance commitment. Thus three components can be described as forms of commitment, of which affective commitment is one (Rajib & Sharma, 2016:163). The present study focuses on the affective base of commitment.

Gao-Urhahn, Biemann and Jaros (2016:515) describe employee affective organisational commitment as the manner in which the employees' are attached to, identify with and get involved in the organisation. Affective commitment is a driving force that initiates and motivates the employees to contribute to improving productivity by spending more effort to accomplish the organisation's goals (Kim, 2014:40).

Meyer and Allen (1991) describe affective commitment as an emotional attachment, identification and involvement with the organisation's activities. Affective commitment refers to feelings of a sense of belonging and attachment to the organisation. Several studies conclude that feelings of affective commitment lead to action and commitment the organisation; this emotion influences employee's behaviour and is informed by the likes of motivation, encouragement and drivenness (Kim, 2014:40). A study by Mercurio (2015:299) found that affective commitment or emotional attachment to an organisation is the essence of organisational commitment.

Demirtas and Akdogan (2015:62) propose that employees achieve a sense of belonging by adopting the organisational conditions, by being included in the firm's

culture and internalising the firm's goals and values with their own identities, which leads to employees living out their memberships within the organisation for a longer period or the duration of their employment.

In contrast with the abovementioned, Gau-Urhan, Biemann and Jaros (2016:515) have suggested that the cross-sectional effects of affective commitment change over time; they found that affective commitment has significant differences because of age and tenure. Hanaysha (2016:300) traced the differences and also noted that AC is increased by work environment attributes that are conducive of a working environment, organisational culture and involvement of proficient leadership. They also identified the following dimensions of affective organisational commitment: loyalty, willingness to continue work and responsibility.

Garg and Dar (2016:375) discovered that the absence of humanistic factors like culture, synergy, and relationships significantly impact the employee's loyalty, trust and faithfulness; consequently, the important dimensions of AC (attachment, identification with the organisation and belongingness) are discovered to have decreased in the organisation (Javaid *et al.*, 2015:220).

Garg and Dhar (2016:175) have explored the variables that influence employees' affective commitment, and have classified them under personal characteristics (e.g. satisfaction with salary, job security, interest in their job, satisfaction with the work climate, engagement, fair treatment), work experiences (e.g. supervisory, openness to new ideas, development) and job characteristics (e.g. mismatch in working hours, organisational support, opportunities for advancement, formal procedural justice, downsizing, participatory management, change).

Considering the culturally diverse South African workforce, organisational commitment has rarely been conducted to measure the degree of commitment of employees of different cultures, particularly in one unit of a working environment. Steyn, Beuidenhoud and Grobler (2017:3) describe organisational commitment as a mechanism that facilitates collaboration among employees. Bal *et al.*, (2014:4) noted that employees who are committed to their organisations are more willing to participate as a group and go the extra mile because they feel connected to the organisation. In South African universities comprised of different ethnicities, a leader's motive it is to drive a successful organisation that obtains its goals and retains its employees.

Recent studies have shown that employees experiencing high levels of affective commitment exhibit a positive influence through extra-role behaviour, job performance (Garg & Dhar, 2016:177) and job satisfaction (Banjarnahor, 2017:116). Several studies have indicated various variables like procedural justice, perceived organisational support (Garg & Dhar, 2016:387), work engagement, job content, job involvement (Scrima, Lorito, Parry & Falgares, 2014:2168), ethical leadership and positive work climate (Demirtas & Akdogan, 2015:64) are have relatively positively been associated with high levels of employee affective commitment. To the contrary, Demistas and Akdogan (2015:64) have argued that employees experiencing low levels of affective commitment are accompanied by burnout and the intention to quit, thus leading to high staff turnover. However studies show that organisations that play a crucial role in economic development have been found to exert a certain level of commitment that every employee can identify with; in this case, the dimension of employee organisational commitment in HEIs was yet to be explored.

2.8. Ubuntu

Ubuntu is an African term for “humanness”, and its facets are revealed through the social connectedness of people living in societies and communities that comprises their cultural and moral values. The concept of ubuntu is widely used by many people from many domains, including philosophers, historians, social scientists, politicians and community members. It is characterised as an African worldwide ideology and doctrine that means “the basis of African communal life” (Idoniboye-Obu & Whetho, 2013:230).

According to Kamwangamalu (1999:27) “ubuntu is a value system which governs societies across the African continent, it is a system against whose values the members of a community measure their humanness”, “it is adopted rooted African worlds view that pursues the primary values of intense caring, empathy, respect, humanness, compassion, and communalism” (Fox, 2010:124). The core belief of ubuntu is that “people are people through other people as translated from isiXhosa which it is expressed as *Umuntu ngumuntu gabanye bantu*” (Idoniboye-Obu & Whetho, 2013:230).

Ubuntu is a concept found in African cultures. It explains that a person is a person through others, and their proficiency is achieved through the development of others

(Hoofman & Metz, 2017:156). The elements of ubuntu point to various dimensions of the concept. Ubuntu is comprised of the set of methodologies, strategies, principles, and values that are established within certain societies and or communities with the same communal social, interpersonal values (Idoniboye-Obu & Whetho, 2013:234). The core values of ubuntu include compassion, respect, empathy, interconnectedness, and communalism. Ubuntu also adopts principles like inclusivity, fairness, equity and reciprocity relationships (Murithi, 2007:282).

The purpose of ubuntu is to serve and to participate, to bring sense not only to one's own life but to the lives of others because one is connected to others in the journey to alleviate human suffering, problems and misunderstanding (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005:228).

The key values of ubuntu are survival, solidarity, compassion, respect, and dignity (Nwagbara, 2012:71). Survival refers to the ability to live longer despite severe challenges, and to overcome the survival issues, Africans have developed a collective psyche to collectively and spiritually address these issues (Poovan, 2005:22). It is through collectivism and unity that Africans have developed the shared will to survive (Nzimakwe, 2014:33).

According to Gerber and Keane (2017:502), workplace challenges can be resolved with ubuntu principles; ubuntu in the workplace emphasises that cultural differences could impact on the productivity, efficiency, and profitability of the organisation. Poovan, Du Toit and Engelbrecht (2017:17) argue that South African business models, theories and ideas are based on European and American management practices. They studied the social values of ubuntu on team effectiveness, and their conclusion suggested that constant reliance on American and European models are inadequate and inefficient enough for managing and developing the diverse South African workforce (Meylahn & Musiyambiri, 2017:6).

