

**POSITIVE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS: AN
EXPLORATORY STUDY**

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BCom (Hons)

Submitted in fulfilment of the degree

MAGISTER COMMERCII

In the School of Behavioural Sciences (Labour Relations Management) in the Faculty of
Humanities of the North-West University (Vaal Triangle Campus)

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April 2016

COMMENTS

The reader is reminded of the following:

- The references as well as the editorial style as prescribed by the *Publication Manual* (6th edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA) were followed in this dissertation.
- The dissertation is submitted in the form of two research articles.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The most amazing, yet challenging journey... Lessons learnt. Eyes opened. Knowledge gained. Self-discovery. Memories cherished and challenges remembered. A lot of prayer, faith, trust and belief. Thank you my Lord, God. I have placed my trust in You. This accomplishment was made possible by You. I will go where You need me to be and I will believe in You.

The saying holds true that it takes a village to raise a child...

Doctor Elsabé Diedericks

“Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought.” - Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

You have motivated, supported, persuaded, and encouraged this endeavour far more than what I have ever expected any study leader to do. You possess an amazingly rare ability to show a person the world through literature, encouraging one to explore something which one encounters on a daily basis; by using creativity to sharpen critical thinking skills. This is by far the most exciting, interesting, intriguing and fascinating topic ever and I want to truly thank you for exposing me to the world of literature. No words or actions will ever be able to express my gratitude. Thank you for believing in me.

Professor Ian Rothmann and Ms Elizabeth Bothma

“It is the mark of a truly intelligent person to be moved by statistics.” - George Bernard Shaw

Thank you for making time to assist with this endeavour. Thank you for your advice, reviews and suggestions. You have always been available, assisting more than you would ever believe. Most of all, Prof. Ian, I am beyond thankful that you were prepared to do the statistical analysis on this study, despite your own academic commitments. Thank you, Elizabeth, for assisting me with the technical presentation of the data. I really appreciate both your efforts - more than words and actions can ever describe.

Staff members of North-West University who have taken time from their schedules to assist with this endeavor

“If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?” – Albert Einstein

A qualitative meta-synthesis literature review would be enough to cause huge anxiety attacks for some students, perhaps even some academia. Prof. Tumi Khumalo and Prof. Werner Nell, thank you for reviewing the literature review. All the comments and suggestions were highly appreciated and this process alone made us feel more at ease and comfortable with a manuscript that could either be an exceptional contribution to society, or could go terribly

wrong. To all the other master's students, lecturers, and subject experts who participated in assisting with developing the questionnaire, thank you for your assistance, time and input. This wouldn't have been possible without you. Deborah Mokgojwa and Musa Sauz, it was a privilege to meet you, and you ladies have really opened up my eyes to endless possibilities. I will cherish all the laughs, smirk comments and random jokes.

Professor Linda du Plessis, a special thank you for your support and enthusiasm regarding this study. You are one-of-a-kind lady and I take my hat off to you. Despite your busy schedule, you made time for me, assisting me with this endeavour. I appreciate your kindness more than you will ever know...

The special, important and most supportive family – my foundation

"In every conceivable manner, the family is link to our past, bridge to our future" – Alex Haley

Mommy, I believe this will be proof enough to "Dr Pope" that I *can* achieve more than just matric. Your words of encouragement, support... I ran out of words. I don't even think "thank you" will suffice. You always believed in me, even when I didn't believe in myself. From a young age you pushed me, encouraged me, and instilled a sense of drive in me. Although you believe that I am a self-starter and master of my own destiny, without your love, support and understanding, I would not have achieved nearly as much. You are the best mother, and I will have enormous shoes to fill when I become a mother myself. I only hope that I will be as good a mother as what you are to me. I love you mommy.

Daddy, allowing me to park on your "stoep" with all my luggage, no questions asked and the door wide open. Especially thank you for the "brain" food you made every morning before you left for work. Yolande, thank you for your kind words of encouragement and support. My wonderful sisters, Simone and Felicia Smith, I only hope that one day, should you decide to pursue your Master's degrees, I will be able to assist you as much as you have assisted me. Mona, thank you for going around and collecting data, especially when *the* crisis occurred. Your willingness and unselfish actions have led me to re-evaluate myself and my actions.

Ouma Jones, as promised a while ago, dust off your retro purple outfit in the meantime, we are graduating again! You are an outstanding woman who raised exceptional children. Thank you for the wonderful mother I have. Oupa Smith, the last time I saw you, I made a promise to you while you were lying in a hospital bed in Pretoria. At graduation, please walk up the stage with me, hold my arm and make sure that I don't fall. I did it Oupa. The last promise is fulfilled...

And lastly, the *most* important message to a very special person and his family, Brenden Naudé. No words can describe, nor can actions justify. You believed and trusted that I could do this. You made use of psychological manipulation, well knowing that my defiant nature will prove you wrong. The most powerful tool in your arsenal is to not only encourage me, but to also teach me that I need to embrace my weaknesses and identify my strengths. Thank you for helping with the statistics and reference lists. Thank you, Oom Gertjie and Rhonnie.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved family
and
exceptional supervisor, Dr Diedericks

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SUMMARY

Title: Positive employment relations: An exploratory study

Key terms: Positive relations, positive employment relations, Higher Education, work engagement, turnover intention

South Africa, a developing country, has been facing many challenges over the past few years; for one, Apartheid had played a significant role in shaping democracy in this country. Since the liberation from this political stance in 1994, the country had witnessed many changes, coupled with increasing challenges. Along with a volatile rand, political and economic instability, continual labour unrest, and job scarcity, quality education has become lacking.

Education has been receiving renewed attention lately, with various protests ranging from text book delivery, and a lack of school infrastructure to teachers protesting for wage increases. Furthermore, along with the primary and secondary education sector, higher education institutions (HEIs) have been faced with increasing levels of uncertainty and instability. Not only have HEI systems and approaches undergone a paradigm shift - from rigid more traditional approaches to more flexible and creative approaches - but these changes have had significant effects on employees at HEIs.

Ensuring an engaged workforce during these uncertain times, with employees in the HEI sector being plagued by increasing stress levels and an ever increasing workload coupled with increasing expectations, is a momentous challenge. A disengaged workforce that is faced with ever increasing challenges is more likely to seek other employment opportunities, which ultimately sees employees leaving HEIs. However, when the ambience within the workplace is right, employees are happier, experiencing a sense of well-being which could contribute towards instilling the motivation to be engaged and remain with the institution.

Research on work engagement and turnover intention within the HEI sector has attracted many researchers, with the aim of increasing the work engagement levels and reducing employee turnover. However, positive employment relations that comprise two major role players - the employer and the employee - could contribute towards creating an ambience in the workplace which encourages work engagement and reduces turnover intention. Positive

employment relations - which is still an emerging concept - entails quality, reciprocal work relationships between the employer (supervisor) and the employee, where valuable resources are exchanged between the parties for mutual gain. Such quality relationships are characterised by trust, equity, respect, support, an ability to manage conflict, and effective communication.

However, despite positive employment relations being an emerging concept, not a single study could be found that has investigated the effects positive employment relations might have on the work engagement levels or turnover intention of staff. Positive employment relations emerged from the term positive relations, which fits into the ambit of positive psychology. As a newly-emerged concept, the available literature on positive employment relations had been fragmented thus far, with each study focusing on a particular aspect or aspects of a multi-dimensional concept. Thus, literature failed to conceptualise the term 'positive employment relations' from a holistic approach. For this reason, a mixed method research approach was used to explore and understand what comprises positive employment relations in this study.

The aim of Article 1 was to conceptualise the term 'positive employment relations' and the core constructs which contribute to the establishment of positive employment relations. A meta-synthesis qualitative research design was used, where available literature pertaining to positive relations and positive employment relations had been consulted. Based on the meta-synthesis literature review, six constructs - trust, respect, support, equity, communication and conflict management - were identified as having a significant impact on establishing and maintaining positive employment relations.

Based on the literature review, along with the identified constructs, the Employment Relations Scale (ERS) was developed with the aim of examining the effect these relations might have on an individual's work engagement level and intention to leave an HEI. Article 2 confirmed the validity and reliability of the six constructs identified in Article 1; therefore validating the ERS. Furthermore, it was found that although positive employment relations significantly impacted the work engagement levels and intention to leave of employees at an HEI, the impact on intention to leave was smaller.

Recommendations for future research were made.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is about conceptualising positive employment relations, developing an instrument to measure positive employment relations, and to determine the effects positive employment relations might have on the work engagement and turnover intention of employees employed at a Higher Education Institution in South Africa.

Chapter 1 contains the problem statement, research objectives, research method and the division of chapters.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION OF THE RESEARCH

“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You’re on your own. And you know what you know. And you are the guy who’ll decide where to go” (Dr Seuss, 1986, p. 2).

In the knowledge era in which we find ourselves, more challenges and demands are being directed at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and academia, whereby the drive to become globally competitive and being exposed to increased information sources due to technological advancement, challenge us to change the way we think, live and work (Cleary, Walter, Andrew, & Jackson, 2013; Council of Higher Education, 2007, 2009; Pillay, Boulton-Lewis, & Wilss, 2004).

Higher Education has been one of the more critical factors globally where countries are required to improve their education systems; nurturing well-educated individuals in order for them to contribute to the overall economic position of the country (Pillay et al., 2004). Along with the globalisation of modern economies, countries are competing to ensure individual financial well-being and the ability to move up the value chain (World Economic Forum, 2012). The South African education system is not immune to these improvements, specifically higher education (Council of Higher Education, 2009). Without suitably qualified, engaged and committed staff, it will be nearly impossible to ensure the sustainable

economic growth of a nation (Pienaar & Bester, 2008); simply because education is the backbone of any country - developing and nurturing productive, creative individuals who significantly contribute to the growth of a nation through knowledge and specialised skills (Pillay et al., 2004).

Since the Apartheid Era was abolished in 1994, South Africa had become known as the rainbow nation; legislation and policies had been developed and implemented to embrace a diverse nation (Council on Higher Education, 2007, 2009; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). These legislative frameworks brought about major changes in HEIs (Mouton, Louw, & Strydom, 2013; Paterson, n.d), which resulted in academic staff being subjected to increased levels of stress (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Catano, Francis, Haines, Kirpalani, Shannon, Stinger, & Lozanski, 2010; Khan, 2013; Mark & Smith, 2012; Tytherleigh, Webb, Cooper, & Ricketts, 2005; Zamir & Ambreen, 2011); increased workload and limited academic staff numbers (Tytherleigh et al., 2005); lower levels of job satisfaction (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Byrne, Chughtai, Flood, & Willis, 2012; Harvey & Knight, 1996; Jackson, Rothmann, & Van De Vijver, 2006; Khan, 2013); lack of task commitment and engagement (Liu & Wang, 2013; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010); burnout (Rashkovits & Livne, 2013); and intention to leave (Khan, 2013; Tytherleigh et al., 2005) - factors that prompt academic staff to consider a career change (Tytherleigh et al., 2005). The integration of a diverse workforce in HEIs resulted in the total overhaul of the organisational climate and culture which increased general levels of stress, brought about the instability of employment relationships, and caused uncertainty and controversy; a paradox to the initial perception that academic careers were stress-free (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Catano et al., 2010; Tytherleigh et al., 2005) and stable occupations (Tsai & Wu, 2010).

Many studies have been conducted in HEIs, identifying the causes and effects of stress (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Catano et al., 2010; Khan, 2013; Tytherleigh et al., 2005; Zamir & Ambreen, 2011) and employment-related antecedents; however, limited attention has been given to employment relations and the outcomes these might have on employees' work engagement and intention to remain with or leave HEIs (Cameron, Mora, Leutscher, & Calarco, 2011).

One of many challenges South African HEIs are facing today is the vast implications resulting from employee resignations (Rosser, 2004). Not only does turnover result in recruitment costs (Musah & Nkuah, 2013; Tettey, 2006) which have been found to amount to

between 70% and 200% of employees' annual salary (Netswera, Rankhumise, & Mavundla, 2005), but it also poses momentous challenges in retaining the remainder of talented academic staff (Samuel & Chipunza, 2013). This should be investigated accordingly. Losing academic expertise is an exorbitant price to pay when one can make use of positive employment relations to identify employees' levels of engagement and their propensity to leave (Venkataramani, Labianca, & Grosser, 2013) - even before the threat becomes imminent.

Employment relationships have been found to have a noteworthy impact on employees' ability to conduct work tasks (Gaur, 2013), both positively and negatively; affecting employees' ability to productively contribute to organisational outcomes (Leblebici, 2012). When positive work relationships have been established alongside positive human resource practices (Acquaah, 2004; de Silva, nd; Gould-Williams, 2003; Huselid, 1995), employees generally experience positive effects such as increased perceived organisational and peer support, work and task engagement, an increase in organisational commitment levels, followed by general performance and organisational efficiency (Khan & Rashid, 2012). Positive employment relations do not only counteract toxic relations and the devastation caused, but also give rise to voluntary behaviours whereby staff are committed and engaged in tasks, completing them long before required (Lawrence, Ott, & Bell, 2010); thus building a foundation for employees to remain with the organisation.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Positive relations and positive employment relations are two very different concepts and differentiation will avoid ambiguity regarding these terms. According to Kumashiro and Sedikides (2005), 'positive relations' can be defined as social resources (emotional and psychological) which equip and assist individuals with establishing quality relationships that are characterised by meaningful emotional experiences, well-being and improved day-to-day physical and psychological functioning (Kumashiro & Sedikides, 2005; Lang, 2001; Lang & Carstensen, 2002). The quality of these relationships not only provides emotional and social support during times of adversity, but also has an effect on self-perceptions, self-evaluations and personal goal evaluations (Kumashiro & Sedikides, 2005; McGonigal, 2007; Peterson, 2009; Sherbourne & Stewart, 1991). Kumashiro and Sedikides (2005) found that the source

of positive relationships is often associated with family members, romantic partners or friends.

The term 'positive relations' was then transferred to the work environment, characterised by positive relations among employees and a work environment that is conducive towards trust, continued learning, and support; thus emerging as the term 'positive employment relations' (Anand, Vidarthi, Liden, & Rousseau, 2010; Bajnok, Puddester, MacDonald, Archibald, & Kuhl, 2012). The phenomenon 'positive employment relations' is associated with supportive, compassionate, engaging and trusting relationships which result in positive individual, team, and organisational outcomes (Mills, Fleck, & Kozikowski, 2013). When employment relationships are viewed as being positive, positive outcomes such as increased levels of performance, job engagement, role clarity and satisfaction are reported (Gaur, 2013; Leat, 2008; Mills et al., 2013). Positive employment relations also require high connectivity among individuals who gain and/or have access to resources; exchanging these resources for professional growth (Mills et al., 2013).

Human existence is based on various needs, including the need for affiliation, love and acceptance (as in relationships), according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Meyer, Moore, & Viljoen, 2003). Based on this concept, employment relationships are interdependent, social exchange relationships between employer and employee (Overell, Mills, Roberts, Lekhi, & Blaug, n.d). Positive employment relations fit into the ambit of positive psychology (i.e. the study of processes and conditions which contribute to the optimal functioning and flourishing on individual, group and institutional levels) (Gable & Haidt, 2005). Positive psychology views positive employment relations as a central source of satisfaction, engagement, motivation, altruistic behaviour and happy employees (Harter, Schmidt, & Keyes, 2003). Positive employment relations encompass engagement, transparent communication (Tella, Ayeni, & Popoola, 2007) and equality in the organisation. In order to foster positive employment relations, various values such as trust, honesty, respect, responsibility, accountability, commitment, support and consideration need to be present (Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003). When these positive values and positive human resource practices, policies and processes are present, a phenomenon of organisational virtuousness emerges. Virtuousness is the collective behaviours of single individuals in the employment setting, striving towards excellence and harmony, and generating citizenship behaviours (Manz, Cameron, Manz, & Marx, 2008).

When employment relationships become toxic (Appelbaum & Roy-Girard, 2007), the general aftermath could result in detrimental individual and organisational circumstances (Pace, 2010; Sang, Teo, Cooper, & Bohle, 2013), such as unresolved disputes, hostilities, discrimination, harassment, and bullying (Carnevale, Gainer, & Meltzer, 1990). As a result, organisations experience exorbitant costs related to grievances, industrial action, and destructive, hostile or deviant workplace behaviours (de Silva, 1997; Douglas & Martinko, 2001; Hepworth & Towler, 2004; Schmidt & Müller, 2013); counterproductive behaviour (Fox, Spector, Goh, Bruursema, & Kessler, 2012); and high labour turnover rates (Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003). With toxic employment relationships, organisational virtuousness becomes extinct, peer support becomes a distant memory, and citizenship behaviours evolve into employee cynicism (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006), where “every-man-for-himself” attitudes are adopted (Anand et al., 2010; Burke & Koyuncu, 2010; Fox et al., 2012). The physical, psychological and emotional resources of employees are threatened (Cleary et al., 2012) due to employment relationships breaking down; the work environment becomes toxic, communication is poor, there is a perceived lack of support, and employees are disengaged from their work (Allen et al., 2003). All these ultimately result in a lack of work and task engagement with a propensity towards turnover (Appelbaum & Roy-Girard, 2007; Backes-Gellner & Tuor, 2010; Khatri, Budhwar, & Fern, 1999; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997).

The most fundamental theories that provide a solid foundation for the formation of positive employment relations will be explored in the next section.

