

**ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT, ROLE CLARITY, JOB INSECURITY AND  
ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT OF EMPLOYEES IN A  
PETROCHEMICAL ORGANISATION**

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## REMARKS

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## SUMMARY

**Title:** Organisational Support, Role Clarity, Job Insecurity and Organisational Commitment of employees in a Petrochemical organisation.

**Key words:** Perceived Organisational Support, Role Clarity, Job Insecurity and Organisational Commitment.

Organisations have been under enormous pressure due to the changes that they are constantly faced with. Most organisations have at some stage been involved in restructuring, laying-off of employees, and outsourcing of non-core business activities with the aim of coping with the change process. When organisations go through these changes, they still need to support their employees. They must ensure that the employees' roles are clarified, and that they feel secure in their jobs in order to improve their commitment to the organisation.

The objective of this study was to determine the relationship between perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and organisational commitment.

Employees from a business unit in a petrochemical organisation were targeted for this research. The study population included employees from managerial, non-managerial and specialist categories. A cross-sectional design was used to achieve the research objectives. Measures of Perceived Organisational Support (POSQ), Role Clarity (RCQ), Job Insecurity (JIQ), Affective Organisational Commitment (OCQ) and a biographical questionnaire were administered for the study. The statistical analysis was carried out with the help of the SPSS program as well as the AMOS program.

Pearson product-moment correlations indicated that when perceived organisational support increases, affective organisational commitment and role clarity will also increase. When perceived organisational support increases, role conflict and job insecurity will

decrease. Affective organisational commitment as well as role clarity is predicted by perceived organisational support.

MANOVA analysis indicated that male employees experience higher levels of role conflict than their female counterparts. It seems that employees in first line management and professional categories experience significantly higher levels of perceived role conflict than employees in lower level positions. Employees in non-management positions experience significantly higher levels of affective job insecurity than employees in senior management positions. Employees in senior management positions experience significantly lower levels of cognitive job insecurity than employees in non-management positions.

Recommendations were made for future research.

## OPSOMING

**Title:** Organisasoriese Ondersteuning, Rolduidelikheid, Werkonsekerheid en Organisasoriese Toegewydheid van werknemers in 'n Petrochemiese Nywerheid.

**Sleutelwoorde:** Ervaarde Organisasoriese Ondersteuning, Rolduidelikheid, Werkonsekerheid, Organisasoriese Toegewydheid.

Organisasies ervaar geweldige druk as gevolg van veranderinge waaraan hulle gedurig onderwerp word. Die meeste organisasies was een of ander tyd betrokke by herstrukturering, afbetaling van werknemers, en uitkontraktering van nie-relevante besighedsaktiwiteite, teneinde die veranderingsproses te hanteer. Dit is noodsaaklik dat organisasies wat deur sulke veranderinge gaan, hulle werknemers moet bystaan. Hulle moet verseker dat die werknemers se rolle duidelik uitgespel is, en dat hulle veilig voel in hulle poste. Dit sal die werknemers se toewyding aan die organisasie verbeter.

Die doel van hierdie studie was om die verhouding tussen ervaarde organisasoriese ondersteuning, rolduidelikheid, werkonsekerheid en organisasoriese toegewydheid vas te stel.

Werknemers in 'n besigheidseenheid van 'n petrochemiese nywerheid is vir hierdie navorsing gekies. Die studiegroep het werknemers op bestuurs- en nie-bestuursvlak ingesluit, asook spesialiskategorieë. 'n Dwarsdeursnee-opnamemetode is gebruik om die navorsingsoogmerke te bereik. Meent instrumente vir Ervaarde Organisasoriese Ondersteuning (POSQ), Rolduidelikheid (RCQ), Werkonsekerheid (JIQ) en Affektiewe Organisasoriese Toegewydheid (OCQ), sowel as 'n biografiese vraelys is gedurende die studie toegepas. Statistiese analise is met behulp van die SPSS-program en die AMOS-program uitgevoer.

Pearson produk-moment korrelasies dui aan dat wanneer ervaarde organisasoriese ondersteuning toeneem, affektiewe organisasoriese toewyding, asook rolduidelikheid sal

toeneem. Wanneer ervaarde organisatoriese ondersteuning toeneem, sal rolkonflik en werkonsekerheid afneem. Affektiewe organisatoriese toewyding asook rolduidelikheid word voorspel deur ervaarde organisatoriese ondersteuning.

MANOVA-analise dui aan dat manlike werknemers 'n hoër mate van rolkonflik ondervind as hulle vroulike eweknieë. Dit wil ook voorkom of werknemers wat 'n hoër posvlak beklee asook spesialis vlak-werknemers statisties gesproke 'n aansienlik hoër vlak van ervaarde rolkonflik beleef as werknemers in laer vlak posisies. Werknemers in nie-bestuursposte ondervind statisties gesproke aansienlik hoër vlakke van affektiewe werkonsekerheid as werknemers in bestuursposte. Werknemers in bestuursposte ondervind ook statisties gesproke aansienlik laer vlakke van kognitiewe werkonsekerheid as werknemers in nie-bestuursposte.

Aanbevelings vir verdere navorsing is gemaak.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This mini dissertation is about the relationship between perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and organisational commitment. In this chapter, the problem statement is discussed and the research objectives are set out. Following this, the research method is explained and the division of chapters given.

### **1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The workplace is a dynamic environment and it is difficult to keep up with the process of change (Lieberman, 2005). Van Vuuren, Klandermans, Jacobson and Hartley (1991) indicate that changes such as economic uncertainty, global competition, and a dramatic increase in mergers and acquisitions in the past decade have forced organisations to improve organisational effectiveness and streamline operations through downsizing, outsourcing, and restructuring, and are coupled with large scale workforce reductions.

In South Africa, as the rest of the world, the work environment has changed so much that it resembles little from what it was just a decade ago (Hlalele, 2003). Modern employees increasingly work in offices (and less in agriculture or industry) with information or clients (and less with tangible objects), in teams (and less in isolation), and with less job security (Rothmann & Cilliers, 2007). According to the South African Economy Review (2008), South African economy has been completely overhauled since the advent of democracy in the country in 1994. Suliman and Iles (2000) contend that with all these changes, employees can no longer afford to be committed to their organisations in this era of re-engineering, corporate restructuring and downsizing.

Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986) proposed that employee's commitment to their organisation is based, in part, on their perception of the organisation's commitment to them. They further explain that employees form global

beliefs about the extent to which an organisation values their contribution and cares about their well-being, which is called Perceived Organisation Support (POS).

Perceived organisational support would be influenced by various aspects of an employee's treatment by the organisation and would, in turn, influence the employee's interpretation of organisational motives underlying that treatment (Eisenberger et al., 1986). This implies that there will be agreement in the degree of support that the employee would expect of the organisation in a wide variety of situations. This would include the organisation's likely reaction to the employee's future illnesses, mistakes, and superior performance, and the organisation's desire to pay a fair salary and make the employee's job meaningful and interesting (Rhoades, Eisenberger & Armeli, 2001). According to Osca, Urien, González-Camino, Martínez-Pérez and Martínez-Pérez (2005) organisational support generates further positive work attitudes. For the purpose of this research, role clarity, job security and affective organisational commitment could be regarded as positive attitudes generated by perceived organisational support.

One of the main objectives of this research is to investigate the relationship between perceived organisational support and role clarity. Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970), states that when the behaviours expected of an individual are inconsistent, the individual will experience stress, become dissatisfied, and perform less actively than when the expectations imposed on him/her were not in conflict. Furthermore, each position in the organisation should have a specified set of tasks or position responsibilities which should allow management to hold subordinates accountable for specific performance and to provide guidance and direction for subordinates (Rizzo et al., 1970).

Rizzo et al. (1970) developed a measure of role clarity which focuses on role conflict and role ambiguity. Role conflict is described in terms of the dimensions of congruency-incongruency or compatibility-incompatibility in the requirements of the role, where congruency or compatibility is judged relative to a set of standards or conditions which impinge upon role performance (Rizzo et al., 1970). Role ambiguity is defined in terms of the predictability of the outcome or responses to one's behaviour, the existence or

clarity of behavioural requirements which would serve to guide behaviour and provide knowledge that the behaviour is appropriate (Rizzo et al., 1970).

Sawyer (1992) defines role clarity as the extent to which an employee's work goals and responsibilities are clearly communicated and whether the individual understands the processes to achieve these goals. According to Teas, Wacker and Hughes (1979) role clarity refers to the degree to which required information is provided about how the employee is expected to perform his/her job. Role clarity is the extent to which the employee receives and understands information required to do the job (Kelly & Hise, 1980).

Based on the above statements, the researcher can deduce that role clarity is important especially when there is a presence of role conflict and role ambiguity. For the purpose of this research and taking into consideration the above definitions, the researcher decided to conceptualise and operationalise role clarity as the absence of role conflict and ambiguity. The question can be asked if role clarity will have an impact on employee's feelings of job security.

According to De Witte (1999) job insecurity has been defined in different ways. De Witte (1999) describes job insecurity in terms of the global view, where he mentions that job insecurity relates to people in their work context, when they fear they might lose their jobs and become unemployed. Van Vuuren (1990); Van Vuuren et al., (1991) define job insecurity as a discrepancy between the levels of security people experience and the level they might prefer. Van Vuuren (1990) emphasises that job insecurity has the following components: First of all, it is a subjective (affective) experience or perception, as different employees might perceive the same situation differently. Secondly, job insecurity implies uncertainty (cognitive) regarding the future. Finally, doubts about the continuation of the job are central to job insecurity.

Previous research has shown that employees with perceptions of low job security are more likely to engage in work-withdrawal behaviour (Probst, 2000). Employees with this

perception also reported lower organisational commitment, which often leads to employee turnover and decreased safety motivation and compliance, which in turn are related to higher levels of workplace injuries and accidents (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989; Probst & Brubaker, 2001). A downward spiral is created where productivity decreases and absenteeism increases, which might result in a competitive strength of the company being undermined (Hartley et al., 1991). Allen and Meyer (1990) say that people develop affective and attitudinal attachments towards their workplace over time, which show up as high levels of commitment, satisfaction and trust.

The concept of organisational commitment has attracted considerable interest as an attempt to understand the intensity and stability of employee dedication to work organisations (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990). This is supported by Foote, Seipel, Johnson and Duffy (2005), who indicate that the concept of organisational commitment has generated a great deal of interest over the past two decades.

According to Allen and Meyer (1990) organisational commitment is defined as the employee's feelings of obligation to stay with the organisation, resulting from the internalisation of the normative pressures exerted on an individual prior or following entry. Allen and Meyer (1990) go on to say that organisational commitment involves three attitudes: **1) Affective commitment** refers to a sense of identification with the organisation's goals. People with strong affective commitment will remain with the organisation because they identify with the organisation. **2) Continuance commitment** refers to perceived costs concerning the individual's needs to continue working for the organisation. People with a strong continuance commitment stay with the organisation because they need to. **3) Normative commitment** refers to employee's feelings of obligation to stay with the organisation. People with a strong normative commitment stay with the organisation because they feel they ought to stay with the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

The above definition of organisation commitment is reflected in the work of Porter, Mowday and Steers (1974) when they describe organisational commitment as the relative

strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in, a particular organisation. Organisational commitment is characterized by at least three related factors: a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation, and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organisation (Porter et al., 1974).

According to Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) it is acknowledged that commitment can take different forms, and it is therefore imperative that researchers state clearly what forms of commitment they are interested in, and that they ensure that the measures they use are appropriate for the intended purpose. Perceived organisational support and affective organisational commitment have been found to have similar antecedents and consequences, and it is often assumed that POS contributes to affective organisational commitment (Rhoades et al., 2001).

According to Allen and Meyer (1996), research shows that affective commitment is more relevant than the other two dimensions of commitment. A study by O'Driscoll and Randall (1999) found that although it is logical to assume a relationship between employee perceptions of organisational support and their levels of organisational commitment and job involvement, there has been little empirical research on the relative influence of perceived organisational support on the other two distinct forms of organisational commitment, i.e. continuance commitment and normative commitment. For the purpose of this research, **affective organisational commitment** of the employees will be investigated.

Through the review of literature and previous research, it can be assumed that there is a relationship between perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity as well as organisational commitment. Zaccaro and Dobbins (1989) support this by saying that employees who perceive role clarity in their jobs are more likely to feel attached to the organisation, identify with the organisation and accept organisational goals, and thus will have more commitment to their organisation.

The business unit to be investigated cannot be exempted from the changes that South African organisations went through over the years. The business unit's stance in which this research will be undertaken is focused on change - change from a perception of the employees that the organisation does not value their contribution or cares about their well-being to a perception that the organisation does care. This investigation became necessary, especially after an employee motivational climate survey was done in 2004, and an organisational analysis that was done in 2006. Both revealed issues of a lack of role clarity, high intention to leave, low employee retention, low levels of organisational commitment, lack of communication between management and employees, lack of trust between management and employees, no customer focus and lack of alignment in the way of doing things between various departments.

It would however be interesting from a practical point of view to see how different people from different positions, age groups, education levels, job levels, departments will experience the organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and affective organisational commitment differently.

According to Makhobotloane (2005), stressful situations that occur in the workplace have a significant effect on employee service delivery. In terms of the business unit in question, the researcher is of the opinion that stressful situations may be caused by various things such as job demands, expected turnaround times, technological changes, changing to a customer-centered culture, change in organisation structure, pressure to change the role of human resources personnel from an administrative to a business partner role and lastly, a change of departments operating in silos to synergized departments within the business unit.