The study argues that ubuntu in conjunction with European and American management styles results in less efficient leadership and team effectiveness, which in turn results in a working environment that is influenced by other factors like poor communication, employee dissatisfaction and negative organisational commitment. The study of Nzimakwe (2014:39) supports the above statement because he demonstrated the importance of practising ubuntu and leadership for good governance

in service delivery businesses. The findings proved that workers in client services sector primarily preferred to carry their work individually, and there is a sense of competition between the employees. Therefore, individualism between employees resulted in low productivity and profitability.

Gerber and Keane (2017:500) suggest that ubuntu should be used as a model to address the shortcoming of the individual-focused western worldview with interconnectedness, which is more inclusive and culturally congruent with the South African context. Msila (2015:30) has previously identified ubuntu to have helped build harmonious relationships in culturally diverse organisations.

The study draws from the collective finger theory by Mbigi (1997), which is best described by the African proverb “A thumb, although it is strong, cannot kill aphids on its own, it would require other fingers” (Mbigi & Maree, 1997:110). The proverb entails that the fingers are perceived as people acting together as a hand, hence the collective, and Mbigi also presents the five fingers as key values of ubuntu that are essential to forming and maintaining a collective culture.

Ubuntu in the work context creates an environment of understanding, sharing of information and reciprocal relationships through fostering hospitality, sympathy, endurance, patience and loyalty (Nzimakwe, 2014:33). Ubuntu embodies a tradition of consultation, participation, decision-making, and consensus by ordinary individuals within the society, the conceptualisation of this notion in the work environment would suggest that employees are viewed as equals, and decisions are made collectively since the organisational outcomes affect all the employees (Washington, 2010:33).

An interpretation of key values of ubuntu in the workplace is that ubuntu affects the organisation in various ways, though there are some issues such as the efficiency of communication within the African context that require exploration, including the effective leadership style within the certain environment and/or sector and team cohesion between employees in the case of group participation and, understanding others' points of views, considering that decisions are influenced by individual backgrounds (Karstens & Illa, 2005:608).

Nzimakwe (2014:36) has found ubuntu to influence work environments concerning various areas of business (ubuntu influences collective learning, sustainability, and

teamwork), corporate governance (the attitudes of the collective, fairness, and humility), restorative justice (the use of dialogue, collective restitution, and healing) and conflict resolution and reconciliation. The available evidence seems to suggest that ubuntu enhances institutions' ability to develop practices that require collaboration and teamwork. In recent developments of diverse organisations, the research to date has focused more on organisational performance rather than employee's interconnectedness with the organisation and other employees within the organisation (Meylahn & Musiyambiri, 2017:6).

2.9. Conceptual framework

The study focused on the adoption and embracement of authentic and participative leadership and whether these leadership styles affect employee affective commitment. The study also investigated whether the mediation role of Ubuntu thus enhance or hinder employee affective commitment when both authentic and participative leadership are adopted by the employees performing in senior or leadership roles within the university.

The leader may adopt authentic leadership style which is comprised of self-awareness, rational transparency, balanced processing, and internal moral perspective but whether these components enhance or hinder employee affective commitment, the study seeks to investigate this proposition. Participative leadership plays a role in organisational effectiveness and success, therefore the study aimed at exploring whether the leaders within the university include followers, subordinates and or employees in decision-making processes, consider their ideas and thoughts and also be granted authority to perform certain tasks and thus also the participative role of leadership thus enhance or hinder employee affective commitment.

Having looked at the problem statement, the research sought to explore whether the mediation role of Ubuntu plays a contributing factor by enhancing or hindering employee affective commitment when authentic and participative leadership are adopted. The employee will recognise the values of Ubuntu which are survival, solidarity, compassion, respect and dignity by observing the organisational culture and the behaviour of other colleagues.

Conceptual framework

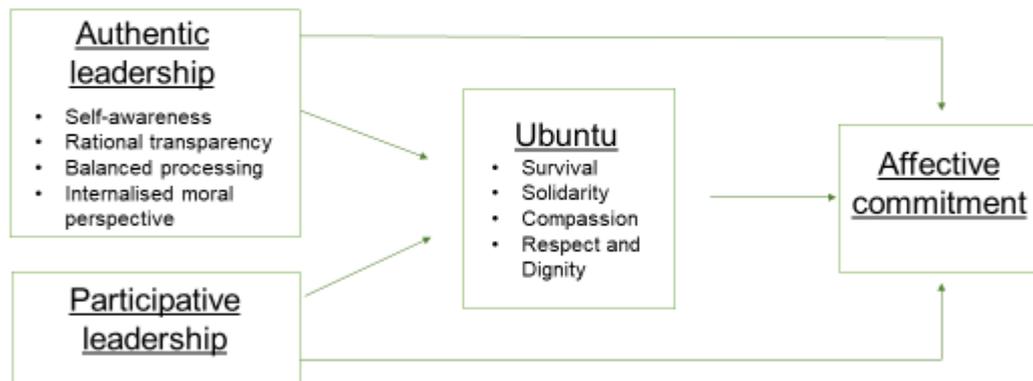


Figure 2.1. The conceptual framework proposed by the study.

The following diagram (figure3.1) graphically represents the conceptual framework of the proposed study. Relevant theories that convoy the study have been discussed in the literature, the variables will be discussed and were possible to distinguish their differences and relationship with the metatheory of the framework namely postpositivism.

The statement of the problem was to investigate the relationship between leadership styles and affective commitment: the mediation role of Ubuntu, The study ought to answer the following questions:

- To what extent is the phenomena of ubuntu perceived among university employees?
- What is the influence of authentic leadership on employee affective organisational commitment?
- What is the influence of participative leadership on employees' affective organisational commitment?
- What is the mediation role of ubuntu between selected leadership styles and employee's affective organisational commitment?

2.10. Conclusion

Leadership as a concept has many definitions, and in certain work contexts, it has a role. Chapter 2 has discussed the leadership variables of interest in this study (authentic leadership style, participative leadership style, affective commitment, and ubuntu) in the educational sector. Chapter 2 also expanded on authentic leadership style and its components (self-awareness, rational transparency, balanced processing, and internal moral perspective), participative leadership, affective commitment, and ubuntu and its principles (survival, solidarity, compassion, respect, and dignity) and the theoretical link between all the variables.