Positive Employment Relations Grounded in Theory

The Social Exchange Theory, Conservation of Resources and Spillover Theories, along with more current theoretical frameworks can be used to better understand employment relationships (Allen et al., 2003; Blau, 1964; Hecht & Boies, 2009; Hobfoll, 1989, 1998; Hobfoll & Wells, 1998).

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) emerged from the basic principles that a series of interactions among individuals generate obligations, usually seen as contingent and interdependent on the actions of another person (Blau, 1964). The theory suggests that relationships are built over time and develop into trusting, loyal and mutual connections (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Certain workplace antecedents such as commitment, engagement and job satisfaction are the results of established social relationships (Liao, Liu, & Loi, 2010), as there is an increase in exchange orientation among employees (Cropanzano

& Mitchell, 2005). The SET suggests that the quality of relationships is dependent on the quality of the resources (love, status, information, money, goods and services) (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) and rewards exchanged (Bellou, 2007; Henderson, Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetric, 2008), including human resource policies and practices (Riberio & Semedo, 2014). By understanding the exchange of rules, norms and resources between employees, supervisors and managers, the quality of the employment relationship and employees' intention to leave can be determined (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Henderson et al., 2008; Riberio & Semedo, 2014). However, the psychological contract (PC) - rooted in the theoretical framework of the SET - further assists in examining the individual's perceptions of obligations made between him/her and the organisation (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010; Chaudhry, Wayne, & Schalk, 2009; Cullinane & Dundon, 2006; Freese, Schalk, & Croon, 2011). The PC assists in identifying the underlying effects pertaining to the individual's behaviour when these obligations are met (Chaudhry et al., 2009; Cullinane & Dundon, 2006; Freese et al., 2011), such as job satisfaction, work and task engagement, and commitment; also when individuals engage with one another, exchanging resources (Avey et al., 2010; Chen, Westman, & Eden, 2009; Hobfoll, 1989; Zamani, Gorgievski-Duijvesteijn, & Zarafshani, 2006).

The Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) (Hobfoll, 1989, 1998; Hobfoll & Wells, 1998) examines the resources identified in the SET (relating to information, love, status, money, services, and goods), and can be used to better explain the reactions employees exhibit where employment relationships are concerned. COR theory specifies that individuals seek, obtain, retain and protect the resources available to them (Hobfoll, 1989, 1998; Hobfoll & Wells, 1998; Zamani et al., 2006). Once these resources are threatened or reach a point of depletion, individuals are susceptible to stress, which can lead to burnout (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008); eventually resulting in minimal or no work engagement (Chen et al., 2009; Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2008). Thus, when stress is experienced due to a lack of resources or resources being depleted and not recovered, employees become exhausted and burnout is experienced (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008), affecting behaviours and increasing propensity towards turnover.

The Spillover Theory (Hecht & Boies, 2009) suggests that work experiences cannot be isolated from an individual's non-working life, and vice versa. This means that it is highly improbable that job experiences can be segregated from one's personal life, if not impossible (Hecht & Boies, 2009; Saari & Judge, 2004). This theory can assist in understanding the

impact employment relations may have on an individual's behavioural and emotional responses within a work and personal context. Irrespective of positive or negative employment relations, spill overs will occur, which can be viewed as a cyclical pattern affecting personal relationships, and then directly impacting relations in the workplace. For example, when toxic employment relations are experienced, these negative workplace experiences will spill over into the individual's personal life, resulting in negative personal and family relations (Hecht & Boies, 2009). These negative personal experiences will then result in negative work attitudes and emotions, counterproductive behaviour, and increased turnover tendencies (Batt & Valcour, 2011; Diedericks & Rothmann, 2014). However, the same is true when individuals are subjected to positive employment relations, with positive spillovers generating positive behaviours, emotions and relations both in their personal and work lives (Hecht & Boies, 2009).

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000), psychological conditions (Kahn, 1990), positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2004), positive organisational scholarship (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008), and organisational virtuousness (Ribeiro & Rego, 2009) are more current theoretical frameworks for studying positive relations and positive employment relations. According to the SDT, an individual's growth tendencies and psychological need satisfaction for competence, relatedness and autonomy could foster positive processes (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Individuals - who are subjected to increased levels of relatedness, competence and autonomy - increase their abilities to determine their actions and behaviours, whilst gaining a sense of achievement from executing tasks efficiently (Cooper, Schuett, & Phillips, 2012). This is an outcome of psychological need satisfaction which, according to Bidee et al. (2013), translates into individuals who are more dedicated, motivated and able to establish quality social relationships based on autonomy, competence and relatedness (Cooper et al., 2012; Ferriz, Sicilia, & Sáenz-Álvarez, 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

According to Kahn (1990), three psychological conditions (PsyCon), namely availability, safety, and meaningfulness emerged from his study. The study proposed that when psychological conditions are present, individuals feel psychologically safe. Individuals who feel psychologically safe, tend to feel valuable (experience meaningfulness) and are able to establish and engage in rewarding relationships, characterised by support and trust. These relationships do not only provide psychological safety to individuals, but also provide individuals with physical, emotional and psychological resources to engage in social interactions. When these interpersonal relations have not been established or are absent,

individuals tend to withdraw due to an absence of resources, resulting in disengaged individuals (Kahn, 1990).

The Broaden-and-Build Theory (BBT) (Fredrickson, 2004) postulates that individuals are able to build enduring personal (emotional, intellectual, physical and physiological) resources when subjected to positive emotions. In this way an individual's thought and action processes are broadened, resulting in resilient, creative and knowledgeable individuals who are able to adapt accordingly and become socially integrated individuals. As a relationship becomes stable and trusting, individuals have access to available resources and are therefore more likely to endure small emotional fluctuations (such as mood changes) between individuals, groups and supervisors (Fredrickson, 2004; Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Garland, Fredrickson, Kring, Johnson, Meyer, & Penn, 2010; Waugh & Fredrickson, 2006).

Positive organisational scholarship (POS) suggests that an individual's ability to thrive and flourish in the employment setting is dependent on the positive aspects (organisational attributes and processes) within the organisation (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). The theoretical framework of POS was derived from research surrounding positive organisations (Cameron et al., 2003). According to POS, positive aspects such as authenticity and individual attribute development (which forms part of the organisation's attributes and processes) have a significant effect on individuals (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Cameron et al., 2003). When an organisation promotes authenticity, individuals are able to relate with one another, display increased engagement levels, and feel empowered (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007). POS furthermore placed significant focus on individual attributes such as strength, resilience and flourishing (Cameron et al., 2003), also emphasising the importance of developing these attributes which result in optimal individual and organisational performance, flourishing (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007), and ultimately virtuous behaviours and emotions (such as compassion, forgiveness, dignity, respect, optimism and integrity) (Armansin & Thompson, 2013).

Ribeiro and Rego (2009) postulated that organisational virtuousness refers to doing what is right, as well as to the social betterment of all involved, transcending from one individual to another; thus cultivating social value within the organisation. Organisational virtuousness places focus on the elevation of individual behaviour and comprises human strength, flourishing, resilience and moral goodness (Ribeiro & Rego, 2009). Virtuous organisations acknowledge that the six virtuous considerations such as faith, courage, compassion,

integrity, justice and wisdom can be applied in the work setting (Kilburg, 2012; Manz et al., 2008; Sadler-Smith, 2013). These virtuous considerations result in a healthy and holistic approach to the employment environment, with emphasis on positive deviations from the set norms (Kilburg, 2012; Manz et al., 2008; Sadler-Smith, 2013). Positive employment behaviours, attitudes and conduct, synergy among employees, improved decision-making practices and decision rationale, increased customer and employee loyalty, job satisfaction and work morale are all viewed as positive outcomes of a virtuous organisation (Zamahani, Ahmadi, Sarlak, & Sherkari, 2013).

The ability to flourish and thrive in an organisation has been directly linked to leadership, the latter playing a significant role in creating a virtuous organisation (Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004; Eberly, Holly, Johnshon, & Mitchell, 2011; Fry, 2003; Sluss, Klimchak, & Holmes, 2008). The leader-member exchange theory (LMX) relational leadership approach suggests that a leader's qualities determine the relationship quality between the leader and follower, not only affecting the outcomes, but also how they are achieved (Avolio, 2007; Eberly et al., 2011; Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008; Sluss et al., 2008; Uhl-Bein, 2006). Sluss et al. (2008) further argue that this relationship-based leadership approach aligns with POS, as it places focus on the dyadic relationship between the leader and the reciprocal follower-leader relationship which promotes trust, respect, communication and mutual obligation, and encourages the exchange of resources (Avolio, 2007; Eberly et al., 2011; Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995; Uhl-Bein, 2006). This leader-member relationship emphasises continual personal and team growth and development, encouraging building strong, exchangeable relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995; Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008; Uhl-Bein, 2006).

Social facilitation occurs when the relationship between the leader and member is viewed as positive, and results in individuals improving their task performance whilst in the presence of others (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Eberly et al., 2011; Forsyth, 2014; Sluss et al., 2008). Increased performance can be attributed to formal and informal influences and the exchange of resources among individuals and a team (Avolio et al., 2009; Eberly et al., 2011; Forsyth, 2014; Sluss et al., 2008).

The five dimensions of social well-being (Keyes, 1998), the social identity theory (Dutton & Ragins, 2009), and the attachment theory (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2002) can further provide a theoretical understanding of employment relations and the effects these relations might have on teams. These three theories will now receive attention.

An individual's ability to address and face social tasks and challenges is related to the individual's connection to communities and social structures, known as social well-being (Keyes, 1998). Keyes (1998) suggested that social well-being consists of five domains, namely social integration, social acceptance, social contribution, social actualisation, and social coherence. Social integration refers to the relationship quality between the individual and society; whereas social acceptance refers to the identification, generalisation and categorisation of an individual's qualities and characteristics. Social contribution relates to the value an individual may bring to a society and the community; whereas social actualisation allows the individual to evaluate the confidence, future growth potential and the belief that the community may progress to overcome social challenges and difficulties in a more effective manner. Lastly, social coherence pertains to the perception, quality and operation of the social world that is a social world which is predictable, caring, and that takes interest in society and the community (Keyes, 1998). When applied in the employment context, Harter et al. (2003) argue that organisations who embrace social well-being - taking an employee's best interest into consideration and considering an individual's well-being - can result in healthy (mentally, emotionally and physically), satisfied and engaged employees. Social well-being does not only have an impact on individuals, but also has an impact on an organisation's efficiency, effectiveness and performance levels, and for this reason supervisors should embrace and enhance social well-being (Harter et al., 2003), which can be achieved through positive employment relations.

The social identity theory investigates the interaction between individuals and groups once the interaction has commenced (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). In order to achieve or maintain self-esteem and superiority levels, individuals associate themselves with particular groups (Dutton & Ragins, 2009). Once associated with a particular group, the individual absorbs the group's qualities and characteristics, viewing the group as an extension of the 'self' (Forsyth, 2014). Cornelissen, Haslam, and Balmer (2007) further define social identity on three levels - individual, group, and organisational levels (Hogg & Terry, 2000). On the individual level, individuals gain a sense of self within the organisation; whereas on group level the team shares an identity with the organisation (Cornelissen et al., 2007). Lastly, the culture of the organisation relates to the organisational level of social identity (Cornelissen et al., 2007). Based on this theory, meaningful, positive employment relationships are more likely to occur when individuals are able to identify, associate with, and internalise the identity of members and leaders who share similar ideals (Albert, Ashforth, & Dutton, 2000).

Leaders fulfil an imperative function in establishing the dynamics of the organisation as experienced by employees (Visagie, Linde, & Havenga, 2011). The symbolic interactionism theory, which forms part of the individual level of the social identity theory, investigates the individual's shared perception regarding workplace interactions (Cornelissen et al., 2007; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). Sluss and Ashforth (2007) further elaborated that, based on the meaning of symbols, gestures and words, the individual's roles and role-relationships are socially constructed by reciprocity of other individuals who have engaged in the social interaction. According to Cornelissen et al. (2007), symbolic interactionism occurs when the individual's perception of the organisation - such as being an employer of choice, and having sound organisational values, leadership and management style - is a result of the organisation managing its own identity (Gioia, Shultz, & Corely, 2000). This means that the organisation makes use of language, artifices and behaviour to differentiate itself from other organisations, as well as to legitimise the organisation (Cornelissen et al., 2007).

Relational leaders play a more significant role when individuals experience adversity (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001, 2005). When an individual feels threatened, according to the attachment theory, an innate psychobiological system will motivate the individual to seek proximity to significant individuals who are viewed as being reliable and supportive (Bretherton, 1985; Collins & Feeney, 2000; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001, 2005; Mikulincer, Shaver, & Pereg, 2003; Waters, Crowell, Elliott, Corcoran, & Treboux, 2002). The attachment theory further suggests that individuals who feel that their relationships with others are unworthy, experience attachment avoidance (Berghaus, 2011; Collins & Feeney, 2000; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005; Waters et al., 2002); whereas an individual who experiences attachment anxiety, concerns him/herself with the availability of other individuals during times of adversity (Berghaus, 2011; Collins & Feeney, 2000; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005; Waters et al., 2002). Individuals who do not display attachment avoidance or attachment anxiety are classified as being securely attached, as they experience supportive and trusting relationships (Berghaus, 2011; Collins & Feeney, 2000; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005; Waters et al., 2002). Individuals who are unable to establish secure attachments, personally experience lower levels of support, believe they are receiving poor support, and develop pessimistic expectations and beliefs (Berghaus, 2011; Collins & Feeney, 2000; Mikulincer et al., 2003; Waters et al., 2002).

The abovementioned theories all provide a strong theoretical grounding in order to gain valuable insight into the development and maintenance of positive employment relationships. They can also assist in determining the effects these relationships might have on employees' work engagement and intention to remain with or leave an HEI – outcomes which are being discussed in the next section.

Work Engagement

Engagement constitutes various concepts, such as employee engagement and work engagement, being linked to employees' characteristics and organisational factors which affect job performance (Pienaar & Bester, 2008; Rich et al., 2010).

It is essential to acknowledge that there are two schools of thought surrounding engagement from the burnout-antithesis approach. Maslach and Leiter (1997) argue that engagement and burnout can be placed on a single continuum, whereby engagement (characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy) is placed on the opposite positive end and burnout (characterised by exhaustion, cynicism and lack of accomplishment) is placed on the opposite, negative end. The second school of thought argues that work engagement is an ubiquitous, persistent and positive state experienced by employees, initially comprising three dimensions - vigour (mental energy and resilience), dedication (involvement and feelings of pride and enthusiasm), and absorption - known as the positive antithesis of burnout (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008; Jackson et al., 2006; Pienaar & Bester, 2008; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002).

Employee engagement is an individual's cognitive, behavioural, and emotional state of involvement, satisfaction and enthusiasm toward his or her work, resulting in long-term, positive organisational outcomes (needs satisfying approach; Kahn, 1990) (Harter, Schmidt, & Keyes, 2002; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). Work engagement relates to positive organisational outcomes (satisfaction-engagement approach), which include enthusiasm towards work, job satisfaction, motivation and low turnover intention; also including positive behaviour such as personal initiative and learning (Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). Jackson et al. (2006) indicated that job resources - playing either intrinsic or extrinsic motivational roles (such as fostering growth, learning and development) - are affected by an individual's work engagement.

Townsend, Wilkinson, and Burgess (2014) indicated that employee engagement has been found to link to productivity, performance and turnover intention. Furthermore, when individuals experience disengagement, relationships in the workplace are negatively affected, resulting in a breakdown of the relationship between the individual and the organisation, and ultimately exacerbating the individual's intention to leave the organisation (Liu & Wang, 2013; Rich et al., 2010).

Turnover Intention

Intention to leave the organisation refers to an employee who wishes to remove him/herself as a member from an organisation, effectively severing the employment relationship (Bellou, 2007; Jaros, 1997). Behaviours such as withdrawal, lack of citizenship (Tziner, Fein, Shultz, Shaul, & Zilberman, 2012), and employee cynicism (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006) are precursors of the intention to leave an organisation (Bellou, 2007). According to Walsh (1988), intention to leave of individuals can be attributed to the inability to tolerate or reduce uncertainty experienced and is based on the stability of the employment relationship (Blomme, Van Rheede, & Tromp, 2010). Mismanagement of the human element could be devastating (Acquaah, 2004; Appelbaum, Roberts, & Shapiro, 2009), as supported by the study of Khatri et al. (1999) that found that poor management, a lack of consistent and systematic HR policies and practices; and inequality (Bellou, 2007) also contributed significantly to the intention to leave (Ribeiro & Semedo, 2014).

It is essential to establish and maintain healthy work relationships, as these relationships affect the working conditions of individuals and ultimately their intention to remain with (or leave) the organisation. The ability to explore, examine and investigate these employment relationships, not only in HEIs, but other organisations as well can spawn scientific information which is invaluable to fundamental human resource practices. From a labour relations perspective, when these employment relationships are healthy, HEIs are less likely to experience labour unrest, as well as vindictive and destructive workplace behaviours. HEIs will be able to retain talent which, in turn, will result in attracting talent in an industry that is notorious for being a stressful occupation (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Catano et al., 2010; Tsai & Wu, 2010; Tytherleigh et al., 2005).

There is currently a gap in literature regarding what constitutes positive employment relations and the effect of such relations on employees' work engagement and intention to leave. The aim of the study is therefore to conceptualise positive employment relations, identify the

psychometric properties of relations at work, and the effect of positive employment relations on the work engagement and turnover intention of employees, particularly at an HEI.