With all this being said, the organisation needs to go through these changes, including restructuring, while remaining in full operation. Over and above this, Caldwell, Chatman and O'Reilly (1990), say that with the changing economic climate in many countries, concern has been expressed about maintaining or even enhancing employee's commitment to the job and the organisation. Due to the above changes, perceived

organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and organisational commitment became significant issues for the business unit to be investigated. All these changes also brought about decreases in morale, increased stress, uncertainty and exhaustion among employees. According to Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001), exhaustion is associated with mental and physical strain, work overload, and job stress at work.

According to Wilson, Deljoy, Richardson, Vandenberg and McGrath (2004), a healthy organisation is one characterised by intentional systematic and collaborative efforts to maximise employee well-being and productivity by providing well-designed and meaningful jobs, a supportive social-organisational environment, and accessible and equitable opportunities for career and work-life enhancement. They developed a model which attempts to incorporate the core aspects of healthy work organisation and conceptualizes a healthy work organisation as consisting of six interrelated dimensions as indicated in Figure 1.

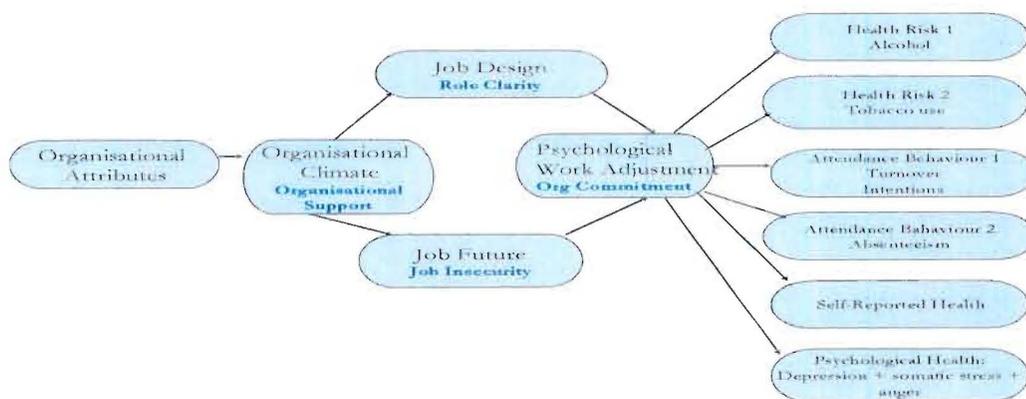


Figure 1: The model of a healthy work organisation (Wilson, Deljoy, Richardson, Vandenberg & McGrath, 2004)

These dimensions are; organisational attributes, organisational climate, job design, job future, psychological work adjustment and employee health and well-being (Wilson et al., 2004). Employee' perception of their organisation (organisational attributes) affect their perception of the climate (organisational climate), which impacts the way people relate to their jobs (job design) and see their future in the organisation (job future), ultimately impacting their work adjustment (psychological work adjustment), health and well-being (employee health and well-being). The model for job insecurity (Probst, 2000) supports the model of Wilson.

This research study is based on the model of a healthy work organisation as illustrated in Figure 1, and the dimensions are linked to the current research constructs. The first dimension is the *job design* dimension, which includes workload, control/autonomy, job content, **role clarity**, environmental conditions and work schedule. The second dimension is the *organisational climate* dimension, which includes **organisational support**, co-worker support, participation and involvement, communication, and health and safety climate. The third dimension is *job future* which entails **job security**, pay and promotion equity, learning opportunities and flexible work arrangements. The next dimension is *psychological work adjustment* which contains job satisfaction, **organisational commitment**, psychological empowerment and perceived job stress. In Figure 1, the illustration of **role clarity**, **organisational support**, **job insecurity** and **organisational commitment** in a model of a healthy work organisation is highlighted.

Wilson et al. (2004) indicated that the healthy work organisation concept centers on the premise that it should be possible to identify the job and organisational characteristics of healthy organisations and that such organisations should have healthier and more productive workers. If all the above dimensions (i.e. organisational attributes, organisational climate, job design, job future and psychological work adjustment) are involved within the work environment, this will certainly lead to a healthy work organisation that has less stressed employees who perceive the organisation as supportive; experience more role clarity; have increased job security; and are more committed to the organisation. If all components are involved within the work

environment this will lead to a *healthy work organisation* that has less turnover, less absenteeism, less stress, more cooperation among employees at all levels, an improvement in safety and health, as well as improvement in employee's physical and psychological health (Tjeku, 2006).

The researcher decided to conduct research which will focus on the relationship between perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and organisational commitment as well as how perceived organisational support and role clarity will affect employee's job security and affective organisational commitment. The job insecurity and affective organisational commitment constructs are important focus points of the research. This is because that the researcher assumes, in consideration of the findings of the motivational climate survey and the organisational analysis, that there might be a lower level of security and low commitment among the employees, caused by the negative aspects mentioned above.

The researcher aims to make a value-adding contribution to the organisation in question as well as to industrial psychology as a science by adding to the information base for future research. Furthermore, the relationship between perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and organisational commitment holds stretching challenges considering the effects of low levels of perceived organisational support, lack of role clarity, high levels of job insecurity and low levels of organisational commitment of employees at the organisation in question. On the basis of the above-mentioned description of the research problem, the researcher has identified the following research questions:

- How are perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and affective organisational commitment conceptualised in the literature?
- What is the relationship between perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and affective organisational commitment of employees in a business unit of a petrochemical organisation?

- To what extent will perceived organisational support and role clarity predict job insecurity of employees at a business unit of a petrochemical organisation?
- To what extent will perceived organisational support, role clarity and job insecurity predict affective organisational commitment of employees at a business unit of a petrochemical organisation?
- Are there differences in the levels of perceived organisational support between demographic groups of employees in a business unit of a petrochemical organisation?

## **1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The research objectives are divided into general and specific objectives.

### **1.2.1 General objectives**

The general objective of this research is to determine whether there is a relationship between perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and affective organisational commitment of employees in a business unit of a petrochemical organisation as well as to determine whether job insecurity and affective organisational commitment can be predicted by perceived organisational support and role clarity.

### **1.2.2 Specific objectives**

The specific objectives of the research are:

- To conceptualise perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and affective organisational commitment according to the literature.
- To determine the relationship between perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and affective organisational commitment.
- To determine whether perceived organisational support and role clarity predict job insecurity of employees.

- To determine whether perceived organisational support, role clarity and job insecurity can predict affective organisational commitment of employees.
- To determine the differences in the levels of perceived organisational support between demographic groups (i.e., age, gender, job level, qualifications, employee status and years of service) of employees in a business unit of a petrochemical organisation.

### **1.3 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH**

The purpose of this section is to ascertain boundaries and points of departure for this research. A certain paradigm, intellectual climate and the market of intellectual resources direct the research. The objective of the paradigm perspective is to define the research within the structure of the relevant research context (Mouton & Marais, 1996). The paradigm perspective in this research will be discussed in terms of the intellectual climate, discipline, meta-theoretical assumptions and market of intellectual resources.

#### **1.3.1 Intellectual climate**

According to Mouton and Marais (1996), intellectual climate refers to the variety of meta-theoretical values or beliefs which are held by those practicing within a discipline at any given stage. In the social science discipline, intellectual climate includes beliefs about the nature of social reality as well as more discipline-specific beliefs relating to society, labour, education and history.

#### **1.3.2 Discipline**

This research falls within the boundaries of the behavioural sciences, more specifically Industrial Psychology. Industrial Psychology is defined by McCormick and Ilgen (1981) as the study of human behaviour in work-related aspects of life and the application of knowledge of human behaviour to the minimisation of human problems in this context. The *raison d'être* of industrial psychology is the existence of human problems in

organisations, and its objective is to somehow provide the basis for resolving these problems, or more realistically, for minimizing them (McCormick & Ilgen, 1981).

### **1.3.3 Meta-theoretical assumptions**

Three paradigms are relevant to this research. The literature review is done within the positive psychology and wellness paradigms and the empirical study is done within the positivistic paradigm.

#### **1.3.3.1 Literature review**

The present study is underpinned by the **positive psychology** paradigm. This paradigm is defined as the scientific study of ordinary, positive, subjective human strengths, virtues, experiences and functioning (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Sheldon & King, 2001). The aim of positive psychology is to understand and enhance those factors that allow individuals, communities and societies to flourish. The positive psychology paradigm gives direction to the present research because the research is done in order to bring about improvements in the organisation involved in this study.

This research is also based on the **wellness paradigm**. According to Wissing (2000) the emergence of the wellness paradigm focuses not only on the understanding and enhancement of psychological well-being and strengths, but also on a more holistic approach to wellness. Palombi (1992) states that the main purpose of wellness is to increase the likelihood of healthier personal growth and to decrease the probability of mental and physical illness.

#### **1.3.3.2 Empirical study**

The empirical research of this study is presented from the **positivistic paradigm** which is based on the assumption that during research, only observable and measurable data should be taken into account (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). This means that basic

assumptions of the positivistic framework are that knowledge can only be obtained through the study of observable phenomena. Positivists attempt to use data obtained through direct observations in order to research 'positive fact' (Ardebili, 2001).

#### **1.3.4 Market of intellectual resources**

The market of intellectual resources refers to the collection of beliefs, which has a direct bearing upon the epistemic status of scientific statements (Mouton & Marais, 1996). They further make a distinction between theoretical beliefs and methodological beliefs with regard to the nature and structure of research phenomena and the research process respectively (Mouton & Marais, 1996).

##### **1.3.4.1 Theoretical beliefs**

Theoretical beliefs are described by Mouton and Marais (1996) as those beliefs of which testable statements about social phenomena are made. The following theoretical beliefs or statements will serve as the point of departure for discussion in this research and they will be classified into conceptual definitions, models and theories.

##### **i) Conceptual definitions**

The relevant conceptual definitions are given below:

Eisenberger et al. (1986), define perceived organisational support as employees' commitment to their organisation, which is based, in part, on their perception of the organisation's commitment to them.

Rizzo et al. (1970) measure role clarity by focusing on role conflict and role ambiguity. Role conflict is described in terms of the dimensions of congruency-incongruency or compatibility-incompatibility in the requirements of the role. Role ambiguity is defined in terms of the predictability of the outcome or responses to one's behaviour, the existence

or clarity of behaviour requirements which would serve to guide behaviour and provide knowledge that the behaviour is appropriate (Rizzo et al., 1970).

De Witte (1999) describes job insecurity in terms of the global view, where he mentions that job insecurity relates to people in their work context, when they fear they might lose their jobs and become unemployed.

Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) define organisational commitment as the employee's feelings of obligation to stay with the organisation, resulting from the internalisation of the normative pressures exerted on an individual prior or following entry. Affective commitment refers to a sense of identification with the organisation's goals. People with strong affective commitment will remain with the organisation because they identify with the organisation.

## **ii) Models and theories**

The model that forms the basis of this research is the model of a **healthy work organisation** by Wilson et al. (2004) which attempts to incorporate the core aspects of a healthy work organisation such as job design, organisational climate, job future, and psychological work adjustment.

### **1.3.4.2 Methodological beliefs**

Methodological beliefs are beliefs concerning the nature of social science and scientific research (Mouton & Marais, 1996). Further to this, Mouton and Marais (1996), say that methodological beliefs are methodological preferences, assumptions and presuppositions about what ought to constitute good research, and are more aligned to those beliefs which form part of the intellectual climate because they frequently entail a postulative aspect.

For the purpose of this research, the methodological beliefs are quantitative and positivistic. This is because the study is based on objective, empirical and operational methods.

## **1.4 RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method consists of a literature review and an empirical study. The results obtained from the research will be presented in an article format.

### **1.4.1 Literature review**

The literature study will focus on perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and organisational commitment and possible relationships between these constructs.

### **1.4.2 Empirical study**

The empirical study consists of the research design, participants, measuring battery and statistical analysis of data.

### **1.4.3 Research design**

The aim of the research design is to enable the researcher to anticipate what the appropriate research decisions should be so as to maximise the validity of the eventual results (Mouton, 1998). According to Mouton and Marais (1996, p. 193) “a research design is a plan of how the researcher decides to execute the formulated research problem”.

According to Mouton (1998), descriptive or factual knowledge includes data, facts, empirical generalisations, narratives and stories and it provides truthful descriptions of phenomena in the world. Explorative research is described as the exploration of a

relatively new and unknown research area. Explorative studies aim to achieve new insight into the phenomenon; to take an initial investigation before a more structured study of the phenomenon; to explain the central concepts and constructs; to determine priorities for future research and to develop new hypotheses about an existing phenomenon (Mouton & Marais, 1996).

Both descriptive and explorative research is relevant to this study. This is because the facts, data and empirical generalisations which give truthful descriptions of the phenomena are used and new insight is gained into the phenomena. Central concepts and constructs are explained, priorities for future research are determined and new hypotheses about an existing phenomenon are developed.

The researcher decided on the cross-sectional research design. This design is used to investigate units of a given phenomenon at a specific point in time (Mouton & Marais, 1996). The cross-sectional design will be the most suited to this study because the relationships between perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and affective organisational commitment will be measured at a specific point in time without any planned intervention. A cross-sectional design is relevant when the research is conducted over a short period, such as one day or a few weeks (Du Plooy, 2001).

#### **1.4.4 Participants**

The study population will consist of all employees ( $n = 240$ ) in a business unit of a petrochemical organisation. Despite the possible limitations and reluctance of the participants to complete the questionnaires, this fact was taken into cognizance and employees will be encouraged to take part in the study. The respondents will consist of Work Integrated Learners, Analysts, Senior Analysts, Principal Analysts, Chief Analysts, and Scientists to Specialist Scientists, Technical Support, Couriers/Samplers, Shift Supervisors, Administrators and Support personnel as well as Management.

#### 1.4.5 Measuring Battery

Four questionnaires will be distributed for the empirical study, namely: the Perceived Organisational Support Questionnaire (Eisenberger et al., 1986), the Role Clarity Questionnaire (Rizzo et al., 1970), the Job Insecurity Questionnaire (De Witte, 2000) and the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Meyer et al., 1993).