3. CHAPTER 3 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the empirical research and the research design, research settings, sampling methods, measurement instruments, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. This chapter intends to illustrate the process that was followed to conduct the study.

3.2. Research paradigm

Given the variety of ontological positions numerous distinctive research orientations or research approaches have evolved over time, for the purpose of this study postpositivism was considered (Maree, 2014:59). The researcher working under postpositivism paradigm follows a critical realist ontology in which believes that the reality exists but can never be perfectly understood (Maree, 2014:59).

Postpositivists approach assumes that reality is subjective, multifaceted, mentally constructed by individuals and can never be fully apprehended, only approximated. Meaning reality is not a fixed entity but it is to a certain degree accepted that reality is a creation of individuals involved in the research influenced by context (religion, gender, culture, etc.) (De Vos et al., 2014:148).

The researcher of postpositivism paradigm focuses normally believe in multiple perspectives from participants than a single reality (Creswell:2007:20), Therefore the problems experienced in this research may be perceived differently by participants, the outcomes of the study may be subjected to different opinions and different realities of participants (De Vos et al., 2014:148).

3.3. Research method

The study followed a quantitative research approach in the form of structured and adopted questionnaires to answer the research questions. According to Maree (2016:307), in quantitative research, a researcher interprets numerical data to test the results and relationships between variables. This approach is used to test the theories against reality and look for probable cause and effect. The study employed a cross-sectional survey because it aimed to yield the results at a specific point in time (Olsen & Maire, 2004:7). A cross-sectional survey was appropriate for this study because it could target a larger sample size (Maree, 2016:307).

3.4. Research design

According to Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001:280), the cross-sectional survey compares selected constructs from the sample group and the relationship of the variables at a specific point in time, and data will be collected anonymously. This type of data collection is approach is best suited for this study because a cross-sectional sample can target a larger group of people, it is less expensive, it is considered most useful when exploring the differences in the population at a specific moment and takes relatively a short period of time (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011:34).

The sample participants will accompany the quantitative approach, collection of data, research instruments, analyse of data.

3.5. Research procedure

This study used a web-based questionnaire designed with Google docs. The web-based application uses software that efficiently produces a coding manual, input templates, web-based statistical summary, and reports. After gathering the data, it was converted to SPSS 1.6 Windows program for data analysis.

According to Rose, Spinks and Canhoto (2015:117), web-based questionnaires reduce turnaround times and costs and allows the researcher to reach participants who would otherwise be difficult to involve in the study when using traditional methods like booklets and one-on-one interviews. Online questionnaires enable the respondents to be open and complete the questionnaire at their own schedule, and it makes participants feel more confident to answer the questions truthfully because of the complete privacy and confidentiality that this method offers. In addition, the web-based questionnaire may appeal to the respondent's convenience based on their familiarity with the online environment, speed of access and ease of completion return.

To achieve the targeted amount of completed questionnaires, a reminder was sent to the faculties and support departments to participate in the survey. The questionnaires were requested to be placed in a box where it is accessible to participants who chose not to take the questionnaire online, and participants would not have access to other participants' answer booklets.

In the data, the participants remain anonymous, ensuring that no response can be traced back to the participant. Participants were advised to complete the survey

without disclosing any personal information other than the characteristics required in the survey, which is gender, ethnicity, highest qualification and work experience.

The researcher has access to the completed data by means of the central data email, which no third party can trace or access. This addressed concerns about data security.

3.6. Research population

The population of the study comprised the support staff of the North-West University, which included the administrative assistants to officers, supervisors, practitioners, managers, and those in higher positions. The researcher distributed 300 emails to participants at the time of the study. Only 68% of the participants responded to the questionnaire. And all the 205 (68%) were usable for the study.

The subjects included in the sample had to meet certain criteria, which included that the sample should:

- Be in leadership and or subordinate level,
- Be reporting to a senior or manager from whom they receive instructions to carry out the work,
- Be willing to participate,
- Fully understand the nature of the study,
- Be willing to give consent to participate in the study and that the answers can be published in an academic journal.
- Be of either sex or any race.

3.7. Research sample

The study followed a convenience sampling method and the researcher selected participants based on their level of work (clerk to directors) and employment type (permanent support staff). A convenience sampling method allows the researcher to include participants who are selected, available and willing to participate. Within the convenience sampling method, the researcher gathers data through designed and existing instruments to test its reliability and validity (Maree, 2017:308). Once the data was gathered, the researcher entered the data into a computer for further general and statistical analysis with statistical analysis tools to describe the data and discuss the results from the analysis.

3.8. Measuring instrument

The information from the questionnaires was used to answer the research questions. The web-based internet questionnaire was sent to the participants by email. The measuring instrument consisted of five sections, excluding biographical information, using the five-point Likert-scale which participants used as responses where 1 as strongly disagree and 5 as strongly agree.

Section A - The biographical information: this section of the questionnaire focused on obtaining biographical information of the participants included gender, age, ethnicity, highest qualification, the position occupied and work experience.

Section B – This section contains 45 questions measuring the occurrence and adoption of **ubuntu** in the organisation. Section B consists of three sub-divisions, namely the co-worker (questions 1 to 13), the team (questions 14-29) and the organisation (questions 30-45). The Likert-category scale comprises of items ranging from 1 as strongly agree to 5 as strongly disagree. The Cronbach Alpha of Ubuntu from the previous study was .82 (Sigger, Polak & Pennink. 2010:10)

Section C – This section contains 6 items measuring the occurrence of **participative leadership style** in the organisation in relation to whether the leadership style is adapted and/or how the participative leadership style is effectively implemented in the organisation and the subordinates' perceptions of their leaders' behaviour that demonstrate and reveal traits of participative leadership style or not. The Likert-category scale comprises of item ranging from 1 as strongly disagree to 5 as strongly agree. The Cronbach Alpa of PL from the previous study was .89 (Benoliel & Barth, 2017:647)

Section D – This section contain 16 questions measuring the occurrence of the **authentic leadership style** in the organisation in relation to whether the leadership style is adopted and/or how the authentic leadership style is effectively implemented in the organisation and, lastly, subordinates' perceptions of their leaders' behaviour on whether or not the leader demonstrates traits of the authentic leadership style. The questionnaire is divided into four dimensions, namely self-awareness (questions 1, 5, 9 and 13), rational transparency (questions 2, 6, 10, and 14), balanced processing (4, 8, 13, and 16) and internalised moral perspective (questions 3, 7, 11 and 15). The

Likert-category scale comprises of items ranging from 1 as strongly disagree to 5 as strongly agree. The previous study reported internal consistency as .93 and the subscales of AL were relational transparency (.79), Self-awareness (.82), balanced processing (.86) and internal moral perspective (.84) (Elrehail et al., 2016:62).