With reference to the literature review, the following specific questions are posed:

- How are positive employment relations conceptualised in literature?
- What are the psychometric properties of a measuring instrument of employment relations?
- What are the effects of positive employment relationships on the work engagement and intention to leave of employees at an HEI?

1.3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

1.3.1 General Aim

The general aim of the study was to establish how positive employment relations were conceptualised in literature; and to assess the validity and reliability of a measure of employment relations at an HEI.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this research were to:

- examine how positive employment relations are conceptualised in literature;
- determine the psychometric properties of a measuring instrument of employment relations; and
- investigate the impact of positive employment relations on the work engagement and turnover intention of employees at an HEI.

1.4 RESEARCH METHOD

In order to achieve the objectives as set out above, the research study will consist of two phases, namely a literature review and an empirical study.

Literature Review

The first part of this study (Chapter 2) employed a meta-synthesis literature review, referring to a qualitative method of study whereby the object of the study was to seek an understanding

and explanation of a particular phenomenon. This was done by comparing a large array of published academic literature; identifying and comparing the common elements of the studies (Barnette-Page & James, 2009; Heyvaert, Maes, & Onghena, 2011; Sandelowski, Docherty, & Emden, 1997; Walsh & Downe, 2005; Weed, 2005).

The meta-synthesis qualitative review (Chapter 2) primarily conceptualised positive employment relations globally. The aim of the meta-synthesis was to fully comprehend the term “employment relations”, including positive and negative employment relationships; distinguishing between positive relations and positive employment relations; identifying the key characteristics which constitute positive relations at work; and finally identifying the impact of positive employment relations on work engagement and ultimately intention to leave.

Relevant and available academic manuscripts published in the field of positive relations and related constructs were perused by means of Atlas ti7 for the purpose of the literature review. Other literature sources included text books, library catalogues, internet search engines and databases, including but not limited to EBSCO-host, Emerald, Science Direct, SA ePublications, Sabinet and Nexus.

Empirical Study

Chapter 3 comprised a quantitative research design, with the aim of validating the Employment Relations Scale (ERS). The ERS had been developed according to the constructs which have been identified through the literature review in Chapter 2 of this study. After the measure had been developed and the questionnaire had been designed, a convenience sampling method was selected due to time, accessibility and availability constraints. The statistical analysis tested the reliability and validity of the measure and the statistical analyses programs which were used included SPSS (IBM Corporation, 2013) and Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2014).

1.4.1 Research Design

An exploratory mixed method approach was used in the study, whereby the qualitative data was collected exploring and identifying the key concepts in the field of positive employment relations. The development of an instrument to measure employment relations formed part of

the quantitative research and was used in collaboration with the meta-synthesis qualitative review (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009; Heyvaert et al., 2011; Maree, 2011; Walsh & Downe, 2004).

During the first phase of the research, the meta-synthesis literature review assisted in better understanding and explaining employment relationships and the properties of positive relations at work (which formed the foundation of the study) (Heyvaert et al., 2011; Walsh & Downe, 2004). The purpose of selecting this method of synthesis was based on the need to identify commonalities (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009) among studies on positive employment relations, in order to develop a measuring instrument (Weed, 2005) which could measure the variables constituting positive relations in organisations. The relevant literature identified 1) common core elements of existing literature on positive relations; 2) theories used as frameworks in the different studies; and 3) the findings of relevant and related studies (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009). This allowed for a better investigation of what constituted positive employment relations, relying solely on global, published academic information pertaining to this phenomenon (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009; Heyvaert et al., 2011; Maree, 2011; Walsh & Downe, 2004; Weed, 2005).

In line with the mixed method approach, quantitative data was then collected (Chapter 3) by utilising a measuring instrument that was designed based on the constructs identified during the meta-synthesis literature review (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The validity (i.e. measuring what it purports to) and reliability (showing stability and consistency) of the psychometric properties of this measuring instrument (Rattray & Jones, 2005) were then tested on the participants of the study.

The validity of the questionnaire, called the Employment Relations Scale (ERS), was tested by making use of the deductive scale development approach (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). This method of validation can only be done once the phenomenon has been fully understood by doing extensive research (i.e. literature reviews), and is often used when a researcher wishes to retest existing data, such as categories, concepts, models, or hypotheses (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hinkin, 1998).

Most items in the questionnaire were selected from pre-existing surveys which were then cross-referenced with the literature review, ensuring item relevance (Germain, 2006). The items were then linguistically altered to “supervisor”. This method of validation required the involvement of a panel of subject matter experts from the following research domains,

namely Industrial Psychology, Psychology, Sociology, Labour Relations and Human Resource Management. The panel comprised two groups, namely group A - master's students - and group B - academic staff (senior lecturer- and associate professor to professor levels) (Germain, 2006). Group A, comprising master's students, was selected to form part of the panel due their sound knowledge of the subject matter. The panel assisted in 1) sorting the questions into content areas; 2) grouping themes into sub-dimensions and dimensions; and 3) sorting these items according to their a) representativeness, b) comprehensiveness, and c) clarity (Germain, 2006; Hinkin, 1998). This resulted in construct validity (the item relates to the construct and determines the extent to which the item measures the same thing) and item analysis (discarding any items with shortcomings) (Germain, 2006; Hinkin, 1998; Maree, 2011).

Once the items had been selected and validated by groups A and B, the questionnaire outlay was compiled (which consisted of a biographical questionnaire, and items selected during the deductive content analysis; two other existing and validated measuring instruments were also included for this study in particular, namely the Work Engagement Scale and the Turnover Intention Scale). The questionnaire was then disseminated among employees at an HEI (Germain, 2006; Hinkin, 1998), assisting in testing the reliability of the ERS (Hinkin, 1998). Confirmatory factor analysis was used, along with Raykov's reliability coefficient (ρ) (Raykov, 2009), with the cut-off value for reliability set at .70 (Wang & Wang, 2012) to test for internal consistency (Hinkin, 1998; Maree, 2011). After the scale had been tested for internal consistency, it then underwent content validation, whereby items which were no longer valid were reviewed and removed from the measure (Germain, 2006; Hinkin, 1998).

1.4.2 Participants

To ensure that the mixed method approach remained true to its design, a non-probability sampling method was used to collect the quantitative data (Creswell, 2009; Struwig & Stead, 2007). This method was selected due to 1) time constraints; 2) testing a measuring instrument; and 3) because this was a preliminary study in the development of a survey (Maree, 2011). The convenience sampling method was selected due to the availability and accessibility of the respondents (Maree, 2011; Struwig & Stead, 2007). This allowed for maximum participation by staff employed at an HEI who wished to participate in the study (Creswell, 2009). A minimum of 200 respondents were targeted for this sampling method, concluding phase two of the study (Hinkin, 1998).

The mixed method research and questionnaire design utilised in this study will now be illustrated in Figure 1.

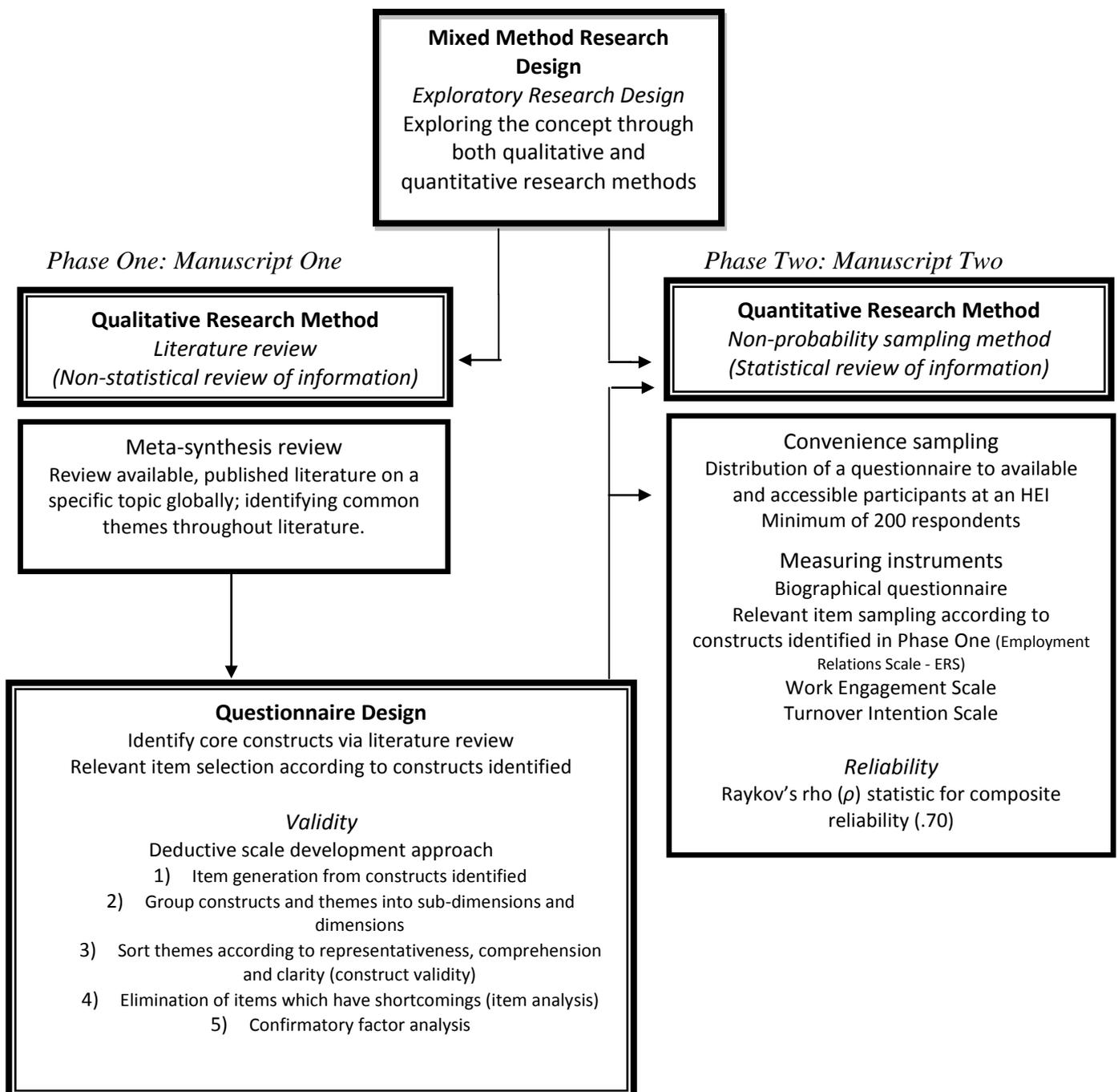


Figure 1. Mixed method research and questionnaire design (adapted from Creswell, 2009; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Germain, 2006; Hinkin, 1998; Maree, 2011; Rattray & Jones, 2005; Struwig & Stead, 2007).

1.4.3 Measuring Instruments

The following research measurements were utilised in the research:

- *Biographical information survey*. A demographic questionnaire measured participant variables such as gender, age, race, marital status, language group, designation, qualification level etc.
- *Employment Relations Scale (ERS)*. A measuring instrument comprising 37 items was developed in this study. Items were developed relating to the six constructs that had been identified as comprising positive relations at work, namely trust (nine items; e.g., “My supervisor acknowledges my rights as an employee”), support (eight items; e.g., “My supervisor gives supportive feedback on my performance”), respect (four items; e.g., “My supervisor is careful that his or her behaviour does not negatively affect me or the department”), equity and equality (four items; e.g., “My supervisor applies the same standards to everyone when decisions are made”), communication (seven items; e.g., “My supervisor involves me in social activities at work”), and conflict management (five items; e.g., “My supervisor attempts to change organisational rules/policies that are non-productive or counterproductive”). A seven-point Likert-scale was used, ranging from 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) for all items of the ERS.
- The *Work Engagement Scale (WES; Rothmann, 2010)* was used to measure work engagement. The WES consisted of nine items. A 7-point frequency scale varying from 1 (*almost never or never*) to 7 (*almost always or always*) was used for all items. The three components of Kahn’s (1990) conceptualisation of work engagement were reflected in the items, namely cognitive engagement (e.g., “I get so into my job that I lose track of time”), emotional engagement (e.g., “I am enthusiastic about my job”) and physical engagement (e.g., “I am full of energy in my work”). Evidence for the construct validity of the WES was reported by Rothmann (2010) and the following alpha coefficients for the three scales of the WES were found: physical engagement = 0.80; emotional engagement = 0.82; and cognitive engagement = 0.78.
- The *Turnover Intention Scale (TIS; Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000)* measured turnover intention and consisted of three items. An example of an item is ‘I am planning to search for a new job during the next 12 months’ (Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000). Response

options ranged from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). A Cronbach alpha coefficient of .83 was reported for the TIS.

1.4.4 Research Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the selected organisation's management team prior to conducting the research. All ethical issues as prescribed by the North-West University were strictly adhered to. The target population for the study included all staff – academic, support, administrative and technical – permanent, temporary and fixed-term employees at an HEI in South Africa.

For the quantitative research, a questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter indicating the purpose of the research, with special emphasis on the confidentiality of the research (Connelly, 2014). The questionnaires were disseminated via hard copy to participants; indicating that all respondents participated on a voluntary basis; that they were under no duress to participate; that participation was anonymous; and that participants could withdraw at any time during the research project without prejudice (Connelly, 2014).

The responses received from the questionnaire were captured on an Excel spread sheet, where after it was prepared for statistical analysis.

1.4.5 Statistical Analysis

As the study comprised a meta-synthesis, non-statistical literature review, statistical analyses were only applicable to the quantitative approach and the data was gathered and analysed accordingly.

The SPSS 22 program (IBM Corporation, 2013) was used to analyse the raw quantitative data. The data was described via descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations). Pearson correlation coefficients were used to specify the relationship between the variables, with the level of statistical significance set at $p < 0.05$. A cut-off point of 0.30 was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients.

The quantitative data collected was analysed using Mplus version 7.31 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2014). When performing structural equation modelling (SEM), Kline (2011) suggested that two steps should be taken when evaluating a model. The two-step procedure of SEM was selected as an alternative to the standard approach due to its limitations, such as the inability

to identify at which level the model does not fit well. The two-step procedure produces estimates of saturated covariance matrices at each level and then performs a single-level analysis at each level with the estimated covariance matrices as input (Yuan & Bentler, 2007).

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the factorial validity of the measurement model, thereafter regressions were analysed (Byrne, 2010). The measurement model which indicated the best fit of the data was selected as the basis for the structural model. The Maximum Likelihood Robust estimator (MLR) was used throughout all analyses to take the skewness and kurtosis of the data into account (Wang & Wang, 2012).

The following indices produced by Mplus were used to assess the model fit in this study: 1) absolute fit indices, including the chi-square (χ^2) which is the test of absolute fit of the model, the Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR), and the Root-Means-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA); and 2) incremental fit indices, including the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Hair, Black, Babin, & Andersen, 2010). For the TLI and CFI, values higher than 0.90 were considered acceptable. RMSEA values lower than 0.08 and a SRMR lower than 0.05 indicated a close fit between the model and the data.

To allow for alternative model comparison and model parsimony, two fit statistics, namely the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) were used to compare the competing measurement models, with lower values indicating a better model (Hair et al., 2010). The Satorra-Bentler chi-square difference test was used to further compare models (Satorra & Bentler, 2010), as the MLR estimator was unable to provide a direct comparison between the chi-square values. The reliability of the questionnaire was measured by making use of Raykov's rho (ρ) statistic which measures composite reliability (Raykov, 2009). According to Wang and Wang (2012), the cut-off value for reliability should be set at 0.70.

1.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical clearance to conduct the study was approved by the North-West University Ethics Committee [ethics number NWU-00335-14-A8]. The purpose of the study, including the roles and responsibilities of all parties, was clearly communicated to all participants involved in the research. Assurance was given that the information gathered would remain confidential

and parties would remain anonymous (Connelly, 2014). Participants were also assured that all information gathered would be used for the sole purpose of the study (Myers & Venable, 2014). It was emphasised that all participants who had engaged in the study had done so voluntarily and could withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice. The researcher personally collected the sealed boxes in which the completed questionnaires had been placed (Halse & Honey, 2005).

Informed consent forms providing the purpose and procedure of the research, possible risks, potential benefits, confidentiality, withdrawal, name and contact details of student and supervisor, and participation agreement had been issued to each participant during the research (Myers & Venable, 2014).

In the case of any complications or risks arising before, during, or after participation in the study, the service of a professional counsellor, who is registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), was made available to participants at no charge (Connelly, 2014). Feedback regarding the results of the study was given to those participants who requested feedback.

1.6 CHAPTER LAYOUT

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Article 1: Conceptualising positive employment relations: A meta-synthesis literature review

Chapter 3: Article 2: Validation of the Employment Relations Scale (ERS)

Chapter 4: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

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CHAPTER 2

ARTICLE 1

Conceptualising positive employment relations: A qualitative meta-synthesis

Abstract

The aim of this study was to conceptualise the term positive employment relations, focusing on the theoretical framework thereof; also identifying the core components which are imperative for the formation of positive relations in the work environment. The study focused on available published scientific literature referring to positive employment relations, of which the majority of sources approached positive employment relations from a positive psychological perspective. Optimal functioning and flourishing of individuals result in an optimally flourishing organisation, and to achieve this, an organisation can attend to and improve the quality of relationships within the organisation. Making use of Atlas ti7 and various scientific search engines, a qualitative meta-synthesis literature study was done utilising the key terms ‘employment relations’, ‘positive relations’, ‘negative relations’, and ‘workplace relations’. It was found that positive employment relations comprise six key constructs: Trust, respect, support, communication, equity and equality, and conflict management.