The researcher obtained written permission from the original authors of the **Perceived Organisational Support Questionnaire (POSQ)** by Eisenberger et al. (1986) to utilise the questionnaire for the purpose of this research. The shorter version of the POSQ will be used. Eisenberger et al. (1986), indicates that the original scale of the POSQ is one-dimensional and has a high internal reliability, which means that the shorter version of the POSQ does not appear problematic and that both facets of the definition of perceived organisational support (evaluation of employee's contribution and the care about employee's wellbeing) are represented in the short version. The short version of the questionnaire consists of 8 items which are rated on a 7-point Likert type scale (1=*strongly disagree*, 7= *strongly agree*) indicating the total degree of perceived organisational support. A typical statement of the POSQ would be "*The organization really cares about my well-being*" (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p. 502).

In order to control for an agreement response bias, half the statements are positively worded and half are negatively worded (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The results on a study conducted by Eisenberger et al., (1990) reported a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0,93 for the short version of the scale. In a related study conducted by Moideenkutty, Blau, Kumar and Nalakath (2001) on pharmaceutical sales representatives from India on the POSQ yielded a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0,80. The results with the POS done in the US resulted in a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0,94 (O'Driscoll & Randall, 1999).

The **Role Clarity Questionnaire (RCQ)** by Rizzo et al. (1970) will be used to measure role clarity of employees. The questionnaire consists of 30 items, 15 of which deal with

role ambiguity (even numbers) and 15 with role conflict (odd numbers). The items in the questionnaire are rated on a 7-point scale (1=*very false*, 7= *very true*). A typical statement of the role ambiguity (even number) would be "*I know what my responsibilities are*" and a typical statement of the role conflict (odd number) would be "*I perform tasks that are too easy or boring*" (Rizzo et al, 1970, p. 156).

In a study conducted on 342 call centre employees by Mukherjee and Malhotra (2006), a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,85 was obtained. According to a study conducted on a group of salesmen, a coefficient alpha measure of reliability ranged from 0,76 to 0,93 (Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1975). Koustelios, Theodorakis and Goulimaris (2004) in their study on physical education teachers in Greece obtained Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients of 0,85 for role ambiguity and 0,86 for role conflict scales.

The **Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ)** by De Witte (2000) was used to measure job insecurity of participants. The JIQ consists of 11 items which measure both cognitive and affective aspects of job insecurity. The items are arranged along a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=*strongly agree*, 5=*strongly disagree*). In terms of the cognitive job insecurity, a typical statement would be, "*I think that I will be able to continue working here*", whereas a typical statement in terms of the affective job insecurity would be, "*I fear that I might lose my job*".

According to De Witte (2000), the items of the JIQ measuring global job insecurity are reported to have a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,92 and for both cognitive and affective job insecurity, Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0,90 and 0,85 were obtained respectively. In a South African study, Cronbach alpha coefficients on cognitive job insecurity of 0,70 and 0,72 on affective job insecurity were obtained (Bosman, 2005). In another study on maintenance workers in a parastatal by Buitendach and De Witte (2005), a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,84 was obtained on job insecurity. De Witte (2000), Sauer (2003), Moeletsi (2003) and Tjeku (2006) reported acceptable levels of reliability for the questionnaire.

The **Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)** by Allen and Meyer (1990) will be used to measure organisational commitment of the participants. The questionnaire is based on the premise that organisational commitment is a multi-dimensional construct which includes affective, continuance and normative commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). For the purpose of this research, affective organisational commitment will be used as a measure of the commitment of the employees. The questionnaire consists of 8 items which are rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=*strongly disagree*, 5=*strongly agree*) indicating the degree of affective organisational commitment. A typical statement of affective organisational commitment would be "*This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me*" (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 6).

In a study conducted by Rafai (2005) a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,70 was obtained on affective organisational commitment. In a study done in South Africa, Heymans (2002) reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,69 for the affective scale. Allen and Meyer (1990) state that inter-item correlations between difference samples were often above 0,90, which shows that the combined factor is congruent. Khwela (2001) support the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

#### **1.4.6 Statistical Analysis**

The statistical analysis will be carried out with the SPSS programme (SPSS Inc., 2008) and the AMOS programme (Arbuckle, 2007). Covariance analysis or structural equation modelling (SEM) methods, as implemented by AMOS (Arbuckle, 2007), will be used to determine the factorial validity of the theoretical factor structures of the instruments. Hypothesised relationships will be tested empirically for goodness of fit with the sample data. The  $\chi^2$  statistic and several other goodness-of-fit indices will summarise the degree of correspondence between the implied and observed covariance matrices.

The hypothesised relationships with the data will also be tested using the following goodness-of-fit statistics: Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), Parsimony Goodness-

of-Fit Index (PGFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) will be used to analyse the data. Cronbach alpha coefficients will be used to determine the internal consistency, homogeneity and unidimensionality of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995). Coefficient alpha contains important information regarding the proportion of variance of the items of a scale in terms of the total variance explained by that particular scale.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients will be used to specify the relationships between the variables. Effect sizes (Steyn, 1999) will be used to determine the practical significance of the findings. Multiple regression analyses will be conducted to determine the percentage variance in the dependent variables that is predicted by the independent variables.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) will be used to determine the significance of differences between the experience of perceived organisational support, role conflict and ambiguity, job insecurity and affective organisational commitment of demographic groups. MANOVA tests whether or not mean differences among groups in a combination of dependent variables are likely to have occurred by chance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In MANOVA, a new dependent variable that maximises group differences will be created from the set of dependent variables.

Wilk's Lambda will be used to test the likelihood of the data, on the assumption of equal population mean vectors for all groups, against the likelihood on the assumption that the population mean vectors are identical to those of the sample mean vectors for the different groups. When an effect is significant in MANOVA, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be used to discover which dependent variables will be affected. A Bonferroni-type adjustment will also be made for inflated Type I error. Tukey tests will be done to indicate which groups differed significantly when ANOVA is performed.

## **1.5 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter 1 comprises an introduction to the research study. The problem statement briefly outlines the constructs and reasons for this research and the research objectives provide detail regarding the general and specific objectives of the research. Finally the research methods will be discussed.

Chapter 2 provides a literature overview and the findings of this study. This chapter concludes with a discussion of limitations and recommendations.

Chapter 3 focuses on the conclusion of this study. Research limitations and recommendations are also provided.

## **1.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Chapter 1 provided the discussion of the problem statement and the objectives of the research. The research method, measuring instruments, as well as an overview of the chapters to follow were provided.

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ARTICLE

CHAPTER 2

# ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT, ROLE CLARITY, JOB INSECURITY AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT OF EMPLOYEES IN A PETROCHEMICAL ORGANISATION

R. M. Nqubane

## ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to investigate the relationship between perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and organisational commitment of employees ( $n = 176$ ) in a petrochemical industry. A cross-sectional survey design was used. The Perceived Organisational Support Questionnaire (POSQ), Measures of Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity (RCQ), Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ) and the Affective Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (AOC), and a biographical questionnaire were administered. The results indicated that there is a practically significant relationship between perceived organisational support and affective organisational commitment, role clarity, role conflict and job insecurity. The results indicated differences between demographic groups for role clarity and job insecurity. The regression analysis showed that perceived organisational support predicts affective organisational commitment and job insecurity. This study provides support and guidance to organisations that are going through changes and are striving for a healthy work organisation.

## OPSOMING

Die doel van hierdie navorsing was om die verhouding tussen ervaaarde organisatoriese ondersteuning, duidelikheid van rolle, werksonsekerheid, en organisatoriese toegewydheid van werknemers ( $n=176$ ) in 'n petrochemiese nywerheid te ondersoek. 'n Dwardeursnee-opnamemetode is gebruik. Die Ervaarde Organisasoriese Ondersteuningsvraelys (POSQ), Die Maatstaf van Rolkonflik en Roldubbelsinnigheid (RCQ), Werkonsekerheid-Inventaris (JIQ), en die Organisasoriese Toegewydheidsvraelys (AOC), as ook 'n Biografiese Vraelys is gebruik. Die resultate het aangedui dat daar 'n beduidende verhouding bestaan tussen ervaaarde organisatoriese ondersteuning en affektiewe organisatoriese toegewydheid, rolduidelikheid, rolkonflik en werksonsekerheid. Die resultate het aan die lig gebring dat demografiese groepe verskil in terme van die vlakke van rolduidelikheid en werksonsekerheid. Die regressie-analise het getoon dat waargeneemde organisatoriese ondersteuning affektiewe organisatoriese toegewydheid en werkonsekerheid voorspel. Hierdie studie bied leiding en ondersteuning aan organisasies wat deur tye van verandering gaan, en daarna streef om 'n gesonde werksorganisasie te vestig.

During the last few decades, many economic changes leading to changes in the labour market have taken place in the industrialised world (Mauno & Kinnunen, 1999). Rothmann and Cilliers (2007) indicate that over the last few decades the occupational arena has undergone remarkable changes. Due to these changes, organisations in most industrialised countries have been involved in restructuring, layoffs, and ‘rightsizing’ in their attempts to reduce labour costs and improve competitiveness (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). Indeed, downsizing or “rightsizing” appears to be the standard solution in organisational attempts at improving organisational effectiveness and reducing labour costs (Hitt, Keats, Harback, Nixon, & 1994).

In South Africa, as in the rest of the world, the work environment has changed so much that there is little resemblance between the environment today and that of just a decade ago (Hlalele, 2003). South African organisations, as well, have been exposed to the effects of the world economy, technological advancement and fierce international competition which resulted in organisations focusing more on their profitability and sustainability (Marais & Schepers, 1996). According to the South African Economy Review (2008) the South African economy has been completely overhauled since the advent of democracy in the country in 1994.

There is also substantial evidence to suggest that the nature of work has changed dramatically for those who remained employed (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). Modern employees increasingly work in offices (and less in agriculture or industry) with information or clients (and less with tangible objects), in teams (and less in isolation), and with less job security (Rothmann & Cilliers, 2007). According to Considine (2001), the full time labour market, particularly that for youth has collapsed, the participation rate of women has significantly increased, the workforce has become increasingly casualised and whilst employment in some industries has grown, others suffered massive labour cost increases.

Sverke and Hellgren (2002) say that from the organisational perspective, these changes provided many companies with the functional and numerical flexibility necessary to

adapt to a changing environment. From the individual perspective, although some individuals may view flexibility positively, the negative consequences are apparent and have dominated the psychological literature. Suliman and Iles (2000) contend that with all these changes, employees can no longer afford to be committed to their organisations in this era of re-engineering, corporate restructuring and downsizing. Organisations need to keep up with all these changes while maintaining their status quo as healthy organisations.

Wilson, Deljoy, Richardson, Vandenberg and McGrath (2004) define a healthy organisation as one characterised by intentional systematic and collaborative efforts to maximise employee well-being and productivity by providing well designed and meaningful jobs, a supportive social-organisational environment, and accessible and equitable opportunities for career and work-life enhancement. They developed a model which attempts to incorporate the core aspects of a healthy work organisation and conceptualises a healthy work organisation as consisting of six interrelated dimensions as indicated in Figure 2.

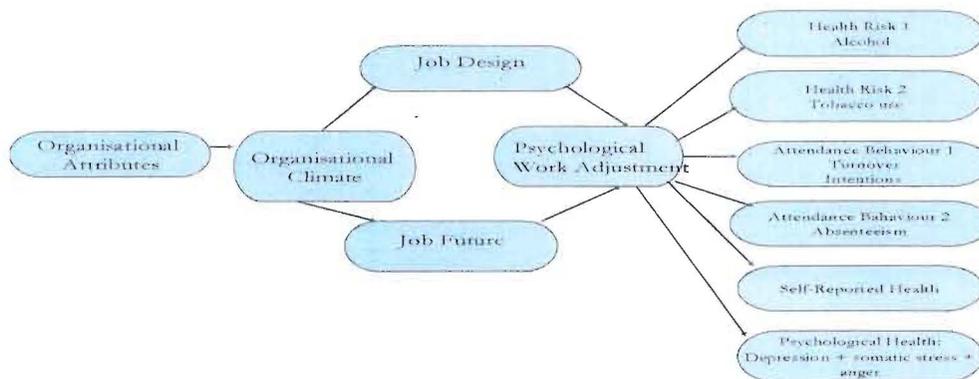


Figure 2: The model of a healthy work organisation (Wilson et al., 2004)

These dimensions are; organisational attributes, organisational climate, job design, job future, psychological work adjustment and employee health and well-being (Wilson et al., 2004). Employees' perception of their organisation (organisational attributes) affect

their perception of the climate (organisational climate), which impacts the way people relate to their jobs (job design) and see their future in the organisation (job future), ultimately impacting their work adjustment (psychological work adjustment), health and well-being (employee health and well-being). The model for job insecurity (Probst, 2000) supports the model of Wilson.

This research study is based on the model of healthy work organisation as illustrated in Figure 2, and the dimensions are linked to the current research constructs. The first dimension is the *job design* dimension, which includes workload, control/autonomy, job content, **role clarity**, environmental conditions and work schedule. The second dimension is the *organisational climate* dimension which includes **organisational support**, co-worker support, participation and involvement, communication, and health and safety climate. The third dimension is *job future* which entails **job security**, pay and promotion equity, learning opportunities and flexible work arrangements. The next dimension is the *psychological work adjustment* which contains job satisfaction, **organisational commitment**, psychological empowerment and perceived job stress. In Figure 3, the illustration of role clarity, organisational support, job insecurity and organisational commitment in a model of a healthy work organisation is indicated in blue.