Section E – This section contains 6 items measuring the occurrence of **employee: the affective organisational commitment** of subordinates in the organisation. All the questions are based on the subordinates' emotional attachment to the organisation and their willingness to stay longer and pursue employment within their organisation. The Likert-category subscale comprises of items ranging from 1 as strongly disagree to 5 as strongly agree. The Cronbach Alpha on this study was .82 (Gim, Desa & Ramayah. 2014:661).

3.9. The validity of measurement instruments

According to Maree (2016:239) validity of the instrument refers to the extent which it measures what it supposed to measure. The validity of the instrument is needed for standardisation, and it has to deal with how well the constructs covered are measured by the different groups of related items (Maree: 2016:240). In this study, the researcher ensured the data collection methods were valid by ensuring objectivity, lack or neglect of precision in the research methodology, scrutiny for bias and application of ethical consideration.

3.10. Reliability of measurement instruments

Five measurement instruments were used in the study, and their reliability was measured using Cronbach Alpha 0.70, which is considered acceptable for research purposes (Field, 2005:667). In order to statistically report the research findings, the factor analysis should be included to consider all the measurements reliability from the responses gathered (Pallant, 2007:47). Reliability of the instrument means that using the same instrument on different respondents or at different times should produce the same findings (Maree, 2017: 238). Therefore, the criterion (Cronbach Alpha 0.70) was used to reflect the reliability of the measurement instruments and dimensions of variables included in the study.

Table 3.1 Reliability of ALQ (n=205)

ALQ Dimensions	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient
self-awareness	0,84
Rational transparency	0,86
Balanced processing	0,89
internal Moral perspective	0,70
<i>Overall authentic leadership</i>	0,95

The table above indicates the internal consistency of 0.95 on overall authentic leadership. According to the criteria, the score is high and considered acceptable for the study. The reliability scores of authentic leadership four dimensions varied between 0.70 (internal moral perspective) and 0.89 (balanced processing), which are all considered high and acceptable.

Table 3.2 Reliability of PLQ (n=205)

	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient
<i>Participative leadership</i>	0,73

The table above indicates an internal consistency of 0.73 on participative leadership. According to the reliability criteria, the score is above the accepted Cronbach Alpha, which is considered high and acceptable for the study.

Table 4.9 Reliability of ubuntu questionnaire (n=205)

Ubuntu Dimensions	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient
Survival	0,71
Solidarity	0,68
Compassion	0,71
Respect and dignity	0,79
<i>Overall ubuntu</i>	0,91

The table above indicates an internal consistency of 0.91 on the overall ubuntu questionnaire. According to the reliability criteria, the score is high and considered acceptable for the study. The reliability scores on dimensions of ubuntu varied from

0.68 (solidarity) and 0.79 (respect and dignity). The solidarity dimension is indicated as 0.67 which is below the accepted reliability criteria. The overall internal consistency is considered very high and acceptable to further continuance with the study.

Table 4.10 Reliability of ACQ (n=205)

	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient
Affective commitment	0.74

The table above indicates an internal consistency of 0.74 on affective commitment questionnaire. According to the reliability criteria, the score is above the accepted Cronbach Alpha score, which is considered high and acceptable for the study.

3.11. Research settings

The study was conducted at the North-West University over the three campuses, namely the Potchefstroom campus, Vanderbijlpark campus and Mafikeng campus in the North West Province and Gauteng province. All three campuses operate as a unitary model. Processes and procedures are aligned across the three campuses. The North-West University comprises the same offices, reporting lines and overall mission and vision. The hierarchal structures are aligned across the three campuses with operating settings.

3.12. Data analysis

The Windows program SPSS v27 (2019) was used for statistical analysis. The validation of questionnaires and internal consistency was examined through the Cronbach Alpha coefficient and inter-item correlation. The mean, standard deviation analysis for descriptive statistics were used to determine the relationship between variables which were conducted with the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r). Skewness and kurtosis were used to determine reliability. The practical significance of the correlation coefficient presented 0.30 as a small effect and 0.50 as a medium effect.

The ANOVA was used to confirm the phenomena of ubuntu and the differences based on the race-specific experience of ubuntu between ethnic groups. The harmonic mean

of the group's sizes (homogeneous subset (Tukey B) was used to identify the ethnic groups that identify and experience ubuntu in the same way.

To specify the prediction and proportion of variance in the dependent variable (affective organisational commitment), the independent variable (leadership style; authentic leadership style and participative leadership style) and mediation of ubuntu, a linear regression analysis was conducted. Both the correlations and the linear regression were used to detect the mediatory use of ubuntu between leadership styles and affective commitment.

3.13. Ethics consideration

Research ethics must be taken into consideration when data is collected, ethics as ethics protects the rights of participants and secures confidentiality with regards to their involvement in the study. Therefore, it is important to ensure that data is collected ethically and fairly. In this regard, the North-West University's ethics committee will be consulted to verify ethical compliance and granting permission to conduct the study. The research will be guided by ethical principles which stipulate and includes but is not limited to the identified key principles when conducting research. As such the research will be conducted with honesty and integrity to ensure that each participant's rights and personal dignity is protected, the subjects of the study will be ensured that their involvement in the study is voluntary and that their participation will be highly appreciated (Rose, Spinks & Canhoto, 2015:147).

In addition to transparency and honesty, the participants must also be genuine and open to participate under their informed consent. The researcher will ensure that the study remains free of any unethical influence and deception, and the participant's involvement within the study will be conducted with the assurance that participant's rights to privacy and anonymity are considered with utmost importance. Respondents will be asked to participate with no promises and unrealistic expectations from the researcher, and considerable measures will be taken to ensure data protection and the participant's confidentiality. Accordingly, the researcher vows to ensure that the interpretation and representation of findings will be truthful and access to the results will be provided by means of a complete study/dissertation.