Key terms: Positive psychology, positive employment relations, positive workplace relations, positive relations, resources.

Internationally, organisations such as the Fortune 500 companies have maintained a large market share, increased their competitive edge and thrived under harsh economic conditions; which have led to an increase in research interest in investigating how these organisations thrive (Gamerschlag & Moeller, 2011; Ibanez, 2014; Richards & Schat, 2011; Robbins, Judge, Odendaal, & Roodt, 2009). Yet, many questions are posed on how these companies are able to thrive during the tough economic conditions, with researchers examining the circumstances that result in an organisation's downfall (Ireland & Hitt, 2005). Valuable research has highlighted two important resources which have made a significant contribution to an organisation's value within the community (Dutton & Ragins, 2007; Richards & Schat, 2011). The emphasis is on the importance of these resources leading to a sustainable, profitable, performing and thriving organisation and is known as human capital and workplace relations (Dutton & Ragins, 2007; Richards & Schat, 2011).

The Universum Student Survey 2013/2014 (2014) highlighted the importance of effectively managing human resources. Identifying key attributes which result in an attractive perception of the company include training and development, leadership opportunities, sponsorships for further education, supportive leaders, and organisations that will serve as an excellent reference for the future. By placing focus on the valuable relationships among employees, organisations - increasing their levels of sustainability, performance and efficiency - are able to align the resource with the values of the organisation and business objectives (Mills, Fleck, & Kozikowski, 2013). Lucrative Spanish companies such as Chiese Pharmaceuticals are invested in their employees by ensuring that the values of the company are recognised, resulting in a significant return on investment; whereas Ernst and Young (EY) in Spain empowers employees to best represent the values of the company (Ibanez, 2014). LG Electronics transmits its five core values during the integration process after an employee's arrival (Ibanez, 2014). The commonality that Chiese, EY and LG Electronics share is that they are ranked as the top employers globally, with proven commitment toward positive employment relations (Ibanez, 2014; Mills et al., 2013).

Organisations have found that collaborating with the human resource department and managing volatile resources have resulted in fruitful, positive results, such as increased performance levels (Resurreccion, 2012). Negative outcomes such as stress (Appelbaum & Roy-Girard, 2007), high turnover rates, and labour disputes (Khan, 2013, Tytherleigh, Webb, Cooper, & Ricketts, 2005) have decreased slightly.

Researchers have recently begun applying the term ‘social relations’ to the work context, with the aim of investigating the effects these relations might have on the individual and organisation, which then emerged as positive employment relations (Spooner & Haidar, 2006). Positive employment relations fit into the ambit of positive psychology (which entails the study of processes and conditions that contribute to the optimal functioning and flourishing of an individual, group and institution (Gable & Haidt, 2005). Positive approaches have been used to examine employment relationships, identifying the effects these relationships may have on commitment, engagement, organisational citizenship behaviours and intention to leave the organisation (Culbertson, Fullagar, & Mills, 2010; Harter, Schmidt, & Keyes, 2003; Khan & Rashid, 2012). Although positive relations and positive employment relations are regarded as two different terms, neither can be viewed in isolation, especially within the work context. The reason for this is because positive relations in general set the stage (Kumashiro & Sedikides, 2005) on which to build positive relations in the work context (Bono, Glomb, Shen, Kim, & Koch, 2013; Larson, Norman, Hughes, & Avey, 2013; Shukla & Singh, 2013).

Social relations (embedded within the Social Exchange Theory, Blau, 1964) have drawn increasing research attention from a wide variety of research fields. Studies on social relations identify various advantages of positive social interactions, relationships and the positive effects these relations have on the individual - psychologically, emotionally and physically (Khan & Rashid, 2012; Kumashiro & Sedikides, 2005; Lang & Carstensen, 2002). The term ‘positive relations’ refers to social resources (Kumashiro & Sedikides, 2005) that encompass the quality of relationships built among individuals, resulting in meaningful emotional experiences. These positive emotional experiences are often associated with strong feelings of well-being and improved day-to-day physical and psychological functioning, effecting citizenship behaviours (Lang & Carstensen, 2002; Manz, Cameron, Manz, & Marx, 2008). According to Lilius, Worline, Dutton, Kanov, and Maitlis (2011), a positive relationship reflects true relatedness and mutuality.

The term ‘positive employment relations’ refers to positive work relationships that develop among employees. Positive employment relations result in individuals supporting one another, creating a work environment that is conducive towards trust and the need for continued learning (Anand, Vidyarthi, Liden, & Rousseau, 2010; Bajnok, Puddester, MacDonald, Archibald, & Kuhl, 2012). Individuals, who are subjected to positive employment relations, are more likely to report higher levels of job engagement,

performance, satisfaction and role clarity (Gaur, 2013; Mills et al., 2013). Positive employment relations are associated with compassionate, supportive, engaging, resilient behaviours, requiring high connectivity among individuals who gain and/or have access to resources, and who exchange these resources for professional growth (Mills et al., 2013).

In a culturally diverse country such as South Africa, various organisations are faced with the momentous challenge of effectively managing the workforce (Jelsma & Ferguson, 2004). Since the abolishment of the Apartheid Era, various legislative changes had been made. These changes included the amendments to and approval of the Constitution of South Africa, 108 of 1996, Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 75 of 1997 (BCEA), the Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995 (LRA), the Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998 (EEA) etc., to better regulate the relationship between employer and employee. Although legislation regulates and guides various aspects of the employment relationship, legislation does not solely prescribe the organisation's culture or the building of relationships within the organisation (Ribeiro & Semedo, 2014).

Investigating and striving to understand these positive employment relationships do not only shed light on the nature of the employment relationship, but also identify the key elements required to effectively build reciprocal relationships between individuals in the workplace and the organisation that will benefit both parties, namely employees and the organisation.

Research Methodology

In order to better understand positive relations within the employment setting, various aspects such as the nature of employment relations and key characteristics or concepts will require extensive exploration. This is to be done by making use of a meta-synthesis literature review which had been selected for this study. A meta-synthesis literature review is a qualitative method of reviewing literature, identifying key elements within literature, and incorporating all the common and recurring elements into a single study (Walsh & Downe, 2005). Due to the nature of a meta-synthesis literature review, it has been suggested that this method of review be used for new and emerging studies and topics (Heyvaert, Maes, & Onghena, 2011; Walsh & Downe, 2005; Weed, 2005), such as this study on positive employment relations. This has been motivated by the idea that if a research topic has been studied extensively and regularly, a meta-synthesis literature review would be an ineffective, unviable, and inappropriate method to review all the

literature. The reason for this can be ascribed to the excessive amounts of literature available on the specific topic (Walsh & Downe, 2005).

The meta-synthesis literature review was selected for this study as it aligns with the research objectives which require extensive exploration of the positive employment relations phenomenon. The meta-synthesis will assist in identifying common themes and key elements in studies world-wide, analysing and synthesising these into new conceptualisations and interpretations (Polit & Beck, 2006). This study does not concern itself with an objective reality, but rather seeks to discover subjective realities or meaning of knowledge regarding positive employment relations from an interpretivist perspective (Stroud, 2011). Unlike the meta-analysis, the meta-synthesis follows a hermeneutic approach that seeks to amalgamate a group of qualitative studies to elicit the findings of this wide array of literature in order to understand and explain the phenomenon being studied (Walsh & Downe, 2005); this includes available published literature such as manuscripts and books, irrespective of their publication dates (Heyvaert et al., 2011; Walsh & Downe, 2005; Weed, 2005).

Therefore, in this study a meta-synthesis was utilised to retrieve all relevant studies within the specific field of positive employment relations, irrespective of publishing dates. This study furthermore integrated a wide array of information and multiple studies, making use of identified theories in literature to substantiate the argument as to what constitutes positive employment relations. This type of review is particularly beneficial in this study due to the limited research (especially research following a holistic approach) that has so far been done on this particular phenomenon.

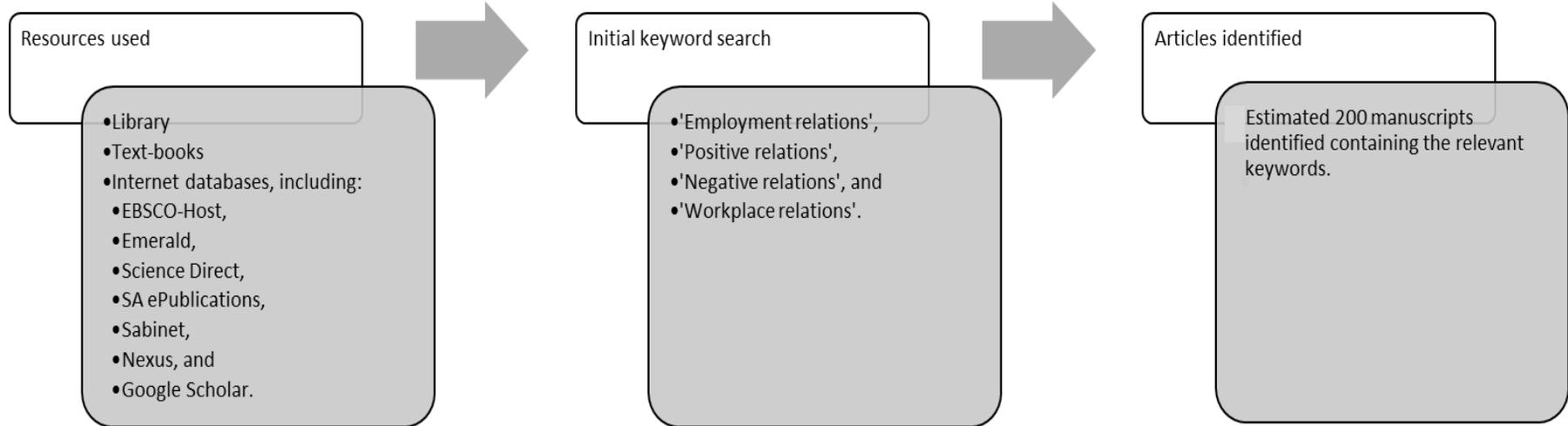
In summary, the following quotation effectively captures the essence of a meta-synthesis literature review: *“For researchers conducting qualitative meta-synthesis projects, the ideal goal is to retrieve all of the relevant studies in a field – not simply a sample of them”* (Barroso, Gollop, Sandelowski, Meynell, Pearce, & Collins, 2009, p. 153).

True to the meta-synthesis literature review, phase one of the process was to identify articles pertaining to positive relations (refer to Figure 1). Various databases, such as EBSCO-host, Emerald, Science Direct, SA ePublications, Sabinet, Nexus, and books were consulted. Keywords which were used during the initial search included ‘employment relations’, ‘positive relations’, ‘negative relations’, and ‘workplace

relations'. These keywords assisted in identifying possible manuscripts and books which could be of use for the literature review. An estimated 200 documents, including books and manuscripts, were initially identified via the different search engines, databases and Atlas ti7.

During phase 2 (refer to Figure 1), each of the estimated 200 identified manuscripts and books was reviewed, making use of Atlas ti7. This software program assisted in identifying common themes, constructs and theories. Of the 200 manuscripts, only 50 manuscripts held specific reference to 'positive employment relations', 'positive workplace relations', 'negative workplace relations', and 'negative employment relations'; thus sharing commonalities. From this review process, the 50 manuscripts were summarised on an Excel spread sheet to further investigate articles with common, yet relevant, theories and constructs. Only sixteen manuscripts displayed commonalities with regard to theories and key constructs, displaying relevance to the term 'positive employment relations' (refer to Table 3 on page 63). These identified manuscripts were then reviewed once more according to a specific set of criteria (refer to Table 2 on page 57), to ensure that they were indeed relevant to the construct being explored. Figure 1 systematically and visually displays the filtration process which occurred during the meta-synthesis.

Phase One: Identify articles pertaining to positive relations



Phase Two: Refining for article relevance pertaining to positive employment relations and identifying commonalities

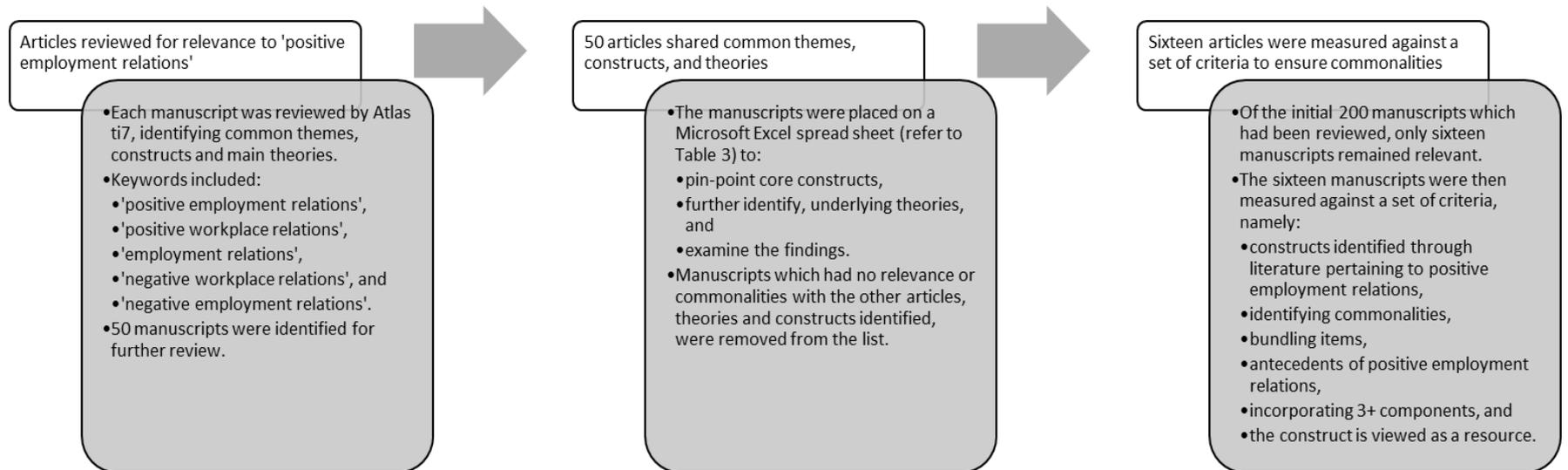


Figure 1. Phases in manuscript identification and refinement

The sixteen remaining manuscripts which had been identified in the final phase of the meta-synthesis literature review are very selective in their approach, failing to view positive employment relations as a whole or entity. Due to the selective approach of these sixteen studies, the information is somewhat fragmented; however, this study aims to explore the phenomenon of positive employment relations by combining and integrating the fragmented literature to gain a global and holistic picture (Heyvaert et al., 2011; Walsh & Downe, 2005; Weed, 2005).

Nature of Positive Employment Relations

Various studies have been conducted regarding the nature of relationships in the workplace, with the aim of better understanding the effects these relationships have on individuals (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Dur & Sol, 2009; Gaur, 2013; Spooner & Haidar, 2006; Venkataramani, Libianca, & Grosser; 2013; Wong, Wong, & Ngo, 2012). At the end of the previous century, Danna and Griffin (1999) found that employees who are subjected to positive employment relations are more likely to experience trust, support and attachment. Gaur (2013) found that communication, fairness, cohesion, satisfaction, commitment, productivity and goal attainment were antecedents of positive workplace relations. Dur and Sol (2009), Gaur (2013), and Venkataramani et al. (2013) made use of the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) to better explain and understand the linkage between antecedents of positive employment relations and employee perceptions and work behaviours (Wong et al., 2012).

According to the Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964), the employment relationship is viewed as an exchange of resources, such as support, trust and autonomy, in exchange for obligation fulfilment, such as salaries, bonuses and employee benefits (Dur & Sol, 2009; Gaur, 2013; Venkataramani et al., 2013; Wong et al., 2012; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2008). However, the exchange of resources also focuses on the quality of the relationship and positive work behaviours through social interactions in the workplace (Alcover, Martínez-Íñigo, & Chambel, 2012; Blau, 1964; Henderson, Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2008; Holthausen, nd; Homans, 1974; Sirmon, Hitt, Ireland, & Gilbert, 2011).

Holthausen (nd) further elaborates that one can better understand the quality of relationships by investigating the resources exchanged among individuals in the relationship. Making use of the SET,

rational individuals strive for positive relations with the aim of controlling their environment in order to achieve specific objectives (Xanthopoulou et al., 2008). For example, a strategic partnership will allow resources such as trust, communication and support to be exchanged for commitment to the relationship; provided the benefits outweigh the cost of the relationship (Blau, 1964; Holthausen, nd.; Wong et al., 2012).

The psychological contract (PC), rooted in the theoretical framework of the SET (Cullinane & Dundon, 2006), places focus on the individual's beliefs of mutual obligations and promises made between the individual and the organisation. The PC does not only focus on beliefs and mutual obligations, but also indicates that it governs an employee's behaviour (Cavanaugh & Noe, 1999; Cullinane & Dundon, 2006; Freese, Schalk, & Croon, 2011). The PC also highlights the importance of exchanging resources, and the effects these resources may have on building and shaping employment relations (Cullinane & Dundon, 2006).