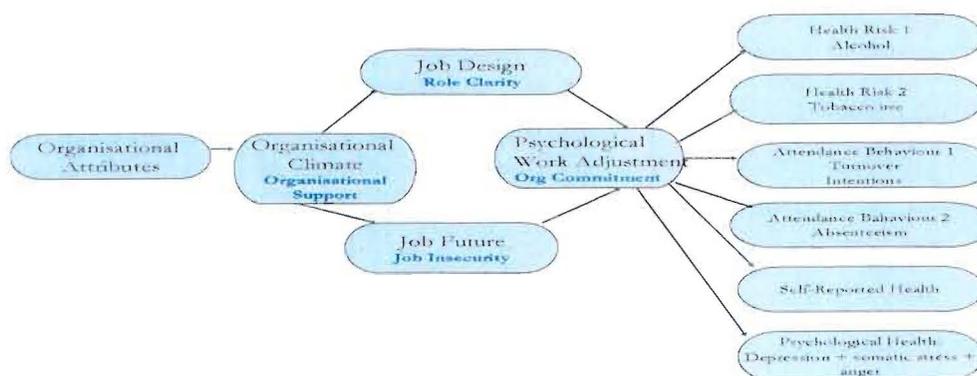


Figure 3: The hypothesised model of a healthy work organisation

Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986) proposed that employee's commitment to their organisation is based, in part, on their perception of the organisation's commitment to them. Perceived organisational support is defined as employee's formed global beliefs about the extent to which an organisation values their contribution and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Perceived organisational support would be influenced by various aspects of an employee's treatment by the organisation and would, in turn, influence the employee's interpretation of organisational motives underlying that treatment (Eisenberger et al., 1986). This implies that there will be agreement in the degree of support that the employee would expect of the organisation in a wide variety of situations. This would include the organisation's likely reaction to the employee's future illnesses, mistakes, and superior performance, and the organisation's desire to pay a fair salary and make the employee's job meaningful and interesting (Rhoades, Eisenberger, Armeli, 2001). Perceived organisational support is therefore part of the organisational climate dimension in Wilson's (2004), model of healthy work organisation. According to Wilson et al. (2004), organisational climate emphasises the social and interpersonal aspects of the work situation.

Organisational climate is defined by Afolabi (2002) as a relatively permanent quality of an organisation's internal environment that distinguishes the organisation from other organisations. When employees perceive their organisational climate as supportive and caring for them, it could lead the organisation towards becoming a healthy organisation. This is supported by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) when they say that perceived organisational support produces a felt obligation to care about the organisation's welfare and to help the organisation reach its objectives. The caring, approval and respect connoted by perceived organisational support should fulfill socio-emotional needs, leading workers to incorporate organisational membership and role status into their social identity. Perceived organisational support should strengthen employees' beliefs that the organisation recognises and rewards increased performance. These processes should have favourable outcomes both for employees (e.g., increased job satisfaction and heightened

positive mood) and for the organisation e.g., increased affective commitment and performance, reduced turnover (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

According to Wilson's model (2004) the job design dimension emphasises employees' individual perceptions of their immediate work tasks. One of the components of this dimension is role clarity. According to Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970) role theory states that when the behaviours expected of an individual are inconsistent, the individual will experience stress, become dissatisfied, and perform less actively than when the expectations imposed on him/her were not in conflict. Each position in the organisation should have a specified set of tasks or position responsibilities which should allow management to hold subordinates accountable for specific performance and to provide guidance and direction for subordinates (Rizzo et al., 1970).

Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek and Rosenthal (1964) explain that to perform work adequately, a person must know:

- what the expectations of the role are, (e.g., the rights, duties and responsibilities),
- what activities will fulfil the role responsibilities; and
- what the consequences of role performance are to self, others, and the organisation.

Rizzo et al. (1970) developed a measure of role clarity which focuses on role conflict and role ambiguity. Role conflict is described in terms of the dimensions of congruency-incongruence or compatibility-incompatibility in the requirements of the role, where congruency or compatibility is judged relative to a set of standards or conditions which impinge upon role performance (Rizzo et al., 1970). Role ambiguity is defined in terms of the predictability of the outcome or responses to one's behaviour, the existence or clarity of behaviour requirements which would serve to guide behaviour and provide knowledge that the behaviour is appropriate (Rizzo et al., 1970).

According to Tubre and Collins (2000) extensive research has examined the relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity and a variety of their correlates, including

organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and job performance. Yun, Takeuchi and Liu (2007) say that when role ambiguity is high, performance expectations may not be clear, and specific performance goals may not be assigned to the employees. When role ambiguity is high, there is much more room for employees to develop different interpretations of their job requirements (Yun et al., 2007), which can be considered a weak situation in which there are few situational constraints on the incumbents and they have a high degree of discretion about how they do their jobs. On the other hand, when role ambiguity is high, employees can set their own goals, which could be challenging, and can impress others, because a self set goal that is specific and challenging indicates that the employee cares about the organisation and the performance of the organisation (Yun et al., 2007).

The type of services that an organisation provides may influence the level of role conflict and role ambiguity (Bauer & Spencer, 2003). Organisations supplying human services tend to employ larger numbers of specialists than organisations supplying services with less uncertainty about the appropriate treatment or technique (Rogers & Molnar, 1976). Bauer and Spencer (2003) make a distinction between persons occupying technical vs. managerial roles. Singh (1998) says that management roles have historically been viewed as predominantly boundary-spanning in nature, where technical roles with greater clarity are less subject to ambiguity, but in some cases having greater conflicting roles and responsibilities.

Further to this, Bauer and Spencer (2003) say that persons occupying internal, buffered roles, especially non-supervisory scientists and engineers, would not be exposed to conflicting pressures or task ambiguities as persons in linking roles. It is important to stress technical role definition and performance in any job context (Hunt & Lichtman, 1970). Managers experience high levels of role stress from not participating in decision-making and a feeling that their opinions are not valued by the organisation, which is reflected in low levels of empowerment and perceived organisational support (Patrick & Laschinger, 2006).

According to Hunt and Lichtman (1970), role clarity has been shown to be a factor associated with levels of tension in the organisation and that role clarity may have important implications for understanding the consequences of conflict. Role conflict and role ambiguity have also been shown to have significant effects on personal and organisational outcomes (Fisher & Gitelson, 1983; Jackson & Schuler, 1985).

Based on the above statements, the researcher can deduce that role clarity is important especially when there is a presence of role conflict and role ambiguity. In this research study, the researcher decided to conceptualise and operationalise role clarity as the absence of role conflict and ambiguity.

Tjeku (2006) indicates that in the model of a healthy work organisation (Wilson et al., 2004) the job future dimension indicates employees' concerns about their future state with the organisation in terms of their perceptions about the likely continuity of their employment, fairness, learning opportunities and flexible working arrangements. Job security/insecurity falls within the job future dimension. De Witte (1999) describes job insecurity in terms of the global view, where he mentions that job insecurity relates to people in their work context, when fear they might lose their jobs and become unemployed. Van Vuuren (1990); Van Vuuren, Klandermans, Jacobson and Hartley (1991) define job insecurity as a discrepancy between the levels of security people experience and the level they might prefer. The above definitions are in line with the job future dimension in the model of healthy work organisation (Wilson et al., 2004).

Van Vuuren (1990) emphasises that job insecurity has the following components: First of all, it is a subjective (affective) experience or perception, as different employees might perceive the same situation differently. Secondly, job insecurity implies uncertainty (cognitive) regarding the future and finally, doubts about the continuation of the job are central to job insecurity. This is supported by Rani (2005) who says that job insecurity arises out of a negative reaction to perceived fundamental and involuntary change in the situation after a cognitive or a subjective appraisal of events in the organisation. People who experience frequent job changes are more likely to smoke,

consume more alcohol and exercise less. Workers who experience job insecurity experience significant adverse effects on their physical and mental health (Bartley, 2005).

De Witte (1999) says that the concept of job insecurity does not only refer to the amount of uncertainty employees experience about their job continuity, but also to the permanence of certain dimensions of their jobs, such as organisational benefits and promotional opportunities. Job insecurity is a stressful experience because it concerns the future. The employee does not know whether he/she will actually lose his/her job, and this uncertainty, in turn, restricts coping processes available in a stressful situation.

In consideration of the above definitions and descriptions of job insecurity, the researcher sees job insecurity as the perceived threat of losing a job, uncertainty about the future, losing valued features of a job (benefits and further opportunities), and losing control of maintaining the continuity of a job. In a study conducted by Rosenblatt and Ruvio (1996), it was found that job insecurity affects organisational commitment, perceived organisational support, intention to leave and resistance to change.

Many South African studies have classified job insecurity as a stressor (Buitendach, 2004; Heymans, 2002; Makhobotloane, 2005; Marais 2005; Rani, 2005). Like other work-related stressors, job insecurity is associated with a number of detrimental consequences for both the individual and the organisation (Näswall, Sverke, & Hellgren, 2005). Marais (2005) supports the above statement by saying that job insecurity is not only problematic to employees, but to the organisation as well. De Witte (1997) found that the impact of job insecurity on individual employees might result in an erosion of effectiveness within the organisation. The feelings of job insecurity may threaten attitudinal attachments towards organizations, which are demonstrated by high levels of commitment, satisfaction and trust that people develop over time (De Witte, 1997).

Previous research has shown that employees with perceptions of low job security are more likely to engage in work withdrawal behaviour (Probst, 2000). In various other research done, employees with this perception also reported lower organisational

commitment, which often leads to employee turnover and decreased safety motivation and compliance, which in turn are related to higher levels of workplace injuries and accidents (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989; Probst & Brubaker, 2001). Allen and Meyer (1990) indicate that people develop affective and attitudinal attachments towards their workplace over time, which show up as high levels of commitment, satisfaction and trust. According to De Witte (1997), feelings of job insecurity may threaten such attachments.

Organisational commitment fits in with the psychological work adjustment dimension in the model of healthy work organisation by Wilson et al. (2004). According to Allen and Meyer (1990) organisational commitment is defined as the employee's feelings of obligation to stay with the organisation, resulting from the internalisation of the normative pressures exerted on an individual prior or following entry. Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982) define organisational commitment as a strong belief in the organisation's goals, values and willingness to exert a considerable effort on behalf of the organisation and a strong desire to remain a member of the organisation.

Allen and Meyer (1990) say that organisational commitment involves three attitudes: *Affective commitment* refers to a sense of identification with the organisation's goals. People with strong affective commitment will remain with the organisation because they identify with the organisation. According to and Allen and Meyer (1990) the antecedents of affective commitment include perceived job characteristics (task autonomy, task significance, task identity, skill variety and supervisory feedback), organisational dependability (extent to which employees feel the organisation can be counted on to look after their interests) and perceived participatory management (extent to which employees feel they can influence decisions on the work environment and other issues of concern to them).

The second type of commitment is *continuance commitment*, which refers to perceived cost concerns the individual needs to continue working for the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990). People with a strong continuance commitment stay with the organisation because they need to. Potential antecedents of continuance commitment include age,

tenure and career satisfaction. Age and tenure can function as predictors of continuance commitment, primarily because of the role as surrogate measures of investment in the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 2001).

The last type of commitment is ***normative commitment*** which refers to employee's feelings of obligation to stay with the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990). People with a strong normative commitment stay with the organisation because they feel they ought to stay with the organisation. The antecedents of normative commitment include co-worker commitment (including affective and normative dimensions, as well as commitment behaviours), organisational dependability and participatory management (Allen & Meyer 1990).

Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) acknowledge that commitment can take different forms, and it is therefore imperative that researchers state clearly what form of commitment they are interested in, and that they ensure that the measures they use are appropriate for the intended purpose. For the purpose of this research, affective organisational commitment of the employees will be the focal point. Perceived organisational support and affective organisational commitment have been found to have similar antecedents and consequences and it is often assumed that perceived organisational support contributes to affective organisational commitment (Rhoades et al., 2001). O'Driscoll and Randall (1999) found that perceived organisational support and satisfaction with rewards may function as stronger predictors of job involvement and affective attachment than of continuance commitment.

Wilson et al. (2004) indicated that the healthy work organisation concept centers on the premise that it should be possible to identify the job and organisational characteristics of healthy organisations and such organisations should have healthier and more productive workers. If all the above dimensions (i.e. organisational attributes, organisational climate, job design, job future and psychological work adjustment) are involved within the work environment, this will certainly lead to a healthy work organisation that has less stressed employees who perceive the organisation as supportive, have more role clarity,

experience increased job security, and are more committed to the organisation. If all components are involved within the work environment this could lead to a *healthy work organisation* that has less turnover, less absenteeism, less stress, more cooperation among employees at all levels, an improvement in the safety and health environment as well as improvement in employees' physical and psychological health (Tjeku, 2006).

The business unit's stance in which this research will be undertaken is focused on change. Change from a perception of the employees that the organisation does not value their contribution or cares about their well-being to a perception that the organisation does care. This investigation became necessary, especially after an employee motivational climate survey was done in 2004, and an organisational analysis that was done in 2006. Both revealed issues such as a lack of role clarity, high intention to leave, low employee retention, low levels of organisational commitment, lack of communication between management and employees, lack of trust between management and employees, no customer focus and lack of alignments in the way of doing things between various departments.

The researcher is of the opinion that all these changes can bring about stressful situations which may be caused by various issues such as job demands, expected turnaround times, technological changes, changing to a customer-centered culture, change in organisation structure, pressure to change the role of human resources personnel from an administrative to a business partner role and lastly, a change of departments operating in silos to synergised departments within the business unit. The organisation still needs to go through these changes, including restructuring, while remaining in full operation. Therefore perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and organisational commitment became significant issues for the business unit to be investigated.