3.14. Limitations of the study

The study is limited to a selected university; therefore, it is difficult to generalise the findings produced in the analysis. The study does not represent the views of all the prospective leaders because the focus is on public educational sectors and not private and corporate sectors which thus limits its research. In addition, the study uses a cross-sectional survey to explore the phenomena in question within the given time and can be considered as a pilot study. Therefor are future recommendations for longitudinal research to study and explore the relationship between these variables at different times and other sectors. Lastly, the study focuses on two leadership styles, while there are other leadership styles available in the literature.

3.15. Conclusion

The online 205 questionnaires were completed across all the three campuses (Potchefstroom, Mafikeng and Vanderbijlpark campus), the majority of the participants is African ethnic group (67%) and females (61%). The Anova, Pearson product-moment correlation and linear regression analysis will be performed tho describe and also analyse the data obtained. The study intends to utilise the linear regression to and correlations to answer the study research questions which this part of this study will be discussed in chapter 4.

4. CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will focus on interpreting the results. This study used a quantitative research design to explain in simple terms the statistical procedures and findings that would be used to investigate and answer the research questions. This chapter is outlined by descriptive statistics and demographic information.

4.2. Reliability of measurement instruments

Five measurement instruments were used in the study, and their reliability was measured using Cronbach Alpha 0.70, which is considered acceptable for research purposes (Field.2005:667). In order to statistically report the research findings, The criterion (Cronbach Alpha) was used and the instruments indicated the following results: authentic leadership (0.95), participative leadership (0.73), Ubuntu (0.91) and Affective commitment (0.76), the affective commitment utilised to 4 items rather than 6.

4.3. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The descriptive statistics presents the responses of research participants in the form of a mean standard deviation and frequency distribution adopted from the questionnaire administered. The descriptive statistics present an outline based on the biographical information that was collected and the measuring instruments used. The questionnaire was distributed by email to 300 participants. Only 205 responses were received, and the biographical information is presented as follows:

Table 4.1 Gender

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
<i>Males</i>	81	39.5	39.5
<i>Females</i>	124	60.5	100.0
<i>Total</i>	205	100.0	

The gender demographics of the study consists of men (39.5%) and women (60.5%). The results indicate that most of the participants who responded were women. Based on the South African employment statistics, men have dominated employment in terms

of representation; however, the demographics have changed for the better thanks to equity representation, so that women seem to be dominating the employment sectors in terms of employability.

Table 4.2 Age

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
19-29	95	46.3	46.3
30-39	52	25.4	71.7
40-49	28	13.7	85.4
50-59	19	9.3	94.6
60+	11	5.4	100.0
Total	205	100.0	

The number of respondents according to age indicates that 46.3% are between the ages of 19 and 29 years, followed by 25.4% between 30 and 39, followed by 13.7%, 9.3% and 5.4% between the ages 40 to 49, 50 to 59 and 60+ respectively. The study also indicates that in higher positions there are fewer individuals at least employed in the organisation.

Table 4.3 Ethnicity

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
African	139	67.8	67.8
Coloured	11	5.4	73.2
Indian	2	1.0	74.1
White	52	25.4	99.5
Other	1	.5	100.0
Total	205	100.0	

The study indicates that the majority of the respondents are African (67.8% or 139 respondents), followed by white (25.4% or 52 respondents), coloured (11

respondents), Indians (two respondents) and other (one respondent), which are 5.4%, 1.0% and 0.5% respectively.

Table 4.4 Highest Qualification

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
<i>Certificate</i>	26	12.7	12.7
<i>Diploma</i>	30	14.6	27.3
<i>Post Diploma</i>	6	2.9	30.2
<i>Degree</i>	54	26.3	56.6
<i>Honours</i>	70	34.1	90.7
<i>Master and Further</i>	19	9.3	100.0
<i>Total</i>	205	100.0	

The table indicates the qualifications of the respondents. A majority of the respondents have obtained an honours degree (34.1% or 70 respondents), followed by a degree (26.3% or 54 respondents). Other respondents obtained only a certificate (12.7% or 20 respondents), a diploma (14.6% or 30 respondents), a postgraduate diploma (2.9% or six respondents), and masters and those who furthered their studies (9.3% or 19 respondents).

Table 4.5 Level of employment

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
<i>Clerk to officer level</i>	87	42.4	42.4
<i>Supervisory level</i>	24	11.7	54.1
<i>Practitioner level</i>	54	26.3	80.5
<i>Manager Level</i>	37	18.0	98.5
<i>Director and higher position level</i>	3	1.5	100.0
<i>Total</i>	205	100.0	

The table indicates the number of respondents according to their employment level. The study comprised employees from clerks to officers, which are a majority of participant (42.4% or 87 respondents) in the study, followed by practitioners at 26.3% (54 respondents). Other members are supervisors (24 respondents), managers (37 respondents) and individuals from the directorship and higher levels (three respondents), which are represented by 11.7%, 18.0% and 1.5% respectively.

Table 4.6 Work experience

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Less than 5 years	70	34.1	34.1
5-10 years	67	32.7	66.8
11-15 years	19	9.3	76.1
16-20 years	19	9.3	85.4
20+	30	14.6	100.0
Total	205	100.0	

The table indicates the respondents' years of work experience. The majority of respondents seem to have fewer than five years' experience, which is 34.1%, followed by five to 10 years' (32.7%). Other respondents are comprised of 11.15, 16-20 and 20+, which are 9.3%, 9.3% and 14.6% respectively.

4.4. REPORTING ANALYSIS

Table 4.7 Correlation Coefficient between PL, ALQ, ubuntu and AC

Variables	Participative leadership	Authentic leadership	Ubuntu	Affective commitment
Participative leadership	1			
Authentic Leadership	-.44**	1		
Ubuntu	-.26**	.63**	1	
Affective commitment	-.18**	.43**	.56**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
 + correlation is practically significant $r > 0.30$ (medium Effect)
 ++ correlation is practically significant $r > 0.50$ (large effect)

As seen in Table 2, the correlation is statistically significant at a 0.01 level and practically significant (medium effect, $r \geq 0.30$ and large effect ≥ 0.50). Authentic leadership is statistically significantly related to ubuntu (large effect) and affective commitment (medium effect). It was deduced that when a person experiences and perceives an authentic and genuine leadership style from their seniors, they will experience the culture of ubuntu and develop an emotional attachment to the organisation.