Chaudhry, Wayne, and Schalk (2009) add that the PC maintains two critical functions which include defining the relationship and managing mutual expectations. Lambert (2011) postulated that the PC comprises beliefs categorised into four components, namely promised incentives, delivered incentives, promised contributions and delivered contributions. When the one or other component has not been adhered to, the PC and the employment relationship can be influenced significantly. Hui, Lee, and Rousseau (2004) further explained that there are three forms of PC present, namely the transactional contract, which is a short term exchange of beliefs; the relational contract, which refers to a long term employment arrangement (Chaudhry et al., 2009; Cullinane & Dundon, 2006; Freese et al., 2011); and the third - a balanced contract - which combines both the transactional and relational PCs for a well-balanced PC (Hui et al., 2004)

Cavanaugh and Noe (1999) argue that emphasis should be placed on the employee-employer relationship in order to determine the outcomes on antecedents such as job satisfaction, commitment and the intention to remain with the organisation. Tromprou, Nikolaon, and Vakola (2012) approached the PC differently, placing focus on PC violation. They argued that PC violation could have detrimental effects on the individual's feelings which include anger, betrayal and mistrust, and ultimately, decreased job satisfaction and affective commitment (Tromprou et al., 2012).

Aside from the SET and PC which focus on the importance of resources on expectations, perceptions and behaviours of the parties, the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory can provide researchers with a framework to investigate the effects that these resources may have on the individual and his or her relationships in the workplace. COR assists in examining and understanding the responses of individuals when resources are threatened or depleted (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010; Hobfoll, 1989; Zamani, Gorgievski-Duijvesteijn, & Zarafshani, 2006). Bono et al. (2013) further the argument by clarifying that these resources are essential for optimal human functioning; however, in order to determine the importance and quality of resources, the SET can be used as a platform to investigate the effects that acquiring, bundling, leveraging and exchanging these resources could have on the individual and the employment relationship (Bono et al., 2013; Sirmon et al., 2011).

According to the COR theory, these resources better assist individuals to not only manage and cope with adverse and negative situations, but also with the growth and development of the individual (Avey et al., 2010; Hobfoll, 1989, 1998; Hobfoll & Wells, 1998). Hobfoll (1989) pioneered the COR, determining that individuals seek to acquire and maintain resources which not only assist them to cope better during times of adversity, but also to achieve set goals. These resources also provide protection from psychological and physiological threats and stimulate growth and development (Sirmon, Hitt, & Ireland, 2007; Sirmon et al., 2011; Zamani et al., 2006). Once these individuals have access to, acquired, or maintained the required resources to manage these effects, the individual can thus better cope with adversity in the workplace by means of support - a resource offered by other employees and the organisation (Danna & Griffin, 1999). By so doing, individuals are able to determine the quality, structure and function of their social ties, as well as their self-perceptions and self-evaluations (Lang & Carstensen, 2002; Peterson, 2009). As a result, the individual's goal evaluations are more stable, his or her decision-making processes are more efficient, and he or she strives to identify his or her weaknesses; addressing these accordingly (Kumashiro & Sedikides, 2005; Lang & Carstensen, 2002; Peterson, 2009). According to Hobfoll (1989), there is an abundance of resources which can be found within people. These resources can often be renewed and restored when positive outcomes such as goal attainment, support and friendship are experienced (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008).

Research has identified these resources to be crucial in suppressing negative experiences, emotions and fake positive emotions; encouraging individuals towards cope-promoting resilience and wellness (Cheung, Tang, & Tang, 2011; Culbertson et al., 2010; Venkataramani et al., 2013). When resources such

as support and friendship are applied to the work environment, they not only form the foundation on which to build positive relations (Kumashiro & Sedikides, 2005), but these relationships can also have a significant impact on the individual's commitment and engagement levels, job satisfaction and intention to stay or leave the organisation (Cheung et al., 2011; Holthausen, nd.). When compared to objects (car, home or clothing), personal characteristics (occupational skills, self-esteem), energies (money, insurance, credit) and conditions (tenure, status at work), positive resources such as support and autonomy tend to be more stable characteristics of the workplace environment (Zamani et al., 2006). These positive resources also create the opportunity to build strong relationships among individuals; thus promoting efficient workplace behaviours, and enhancing positive experiences for individuals in the workplace.

A key resource available to individuals in the workplace includes psychological capital (PsyCap), which equips the individual to deal with and manage workplace stress and demands, and assists individuals in balancing work and life, whilst at the same time improving the well-being of the individual (Gamerschlag & Moeller, 2011; Larson et al., 2013; Shukla & Singh, 2013). PsyCap characteristically comprises efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience (Larson et al., 2013; Shukla & Singh, 2013). Organisations that implement interventions to embrace, nurture and build employees' PsyCap tend to experience favourable results, leading to positive outcomes for both the individual and organisation (Gamerschlag & Moeller, 2011; Shukla & Singh, 2013). Skowronski and Carlston (1989) suggested that negative workplace relations were rare, and that these relations tend to be better diagnostic tools in determining the individual's judgments, attitudes and decisions. In recent years a substantive amount of research has been conducted in the workplace with the focus on job satisfaction, job and task commitment, etc. (Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003; Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009; Conchie, Taylor, & Charlton, 2010; Diedericks & Rothmann, 2013; Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003; Mills et al., 2013), including turnover intention in organisations (Burnes & Pope, 2007; Diedericks & Rothmann, 2014).

The Spillover Theory (Hecht & Boies, 2009) can also assist in examining the effects employment relations might have on individuals, establishing the impact these relations have on employee behaviours and emotional responses. Based on this theory, work experiences tend to spill over into non work-related life and vice versa. It is highly improbable that job experiences and personal life can be segregated (Hecht & Boies, 2009), and when faced with toxic employment relations and behaviour, negative spillovers from work to family life are more likely to occur. This then results in negative relations at home (Batt & Valcour, 2011), and general negative, counterproductive behaviour influencing the turnover propensity of

affected employees (Diedericks & Rothmann, 2014). Fortunately, the opposite is also true; positive spillovers from one domain into another will generate positive behaviours and relations. Apart from the aforementioned theories, more current frameworks within which positive relations and positive employment relations have been studied include the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000), psychological conditions (PsyCon) (Kahn, 1990), positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2004), and positive organisational scholarship (POS) (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008).

The SDT suggests that positive processes are fostered by the individual's growth tendencies and psychological needs, including the needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When individuals experience autonomy, competence and relatedness, they are able to determine their own actions and behaviours, whilst also gaining a sense of achievement from executing tasks efficiently. The quality of interactions with others will then mediate the individual's motivation to further participate in these activities (Cooper, Schuett, & Phillips, 2012) as the psychological needs are then satisfied (Cooper et al., 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Bidee et al. (2013) found in favour of the SDT, indicating that individuals are more dedicated, motivated, and able to establish social relationships when the basic principles of autonomy, competency and relatedness are present.

Aside from investigating the effects resources may exert on an individual within the workplace setting, it is important to also investigate the psychological effects these resources may have on the individual. This can be explained by making use of Kahn's (1990) PsyCon theory, as well as Fredrickson's (2004) Broaden-and-Build Theory (BBT). According to Kahn (1990), three PsyCon emerged from his study, including meaningfulness, safety and availability. When individuals experience meaningfulness, they feel valuable and not taken for granted, with the ability to foster rewarding interpersonal interactions with co-workers. It was also found that supportive and trusting interpersonal interactions and relations result in psychological safety of the individual; however, when these interpersonal relations have not been established, the individual might withdraw.

Fredrickson (2004) developed the BBT on the basis that individuals, who experience positive emotions, broaden their thoughts and action process; they also build enduring personal (emotional, intellectual, physical and physiological) resources, resulting in more resilient, creative, knowledgeable, adaptive and socially integrated individuals. Waugh and Fredrickson (2006) found that positive emotions have a significant effect on the building of social relationships; however, as the relationship becomes stable and trusting, it is more likely to endure the small fluctuation of emotions. Based on this theory, the resources

would have been built to endure stress during social interactions and to adapt to future stressors (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Garland, Fredrickson, Kring, Johnson, Meyer, & Penn, 2010).

Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS), a fairly new theoretical framework which emerged from research pertaining to positive organisations, primarily places emphasis on the positive aspects within the organisation which can influence the individual's ability to thrive in the work setting (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008), including the process and attributes of the organisation (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). POS also suggests that in order for individuals to feel empowered, engaged, and related to others, it is critical for authenticity to be promoted among employees (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007). The key focus of POS is placed on the development of human attributes, such as strength, resilience and flourishing - cultivating individual and organisational performance. This in turn leads to flourishing outcomes for both the organisation and the individual, such as virtuous behaviours and emotions, including compassion, forgiveness, dignity, respect, optimism, and integrity (Armansin & Thompson, 2013).

According to Ribeiro and Rego (2009), organisational virtuousness results in the elevation of individual behaviour and comprises human impact, referring to human strength; flourishing and resilience; moral goodness which refers to doing what is right; and social betterment which transcends from one individual to another, cultivating a social value within the organisation. Organisational virtuousness postulates that the six virtuous considerations such as faith, courage, compassion, integrity, justice and wisdom can be applied within the work setting, resulting in a more holistic human and health approach to the employment environment (Kilburg, 2012; Manz et al., 2008; Sadler-Smith, 2013). The benefits of a virtuous organisation includes positive behaviours, attitudes and conduct, improved decision-making practices and rational synergy among employees, increased customer and employee loyalty, increased job satisfaction and general work morale, and in general, a positive atmosphere overall (Zamahani, Ahmadi, Sarlak, & Sherkari, 2013). Positive organisational support encourages intentional positive deviant behaviour to over exceed and go beyond what is expected (Sadler-Smith, 2013), ultimately resulting in staff retention (Kilburg, 2012; Manz et al., 2008; Sadler-Smith, 2013; Zamahani et al., 2013).

Creating a positive atmosphere that is conducive to organisational virtue relies heavily on organisational leadership, having a direct impact on an individual's ability to flourish and thrive in the organisation (Eberly, Holly, Johnson, & Mitchell, 2011; Sluss, Klimchak, & Holmes, 2008). The relational approach of the leader-member exchange theory (LMX) suggests that the quality of the relationship between the

leader and the follower is often determined by the leader's qualities, affecting the outcomes and how they will be achieved (Avolio, 2007; Eberly et al., 2011; Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008; Sluss et al., 2008; Uhl-Bein, 2006). Sluss et al. (2008) further argue that this relationship-based leadership approach aligns with POS, as it places focus on the dyadic relationship between the leader and the follower-leader reciprocal relationship. This leader-follower relationship results in the exchange of resources which promote trust, respect, communication and mutual obligation (Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995; Uhl-Bein, 2006), also encouraging building strong, exchangeable relationships, and emphasising continual personal and team growth and development (Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995; Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008; Uhl-Bein, 2006). When the relationship between the leader-member is positive, this results in a phenomenon known as social facilitation. This is when individuals improve their task performance when working in the presence of others as a result of the formal and informal influences and exchange of resources among the individuals and the team (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Eberly et al., 2011; Forsyth, 2014; Sluss et al., 2008).

Although these theories place focus on the individual and the organisation, the internal dynamics of teams in the employment relationship should be further explored. For this reason the five dimensions of social well-being (Keyes, 1998), the social identity theory (Dutton & Ragins, 2007) and the attachment theory (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005) will be utilised.

According to Keyes (1998), social well-being of individuals is embedded in the social structures and communities which have an effect on the individual's ability to face social tasks and challenges. Keyes (1998) further elaborates that the five domains of social well-being include social integration which elevates the quality of the relationship to society and the community; social acceptance whereby the character and qualities of other individuals are identified, generalised and categorised; social contribution which includes the evaluation of the social value one brings to society and the community as a whole; social actualisation which evaluates the potential of the society; and social coherence that refers to the perception of the social world, including the quality and operation of the world.

However, the social identity theory is more attentive to what occurs once the interaction between individuals and groups commences (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). For this reason, individuals are more likely to associate with groups in order to achieve or maintain levels of self-esteem and perceptions of superiority (Dutton & Ragins, 2007); thus making the group an extension of the individual and taking on the group's qualities and characteristics (Forsyth, 2014). Cornelissen, Haslam, and Balmer (2007) further define social identity on three different levels, including the individual level where the individual relates

to other individuals' sense of self within the organisation; group level which relates to the shared identity of the team within the organisation; and the organisational level that relates to the culture of the organisation (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

Referring to the three levels of the social identity theory as mentioned above, according to the symbolic interactionist approach, employee interactions in the workplace lead to shared perceptions of the work setting. This means that policies, procedures and workplace practices are communicated, discussed and questioned during these interactions. Employees endeavour to make meaning of a complex and often equivocal work environment through a social verification process with their fellow colleagues which result in strengthening a positive organisational climate (Zohar, 2010).

When an individual feels threatened, according to the attachment theory, an innate psychobiological system will motivate him or her to seek proximity to significant individuals who are viewed as being reliable and supportive (Bretherton, 1985; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005; Mikulincer, Shaver, & Pereg, 2003; Waters, Crowell, Elliott, Corcoran, & Treboux, 2002). The attachment theory further elaborates that individuals can either experience attachment avoidance, whereby the individual feels unworthy of the relationship with the other individual, or attachment anxiety which refers to the individual's concern that the other party will not be available or responsive to the distressing circumstances (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005; Waters et al., 2002). However, when faced with trusting, supportive relationships, individuals are classified as being securely attached as they exhibit no attachment anxiety or attachment avoidance characteristics (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005; Waters et al., 2002). When individuals are unable to establish secure attachment, the result is pessimistic beliefs and expectations which provide poor support and elicit the perception that the support received from others is poor and lacking (Mikulincer et al., 2003; Waters et al., 2002).

Taking the crux of the theoretical frameworks discussed above into consideration, Table 1 serves as a compact summary of each theory which serves as a foundation towards a better understanding of positive employment relations.

Table 1

Theoretical Framework of Positive Employment Relations

Theory	Core Principles
Social Exchange Theory (SET)	Encourages the reciprocal exchange of resources among all parties involved in the employment relationship, evaluated against cost and rewards.
Psychological Contract (PC)	Shaping the employment relationship by exchanging resources, resulting in a series of mutual expectations being created which assist in defining and maintaining relationships.
Conservation of Resources (COR)	Assists and encourages the conservation, building and bundling of resources among employees. Resources are available from internal and environmental processes, and enable individuals to flourish when these resources are protected, maintained and conserved.
Psychological Capital (PsyCap)	Ensures that appropriate resources are available to promote efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience for employees to efficiently cope with workplace stressors.
Spillover Theory	Evaluates and examines the impact employment relations may have on an individual's behaviour and emotional responses and how these relations and behaviours spill over and impact one another in all domains.
Psychological Conditions (PsyCon)	Foster rewarding relationships, founded by support and trust, ensuring psychological safety.
Self-Determination Theory (SDT)	Utilises autonomy, competence and relatedness to satisfy psychological needs of employees and, in so doing, establish and enhance employment relations.
Broaden-and-Build Theory (BBT)	Utilises the resources to create enduring personal and social resources, resulting in stable relationships and efficient stress management.
Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS)	Encourages the use of positive organisational processes and attributes, as well as identifies positive aspects within the organisation leading to a virtuous individual and organisation. Desire to improve the human condition by seeking goodness for its intrinsic value.
LMX-Relational Leadership Theory	Places focus on strong exchangeable relationships characterised by trust and support which lead to continual individual growth and improvement.

Social Facilitation	Occurs when individual task performance increases when working in the presence of others due to the exchange of resources among individuals.
Social Well-being	The environment, including social structures and communities which have an effect on individuals' ability to face social tasks and challenges.
Social Identity Theory	Individuals view the group as an extension of themselves, with their self-definition based on the group's characteristics and qualities.
Symbolic Interactionism	Refers to the words, gestures and symbols with an acquired meaning which facilitate and give meaning to an individual's interaction and communication.
Attachment Theory	During times of adversity, individuals seek closer relationships with others who provide support and are perceived as being reliable.

Now that the theoretical frameworks constituting positive employment relations have been established, the next step would be to conceptualise positive employment relations in literature.

Conceptualising Positive Employment Relations in Literature

The nature of employment relations constitutes the exchange of resources among individuals in the workplace setting; however, through the exchange of resources among employees, various characteristics (Anand et al., 2010; Bajnok et al., 2012) which are largely fragmented in literature, become evident.

Danna and Griffen (1999) approached positive employment relations by focusing on trust (and trust **only**) among individuals and the negative consequences in the absence thereof, namely distrust, ambiguity, poor communication, low job satisfaction, poor task engagement and lack of commitment. Labianca and Brass (2006) approached employment relations from a solely negative approach, whereby negative employment relationships lack reciprocity, cognition, and relationship strength, and include social distance and detachment. This directly results in negative workplace behaviours such as absenteeism and turnover (Labianca & Brass, 2006). Dur and Sol (2009) further largely focused and built on Danna and Griffen's (1999) approach by indicating that relationships are based on the exchange of resources, such as trust,

communication and support, and that positive employment relations are associated with job satisfaction, task involvement and commitment. Gaur (2013) supported the findings of Danna and Griffen (1999) and Dur and Sol (2009) by adding that employment relations are based on various dimensions, including trust, communication, and a healthy workplace which includes equality; subsequently resulting in cohesion, satisfaction, commitment and productivity.