The research is undertaken in a petrochemical organisation and the respondents include participants consisting of males and females, from different age groups, on management, specialist and non-management levels, possessing different qualification levels, various years of service, trade union membership, shift work and employment status i.e.

permanent and non-permanent employees. The main aim of this research is to establish whether a relationship exists between perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and affective organisational commitment. Based on the above-mentioned research problem, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Practically and statistically significant relationships exist between perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and affective organisational commitment of employees.
- H2: Perceived organisational support and role clarity predict job insecurity.
- H3: Perceived organisational support, role clarity and job insecurity predict affective organisational commitment.
- H4: Differences exist between the levels of perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and affective organisational commitment of participants from various demographic groups in a petrochemical organisation.

## **2.1 METHOD**

### **2.1.1 Research design**

A cross-sectional design with a survey as the data collection technique was used to achieve the research objectives. Cross-sectional designs are used to examine groups of subjects in various stages of development simultaneously, while a survey is a data-collection technique in which questionnaires are used to gather data about an identified population (Burns & Grove, 1993).

Information collected is used to describe the population at that point in time. This design can also be used to assess interrelationships among variables within a population. According to Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1997) this design is best suited to address the descriptive and predictive functions associated with the correlational design, whereby relationships between variables are examined.

## 2.1.2 Participants

The participants could be defined as an availability sample of employees working in a business unit of an organisation in the petrochemical industry. A total population of 240 employees working in such a business unit of a petrochemical organisation were targeted, of which 176 returned usable questionnaires. Descriptive information of the sample is given in Table 1.

Table 1  
*Characteristics of the Participants*

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	107	60,80
	Female	69	39,20
Age	24 years and younger	30	17,00
	25 to 35 years	84	47,70
	36 to 45 years	31	17,60
	46 to 55 years	24	13,60
	56 years and older	7	4,00
Race	African	93	52,80
	White	74	42,00
	Indian	3	1,70
	Coloured	1	0,60
	Other	1	0,60
	Missing Values	4	2,40
Education levels	Grade 12	90	51,10
	Diploma	62	35,20
	Degree	13	7,40
	Postgraduate degree	10	5,70
	Missing Values	1	0,60
Departments	Routine Section	60	35,10
	Projects & Technology	37	21,00
	Analysers	28	15,90
	Administration and Support	14	8,20
	Shift Supervisor / Courier / Administrator	24	14,00
	Management	4	2,30
	Satellite Department	4	2,30
	Missing Values	5	2,80

Table 1 (continue)

*Characteristics of the Participants*

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Job Level	Level 10 and 11	48	27,30
	Level 8 and 9	59	33,50
	Level 6 and 7	44	25,00
	Level 6C	6	3,40
	Level 4, 5A and 5B	13	7,40
	Missing Values	6	3,40
Years of Service in business unit	Less than 1 year	37	21,00
	2 to 5 years	52	29,50
	6 to 10 years	34	19,30
	11 to 20 years	23	13,10
	More than 20 years	29	16,50
	Missing Values	1	0,60
Years of service in organisation	Less than 1 year	32	18,20
	2 to 5 years	53	30,10
	6 to 10 years	30	17,00
	11 to 20 years	31	17,60
	More than 20 years	30	17,00

The study population consisted mainly of male (60,80%) and African (52,80%) and employees between the ages of 25 and 35 (47,70%). The majority of the sample had a grade 12 (51,10%) qualification, and 35,10% of the participants worked in the routine section of the laboratory. The majority of the participants were on a non-management level with between 2 and 5 years working experience in the laboratory. The sample is representative of the actual population of the business unit's employees with males (59%) and females (49%). In terms of race, Africans form (56%), Whites (42%), Coloureds (1%) and Indians (1%) of the entire population.

### 2.1.3 Measuring battery

The following measurement instruments were used in the empirical study:

Four questionnaires were used in the empirical study, namely: the Perceived Organisational Support Questionnaire (Eisenberger et al., 1986), the Role Clarity

Questionnaire (Rizzo et al., 1970), the Job Insecurity Questionnaire (De Witte, 2000) and the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

The researcher obtained permission from the original authors of the **Perceived Organisational Support Questionnaire (POSQ)** by Eisenberger et al. (1986) to utilise the questionnaire for the purpose of this research. The shorter version (Eisenberger, et al., 1986) of the POSQ was utilised. Eisenberger et al., (1986) indicates that the original scale of the POSQ is one-dimensional and has a high internal reliability, which means that the shorter version of the POSQ does not appear problematic and that both facets of the definition of perceived organisational support (evaluation of employees' contribution and the care about employees' wellbeing) are represented in the short version. The short version of the questionnaire consists of 8 items which are rated on a 7-point Likert type scale (1=*strongly disagree*, 7= *strongly agree*) indicating the total degree of perceived organisational support. A typical statement of the POSQ would be "*The organization really cares about my well-being*" (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p. 502).

In order to control for an agreement response bias, half the statements are positively worded and half are negatively worded (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The results on a study conducted by Eisenberger, Fasolo and Davis-Lamastro (1990) reported a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0,93 for the short version of the scale. In a related study conducted by Moideenkutty, Blau, Kumar and Nalakath (2001) on pharmaceutical Sales representatives from India on the POS yielded a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0,80. The results with the POS done in the US resulted in a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0,94 (O'Driscoll & Randall, 1999).

The **Role Clarity Questionnaire (RCQ)** by Rizzo et al. (1970) was used to measure role clarity of employees. The questionnaire consists of 30 items, 15 of which deal with role ambiguity (even numbers) and 15 with role conflict (odd numbers). The items in the questionnaire are rated on a 7-point scale (1=*very false*, 7= *very true*). A typical statement of the role ambiguity (even number) would be "*I know what my responsibilities are*" and

a typical statement of the role conflict (odd number) would be "*I perform tasks that are too easy or boring*" (Rizzo et al., 1970, p. 156).

In a study conducted on 342 call centre employees by Mukherjee and Malhotra (2006) a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,85 was obtained. According to a study conducted on a group of salesmen, a coefficient alpha measure of reliability ranged from 0,76 to 0,93 (Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1975). Koustelios, Theodorakis and Goulimaris (2004), in their study on physical education teachers in Greece obtained Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients of 0,85 for role ambiguity and 0,86 for role conflict scales.

The **Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ)** by De Witte (2000) was used to measure job insecurity of participants. The JIQ consists of 11 items which measure both cognitive and affective aspects of job insecurity. The items are arranged along a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=*strongly agree*, 5=*strongly disagree*). In terms of the cognitive job insecurity, a typical statement would be, "*I think that I will be able to continue working here*", whereas a typical statement in terms of the affective job insecurity would be, "*I fear that I might lose my job*".

According to De Witte (2000) the items of the JIQ measuring global job insecurity are reported to have a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,92 and for both cognitive and affective job insecurity, Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0,90 and 0,85 were obtained respectively. In a South African study, Cronbach alpha coefficients on cognitive job insecurity of 0,70 and 0,72 on affective job insecurity were obtained (Bosman, 2005). In another study on maintenance workers in a parastatal by Buitendach and De Witte (2005), a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,84 was obtained on job insecurity. De Witte (2000); Sauer (2003); Moeletsi (2003) and Tjeku (2006) reported acceptable levels of reliability for the questionnaire.

The **Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)** by Allen and Meyer (1990) was used to measure organisational commitment of the participants. The questionnaire is based on the premise that organisational commitment is a multi-dimensional construct,

which includes affective, continuance and normative commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). For the purpose of this research, affective organisational commitment will be used as a measure of the commitment of the employees. The questionnaire consists of 8 items, which are rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=*strongly disagree*, 5=*strongly agree*) indicating the degree of affective organisational commitment. A typical statement of affective organisational commitment would be "*This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me*" (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 6).

In a study conducted by Rafai (2005) a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,70 was obtained on affective organisational commitment. In a study done in South Africa, Heymans (2002) reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,69 for the affective scale. Allen and Meyer (1990) state that inter-item correlations between difference samples were often above 0,90, which shows that the combined factor is congruent. Khwela (2001) support the reliability of the questionnaire.

#### **2.1.4 Statistical analysis**

The statistical analysis was carried out with the SPSS programme (SPSS Inc., 2007) and the AMOS programme (Arbuckle, 2007). Covariance analysis or structural equation modelling (SEM) methods, as implemented by AMOS (Arbuckle, 2007), were used to determine the factorial validity of the theoretical factor structures of the instruments. Hypothesised relationships were tested empirically for goodness of fit with the sample data.

The  $\chi^2$  statistic and several other goodness-of-fit indices summarised the degree of correspondence between the implied and observed covariance matrices. However, because the  $\chi^2$  statistic equals  $(N-1)F_{min}$  this value tends to be substantial when the model does not hold and the sample size is large (Byrne, 2001). Researchers addressed the  $\chi^2$  limitation by developing goodness-of-fit indices that take a more pragmatic approach to the evaluation process.

A value  $<2$  for  $\chi^2/\text{degrees of freedom}$  ratio (CMIN/df) (Wheaton, Muthén, Alwin, & Summers, 1977) indicates acceptable fit (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). The hypothesised relationships with the data were also tested using the following goodness-of-fit statistics: Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), Parsimony Goodness-of-Fit Index (PGFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were used to analyse the data. Cronbach alpha coefficients were used to determine the internal consistency, homogeneity and unidimensionality of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995). Coefficient alpha contains important information regarding the proportion of variance of the items of a scale in terms of the total variance explained by that particular scale.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were used to specify the relationships between the variables. In terms of statistical significance, it was decided to set the value at a 95% confidence interval level ( $p \leq 0,05$ ). Effect sizes (Steyn, 1999) were used to determine the practical significance of the findings. A cut-off point of 0,30 (medium effect, Cohen, 1988) was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients. Multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the percentage variance in the dependent variables that is predicted by the independent variables. The effect size (which indicates practical significance) in the case of multiple regressions are given by the following formula (Steyn, 1999):

$$f^2 = R^2 / 1 - R^2$$

A cut-off point of 0,35 (large effect, Steyn, 1999) was set for the practical significance.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine the significance of

differences between the experience of perceived organisational support, role conflict and ambiguity, job insecurity and affective organisational commitment of demographic groups. MANOVA tests whether or not mean differences among groups in a combination of dependent variables are likely to have occurred by chance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In MANOVA, a new dependent variable that maximises group differences is created from the set of dependent variables.

Wilk's Lambda was used to test the likelihood of the data, on the assumption of equal population mean vectors for all groups, against the likelihood on the assumption that the population mean vectors are identical to those of the sample mean vectors for the different groups (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). When an effect was significant in MANOVA, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to discover which dependent variables had been affected. Seeing that multiple ANOVAs were used, a Bonferroni-type adjustment is made for inflated Type I error. Tukey tests were done to indicate which groups differed significantly when ANOVA was performed.

## **2.2 RESULTS**

### *Construct validity of the measuring instruments (POSQ, RCQ, JIQ and OCQ)*

The factorial validity of the POS was determined with the help of the AMOS program (Arbuckle, 2007). The obtained  $\chi^2$  goodness-of-fit statistic, degrees of freedom and probability or significant level were studied. Comparative fit indices, such as the Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI), the Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), the Parsimony Goodness-of-Fit Index (PGFI), the Normed Fit Index (NFI), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were also used. The goodness-of-fit statistics are given in Table 2.

Table 2

*Goodness-of-Fit Statistics for the POSQ*

Model	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	AGFI	PGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model 1 (one-factor)	183,07	9,15	0,75	0,54	0,41	0,67	0,57	0,69	0,22
Model 2 (errors correlated)	47,50	2,97	0,94	0,86	0,42	0,92	0,90	0,94	0,11

A theoretical one-factor model was tested. The goodness-of-fit indices showed that the one-factor model did not reach its critical values. To pinpoint possible areas of misfit modification indices were examined. Errors POS1 and POS4, POS4 and POS6, POS4 and POS8, and POS6 and POS8 were allowed to correlate. Subsequent analysis was therefore performed on the re-specified model (Model 2). The goodness-of-fit indices showed reasonable and acceptable fit and no further modification of the model was deemed necessary.

The factor was labelled **Perceived Organisational Support**. Items loading on this factor included ‘The organisation values my contribution to its well-being’; ‘The organization really cares about my well-being’, and the ‘Organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work’ (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p. 502).

The initial theoretical model of Role Clarity as stipulated by Rizzo et al. (1970) was not used in the current research. On investigation of the initial development of the questionnaire in the 1970 article, it was indicated that Rizzo et al. (1970) could not confirm the initial theoretical factor structure and their factor analysis confirmed a different two-factor structure. Rizzo et al. (1970) also indicated that a shortened version (using 14 of the original 30 items) of the questionnaire could be used. Within the current research the factorial validity of the adjusted two-factor structure and the shortened two-factor structure were determined with the help of the AMOS program (Arbuckle, 2007). The goodness-of-fit statistics for the RCQ are given in Table 3.

Table 3

*Goodness-of-Fit Statistics for the RCQ*

Model	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	AGFI	PGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model 1 (Adjusted two-factor model)	722,25	2,21	0,76	0,72	0,65	0,54	0,65	0,68	0,08
Model 2 (Shorten two-factor model)	114,19	1,510	0,91	0,88	0,66	0,80	0,91	0,92	0,05
Model 3 (Errors correlated)	97,39	1,30	0,93	0,90	0,66	0,83	0,94	0,95	0,04

Three models were tested. The one model is an adjusted two-factor model based on the results obtained by Rizzo et al. (1970) and the other model is also a two-factor model but a shortened version indicated by Rizzo et al. (1970) as being acceptable to determine the theorised factors of role clarity. The  $\chi^2$  value of 722,25 ( $df = 344$ ;  $p = 0,00$ ) obtained for the adjusted two-factor model (Model 1) was significantly higher than the  $\chi^2$  value of 114,19 ( $df = 76$ ;  $p = 0,00$ ) for the shortened two-factor model (Model 2). Further analysis was therefore done on the shortened two-factor model.