Participative leadership is statistically significantly related to ubuntu (small effect) and affective commitment (small effect) with a negative correlation. This indicates that the person may be unlikely to experience the culture of ubuntu and be emotionally attached to the organisation under the supervision of a participative leadership style.

Table 4.8 ANOVA: Differences in ethnicities on ubuntu perceptions

ANOVA					
Ubuntu					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2,898	2	1,449	6,121	0,003
Within Groups	47,106	199	0,237		
Total	50,004	201			

The data provides statistically significant evidence that the experience of ubuntu culture is not the same for all ethnicity groups (One-way ANOVA, $F=6,121$, $df=2,199$, $P<0,005$).

Table 4.9 Harmonic mean of the ethnicity groups sizes

Ubuntu			
Tukey B _{a,b}			
Ethnicity	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Coloured	11	3,1240	
White	52	3,3772	3,3772
Africa	139		3,5641

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 25.568.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

The homogeneous subsets indicate that there is a significant difference between the three groups (One-way ANOVA, $F=6,121$, $df=2,199$, $P<0,001$ (0,05). Post hoc points out how ubuntu is experienced by different ethnicity groups. The coloureds (3,12) experience of ubuntu was different from those of the African (3,56) respondents. There were no significant different experience/perceptions of ubuntu between whites and African respondents (3,38 and 3,56); similarly, the experience/perceptions of ubuntu between coloureds and whites (3,12 and 3,38 respectively).

Table 4.10 Descriptive statistics of ubuntu (Race groups)

Ubuntu						
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Effect Size	
					1&	2&
African	139	3,5641	0,47873	0,04061		
Coloured	11	3,1240	0,80020	0,24127	0,55	
White	52	3,3772	0,42185	0,05850	0,39	0,32
Total	202	3,4920	0,49878	0,03509		

The table summarises the correlation effect between African, Coloureds and White respondents. This correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level and practically significant (medium effect, $r \geq 0.30$) and (Large effect, $r \geq 0.50$). There is a correlation effect of 0.55 between African and coloured respondents.

Followed by 0.39 between African and white respondents and lastly Coloured and White respondents correlation is 0.32. The phenomena explored between the three groups is that the Africans and Coloured respondents uphold the significant effect of the experience and the perceptions of ubuntu then the white respondents.

4.5. Regression analysis

Table 4.11 *Regression analysis with affective commitment as the dependent variable*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		t	Sig.	f	R	R2	ΔP^2
	B	Std. Error	Beta							
Constant	4,776	0,608			7,85	0,000	8,844	.204 ^a	0,042	0,037
PL	-0,621	0,209	-0,204		-2,97	0,003				
Constant	1,030	0,292			3,53	0,001	47,142	.434 ^a	0,188	0,184
AL	0,557	0,081	0,434		6,87	0,000				
Constant	-1,283	0,446			-2,88	0,004	93,428	.561 ^a	0,315	0,312
Ubuntu	1,220	0,126	0,561		9,67	0,000				

The table summarises the regression analysis with leadership styles (participative and authentic leadership) and ubuntu as predictors of affective organisational commitment. First step entry of participative leadership style of the regression analysis produced a statistical model ($F(1,203)=8,844;p=0,00$), accounting for approximately 42% of the variance. More specifically, it seems that participative leadership ($\beta=0,204$; $t=-2,97;p\leq 0,05$) predicts affective commitment.

The second step entry of authentic leadership style of the regression analysis produced a statistical model ($F(1,203)=47,142;p=0,00$), accounting for approximately 19% of the variance. It seems that authentic leadership ($\beta=0,434$; $t=6,87$; $p\leq 0,05$) predicts Affective commitment. The last step of entry for ubuntu in the regression analysis produced a statistical model ($F(1,203)=93,428;p=0,00$), accounting for approximately 32% of the variance. This appears to indicate that authentic leadership ($\beta=0,561$; $t=9,67$; $p\leq 0,05$) predicts affective commitment.

Model 1

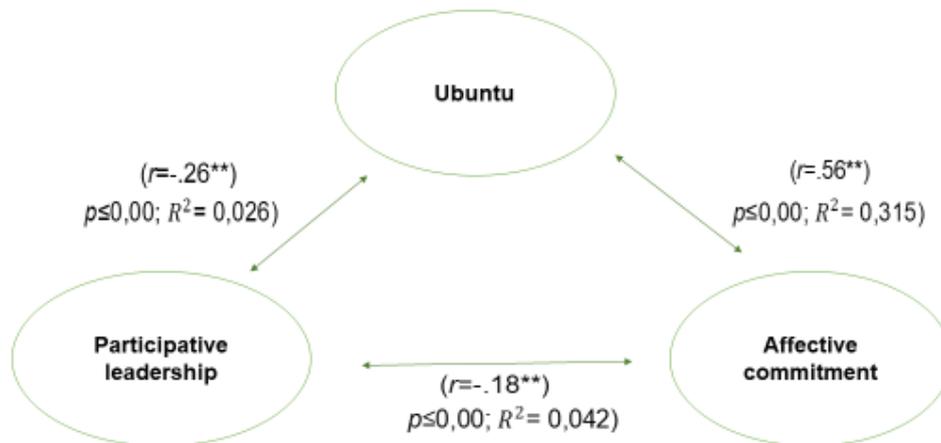


Figure 4.1 Model 1 Correlations and regression between ubuntu, PL & AC

The above table indicates the correlations and regressions of the variables of participative leadership, ubuntu and affective commitment. The findings reveal the correlation coefficient of $(r = -.26^{**})$, which indicates the small effect of the variables between participative leadership and ubuntu from the responses and the linear regression of $(p \leq 0,00$; $R^2 = 0,075$) on ubuntu as dependent variable. The second correlation and regression between participative leadership and affective commitment was measured, and the correlation of $(r = -.18^{**})$ indicated a small effect of the variables and linear regression of $(p \leq 0,00$; $R^2 = 0,042$) on affective commitment. Lastly, the correlation and regression between ubuntu and affective commitment (as dependent variable for regression) indicated $(r = .56^{**})$ as medium effect and $(p \leq 0,00$; $R^2 = 0,315$) respectively.