Aside from trust and communication (Danna & Griffen, 1999; Dur & Sol, 2009; Gaur, 2013), Ruth, Crawford, Wysocki, and Kepner (2002) limited their approach to a positive workplace by including the ability to balance relationships (among individuals) which are timed and clear. These balanced relationships result in improved employee performance and the empowerment of the parties involved in the relationship. Bajnok et al. (2012) placed specific focus on positive social interactions, and found that behaviours and attitudes are directly linked to the ability to understand teamwork as well as the ability to improve and build appropriate relations. Building and improving relations can be achieved by ensuring that the appropriate structures and policies are in place to reinforce and stimulate positive employment relations (Bajnok et al., 2012).

Rotemberg (1994) primarily focused on relationships between supervisors and employees and found that when these relationships are positive, the interaction between them tend to be of a friendly nature, high in altruism; resulting in co-operation and efficiency. In unbalanced workplace relationships, employees often feel mistreated, powerless and tend to retaliate and engage in deviant behaviours, resulting in negative outcomes for the individual, and possibly the team as a whole (Thau, Bennett, Mitchell, & Marrs, 2008). Bingham and Duran-Palma (2013) predominantly investigated and determined that a balance between equity and equality is required to promote and engage a balanced relationship between supervisors and employees.

Towsend, Wilkinson, and Burgess (2013), as well as Venkataramani et al. (2013) mainly studied a leader's management style and found that an individual's style of management can have a significant impact on the relationship between the individual and his or her superior. Poor management results in distrust between the parties, lack of respect, little or no support, inequality being experienced, an inability to communicate with each other, poor conflict management and an unbalanced relationship in general.

Based on the above discussion, various constructs had been identified throughout positive relations literature; however, despite the available literature addressing these constructs, literature failed to view

the fragmented information as a whole. It is imperative to identify the fundamental concepts to assist in understanding positive employment relations. This is done by making use of the following criteria to narrow down the search for the fundamental concepts comprising positive employment relations according to literature.

Criterion 1: A construct identified throughout literature that pertains to positive employment relations
(Literature)

Criterion 2: A construct including sub-components that pertain to positive employment relations
(Commonalities)

Criterion 3: Underlying constructs that form part of more than one construct pertaining to positive employment relations (Bundling)

Criterion 4: A construct that is an antecedent of positive workplace relations (Antecedent)

Criterion 5: A construct incorporating three or more of the listed components (3+ Components)

Criterion 6: A construct that can be viewed as a resource (Resource)

Table 2 displays the criteria for positive employment relations that were utilised for the selection of core constructs as identified in literature. With reference to Table 2, constructs were first selected based on their relevance to positive employment relations; second the constructs were bundled/sorted into one significant construct; and third it was established whether or not the construct could be viewed as a resource.

Based on the meta-synthesis of positive relations and positive employment relations manuscripts and criteria selection method, the core constructs were identified as **trust** (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Dur & Sol, 2009; Labianca & Brass, 2006; Ruth et al., 2002), **respect, support, communication (social integration)** (Gaur, 2013; Venkataramani et al., 2013), **equity and equality** (Bingham & Duran-Palma, 2013), and **conflict management** (Anand et al., 2010; Appelbaum & Roy-Girard, 2007; Bajnok et al., 2012; Dur & Sol, 2009; Labianca & Brass, 2006; Manion 2011; Mills et al., 2013; Rotemberg, 1994; Ruth et al., 2002; Thau et al., 2008; Townsend et al., 2013). Although leadership has met many of the criteria listed in Table 2, leadership is not a construct of positive employment relations *per se*; it creates the context within which positive employment relations take place.

Table 2
Criteria for Selection Procedure

Author(s)	Construct	Item	Criterion 1 Literature	Criterion 2 Commonalities	Criterion 3 Bundling of Items	Criterion 4 Antecedent	Criterion 5 3+ components	Criterion 6 Resource
Bono et al., 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2000.	Autonomy	1	✓	✓	18	✓	-	-
Gaur, 2013; Rotemberg, 2014.	Cohesion	2	✓	✓	2	✓	-	-
Alcover et al., 2012; Dur & Sol, 2002; Gaur, 2013.	Commitment	3	✓	✓	4; 17; 18	✓	-	-
Danna & Griffin, 1999; Gaur, 2013; Venkataramani et al., 2013.	Social integration - Communication	4	✓	✓	2; 17; 18	-	✓	✓
Mills et al., 2013.	Empowerment	5	✓	✓	17; 18	✓	-	-
Mills et al., 2013; Townsend et al., 2013.	Engagement	6	✓	✓	17	✓	-	-
Bingham & Duran-Palma, 2013.	Equality and equity	7	✓	✓	8; 18; 19; 21	-	✓	✓
Gaur, 2013.	Fairness	8	✓	✓	20	✓	-	-
Labianca & Brass, 2006; Rotemberg, 2014.	Friendship	9	✓	✓	17	✓	-	-
Gaur, 2013; Hobfoll, 1989.	Goal attainment	10	✓	✓	17; 18; 19	✓	✓	-
Burnes & Pope, 2007.	Justice	11	✓	✓	19	✓	-	-
Appelbaum & Roy-Girard, 2007; Bingham & Duran-Palma, 2013; Gaur, 2013; Mills et al., 2013; Rotemberg, 1994; Ruth et al., 2002; Thau et al., 2008; Townsend et al., 2013.	Leadership	12	✓	✓	4; 7; 17; 18; 19; 21	-	✓	✓
Danna & Griffin, 1999; Gaur, 2013; Rotemberg, 2014.	Productivity	13	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-
Cooper et al., 2012	Quality interactions	of 14	✓	✓	18	✓	-	-
Allen et al., 2003; Mills et al., 2013.	Resilience	15	✓	✓	17	✓	-	-
Danna & Griffin, 1999; Dur & Sol, 2009; Gaur, 2013; Venkataramani, 2013.	Satisfaction	16	✓	✓	19	✓	-	-
Danna & Griffin, 1999; Gaur, 2013; Venkataramani et al., 2013.	Support	17	✓	✓	3; 5; 6; 9; 10; 15; 19	-	✓	✓
Danna & Griffin, 1999; Labianca & Brass, 2006; Ruth et al., 2002.	Trust	18	✓	✓	1; 3; 4; 5; 10; 12; 14; 19; 21	-	✓	✓
Gaur, 2013; Venkataramani et al., 2013.	Respect	19	✓	✓	7; 8; 10; 11; 12; 16; 17; 18	-	✓	✓
Danna & Griffin, 1999; Dur & Sol, 2009; Gaur, 2013; Mills et al., 2013; Venkataramani, 2013.	Attachment	20	✓	✓	12	✓	-	-
Danna & Griffin, 1999; Gaur, 2013; Venkataramani et al., 2013.	Conflict management	21	✓	✓	7; 17; 18; 19	-	✓	✓

The constructs - as identified through the meta-synthesis and criterion selection - will now be discussed.

Trust

According to the Oxford Quick Reference Dictionary (Thompson, 1996), the word 'trust' is derived from the Icelandic word 'traust' and emerged from four elements, including reliability, strength, confident expectation and responsibility. Ellonen, Blomqvist, and Puumalainen (2008) state that research conceptualises trust as ability, capability, integrity, truthfulness and goodwill of an individual. Manion (2011) adds that trust includes competence, congruence and consistency, resulting in an individual's ability to trust another individual; binding a human relationship into an effective partnership (Gaur, 2013). McCabe and Sambrook (2013) state that trust can also be defined as one's ability to increase one's vulnerability to another person's behaviours, which cannot be controlled. Hams (1997) further elaborated that trust can also be defined as the ability and willingness to engage in reliable and empowering relationships; whereas Heavey, Halliday, Gilbert, and Murphy (2011) conceptualised trust as a concept which results in increased positive attitudes and increased levels of co-operation (Gaur, 2013).

Shagholi, Hussin, Siraj, Naimie, Assadzadeh, and Moayed (2010) indicated that interpersonal trust is often linked to leadership relationships and organisational effectiveness, strengthening co-operation and increasing organisational commitment among individuals. Interpersonal trust has also been found to reduce conflict, diminishing the intention to leave the organisation (Gaur, 2013). Adding to this, Conchie et al. (2010) indicated that trust also increases an employee's engagement levels and can modify risky behaviours, such as wearing personal protection equipment while on site, or evoking full environmental awareness to various potential hazards.

Lang and Carstensen (2002) found that individuals seek social partners who share and express their acceptance, trusting one another to attain a mutual goal. Alcover et al. (2012) state that trust also forms part of an exchange of resources which takes place between individuals. Bono et al. (2013) supported this, indicating that individuals who experience a trusting relationship are more likely to exchange resources, experience positive day-to-day interactions and increased autonomy. Anand et al. (2010) determined that the level of trust among individuals determine the delegation of tasks between them, for example, a supervisor may trust one employee more than the other and display a tendency to delegate more challenging tasks to this individual rather than to others. Bajnok et al. (2012) expand on the

example of Anand et al. (2010) by elaborating that individuals who perceive an increased level of trust from supervisors or other individuals tend to work more effectively. Furthermore, Manion (2011) supported Bajnok et al. (2012) by suggesting that healthy relationships are based upon trust, respect, support and communication.

Respect

Carnevale, Gainer, and Meltzer (1990) made use of Maslow's hierarchy of Human Needs, *which includes* physical requirements for survival, need for safety, love and a sense of belonging, esteem and self-actualisation, indicating that respect forms part of the self-esteem needs tier. According to Froman (2010), individuals build relationships based on trust and respect, with the aim of building a virtuous organisation. In order to do this, respect is built among individuals when recognition is given for a job well done (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) further argue that when individuals feel respected, a strong impression is created about the organisation's values, and the individual's contribution toward the organisation. Milliman et al. (2003) found that individuals who feel respected and worthy within their organisation tend to experience higher levels of organisational satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviours, increased job performance and tend to foster a sense of positive relations in the workplace. Cameron, Mora, Leutscher, and Calarco (2011) add that when an organisation adopts an environment characterised by respect and integrity, employees feel meaningful, confident, tend to forgive mistakes and experience a positive environment conducive towards fostering positive employment relations.

Carnevale et al. (1990) indicated that leaders play a crucial role in cultivating respect among peers and are responsible for projecting goal orientation, vision, and enhancing effectiveness among individuals. However, lack of respect can result in negative workplace behaviours when individuals perceive unfairness, injustice and disrespect, resulting in aggression and bullying, and ultimately, turnover (Burnes & Pope, 2007). Carnevale et al. (1990) and Burnes and Pope (2007) indicated that in recent years individuals have lost faith and trust in organisations, affecting their ability to build respectful, supportive and satisfying relationships with the organisations and managers.

Mills et al. (2013) found that organisations can make use of respect to enhance the perception of support within organisations, resulting in increased and improved decision making and flexibility within the organisation, as well as improved and positive employment relations.

Support

Tsutsumi, Takao, Mineyama, Nishiuchi, Komatsu, and Kawakami (2005) in their study indicated that support is a crucial yet valuable resource for employees; whilst Zapf (2002) also added that support acts as a buffer during negative experiences.

According to Leblebici (2012), support forms a crucial platform for employees to complete a job, and employees who are supported by their peers tend to experience increased performance levels, simultaneously encouraging positive relations within the workplace. Cameron et al. (2011) found that organisations that provide both support and adequate resources to their employees tend to experience a positive employment atmosphere (Liu, Hu, Wang, Sui, & Ma, 2013). Labianca and Brass (2006) indicated that support leads to stabilising a positive relationship, ultimately leading to friendship development. Liu et al. (2013) added that support can lead to confident and hopeful employees who are determined to achieve the set job goals and engage in positive behaviours.

Allen et al. (2003) and Mills et al. (2013) postulate that employees who are supported in the workplace not only experience a positive workplace, but also increased levels of job satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviours and resilience. Tsutsumi et al. (2005) stated that when employees are supported, negative effects of stress - such as depression, fatigue and psychological distress - tend to be buffered (Avey et al., 2009; Bono et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2013; Zapf, 2002).

Communication – Social Integration

Social integration involves group attraction, satisfaction with the group members and the social integration of the members in the group, resulting in group cohesion with increased member morale, efficiency, and satisfaction (O'Reilly, Caldwell, & Barnett, 1989; Smith, Smith, Olian, Sims, O'Bannon, & Scully, 1994). In the seminal work of Smith et al. (1994), these authors further elaborated that communication is the essence of social integration, placing focus on communication systems, processes and channels. According to Robbins et al. (2009), communication is a tool which serves to motivate, control, express and inform. Mills et al. (2013) further add that transparent communication which occurs

frequently and accurately serves as a problem-solving tool which leads to mutually beneficial outcomes, without judgment (Gamerschlag & Moeller, 2011).

Literature has identified various facets of communication that are essential towards establishing and maintaining positive employment relations (Bryson, Forth, & Kirby, 2005; Fielding, 2006; Gamerschlag & Moeller, 2011; Mills et al., 2013; Robbins et al., 2009; Sirmon et al., 2011). The direction of communication focuses on who is sending the message, and who is receiving it, including upward (employees communicate via appropriate channels with management)(Bryson et al., 2005; Fielding, 2006; Sirmon et al., 2011); downward (management communicates with employees) (Bryson et al., 2005; Sirmon et al., 2011); and lateral communication (all parties are on the same level, and are encouraged to communicate) (Fielding, 2006; Mills et al., 2013; Robbins et al., 2009). The different forms of communication include oral, written and non-verbal communication; most commonly also including bodily actions and facial expressions (Fielding, 2006; Robbins et al., 2009).

Organisational communication includes formal small-group networks such as the chain (formal chain of command), the wheel (relies on a central person to act as the conduit of communication) and all-channel (encourages all group members to engage in communication among one another) (Robbins et al., 2009). The grapevine is an informal communication network among work groups and is not controlled by management; individuals tend to believe the information and perceive the information as more reliable than the communication issued by management. The grapevine is a communication channel that serves the self-interest of the participants (Robbins et al., 2009). Knowledge management (i.e. the process of capturing and disseminating organisational knowledge effectively) (Davenport, 1994) requires stringent control, as specific information is communicated to the appropriate individuals, at the correct time (Gamerschlag & Moeller, 2011; Robbins et al., 2009).

Sirmon et al. (2011) emphasise that the communication structure within organisations often undergo change and develop as the organisation evolves. In turn, Bryson et al. (2005) argue that an organisation that instils adequate, appropriate and efficient communication structures tends to be more cost-effective, in that all individuals are aware of management's expectations, and as a result tend to build toward a good work environment, encouraging a healthy work climate. Bryson et al. (2005) found that individuals are also more likely to experience support through communication; whereas Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002) found that communication can and is often used by management to foster trust among individuals.

Equity and Equality

Building on Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs (refer to the levels discussed before under Respect) and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (including motivators such as recognition, achievement, responsibility and opportunity; and hygiene factors which include job security, status, salary and benefits), it is clear that every individual appreciates fairness, justice, and equality (Robbins et al., 2009). Searle and Dietz (2012) further elaborated on the importance of justice, fairness and equity of systems, and the possible effects these may have on an individual's trust. Gaur (2013) argued that individuals often perceive inequity - from management - with regard to administration, salaries and pay, workplace rules, regulations, and so forth.

Forsyth (2014) stated that *equality* recommends that all groups and individuals - irrespective of race and gender - should be given the same outcomes, regardless of their inputs; whereas *equity* represents moral fairness. An example from the workplace towards illustrating the difference between these two terms could be the following: **All employees** at company ABC are issued with an employee security card that gives them access to the company premises (*equity = fairness*). Company policy is very clear that no employee card means no access to the premises (*equality – no exception to the rule*). One day Employee A had left her employee card at home, but was nevertheless granted access as a favour as the security guard on duty was a close family friend. The following day Employee B (who had witnessed what had happened the previous day) did not have his employee card with him – he had forgotten it at home – and was denied access by the same security guard who had allowed Employee A access the previous day. This is a clear example of *equity* – both employees were given access to the same opportunity, namely to access the premises via an issued employee card, but it is also a clear example of *inequality* – two employees were treated in directly opposing ways by the security guard.

Conflict Management

According to Labianca and Brass (2006), conflict can be viewed as a precursor to negative workplace relations, and often occurs due to differences in perceptions of individuals in different working groups. When individuals personalise workplace conflict, negative ties may be experienced, resulting in negative workplace behaviours such as gossiping and refusal to assist one another. This could ultimately result in a poor work climate (Venkataramani et al., 2013) and possible depression among employees, should the resources available not suffice resolution (Hobfoll, 1989).

Labianca and Brass (2006) further elaborated that conflict in the workplace can be beneficial when appropriate resolution techniques are applied. Shukla and Singh (2013) indicated that individuals, who are able to overcome conflict in a positive manner, promote positive relations in the workplace (Avey, Luthans, & Youssef, 2010). According to Forsyth (2014), conflict can be viewed as a group adhesive, binding the individuals within a group, provided that they are able to effectively manage the conflict that will result in constructive conflict and positive individual and group outcomes.

Based on the available literature which pertains to positive employment relations, it is clear that all six constructs, namely trust, respect, support, communication and social integration, equity and equality, and conflict management are required to ensure positive relations within the work environment. Omitting or neglecting a single construct could have a detrimental effect on the employment relationship. Now that positive employment relations have been conceptualised from theory and the core constructs indicative towards fostering positive employment relations have been identified, the effects positive relations may have on the workplace will now be discussed.

Discussion

Table 3 serves as a summary of the key manuscripts in literature (selected according to the set criteria; refer to Table 2 on page 57) pertaining to positive employment relations, along with the key constructs, theoretical basis, and the findings of the relevant studies. The search for literature on positive employment relations ended on 01 November 2015; any literature published after this date was omitted from this study.