The goodness-of-fit indices showed an acceptable fit for the shortened two-factor model by reaching the recommended critical values – except for PGFI, which is lower than 0,80, and AGFI and NFI, which is lower than 0,90. To pinpoint possible areas of misfit, modification indices were examined. Errors RC7 and RC8 were allowed to correlate. Subsequent analysis was therefore performed on the re-specified model (Model 3). The goodness-of-fit indices showed acceptable fit and no further modification of the model was deemed necessary.

The two factors were labelled **Role Conflict** and **Role Ambiguity**. Items loading on Role Conflict included: *'I have to do things that should be done differently'*; *'I work with two or more groups who operate quite differently'* and *'I work on unnecessary things'*. Items loading on Role Ambiguity included: *'Clear, planned goals and objectives for my job'*; *'I know what my responsibilities are'*; and *'I know exactly what is expected of me'* (Rizzo et al., 1970, p. 156). Rizzo et al. (1970) mentions that the role ambiguity items are more in the direction of role clarity and not role ambiguity. According to Fried, Ben-David,

Tiegs, Avital and Yeverechyahu (1998) some scholars have raised concerns about the content validity, susceptibility to wording biases and factor structure of these measures. With this the researcher decided to use the role ambiguity scale (unreversed) as a positive scale and therefore renamed it as **role clarity**. Mukherjee and Malhotra (2006) used the role ambiguity items as role clarity.

The goodness-of-fit statistics for the JIQ are given in Table 4. Due to the previously reported problematic nature of Item 2 ("There is only a small chance that I will become unemployed") in South African studies (Jordaan, 2007; Kriese, 2007; Viljoen, 2004) it was left out in further analysis.

Table 4  
*Goodness-of-Fit Statistics for the JIQ*

Model	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	AGFI	PGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model 1 (Theoretical two-factor model)	198,72	4,62	0,82	0,72	0,53	0,79	0,78	0,83	0,14
Model 2 (Errors correlated)	119,43	3,85	0,88	0,79	0,50	0,87	0,86	0,90	0,13
Model 3 (Adjusted two-factor model)	154,06	4,53	0,85	0,78	0,53	0,84	0,82	0,87	0,14
Model 4 (Errors correlated)	76,81	2,65	0,92	0,85	0,49	0,92	0,92	0,95	0,10

Four models were tested. The one model is the theoretical two-factor model as stipulated by De Witte (2000) and the second model is an adjusted two-factor model based on South African results (Jordaan; Kriese, 2007; 2007; Viljoen, 2004). A simple principle factor analysis in the current research confirmed previous South African studies with a two-factor structure emerging explaining 61,42% of the total variance. The goodness-of-fit indice  $\chi^2$  showed that the theoretical two-factor model (Model 1) did not reach its critical values.

To pinpoint possible areas of misfit modification indices were examined. Errors CJI2 and CJI3, AJI2 and AJI5 and AJI2 and AJI3 were allowed to correlate. Subsequent analysis was therefore performed on the re-specified model (Model 2). The goodness-of-fit

indices still did not reach their critical values and based on the modification indices no further modification was possible.

The adjusted two-factor model was then tested. The goodness-of-fit indices  $\chi^2$  showed that the adjusted two-factor model (Model 2) also did not reach the critical its critical values. To pinpoint possible areas of misfit modification indices were examined.

Errors AJI1 and AJI2, AJI2 and AJI3, AJI2 and AJI5, AJI4 and AJI6 and AJI5 and AJI6 were allowed to correlate. Subsequent analysis was therefore performed on the re-specified model (Model 4). The goodness-of-fit indices showed acceptable fit and no further modification of the model was deemed necessary.

Items loading on the first factor were related to Affective Job Insecurity (e.g., *'I fear that I might lose my job'*; and *'I feel uncertain about the future of my job'*). The second factor addresses Cognitive Job Insecurity (e.g., *'I think that I will be able to continue working here'*; and *'I am certain/sure of my job environment'*).

The goodness-of-fit statistics for the OCQ – Affective Organisational Commitment (AOC) are given in Table 5.

Table 5  
*Goodness-of-Fit Statistics for the OCQ*

Model	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	AGFI	PGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model 1 (one-factor)	161,76	8,09	0,76	0,58	0,42	0,74	0,67	0,77	0,20
Model 2 (errors correlated)	51,18	3,20	0,93	0,84	0,41	0,92	0,90	0,94	0,11
Model 3 (further errors correlated)	29,58	1,97	0,96	0,91	0,46	0,95	0,96	0,98	0,08

A theoretical one-factor model was tested. The goodness-of-fit indices showed that the one-factor model did not reach its critical values. To pinpoint possible areas of misfit modification indices were examined. Errors AOC2 and AOC3, AOC2 and AOC4, AOC3

and AOC6 and AOC5 and AOC6 were allowed to correlate. Subsequent analysis was therefore performed on the re-specified model (Model 2).

The goodness-of-fit indices showed reasonable fit although the indices did not meet the critical value. Modification indices indicated that further errors, namely error AOC3 and AOC4 could also be allowed to correlate. Subsequent analysis was therefore performed on the re-specified model (Model 3). The goodness-of-fit indices showed acceptable fit and no further modification of the model was deemed necessary.

The factor was labelled **Affective Organisational Commitment**. Items loading on this factor included ‘*I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside it*’; ‘*I really feel as if this organisation’s problems are my own*’; and ‘*This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me*’.

The descriptive statistics and alpha coefficients of the one factor of the POSQ, two factors of the RCQ, two factors of the JIQ and one factor of the OCQ are indicated in Table 6.

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics and Alpha Coefficients of the POSQ, RCQ, JIQ, and OCQ*

Item	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	$\alpha$
<b>POS</b>					
Perceived Organisational Support	35,37	9,60	0,05	-0,21	0,83
<b>RCQ</b>					
Role Conflict	29,17	8,58	0,08	-0,40	0,73
Role Clarity	32,08	6,26	-0,60	0,22	0,75
<b>JIQ</b>					
Cognitive Job Insecurity	6,60	2,38	0,68	1,00	0,65
Affective Job Insecurity	17,28	6,45	0,25	-0,32	0,88
<b>OCQ</b>					
Affective Organisational Commitment	35,49	10,71	-0,24	-0,34	0,85

Table 6 indicates that acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients varying from 0,73 to 0,88 were obtained, except for Cognitive Job Insecurity ( $\alpha = 0,65$ ). These alpha coefficients compare reasonably well with the guideline of 0,70 (0,55 in basic research),

demonstrating that a large portion of the variance is explained by the dimensions (internal consistency of the dimensions) (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

It is evident from Table 6 that most of the scales of the measuring instruments have relatively normal distributions, with low skewness and kurtosis. The skewness and kurtosis do not exceed the critical values of 2,00 and 7,00 respectively (West, Finch & Curran, 1995).

The product-moment correlation coefficients between Perceived Organisational Support, Role Conflict, Role Clarity, Cognitive Job Insecurity, Affective Job Insecurity and Affective Organisational Commitment are given in Table 7.

Table 7

*Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients between the POSQ, RCQ, JIQ, and OCQ*

Item	1	2	3	4	5
1. Perceived Organisational Support					
2. Role Conflict	-0,39 <sup>+</sup>				
3. Role Clarity	0,48 <sup>+</sup>	-0,35 <sup>+</sup>			
4. Affective Job Insecurity	-0,34 <sup>+</sup>	0,18 <sup>*</sup>	-0,34 <sup>+</sup>		
5. Cognitive Job Insecurity	-0,50 <sup>+</sup>	0,19 <sup>*</sup>	-0,53 <sup>+++</sup>	0,49 <sup>+</sup>	
6. Affective Organisational Commitment	0,58 <sup>+++</sup>	-0,28 <sup>*</sup>	0,39 <sup>+</sup>	-0,20 <sup>*</sup>	-0,50 <sup>+</sup>

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

+  $r \geq 0,30$  – practically significant (medium effect)

++  $r \geq 0,50$  – practically significant (large effect)

Table 7 shows that perceived organisational support has statistically significant positive correlations (practically significant, large effect) with affective organisational commitment and statistically significant positive correlations (practically significant, medium effect) with role clarity. Perceived organisational support has statistically significant negative correlations (practically significant, medium effect) with role conflict and affective job insecurity, a statistically significant negative correlations (practically significant, large effect) with cognitive job insecurity.

Role conflict is statistically significant, negatively correlated (practically significant, medium effect) with role clarity. Role clarity has statistically significant, positive

(practically significant, medium effect) correlations with affective organisational commitment. Joiner and Bakalis (2006) in their study found that increased information (role clarity) was associated with heightened affective organisational commitment. Role clarity has statistically significant, negatively correlated (practically significant, large effect) correlations with cognitive job insecurity and (practically significant, medium effect) correlations with affective job insecurity.

Affective job insecurity is statistically significant, positively correlated (practically significant, medium effect) with cognitive job insecurity. This result correlates with the results found in previous studies where it was found that cognitive job insecurity is positively correlated with affective job insecurity (Buitendach, 2005; Tjeku, 2006; Rani, 2005). Cognitive job insecurity is statistically significant, negatively correlated (practically significant, large effect) with affective organisational commitment.

The results of a multiple regression analysis with Affective Job Insecurity as dependent variable and perceived organisational support, role conflict and role clarity as independent variables are reported in Table 8.

Table 8

*Multiple Regression Analysis with Affective Job Insecurity as Dependent Variable*

Model		Unstandardised		Standardised	T	p	F	R	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
		Coefficients		Coefficients						
		B	SE	Beta						
1	(Constant)	25,43	1,75		14,50	0,00*	23,13	0,34	0,12	0,12
	Perceived Organisational Support	-0,23	0,05	-0,34	-4,81	0,00*				
2	(Constant)	29,80	3,71		8,03	0,00*	10,57	0,40	0,16	0,04
	Perceived Organisational Support	-0,16	0,06	-0,23	-2,82	0,01*				
	Role Conflict	0,01	0,06	0,01	0,17	0,87				
	Role Clarity	-0,23	0,08	-0,22	-2,70	0,01*				

\*  $p \leq 0,05$

Table 8 shows that 12% of the variance explained in Affective Job Insecurity is predicted by perceived organisational support ( $F = 23,13$ ,  $p \leq 0,05$ ). Perceived organisational support made a significant contribution to the variance explained. By adding role conflict

and role clarity the statistical significance of the  $R^2$  was slightly increased ( $\Delta R^2 = 0,04$ ). From Table 8 it is evident that 16% of the variance explained in Affective Job Insecurity is predicted by perceived organisational support, role conflict and role clarity ( $F = 10,57$ ,  $p \leq 0,05$ ). Perceived organisational support and role clarity were the only statistically significant predictors of affective job insecurity. The results of a multiple regression analysis with Cognitive Job Insecurity as dependent variable and perceived organisational support, role conflict and role clarity as independent variables are reported in Table 9.

Table 9

*Multiple Regression Analysis with Cognitive Job Insecurity as Dependent Variable*

Model		Unstandardised		Standardised	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i>	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$
		Coefficients		Coefficients						
		B	SE	Beta						
1	(Constant)	10,95	0,60		18,32	0,00*	56,90	0,50	0,25	0,25
	Perceived Organisational Support	-0,12	0,01	-0,50	-7,54	0,00*				
2	(Constant)	15,20	1,18		12,84	0,00*	33,29	0,61	0,37	0,12
	Perceived Organisational Support	-0,84	0,02	-0,34	-4,73	0,00*				
	Role Conflict	-0,02	0,02	-0,09	-1,30	0,20				
	Role Clarity	-0,15	0,03	-0,40	-5,73	0,00*				

\*  $p \leq 0,05$

Table 9 shows that 25% of the variance explained in Cognitive Job Insecurity is predicted by perceived organisational support ( $F = 56,90$ ,  $p \leq 0,05$ ). Perceived organisational support made a significant contribution to the variance explained. By adding role conflict and role clarity, the variance explained the  $R^2$  was moderately increased ( $\Delta R^2 = 0,12$ ). From Table 9 it is evident that 37% of the variance explained in Cognitive Job Insecurity results from perceived organisational support, role conflict and role clarity ( $F = 33,29$ ,  $p \leq 0,05$ ).

Perceived organisational support and role clarity were the only statistically significant predictors of cognitive job insecurity. Based on the above findings on table 8 and table 9, hypothesis 2 indicating that perceived organisational support and role clarity predict job insecurity is accepted. The results of a multiple regression analysis with Affective

Organisational Commitment as dependent variable and perceived organisational support, role conflict and role clarity and job insecurity (cognitive and affective job insecurity) as independent variables are reported in Table 10.

Table 10

*Multiple Regression Analysis with Affective Organisational Commitment as Dependent Variable*

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	T	p	F	R	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>
		B	SE	Beta						
1	(Constant)	12,75	2,53		5,03	0,00*	86,50	0,58	0,33	0,33
	Perceived Organisational Support	0,64	0,07	0,58	9,30	0,00*				
2	(Constant)	9,56	5,40		1,77	0,08	31,10	0,59	0,35	0,02
	Perceived Organisational Support	0,55	0,08	0,49	6,79	0,00*				
	Role Conflict	-0,05	0,09	-0,04	-0,59	0,56				
	Role Clarity	0,25	0,12	0,15	2,04	0,04*				
2	(Constant)	-0,22	6,47		-0,03	0,97	32,21	0,64	0,41	0,05
	Perceived Organisational Support	0,46	0,08	0,49	5,57	0,00*				
	Role Conflict	-0,09	0,08	-0,07	-1,04	0,30				
	Role Clarity	0,08	0,13	0,05	0,61	0,54				
	Cognitive Job Insecurity	1,40	0,36	0,31	3,91	0,00*				
	Affective Job Insecurity	0,20	0,11	0,12	1,73	0,09				

\*  $p \leq 0,05$

Table 10 shows that 33% of the variance explained in Affective Organisational Commitment is predicted by perceived organisational support ( $F = 86,50$ ,  $p \leq 0,05$ ). Perceived organisational support made a significant contribution to the variance explained. By adding role conflict and role clarity the percentage variance of the  $R^2$  was slightly increased ( $\Delta R^2 = 0,02$ ) and by adding job insecurity the percentage variance of the  $R^2$  was also slightly increased ( $\Delta R^2 = 0,05$ ). Perceived organisational support and cognitive job insecurity seem to be statistically significant predictors of affective organisational commitment. Role clarity was not statistically significant. Based on the above findings, hypothesis 3, which states that perceived organisational support, role clarity and job insecurity predict affective organisational commitment is not accepted due to role clarity not being statistically significant.