From the above findings, the correlations and regression analysis reveal that ubuntu has a positive relationship with affective commitment, but while ubuntu shows a negative relationship with participative leadership. Therefore, ubuntu as a form of meditation based on the analysis can be concluded not to have an influence on participative leadership towards employee affective commitment or according to the explanatory model. The influence is not intended to achieve employee affective commitment.

Model 2

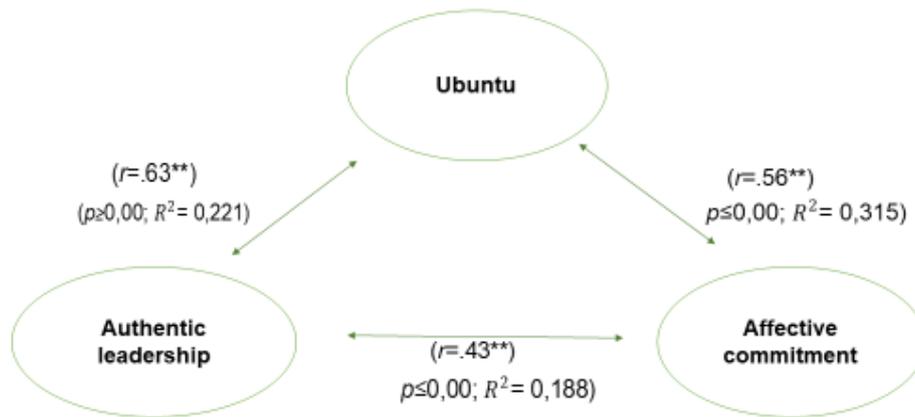


Figure 4.2 Model 2 Correlations and regression between ubuntu, AL & AC

The table above indicates the correlations and regressions of the variables ubuntu, authentic leadership and affective commitment. The findings reveal a correlations coefficient of $(r = 0.63^{**})$ which indicates the large effect of the variables between ubuntu and authentic leadership from the responses and the linear regression of $(p \geq 0,00; R^2 = 0,221)$ on ubuntu as a dependent variable. The second measured the correlation and regression between authentic leadership and affective commitment; a correlation of $(r = .43^{**})$ indicated a medium effect of the variables and linear regression of $(p \leq 0,00; R^2 = 0,188)$ on affective commitment. Lastly, the correlation and regression between ubuntu and affective commitment (as dependent variable for regression) at $(r = .56^{**})$ $(p \leq 0,00; R^2 = 0,315)$ respectively indicated a medium effect.

The above findings from the correlations and regression analysis reveal that ubuntu has a strong positive relationship with authentic leadership; therefore, ubuntu as a form of mediation, based on the analysis, can be concluded to influence authentic leadership toward fostering employee affective commitment.

4.6. Discussions

The review of study objectives

The general aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between leadership styles (authentic and participative leadership) and affective commitment within South African universities pertaining to the mediatory use of ubuntu.

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To determine the extent to which phenomena of ubuntu is perceived among university employees
2. To measure the influence of authentic leadership style on employees' affective organisational commitment
3. To measure the influence of the participative leadership style on employees' affective organisational commitment
4. To determine the mediatory role of ubuntu in the relationship between the selected leadership styles and employee affective organisational commitment.

After the data have been collected and the analysis performed, the below discusses reflect on the findings that were explored on the NWU staff employees:

The first objective of this study was to determine the level of perceived ubuntu among the South African university support staff.

The results confirm that the ethnic (African, coloureds and whites) groups of respondents in the study perceived and experienced ubuntu differently within the organisation. According to the results, ubuntu is not perceived and experienced equally in the workplace; thus it indicates that the principles of ubuntu differ between individuals. Msila (2015) also indicated that ubuntu is a term that is understood and experienced differently because of diverse cultural backgrounds and institutions having to merge ancient western and Afrocentric cultural norms to achieve a humane and productive workplace. Sebola (2019) also indicated that ubuntu would differ due to individualistic cultures practised in the organisation, and South African organisations are influenced by economic factors, high unemployment rates and retrenchments, so it is permissible that employees' survival in the organisations will force employees to secure employment anywhere (Garber & Koyana, 2012:88). Hence, employees will

familiarise themselves with behaviour for survival rather than solidarity, compassion, respect and dignity.

The second objective of this study was to determine the influence of authentic leadership style on employees' affective commitment amongst the South African universities' support staff.

The results confirmed that authentic leadership thus predicts affective commitment. The study of Semedo, Coelho and Ribeiro (2016) suggests that authentic leaders see an improvement in employees' attitudes, where they display characteristics like genuineness and true self-motivation which they identify in themselves, the leader and consequently the organisation. Bojana, Leposava, Bogda and Milan (2017) also found that the capabilities of authentic leaders moderately and positively influence employee affective commitment. Their study suggests that to achieve employee affective commitment, it is important as an authentic leader to display characteristics of servanthood by making decisions based on shared information with and input from the subordinates in the organisation.

The third objective of this study was to determine the influence of the participative leadership style on employees' affective commitment amongst the South African universities support staff.

The results confirm that participative leadership predicts affective commitment. Other studies have revealed that there is a significant relationship between supervisory or higher-level participative leadership and affective commitment: Miao, Newman, Schwarz and Xu (2013) indicated that trust within the organisation could be reciprocated with high levels of affective commitment, and Odoardi, Battistelli, Montani and Peiro (2019) confirm that the relationship between participative leadership and employee affective commitment was achieved when team-level participative leadership was executed. The study by Fatima and Majeed (2017) also explored affective commitment through promoted innovative work under participative leadership, which elicited team information sharing and participation. All the abovementioned variables are consistent with high levels of achieved participative leadership.

The last objective of this study was to determine the mediatory role of ubuntu in the relationship between selected leadership styles and affective commitment among South African university support staff.

The correlations and regressions were used to confirm the mediatory of ubuntu between leadership styles and affective commitment.

Model 1 showed that the correlation between ubuntu and participative leadership revealed a negative relationship between variables, with regression analysis indicating that the participative leadership accounted for only 8% of the ubuntu dimensions. The results revealed a negative relationship between participative leadership and affective commitment; in this instance, we can conclude that interaction between the variables ubuntu, participative leadership and affective commitment according to the correlations and regression the mediation of ubuntu is not effective.