Table 3

Summary of Literature on Positive Employment Relations

Author	Date	Title and Journal	Key Constructs	Theoretical Basis	Findings
Alcover et al.	2012	Perceptions of employment relations and permanence in the organisation: Mediating effects of affective commitment in relations of psychological contract and intention to quit. <i>Psychological Reports</i> ,	working conditions, relationships, turnover intention, psychological contract	Social exchange theory Relational investment Psychological contract	Perceived mutuality and reciprocity have an effect on the individual's obligations. Individuals with a strong exchange relationship are less likely to display sensitivity to organisational politics, affecting their intentions to remain with the organisation.

110(3), 839-853.

Appelbaum & Roy-Girard	2007	Toxins in the workplace: Effect on organisations and employees. <i>Corporate Governance</i> , 7(1), 17–28.	negative working environment, negative attitude, perception and personality, culture and climate of work environment, toxic leaders and managers	Leadership Conservation of Resources Social well-being Social identity theory Equity theory Positive Organisational Scholarship	Creating a stable organisation involves ridding the organisation of "toxins" such as poor leaders and managers. A culture of general disregard toward co-workers is created, resulting in deviant and dysfunctional organisational "families". The response to negative behaviour is exponentially greater than to positive behaviour, resulting in detachment and turnover intention.
Bajnok et al.	2012	Building positive relationships in healthcare: Evaluation of the teams of interprofessional staff education program. <i>Contemporary Nurse</i> , 42(1), 76–89	collaboration, team work, relationships	Social exchange theory Symbolic interactionism Social facilitation	When teamwork is understood, outcomes improve and the ability to build relations and work more efficiently in different teams become a reality; however appropriate structures and policies to be in place to reinforce the behaviour
Bingham & Duran-Palma	2013	Rethinking research supervision: Some reflections from the field of employment relations. <i>Teaching in Higher Education</i> , 19(1), 78-89.	supervision relationship, employment relationship, power relationship, evaluation and benchmarking the relationship, exchange relationship	Leadership theory – LMX Equity theory Social exchange theory Symbolic interactionism Positive Organisational Scholarship	To foster positive employment relations, supervisors are encouraged to seek a balance between objectives of equity and efficiency. Supervisors are also encouraged to promote balanced practices surrounding competing interests of various employees.
Danna & Griffin	1999	Health and well-being in the workplace: A review and synthesis of literature. <i>Journal of Management</i> , 25(3), 357-384	health, well-being, absenteeism, job satisfaction, productivity, stress	Social well-being Spillover theory Psychological capital Attachment theory	Mistrust among co-workers results in ambiguity, poor psychological well-being, low job satisfaction and poor communication. Negative emotions such as envy, jealousy, workplace violence and harassment. Positive workplace relations are associated with cognitive appraisal, support and attachment, and positivity correlates with physical health.
Dur & Sol	2009	<i>Social interaction, co-worker altruism, and incentives</i> . IZA Discussion papers, No. 4532, retrieved	social interaction, co-worker satisfaction, altruism, incentive contracts	Based on Rotemberg's (1994) analysis of human relations in the workplace. Social attachment theory	Social interaction is associated with job satisfaction, involvement and commitment. Negative social interaction is

from
<http://hdl.handle.net/10419/36019>

Equity theory
 Social exchange theory

associated with absenteeism, stress, coupled with turnover intention when social support is limited. Building relationships is based on benefits or resources exchanged.

Gaur	2013	Understanding workplace relations- with special reference to superior-subordinate relationship: An important dimension having impact on the success, growth and performance of the employees and organisation. <i>International Journal of Research and Development</i> , 2(2),7-12	workplace relations, positive relationships, positive exchange,	Leadership theories – LMX Social exchange theory Equity theory Social identity theory Psychological conditions Broaden-and-build theory	Workplace relations result in cohesion, satisfaction, commitment, productivity, goal attainment, positive feelings toward organisation, prevention of employee turnover and desire to leave. Friendship and stable relationships between leader and subordinate. Dimensions for effective relationship: trust, communication, healthy workplace (involvement, work/family balance, recognition, growth, safe practices), precision and clarity, ethics and approachability.
Healthy work environments	2012	<i>Building a healthy workplace? Start with the foundation of positive working relationships.</i> Matters_Mar12_Matters! Newsletter, 21 (2), retrieved from www.amsn.org .	healthy working relationships	Leadership theory Social identity theory Self-determination theory	Elements for healthy relationships (Manion, 2011): trust, respect, support and communication.
Labianca & Brass	2006	Exploring the social ledger: Negative relationships and negative asymmetry in social networks in organisations. <i>Academy of Management Review</i> , 31(3), 596-614.	social networks, negative workplace relations	Social exchange theory Conservation of Resources Social identity theory	Only 1-8 percent of relationships are reported to be negative. Characteristics of negative relationships: 1) relationship strength, 2) lack of reciprocity, 3) cognition, 4) social distance. Negative relations result in socio-economic outcomes of detachment, absenteeism and turnover. Negative relationships tend to have a harder, stronger and more destructive impact on the employee, teams and organisation.

Mills et al.	2013	<p>Positive psychology at work: Conceptual review, state-of-practice assessment, and a look ahead.</p> <p><i>The Journal of Positive Psychology: Dedicated to furthering research and promoting good practice</i>, 8(2), 153-164</p>	<p>positive relations, engagement, psychological capital, empowerment, leadership, management, resilience, support</p>	<p>Social exchange theory Psychological capital Leadership theory – LMX Broaden-and-build theory. Attachment theory Conservation of Resources Self-determination theory</p>	<p>Leadership, support and positive work relations have a profound impact on behaviours. Research is limited regarding the effects positive workplace relations might have on the individual and organisation; effective interventions are absent.</p>
Rotemberg	1994	<p>Human relations in the workplace.</p> <p><i>The Journal of Political Economy</i>, 102(4), 684-717.</p>	<p>Personal feelings refer to human relations in this study. Altruism, climate conducive to creating friendships, relations with management and authorities, cohesion, productivity</p>	<p>Social identity theory Positive Organisational Scholarship Social exchange theory Conservation of Resources Leadership theory (LMX). Self-determination theory</p>	<p>Social interaction between employees and co-workers tends to develop much easier than building informal relationships with superiors, management and members of authority. Friendliness depends on the frequency of interaction between parties. Altruism results in co-operation</p>
Ruth et al.	2002	<p><i>Creating a positive workplace for your associates.</i> Florida: University of Florida, IFAS Extension.</p>	<p>positive workplace, positive workplace relations</p>	<p>Leadership theory (LMX) Social facilitation</p>	<p>A positive workplace is where employees are happy and motivated, and can become a reality by establishing positive workplace relationships. These relationships have greater impact on employee performance. A positive workplace can be created by developing manager-employee relationships that are balanced, timed and have clear positive relations benefit everyone</p>
Spooner & Haidar	2006	<p>Defining the employment relationship.</p> <p><i>International Journal of Employment Studies</i>, 14(2), 63-82</p>	<p>employment relationship</p>	<p>Psychological contract Equity theory</p>	<p>This study defines the employment relationship in terms of the legal world-wide definition according to literature.</p>

Thau et al.	2008	<i>How management style moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and workplace deviance: An uncertainty management theory.</i> Management Department Faculty Publications. Paper 2.	workplace relationship, retaliation, deviant behaviours, mistreated employees	Social exchange theory Equity theory Leadership theory	The study focused on leadership styles and the mistreatment of employees, who then engage in deviant behaviours due to the negative experiences they find themselves in. Employees feel powerless after being humiliated and maltreated, directing the retaliation toward the transgressor - "by harming the organisation, the employee retaliates against the supervisor".
Towsend et al.	2013	Routes to partial success: Collaborative employment relations and employee engagement. <i>International Journal of Human Resource Management</i> , 25(6), 915-930.	employment relationship, engagement, mutual gains, partnership	Leadership theories Social exchange theory	The management style of leaders can mediate collaboration between the employee and manager. This then leads to increased individual engagement and more mutual gains to be received from the relationship.
Venkataramani et al.	2013	Positive and negative workplace relations, quality of social relations, social and job satisfaction, and organizational attachment, turnover intention. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i> 98(6), 1028-1039.	workplace social networks, positive and negative social ties, attachment, withdrawal and avoidance, centrality of networks	Social exchange theory The relational systems perspective Attachment theory	Positive and negative work ties are to be seen holistically. Confronting negative social ties resembles the importance of the employee's social ties, affecting social satisfaction and attachment. Centrality in positive networks is indirectly linked to attachment through the effects of social satisfaction. Encouraging positive ties can result in satisfaction by resolving differences early on; open communication; revising workflow; fostering a trust relationship, and encouraging relationship building.

Based on the information in Table 3, it is clear that the phenomenon 'positive employment relations' is a multi-dimensional theoretical framework comprising a variety of constructs that rely on exchanging resources among individuals in the workplace (refer to Figure 2 on page 71).

The crux of positive employment relations relies strongly on the exchange, conservation, maintenance and building of resources between individuals in the work setting. Resources have been highlighted as a significant contributor towards positive relations (Bono et al., 2013; Danna & Griffin, 1999; Hobfoll,

1989; Zamani et al., 2006), and this is no exception with regard to positive employment relations. These resources are required as a foundation for establishing stable relationships within the workplace as well as encouraging individuals to participate in reciprocal relationships which are built upon trust, respect, support, equity and equality, communication and conflict management (Bono et al., 2013; Danna & Griffin, 1999; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll & Wells, 1998; Zamani et al., 2006).

Theoretically - based on the COR - when resources are available and maintained, individuals are less likely to experience negative effects such as burnout and intention to leave (Kumashiro & Sedikides, 2005; Lang & Carstensen, 2002; Peterson, 2009). This means that individuals - who experience positive employment relations - tend to display increased levels of resilience due to the perceived support received from trusted co-workers, leaders and the organisation (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Hobfoll, 1989, 1998; Hobfoll & Wells, 1998). When these resources are exchanged, reciprocal relationships develop that are characterised by trust, respect and support, and that encourage communication between individuals (Blau, 1964).

Grounded in the SET, reciprocal relationships are developed based upon the levels of exchange between the individuals (Blau, 1964). When these relationships are viewed as fair exchange relationships that are characterised by support, trust and respect, a healthy psychological contract is established (Cullinane & Dundon, 2006; Henderson et al., 2008; Homans, 1974; Sirmon et al., 2011). Based on a healthy psychological contract, the employment relationship is thus defined through the exchanges made between the individuals. Once these reciprocal relationships have been defined and are viewed as stable, communication gives rise to short term and long term perceptions being shared among individuals (Alcover et al., 2012; Blau, 1964; Henderson et al., 2008; Homans, 1974; Sirmon et al., 2011). Yet, when these resources are exchanged among employees, the SDT that propagates psychological need satisfaction for autonomy, competence and relatedness further strengthen and support the psychological contract. This promotes the building of optimistic, hopeful and resilient (PsyCap) relationships among individuals in the work setting (Gamerschlag & Moeller, 2011; Larson et al., 2013; Rotemberg, 1994; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Shukla & Singh, 2013).

In view of the aforementioned, it would therefore seem that the establishment of positive employment relations could predict behavioural and emotional responses during times of adversity (Cavanaugh & Noe, 1999; Cullinane & Dundon, 2006; Freese et al., 2011). Referring to the Spillover Theory, when individuals experience adverse effects at work and positive employment relations are not present or are

limited (referring to support, trust, and communication), their negative behaviours and emotions spill over into the family domain (Batt & Valcour, 2011; Hecht & Boies, 2009). This work-to-home spillover results in emotional responses such as stress; and behavioural responses such as aggression or agitation becoming a cyclical reaction (Hecht & Boies, 2009). Individuals who experience positive employment relations are more likely to experience psychological safety (PsyCon) as they have access to various resources (which promote resilience) to assist during stressful situations (Kahn, 1990). Not only do positive employment relations assist with valuable resources for coping and resilience, but also result in building and maintaining stable workplace relationships and effectively managing stress (BBT; Fredrickson, 2004). Employment relationships become less susceptible to negative outcomes such as stress and burnout in the workplace (Fredrickson, 2004; Waugh & Fredrickson, 2006). Once individuals feel a sense of stability, safety, and autonomy and respond appropriately - behaviourally and emotionally - organisations then need to promote positive relations in the workplace by focusing on the core concepts of trust, respect, support, communication, equity/equality and effective conflict management (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Garland et al., 2010). Once the foundation has been laid and positive employment relations have been promoted, positive outcomes - on both individual and organisational levels - can be expected (POS) (Cameron et al., 2003; Ribeiro & Rego, 2009).

When relationships develop and resources are exchanged among individuals in the workplace, social well-being- and social identity theories better examine the effects a team has on the individual (Cornelissen et al., 2007; Dutton & Ragins, 2007; Forsyth, 2014; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Keyes, 1998; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). Individuals identify and evaluate teams before viewing the team as an extension of the 'self' (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). Considering the social well-being theory, when individuals enter an employment setting, they evaluate the quality of relationships in the workplace. This allows them to identify the character and qualities of individuals, generalising these individuals and categorising them accordingly (Keyes, 1998). Individuals will also evaluate the value these teams bring to the employment setting, whilst evaluating the potential of the team and the perceptions which come with the team (Cornelissen et al., 2007; Forsyth, 2014; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Due to the core constructs identified (trust, respect, support, communication, equity and equality, and conflict management), individuals are more likely to migrate toward a leader who provides a platform to uphold these constructs, also maintaining the ability to promote individual growth and improvement (Cornelissen et al., 2007; Dutton & Ragins, 2007; Forsyth, 2014; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Keyes, 1998; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007).

The organisational community will also have an effect on the individual's ability to face social challenges, and his or her ability to appropriately deal with these challenges, as the social facilitation theory suggests (Avolio et al., 2009; Eberly et al., 2011; Forsyth, 2014; Sluss et al., 2008). The attachment theory further assists in understanding the individual's ability to relate to other individuals when adversity is experienced (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005; Waters et al., 2002). Based on the attachment style (i.e. either anxious, avoidant or securely attached), the individual will identify other individuals upon whom he or she can rely for support and who are perceived as being trustworthy and reliable (Avolio et al., 2009; Eberly et al., 2011; Forsyth, 2014; Sluss et al., 2008). Once individuals have evaluated and identified with a team, they are then more likely to select a team which can be seen as an extension of the self, as based on the social identity theory (Cornelissen et al., 2007; Forsyth, 2014; Hogg & Terry, 2000)..

Once employees have associated with the appropriate team, they may experience improved job satisfaction and engagement levels, along with increased levels of commitment, organisational citizenship behaviours, and flourishing (Alcover et al., 2012; Culbertson et al., 2010; Harter et al., 2003; Keyes, 1998). On organisational level, increased performance and efficiency could possibly be experienced, followed by organisational virtue and positive scholarship (Cameron et al., 2003; Manz et al., 2008). Organisational virtuousness places focus on a more holistic and healthy approach to the employment environment, contributing towards individuals' flourishing in the employment setting (Eberly et al., 2011; Kilburg, 2012; Manz et al., 2008; Sadler-Smith, 2013; Sluss et al., 2008). A virtuous organisation can experience a number of benefits which range from positive employment behaviours, attitudes and conduct, improved and rational decision-making practices, and synergy among employees to increased customer and employee loyalty, increased job satisfaction and work morale - and in general - a positive atmosphere overall (Armansin & Thompson, 2013; Ribeiro & Rego, 2009; Zamahani et al., 2013). Positive organisational support encourages intentional positive deviance to over exceed and go beyond what is expected (Sadler-Smith, 2013), ultimately resulting in staff retention (Kilburg, 2012; Manz et al., 2008; Sadler-Smith, 2013; Zamahani et al., 2013).

The foundations and outcomes of positive employment relations as conceptualised in literature can be modelled as follows.