MANOVA analysis was conducted to determine differences between demographic groups (such as gender, racial groups, age, education levels, department and job level) in

the experience of perceived organisational support, role clarity, cognitive and affective job insecurity, and affective organisational commitment. Results were first analysed for statistical significance using Wilk's Lambda statistics. ANOVA was used to determine specific differences whenever statistical differences were found. The results of the MANOVA and ANOVA analysis are given in Table 11 to 16.

Table 11  
*ANOVA – Differences in Perceived Organisational Support*

Variable	Type III Sum Squares	F	Df	p	Partial Eta squared
Gender	230,00	0,02	1,00	0,88	0,01
Racial Groups	362,86	0,99	4,00	0,42	0,02
Age	244,05	0,88	4,00	0,48	0,02
Education levels	338,57	1,11	4,00	0,35	0,02
Department	879,44	1,34	6,00	0,24	0,04
Job Level	1178,76	2,12	4,00	0,08	0,08

\*  $p \leq 0,05$

No statistically significant differences ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) regarding perceived organisational support could be found between gender, racial groups, age and departments, and education levels and job levels. Table 12 shows the differences in role clarity (role conflict and role clarity) between gender, racial groups, age and departments, and education levels and job levels.

Table 12  
*MANOVA – Differences in Role Clarity (role conflict and role clarity)*

Variable	Value	F	Df	p	Partial Eta squared
Gender	0,96	3,67	2,00	0,03*	0,04
Racial Groups	0,97	0,59	8,00	0,79	0,01
Age	0,90	2,31	8,00	0,02*	0,05
Education levels	0,95	1,08	8,00	0,38	0,03
Department	0,90	1,53	12,00	0,11	0,05
Job Level	0,90	2,19	8,00	0,03*	0,05

\*  $p \leq 0,05$

In analysis of Wilk's Lambda values, no statistically significant differences ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) regarding role clarity could be found between racial groups, departments and education

levels. However, statistically significant differences ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) were found for gender, age groups and job levels. Male employees experienced higher levels of role conflict than their female counterparts.

In investigating the significance levels of the independent variables in terms of role clarity, the significance of age levels was lower than the adjusted Bonferri adjustment of  $p \leq 0,025$ . The relationship between role clarity and job levels was further analysed using ANOVA. The Games-Howell procedure was used to determine whether there were any statistical differences between the groups. The results of the ANOVA based on job levels are given in Table 13.

Table 13

*Differences in Role Clarity (i.e. role conflict and role ambiguity) based on Job Levels*

Item	Level 10 and 11	Level 8 and 9	Level 7 and 6	Level 6C	Level 4, 5A and 5B	<i>p</i>	Partial Eta Squared
Role Conflict	27,96 <sup>b</sup>	28,65	29,46	37,83 <sup>a</sup>	33,69	0,02*	0,07
Role Clarity	33,68	31,72	31,30	33,33	30,00	0,21	0,03

\* Statistically significant difference:  $p \leq 0,05$

<sup>a</sup> Group differs statistically significantly from type (in row) where <sup>b</sup> is indicated

Table 13 shows that there are statistically significant differences between levels of role conflict based on job levels. It seems that employees in level 6C positions (company car level) experience statistically significant higher levels of perceived role conflict than employees in lower level positions, i.e. Level 10 and 11. The differences in job insecurity (cognitive and affective) are indicated in table 14.

Table 14

*MANOVA – Differences in Job Insecurity (cognitive and affective job insecurity)*

Variable	Value	<i>F</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>p</i>	Partial Eta squared
Gender	0,99	1,23	2,00	0,29	0,01
Racial Groups	0,96	0,93	8,00	0,49	0,02
Age	0,96	0,95	8,00	0,47	0,02
Education levels	0,93	1,53	8,00	0,15	0,04
Department	0,93	1,06	12,00	0,40	0,04
Job Level	0,86	3,10	8,00	0,00*	0,07

\*  $p \leq 0,05$

In analysis of Wilk's Lambda values, no statistically significant differences ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) regarding job insecurity (i.e. cognitive and affective job insecurity) could be found between gender, racial groups, age, departments and education levels. However, statistically significant differences ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) were found for job levels. The relationship between job insecurity (i.e. cognitive and affective job insecurity) and job levels was further analysed using ANOVA. The Games-Howell procedure was used to determine whether there were any statistical differences between the groups. The results of the ANOVA based on job levels are given in Table 15.

Table 15

*Differences in Job Insecurity (i.e. cognitive and affective job insecurity) based on Job Levels*

Item	Level 10 and 11	Level 8 and 9	Level 7 and 6	Level 6C	Level 4, 5A and 5B	<i>p</i>	Partial Eta Squared
Affective Job Insecurity	17,72	19,05 <sup>a</sup>	16,93	13,67	12,23 <sup>b</sup>	0,01*	0,08
Cognitive Job Insecurity	5,90	7,02	7,11 <sup>b</sup>	6,33	5,69 <sup>a</sup>	0,04*	0,06

\* Statistically significant difference:  $p \leq 0,05$

<sup>a</sup> Group differs statistically significantly from type (in row) where <sup>b</sup> is indicated

Table 15 shows that there are statistically significant differences between levels of job insecurity based on job levels. It seems that employees in level 8 and 9 positions experience statistically significant higher levels of affective job insecurity than employees in Level 4 upper positions. Employees in a level 4 and upper position experience statistically significant lower levels of cognitive job insecurity than employees in lower level positions, i.e. Level 7 and 6. The results of the ANOVA based on Affective Organisational Commitment are indicated in table 16.

Table 16

*ANOVA – Differences in Affective Organisational Commitment*

Variable	Type III Sum Squares	<i>F</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>p</i>	Partial Eta squared
Gender	121,17	1,86	1,00	0,18	0,01
Racial Groups	192,05	1,025	4,00	0,28	0,01
Age	435,46	1,77	4,00	0,14	0,02
Education levels	1086,87	1,05	4,00	0,39	0,05

Department	1376,13	0,66	6,00	0,68	0,07
Job Level	771,40	0,35	4,00	0,84	0,04

\*  $p \leq 0,05$

No statistically significant differences ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) regarding affective organisational commitment could be found between gender, racial, age and departments, and education and job levels.

Based on the discussion from table 11 to table 16, hypothesis 5, which states that differences exist between the levels of perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and affective organisational commitment of participants from various demographic groups in a petrochemical organisation can be partially accepted.

### 2.3 DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and organisational commitment. Little research in South Africa has been conducted to investigate the relationships between these constructs.

A theoretical one-factor model was tested for the **POSQ**. When the results showed that the one-factor model did not reach its critical values, the modification indices as well as subsequent analysis on the re-specified model was examined to obtain model fit. The initial theoretical model of **RCQ** as stipulated by Rizzo et al. (1970) was not used in the current study. On investigation of the initial development of the questionnaire in the 1970 article, it was indicated that Rizzo et al. (1970) could not confirm the initial theoretical factor structure and their factor analysis confirmed a different two-factor structure.

The factorial validity of the Role Clarity Questionnaire (RCQ) of the adjusted two-factor structure and two models were tested (role conflict and role ambiguity). Rizzo et al. (1970) also support the two factor model of role conflict and role ambiguity. The role

ambiguity scale was renamed and used as role clarity because the items are more in the direction of role clarity and are positive. The statements were not reversed.

For the **JIQ** two models were tested. The one model is the theoretical two-factor model as stipulated by De Witte (2000) and the second model is an adjusted two-factor model based on South African results (Jordaan, 2007; Kriese, 2007; Viljoen, 2004). For the **OCQ**, a one factor model was tested and an acceptable model fit was obtained through goodness-of-fit indices.

Cronbach alpha coefficients obtained for the constructs varied between 0,73 and 0,88 except for Cognitive Job Insecurity ( $\alpha = 0,65$ ). The scales of the measuring instruments have relatively normal distributions, with low skewness and kurtosis.

Pearson product-moment correlations were conducted to determine the relationship between the constructs. The results revealed that perceived organisational support has positive correlations with affective organisational commitment. O'Driscoll and Randall (1999) found that perceived organisational support is a strong predictor of affective commitment. Perceived organisational support has a negative correlation with cognitive job insecurity, affective job insecurity and role conflict. This could mean that when perceived organisational support increases cognitive job insecurity, affective job insecurity and role conflict will decrease. On the other hand, perceived organisational support is positively correlated with role clarity. This means that when employees feel supported by their organisation, they will feel less ambiguous in their jobs.

Role conflict is negatively correlated with role clarity and affective organisational commitment. This could mean that when employees experience role conflict they could experience decreased role clarity and could feel less committed to their organisation.

Role clarity is negatively correlated with affective job insecurity and cognitive job insecurity. This could mean that when employees experience role clarity, they could experience less cognitive and affective job insecurity. Role clarity correlated positively

with affective organisational commitment. This could mean that when employees feel that their roles have been clarified, they could experience increased commitment to their organisation.

Affective job insecurity is positively correlated with cognitive job insecurity. This could mean that when employees experience increased affective job insecurity they could experience increased cognitive job insecurity. Affective organisational commitment is negatively correlated with affective job insecurity and cognitive job insecurity. When employees experience job insecurity cognitive and affective, they will feel less committed to their organisation.

The regression analysis showed that perceived organisational support, role conflict and role clarity predicted 16% of the variance explained in affective job insecurity. Perceived organisational support, role conflict and role clarity predicted 37% of the variance explained in cognitive job insecurity.

It is indicated that there are no significant differences regarding perceived organisational support found between gender, racial groups, age, education levels, department and job level. However, statistically significant differences were found for gender, age groups and job levels in terms of role conflict. Male participants experience higher levels of role conflict than their female counterparts.

Employees in first line management or professional positions experience higher levels of role conflict than employees in lower level positions. This could be that employees on first line management or professional positions perceive their role differently from their enacted role than employees in lower level positions. According to Hartenian and Hadaway (1994) management can play an important part in increasing role clarity and reducing role conflict by communicating social and functional role behaviours to the potential employee in a way that reduces the gap between expected and perceived roles, where employees will experience role clarity.

The results also revealed that employees in lower level positions experience higher levels of affective job insecurity than employees in senior management positions. This could be that senior management is more updated about the changes and the restructuring than lower level employees. On the other hand, employees in senior management positions experience lower levels of cognitive job insecurity than employees in lower level positions.

There were no significant differences found regarding affective organisational commitment between gender, race, age, departments, education level and job levels.

The above discussion of the results are in line with previous research and is in support of Wilson et al.,'s (2004) model of healthy work organisation, which states that for a work organisation to be healthy, a number of organisational attributes such as organisational climate which includes perceived organisational support; job design which includes role clarity; job future which includes job security and psychological work adjustment which includes affective organisational commitment are needed.

Wilson et al., (2004) supports this by saying that if all the above dimensions are involved within the work environment, this will certainly lead to a healthy work organisation that has less stressed employees, less anger, depression, burnout and increased levels of health and safety, less tobacco and alcohol use and higher levels of self reported health and welfare among employees within the organisation.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the results presented and discussions provided, it is evident that the organisational support that is perceived by the employees plays a vital role in their perception on role clarity and job insecurity leading to affective organisational commitment. It is stated in previous chapters that in order for an organisation to achieve a state of a healthy organisation, all these organisational attributes must be in synergy.

The results indicated that when perceived organisational support decreases, role conflict, affective and cognitive job insecurity will increase. This means that organisations should constantly provide their employees with support because if this does not happen on a regular basis, employees will become unhappy and insecure in their jobs. Management has a crucial role to play to ensure that employees feel supported in their work environments. Supportive actions that management could focus on can be in the form of recognition for extra effort given to the employee, opportunities for employees to move up the ranks, caring about the employees and their opinions, making employees jobs as interesting as possible.

Further research is warranted to determine why there is a difference between the levels of role conflict between male and female participants could yield useful information for management.

Management must also clarify and communicate the strategic direction for the business unit to all employees at all levels. This could be linked with the provision of clear job models and responsibility matrices for all employees. Employees should also be awarded with opportunities to clarify their goals and performance expectations in their organisations. This will ensure that all employees know what their responsibilities are and that there is no room for role conflict or ambiguity.

## **LIMITATIONS**

A limitation of this study is that the design is cross-sectional and it represents employees' opinions, attitudes and feelings at one point in time. In order to curb this problem, a longitudinal evaluation of employee attitudes, opinions and feelings may provide a better examination of perceived organisational support, role clarity and their effects on job insecurity and organisational commitment. Social desirability may also be present. Furthermore, the results were obtained solely by means of self-report measures. This may lead to a problem commonly referred to as "method variance" or "nuisance".

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Only a few variables and none of the outcomes noted by Wilson could be investigated, which might not represent a full picture. The size of the sample, specifically the distribution of language groups and the sampling procedure in the present study which has significant limitations in terms of generalisation of the findings applied to the total study population. Future studies could benefit hugely in terms of a stratified random-sample design which would ensure sufficient representation of the different groups in the total population of employees in the petrochemical industry.