Model 2 showed a strong relationship between all variables, indicating that ubuntu does not influence authentic leadership, considering that the dimensions of both ubuntu (survival, solidarity, compassion, respect and dignity) and authentic leadership (self-awareness, balanced processing, internal moral perspective and rational transparency) correlate with a variance of 22%. Authentic leadership thus predicts affective commitment, but in this instance, it can be concluded that ubuntu does not mediate the relationship between authentic leadership and affective commitment. The previous studies which include Ubuntu as a construct and mediatory role can not be traceable within the South African context.

5. Chapter 5

This chapter is outlined with a summary of the findings derived from chapter 3 which comprised with discussions on statistical and reporting of analysis. The chapter also discussed managerial implications from the findings, recommendations, limitations, future research and the conclusion of the study.

5.1. Summary of findings

This section discusses, in short, the overall summary of findings on variables included in the study namely: participative leadership, authentic leadership, Ubuntu and affective commitment. Also, their relationship with the mediatory role of Ubuntu and dependable variable of affective commitment are discussed.

5.1.1. Participative leadership

The research found a weak presence of participative leadership style. The results indicate participative leadership to be ineffective, not practised, nor adopted by leadership and or the NWU employees don't perceive their leader as participative leaders. The findings also indicated participative leadership not related to and or do not have a relationship with Ubuntu and affective commitment

5.1.2. Authentic leadership

The research found a strong presence of authentic leadership style in the NWU employees. The results indicate authentic leadership style to be effective, leadership role being adopted, practised by the leadership and the employee perceive their leaders to be authentic. The findings also indicated authentic leadership to have a strong relationship with Ubuntu and affective commitment.

5.1.3. Ubuntu

The research found that there is a strong presence of Ubuntu and its principles with the NWU, the results indicated that Ubuntu acknowledge and adopted within the organisation and that there is a relationship between Ubuntu with participative and authentic leadership and also the findings indicated that the Ubuntu is adopted in the

NWU and also the contributing factor to employee affective commitment within the NWU employees.

5.1.4. Affective commitment

The results indicated that there is a presence of affective commitment within the organisation, the results indicated that the affective commitment is not related nor thus have a relationship with participative leadership but however, there is a strong relationship between authentic and affective commitment.

5.2. Managerial implications

The findings of the study has indicated that participative leadership style poses several deficiencies within the NWU support staff, though specific problems or issues were not identified but receiving such a negative feedback from the responses this threat poses several implications in managerial level, the importance of relationship between leaders and subordinates should arouse concerns when this leadership style is not adopted and or employees perceive their leaders not being participative in nature. Having obtained insight into this leadership style several concerns can be revealed as it is perceived negatively both towards the employees and the organisation. These several concerns and implications could mean the following discussed matters below:

From a managers perspective

- Managers may disregard the notion of employee inclusion during decision-making processes due to limited and deadline schedules, meaning ineffective inclusion and participation of employees may lead to unmet goals.
- Managers may fear participative type of approach which may hinder and or cause erosion of power base and control over the subordinates.
- The NWU may have employed the top-to-bottom communication channel which entails those at the bottoms receives instructions which should be carried out as instructed. Autocratic leadership can abstractly be in place which confirms low employee participative and high authority and strong leader's direction.

- Managers fear the inclusion of everyone's ideas may take time to disseminate other colleagues' ideas.
- The NWU carried the mandate from stakeholders which according to the NWU specific tasks should be carried out without being questioned.

From employees perspective

- Policies, regulations and means of work being carried out, employees ought to receive the instructions from seniors and no room for participation and involvement in decision-making occurs.
- Employees may feel alienated, if there are not accepted for action, this may create feelings of frustrations and ill-will.
- The roles within the NWU are structured and changing the way of work is not considered and employees may believe their ideas and thoughts are disregarded and their initiatives are perceived to add no value.
- Individual's ideas and thoughts are overlooked due to specific patterns which work are carried out and there is no means for creativity and authority that can be granted to the employees.

5.3. Recommendations for the leaders

It is recommended that supervisors, managers and director practise leadership styles that complement various environments. The constant changing world of work crucially requires a perfect match between leadership styles and certain work environments. The higher education sector needs to adapt and expand on the culture characterised by humanness within the workplace concerning different ethnicities. To accommodate different backgrounds, different ideas for addressing problems and conflicts should be developed, and team collaboration is needed to provide solutions to daily work issues and problems effectively.

5.4. Limitations

This study had certain limitations: Firstly, the study used a convenient sampling method, which means that the data was collected from the selected support staff of

the North-West University and implies that the sample and respondents results may not be representative on a national level. Secondly, the ethnic groups comprised Africans, whites, coloureds, Indians and others (foreign nationals). However, the majority of the respondents were Africans (68%), followed by whites (25%) and then coloureds, only accounting for 5% of the population. This observation raises concerns about race representation within the study, as it investigated the perceptions of employees, and the perception-based results may be criticised as being biased among the groups. This may prevent results from being generalised to the equity status quo of the South African workforce. Lastly, the literature on participative and authentic leadership style in the higher education sector in South Africa is limited and or untraceable.

5.5. Future research

- The study should follow a longitudinal study regarding ubuntu within the higher education sector, especially within South African universities, and they also include ubuntu as a leadership style as it has limited research.
- With longitudinal research, an extensive research body can be established and continually redresses the gaps in exploring of ubuntu as a principle and leadership construct within South Africa between different ethnicities.
- To include all the ethnic groups and ensure equal participation within the study to intensify the diversity of information within the body of ubuntu literature.

5.6. Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that ubuntu, participative leadership and authentic leadership were adopted by the North-West university support staff. Ubuntu dimensions correlated more with authentic leadership dimensions, indicating a practically significant positive relationship between these two variables. Participative leadership, however, indicated a negative relationship between ubuntu and affective commitment. The study also indicated that when authentic leadership is experienced and perceived by the staff, the employee affective commitment was achieved.

The objectives and the research question of the study were addressed. It can be concluded from the findings that both leadership styles (authentic and participative

leadership) have differently influenced employee affective commitment within the higher education sector in the selected university. The culture of ubuntu, principles and components thereof are clearly visible when complimentary leadership is employed within the conducive environment that allows employees to engage with their leaders.

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