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## CHAPTER 3

### CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an analysis and discussion of the literature and empirical results of the study. Conclusions with regard to the research objectives are drawn. The limitations and shortcomings of the research will be discussed and recommendations for organisations and further research will be provided.

#### 3.1 CONCLUSIONS

The general objective of this research was to determine whether there is a relationship between perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and affective organisational commitment of employees in a business unit of a petrochemical organisation as well as to determine whether job insecurity and affective organisational commitment can be predicted by perceived organisational support and role clarity.

*The first objective of this study was to conceptualise perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and affective organisational commitment according to the literature.*

**Perceived organisational support** was conceptualised as employees forming a global belief about the extent to which an organisation values their contribution and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa 1986). Perceived organisational support would be influenced by various aspects of an employee's treatment by the organisation and would, in turn, influence the employee's interpretation of organisational motives underlying that treatment (Eisenberger et al., 1986). According to Rhoades, Eisenberger and Armeli (2001) this would include the organisation's likely reaction to the employee's future illnesses, mistakes, and superior performance, and the organisation's desire to pay a fair salary and make the employee's job meaningful and interesting.

**Role clarity** has been described by Sawyer (1992) as the extent to which an employee's work goals and responsibilities are clearly communicated and whether the individual understands the processes to achieve these goals. In this research role clarity has been conceptualised as the absence of role conflict and role ambiguity. Role ambiguity is defined in terms of the predictability of the outcome or responses to one's behaviour, the existence or clarity of behaviour requirements which would serve to guide behaviour and provide knowledge that the behaviour is appropriate (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). Role conflict is described in terms of the dimensions of congruency-incongruency or compatibility-incompatibility in the requirements of the role, where congruency or compatibility is judged relative to a set of standards or conditions which impinge upon role performance (Rizzo et al., (1970).

**Job insecurity** has been described by De Witte (1999) in terms of the global view, where he mentions that job insecurity relates to people in their work context, who fear they might lose their jobs and become unemployed. Van Vuuren (1990); Van Vuuren Klandermans, Jacobson, & Hartley (1991) define job insecurity as a discrepancy between the levels of security people experience and the level they might prefer. The above definitions are in line with the job future component in the model of healthy work organisation (Wilson, Deljoy, Richardson, Vandenberg, & McGrath, 2004). Job insecurity has been classified into two components which are: affective job insecurity, which is explained as different employees might perceive the same situation differently and cognitive job insecurity, which implies uncertainty regarding the future and finally, doubts about the continuation of the job are central to job insecurity (Van Vuuren, 1990).

Organisational commitment is widely described in the management and behavioural sciences literature as a key factor in the relationship between individuals and organisations (Maré, 2007). According to Allen and Meyer (1990) organisational commitment is defined as the employee's feelings of obligation to stay with the organisation, resulting from the internalisation of the normative pressures exerted on an individual prior or following entry. Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982) define organisational commitment as a strong belief in the organisation's goals, values and

willingness to exert a considerable effort on behalf of the organisation and a strong desire to remain a member of the organisation. Allen and Meyer (1990) say that organisational commitment involves three attitudes: *Affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment*.

For the purpose of this study **affective organisational commitment** was focused on. This is because perceived organisational support and affective organisational commitment have been found to have similar antecedents and consequences and it is often assumed that perceived organisational support contributes to affective organisational commitment (Rhoades et al., 2001). O'Driscoll and Randall (1999) found that perceived organisational support and satisfaction with rewards may function as stronger predictors of job involvement and affective attachment than of continuance commitment. In a South African study by Buidendach and De Witte (2005) their measurement of organisational commitment was also restricted to affective organisational commitment.

The model of a healthy work organisation formed the basis of this study. Wilson et al. (2004) define a healthy organisation as one characterized by intentional systematic and collaborative efforts to maximize employee well-being and productivity by providing well designed and meaningful jobs, a supportive social-organisational environment, and accessible and equitable opportunities for career and work-life enhancement. The model of healthy work organisations further brings the objectives of this study into perspective.

The concept of a the healthy work organisation centers on the premise that it should be possible to identify the job and organisational characteristics of healthy organisations and such organisations should have healthier and more productive workers. If all the above dimensions (i.e. *organisational attributes, organisational climate, job design, job future and psychological work adjustment*) are involved within the work environment, this will certainly lead to a healthy work organisation that has less stressed employees who perceive the organisation as supportive, more role clarity, increased job security and more committed to the organisation. According to the model of a healthy work organisation

(Wilson et al., 2004), this could lead to employees experiencing less alcohol and tobacco use, decreased turnover intentions, less absenteeism, high levels of self-reported health, decreased somatic stress, decreased anger and less depression as illustrated in Figure 4.

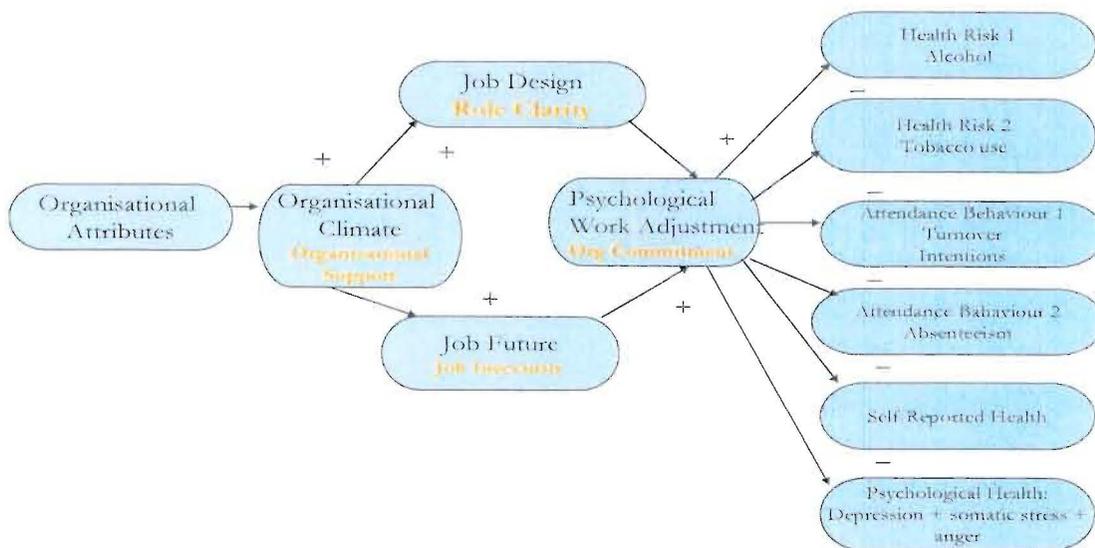


Figure 4: The model of a healthy work organisation (Wilson et al., 2004), indicating the relationship between the variables of the study.

Based on the above discussion, it is concluded that the first objective of the study has been reached.

*The second objective was to determine the relationship between perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and affective organisational commitment.*

A statistically significant positive correlation was found between perceived organisational support, affective organisational commitment and role clarity. Perceived

organisational support is negatively correlated with role conflict, affective job insecurity and cognitive job insecurity. Role conflict is negatively correlated with role clarity and affective organisational commitment and positively correlated with affective and cognitive job insecurity. Role clarity positively correlated with affective commitment and negatively correlated with cognitive and affective job insecurity.

Affective job insecurity is positively correlated with cognitive job insecurity and cognitive job insecurity is negatively correlated with affective organisational commitment. Based on the discussion, the second objective was reached.

***The third objective was to determine whether perceived organisational support and role clarity predict job insecurity of employees.***

The results indicated that perceived organisational support and role clarity predicted cognitive job insecurity and affective job insecurity of employees in a petrochemical organisation. Based on the discussion, the third objective was reached.

***The fourth objective was to determine whether perceived organisational support, role clarity and job insecurity can predict affective organisational commitment of employees.***

The results indicated that only perceived organisational support and cognitive job insecurity are statistically significant predictors of affective organisational commitment. Based on the above findings, the fourth objective was partially reached.

***The fifth and the last objective was to determine the differences in the levels of perceived organisational support between demographic groups, age, gender, job level, qualifications, employee status and years of service of employees.***

The results indicated that no statistically significant differences regarding perceived organisational support could be found between gender, racial group, age, departments,

education levels and job levels. The results also revealed that no statistically significant differences regarding role conflict and role clarity could be found between racial groups, departments and education levels. However, statistically significant differences were found for gender, age groups and job levels. Male employees experience higher levels of role conflict than their female counterparts.

The results also indicated that the significance of age levels was lower than the adjusted Bonferri adjustment. It was found that there are statistically significant differences between levels of role conflict based on job levels. Employees in level 6C positions (company car) experiences statistically significant higher levels of perceived role conflict than employees in lower level positions.

The results also revealed that employees in lower level positions experience higher levels of affective job insecurity than employees in senior management positions. On the other hand, employees in senior management positions experience lower levels of cognitive job insecurity than employees in lower level positions. No statistically significant differences regarding affective organisational commitment could be found between gender, racial groups, age, departments, education and job levels. Based on the above discussion, the fifth objective was reached.

### **3.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

A limitation of this study is that the design is cross-sectional and it represents employees' opinions, attitudes and feelings at one point in time. In order to curb this problem, a longitudinal evaluation of employee attitudes, opinions and feelings may provide a better examination of perceived organisational support, role clarity and their effects on job insecurity and organisational commitment. Social desirability may also be present. The results were also obtained by means of self-report measures. This may lead to a problem commonly referred to as "method variance" or "nuisance". According to Schaufeli, Enzmann and Girault (1993) the exclusive use of self-report measures in validation

studies increases the likelihood that at least part of the shared variance between measures can be attributed to method variance.

Another limitation is the size of the sample, specifically the distribution of language groups and the sampling procedure in the present study which has significant limitations in terms of generalisation of the findings applied to the total study population. Future studies could benefit hugely in terms of a stratified random-sample design which would ensure sufficient representation of the different groups in the total population of employees in the petrochemical industry.

Not all of the variables and outcomes explored by Wilson et al., (2004) could be investigated. This might not represent the full picture of the problem.

### **3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **3.3.1 Recommendations for the Organisation**

The interest in healthy work organisation continues to grow (Wilson et al., 2004). Organisations need to take very seriously what is needed in order to become a healthy organisation. More and more employees moving into organisations are concerned about their state of health at work and more and more organisations are starting to realise the costs of absenteeism, stress and anger at workplaces, turnover and alcohol and tobacco abuse. It is recommended that teambuilding and team strengthening interventions be implemented that will focus on practices to enhance organisational support and affective organisational commitment of employees. Understanding the dimensions for a healthy work organisation should also form part of these interventions.

During the phase of organisational changes, management should strive to create an open communication environment in order to allow the employees to go through the changes in a less stressful way. This can eradicate the feelings of job insecurity, role ambiguity and role conflict and thereby increasing the commitment of employees because they will

realise that the change is for the better. A strategy that management could follow could be to select employee representatives who will represent the larger employee population in management forums where decisions are made. Training of these employee representatives is very important. Part of their roles as employee representatives must be to be an important link between management, employees and the employee support function and thereby providing emotional support to the employees.

In striving towards a healthy organisation, management must ensure that there are support systems for employees and their roles are clarified. Getting to know the employees better will ensure that management provides the necessary support that employees need. In other words, management need to realise the important part they can play in increasing the role clarity of employees by communicating social and functional role behaviours to employees in a way that reduces the gap between expected and perceived roles.

Career paths for the various positions need to be determined and communicated in an open way to all concerned parties in order to emphasise the clarity of roles. Further to this, the job models/profiles for all jobs which clearly specify roles, competencies required, expected behaviours as well and how these will be measured for their personal development and the bigger performance management process should be developed, discussed and agreed upon with the employees.

Management should also realise the importance of development centers as part of identifying personal development needs, selection for best person job fit and for general career progression. Such interventions provide the organisation and the employees with useful information that can be utilised for various purposes, including drawing up of detailed personal development plans.

Managers need to be developed as developers of people, concentrating on observing behaviour, assessing behaviours against set competencies, giving feedback on

performance and development and ensure that out of those discussions, detailed personal development plans are drawn up.

The current research study adds to the researcher's efforts to comprehend the relationship between perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and organisational commitment. This research provides a new direction in the research of perceived organisational support by starting a debate on this topic.

### **3.3.2 Recommendations for future research**

Present findings have important implications for future research and practice despite the above limitations of this study. Very little or no research has been done on perceived organisational support in South African organisations.

It is suggested that in the future, more research on perceived organisational support and role clarity in South African industries be conducted. Future research should also focus on the reliability and validity of the POSQ, RCQ, JIQ and OCQ for other industries and occupational settings, since they were found to be reliable and valid for this sample specifically. It is also important to determine norm levels for other industries and occupations in South Africa for all questionnaires respectively.

It is recommended that larger samples with more sampling methods be used to enable generalisation of the findings to other similar groups. Also, the use of adequate statistical methods, such as structural equation modeling, equivalence and bias analysis is recommended. The questionnaire used also needs to be translated into languages other than English in order to ensure that there are no misinterpretations of responses due to language inefficiencies.

More longitudinal studies should be conducted on perceived organisational support, role clarity, job insecurity and organisational commitment in other organisations in South Africa in order to compare the results and findings from a South African perspective.

Similar studies can be extended to other petrochemical organisations in order to allow for a larger sample.

Future research is warranted, using a larger database, for the mediating and moderating effects of job insecurity and role clarity on the relationship between perceived organisational support and affective organisational commitment.

It would be interesting to further investigate the effect that perceived organisational support has on the outcomes such as performance, turnover and turnover intentions, general health, absenteeism and employee wellness and support on issues such as alcohol abuse, substance abuse and stress.

### **3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

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

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