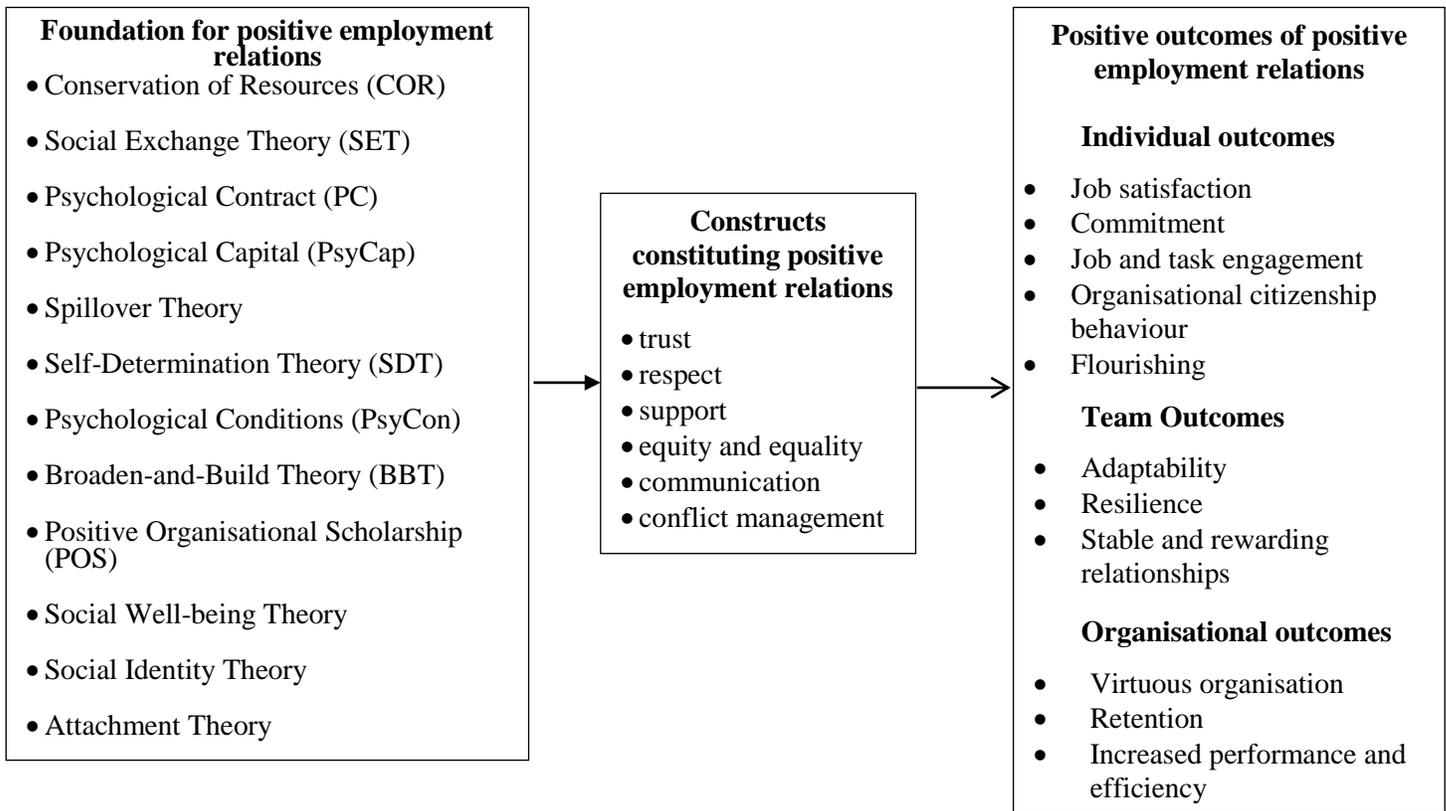


Figure 2. Foundation, constructs and outcomes of positive employment relations

Conclusion

In view of the systems theory that postulates that the whole is better than the sum of its parts, positive employment relations can be regarded as a multi-theoretical approach where each construct can be viewed in isolation; however, these constructs are interdependent as they share properties (see Table 2 on page 57) (Forsyth, 2014; Miller, 1978). For example, trust can be viewed as a resource and as an independent concept; however, trust also embodies other concepts such as respect, leadership and communication. Constructs which had been identified throughout positive employment relations literature and which had been found to have an impact on relationships in the workplace include trust, respect, support, equity and equality, communication, and conflict management.

In order to ensure positive employment relations, an organisation is required to foster a positive work climate by building and facilitating trust among employees; encourage respect among all in the work

setting; render support by providing valuable resources to employees; ensure that communication structures are adequate, sufficient and transparent - and in so doing - reduce ambiguity; and emphasise the importance of equity and equality in the workplace. Furthermore, management should immediately attend to skewed employee perceptions, preventing further discontent. The importance of conflict management methods cannot be excluded, and organisations should strive towards encouraging constructive conflict management by providing the required resources to manage and resolve conflict swiftly and efficiently, also aggressively attending to any destructive conflict which could have serious repercussions for the individual and the organisation.

Positive employment relations do not only have an effect on the organisation as a community, but also on the team and the individual. Employment relations can result in either committed, engaged, satisfied, productive employees - or alternatively - an organisation that faces continual labour unrest and substantially high turnover rates. To foster positive employment relations in the workplace, mutually-beneficial relationships which are founded on trust, respect, support, communication, equity and constructive conflict resolution are required. Without providing this foundation, building beneficial relationships can be extremely challenging and may take many months, years or even decades to achieve – if at all viable.

In the search for literature on positive employment relations, a clear deficit has been exposed, prompting the need to further investigate positive relations in the employment environment. Despite various discussions, debates and research regarding the concept of positive relations and positive employment relations, not one article focused on identifying key underlying concepts which could assist in developing an instrument to measure employment relations **holistically**.

Based on the qualitative meta-synthesis literature review, some limitations are present. These limitations include the inability to predict and determine the actual outcomes based on theories; however, the study aimed at conceptualising the concept ‘positive employment relations’. The scientific community may not understand the interpretation of the literature; however, the study was peer-reviewed to ensure both the argumentation and justification were relevant to the research community. The researcher’s personal bias, ideas and opinions could influence the literature review; however, the available literature was reviewed according to two sets of criteria, selecting only the relevant literature and thus limiting researcher bias.

True to the nature of a qualitative meta-synthesis, this study will require further exploration and investigation. Positive employment relations are still a relatively new topic in the field of labour relations and organisational psychology, with the majority of studies focusing on relations within the ambit of positive psychology, yet with very little application in the employment setting. In view of the current turbulent labour market in South Africa, future studies should investigate the impact of employment relations from, amongst others, a labour relations-orientation perspective on micro-, mezzo- and macro levels in different industries.

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CHAPTER 3

ARTICLE 2

Validation of the Employment Relations Scale (ERS)

Abstract

Higher education in South Africa is in turmoil, with more and more pressure being exerted on employees at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). It is imperative to not only retain talented academia that are responsible for the transfer of knowledge, but also support staff members who are indispensable in the day-to-day functioning of an HEI. Thus, the well-being of employees within the HEI employment context is imperative. No instrument could be found that holistically measured positive relations and the effects thereof on the employment relationship. Therefore, the aim of this study was to test the validity and reliability of a new measuring instrument, the Employment Relations Scale (ERS), which investigated the effects positive employment relations might have on the work engagement levels and turnover intention of staff at an HEI. The six constructs comprising the ERS, namely trust, equity and equality, respect, support, conflict management, and communication were all found to be valid and reliable within a South African context. The results showed that positive employment relations had a statistically significant impact on both employees' work engagement levels and their intention to leave a higher education institution.

Key terms: Positive employment relations, Employment Relations Scale (ERS), validation, reliability, work engagement, intention to leave, higher education institution (HEI).

Introduction

In the knowledge era, more challenges and demands are directed at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and academia; the drive to become globally competitive and exposure to increased information sources due to technological advancement challenge them to change the way they think, live and work (Cleary, Walter, Andrew, & Jackson, 2013; Council of Higher Education, 2007, 2009). HEIs are becoming increasingly responsible for the generation of thousands of potential candidates who can effectively and significantly contribute to society (Pillay, Boulton-Lewis, & Wilss, 2004). Calderon and Mathies (2013) indicated that the enrolments for higher education, globally, have increased drastically over the past few years, with statistics indicating that by the year 2035, an estimated 52.5 million students would enrol, resulting in a 278% growth calculated from the year 2005 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009).

Universities' business models have become more diverse and increasingly competitive. According to QS Top Universities (QS Top Universities, 2014), universities are internationally rated according to eight criteria, which include 1) the academic reputation of the institution (30%); 2) employers who perceive an institution as producing the best graduates (20%); 3) the faculty/student ratio (20%); 4) staff members in possession of a PhD (10%); 5) research productivity (10%); 6) citations per paper (5%); 7) attracting academia internationally (2.5%); and 8) international student enrolment figures (2.5%). South African universities are under pressure to not only be included in the QS Top Universities survey, but also to improve their rating annually. When benchmarking South African universities against international universities, it is clear that although South Africa is a developing country, failure to remain competitive and achieve the set criteria within the international HEI environment could cast a shadow on South African HEIs' ability to be taken seriously.

Based on the aforementioned figures, HEIs are forced to continually adjust their approaches, systems and cultures, from a traditional industrialised approach to a learning, more creative, motivating and flexible approach where the empowerment of students is encouraged (Cleary et al., 2013; Cotterill, 2013). This can only be made possible by employing suitably qualified, engaged and committed academic staff who are able to develop productive and creative individuals through the transfer of knowledge and specialised skills (Council of Higher Education, 2009; Pienaar & Bester, 2008). This means that academic staff work in complex, demanding and stressful environments which are subject to continual changes and multiple and competing demands in an industry which is performance-driven; an occupation that has ironically previously been perceived as being stress-free (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Catano, Francis, Haines,

Kirpalani, Shannon, Stinger, & Lozanski, 2010; Mark & Smith, 2012; Tytherleigh, Webb, Cooper, & Ricketts, 2005).

Not only are South Africa universities expected to perform and remain competitive compared to international academic institutions (Cleary et al., 2013; Council of Higher Education, 2009; Pienaar & Bester, 2008), but higher education is also hindered by poor quality primary and secondary school education, lack of infrastructure, corruption, inadequate support, resources which are used inefficiently, and poverty (Gaza, 2012). Furthermore, financial support in the form of bursaries and loans for potential students is under severe pressure, struggling to meet student demands (SA news.gov.za, 2015). The funds required for potential students who had applied for bursaries exceed the financial capacity of institutions such as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), which revealed insufficient loan recovery in excess of R261.2 million for the 2014/2015 financial year (SA news.gov.za, 2015).

Furthermore, higher education in South Africa has been put under the magnifying glass with student riots which have made headlines worldwide, eliciting sympathy and solidarity protests in the United Kingdom and elsewhere (ENCA, 2015; George, 2015; Whittles & Nicolaidis, 2015). During October 2015, the national #FeesMustFall student movement demanded that students receive free tertiary education with the SA government eventually succumbing to pressure and obliging to zero percent class fees increments in 2016 (Allison, 2015; Baloyi & Isaacs, 2015; Conway-Smith, 2015; Hanly, 2015). With the government failing (at time of press) to commit to increasing subsidies to universities in order to counteract financial constraints as a result of this concession to students, the situation in HEIs has become even more adversarial (Baloyi & Isaacs, 2015; News24wire, 2015; Phungo, 2015).

Despite these demotivating statistics and student turmoil, it is imperative to retain not only talented academia at universities, but also other staff members (technical and support staff) who are all imperative in not only keeping the vessel afloat, but also steering the ship in the right direction. A concept known as positive employment relations could indirectly assist in increasing universities' research output, and improving their academic reputation, which would eventually result in improved university rankings internationally; simultaneously retaining happy and engaged staff members.

The term '*positive employment relations*' refers to positive relationships between individuals in the workplace, the latter being characterised by support, a trusting work environment and a climate in which continued learning and increased productivity are fostered (Anand, Vidyarthi, Liden, & Rousseau, 2010;

Bajnok, Puddester, MacDonald, Archibald, & Kuhl, 2012). Positive employment relations are nestled within the ambit of positive psychology which relates to the study of processes and conditions that contribute to individual, team and organisational flourishing and optimal functioning (Gable & Haidt, 2005). When individuals perceive employment relations as being positive, they are more likely to report increased levels of job engagement, performance, satisfaction and role clarity (Gaur, 2013; Leat, 2008; Mills, Fleck, & Kozikowski, 2013). Behaviours associated with positive employment relations include compassion, support and engagement (Mills et al., 2013). Furthermore, high levels of connectivity among individuals are present and the exchange of resources for professional growth becomes part of the organisational climate (Mills et al., 2013).

When positive work relationships have been established alongside positive human resource practices (Acquaah, 2004; Gould-Williams, 2003; Huselid, 1995), employees generally experience positive effects such as increased perceived organisational and peer support, increased levels of trust, and effective and transparent communication. Aside from this, individuals are also more likely to experience increased levels of respect, equality and equity, and are equipped to constructively and effectively manage conflict. This in turn has a positive impact on employee work engagement; organisational commitment levels, general performance and organisational efficiency also increase (Khan & Rashid, 2012).

Taking all these factors into consideration, employment relationships have been found to have a noteworthy impact on employees' ability to conduct work tasks (Gaur, 2013), affecting their ability to productively contribute to organisational outcomes (Leblebici, 2012), as well as having an effect on individual and work engagement (Pienaar & Bester, 2008; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010), and intention to leave (Venkataramani, Labianca, & Grosser, 2013).

Intention to leave an organisation could be viewed as an enormous risk factor for the organisation, as it could ultimately lead to actual employee turnover (Musah & Nkuah, 2013; Tettey, 2006). Stating this, the financial threat may not seem so severe; however, a study found that turnover costs of a single employee can amount to between 70% and 200% of the employee's annual salary (Netswera, Rankhumise, & Mavundla, 2005). Turnover also poses challenges in retaining the remainder of talented academic staff (Samuel & Chipunza, 2013). Losing academic expertise is an exorbitant price to pay when one can make use of positive employment relations to identify employees' propensity to leave (Venkataramani et al., 2013), even before the threat of leaving becomes imminent.

The aim of this study is to validate a measuring instrument which will explore the effects of positive employment relations that are earmarked by trust, respect, support, equity and equality, communication and conflict management on employees' levels of work engagement and turnover intention at an HEI.

The six constructs, that have been identified through a meta-synthesis qualitative literature study (refer to Chapter 2) as comprising positive employment relations, will now be discussed.

Trust

The Oxford Quick Reference Dictionary (Thompson, 1996) indicated that trust emerged from reliability, confident expectation, responsibility and strength. Trust is based on the foundations of competence (confidence in one's self and others' ability to work independently), congruence (mutually rewarding exchange relationship) and consistency (reliable, genuine and trusting relationships) (Manion, 2011).

According to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, relationships are built upon the reciprocal exchange of resources (objects, physical, emotional, financial), through which trust is developed (Blau, 1964, Danna & Griffin, 1999). The Social Exchange Theory (SET) supports the COR by suggesting that although relationships rely on the reciprocal exchange of resources, the level and quality of exchanges among individuals could have a profound and significant effect on levels of trust (Bellou, 2007; Cullinane & Dundon, 2006; Henderson, Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2008). According to the psychological conditions (PsyCon) theory, when individuals establish meaningful and rewarding relationships - based on trust and support - they experience psychological safety and become more resilient during adverse times (Kahn, 1990). The Self-Determination Theory (STD) indicates that once an individual's psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness have been satisfied, he/she is able to build strong positive relations (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Furthermore, trusting relationships result in establishing a healthy psychological contract (PC) (i.e. a perception of mutual expectations, obligations and beliefs between the individual and the organisation), which then governs the individual's behaviours, job satisfaction and affective commitment (Cavanaugh & Noe, 1999; Freese, Schalk, & Croon, 2011). Once individuals experience trusting relationships, not only does the PC stabilise (Cullinane & Dundon, 2006; Freese et al., 2011), but individuals also become more securely attached and are less likely to experience negative effects such as stress and burnout (Berghaus, 2011; Collins & Feeney, 2000; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). The leader-member exchange theory (LMX) indicates that relational leaders - who

encourage strong, reliable and exchangeable relationships - could promote trust and mutual obligations between the leader and his followers in the workplace (Avolio, 2007; Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995; Uhl-Bein, 2006). When relations are strong, reliable and highly resourceful, social facilitation occurs that results in individuals increasing their task performance when in the presence of such relationships (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Sluss, Klimchak, & Holmes 2008).

When the employment relationship is characterised by high levels of trust between the supervisor and employee, the employee will more likely experience increased levels of co-operation. Furthermore, the employee will also more likely display increased levels of confidence in the supervisor's decisions and abilities, especially when they involve the employee's interests, career development and empowerment (Heavey, Halliday, Gilbert, & Murphy, 2011; Manion, 2011). Employees may experience a sense of empowerment and an ability to accomplish and master the most difficult tasks, due to the supervisor believing in their capabilities and abilities (Manion, 2011; McCabe & Sambrook, 2013). The employee will then experience a sense of ownership, autonomy and responsibility for the duties entrusted upon him/her (Bono, Glomb, Shen, Kim, & Koch, 2013; Manion, 2011), including an awareness that the supervisor only has his or her best interests and well-being at heart (Alcover, Mart ínez-Íñigo, & Chambel, 2012; Blau, 1964; Gaur, 2013; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2008). When the supervisor is perceived to behave in a consistent manner by acknowledging each and every employee's right in the workplace, a healthy workplace relationship ensues (Blau, 1964; Gaur, 2013; Lang & Carstensen, 2002; Manion, 2011). Positive attitudes and the building of interpersonal relationships with the supervisor are also linked to increased commitment and engagement levels, co-operation, organisational effectiveness, and leader-member interaction (Gaur, 2013; Shagholi, Hussin, Siraj, Naimie, Assdzadeh, & Moayedi, 2010).

Trusting relationships also translate into improved psychological safety which promotes the individual's ability to cope during stressful times; thus effectively promoting resilience (Kahn, 1990). Aside from promoting individual resilience, trusting relationships also have a significant impact on work-related antecedents such as job satisfaction, task involvement, commitment and engagement levels (Danna & Griffen, 1999; Dur & Sol, 2009).

Equity and Equality

According to Forsyth (2014), *equality* recommends that all groups and individuals should be given the same outcomes, regardless of their inputs, race and gender; whereas *equity* represents equal treatment and moral fairness towards every individual.

Bingham and Duran-Palma (2013) found that a balanced relationship relies on the balance of equity and equality between employees and their supervisor. According to Appelbaum and Roy-Girard (2007), leadership in the organisation can significantly impact the organisational culture and individuals. Thau, Bennet, Mitchell, and Marrs (2006) indicated that when an individual is mistreated and humiliated, he or she will likely retaliate against the supervisor and the organisation due to feeling powerless; thus resulting in negative deviant behaviour.

Searle and Dietz (2012) further suggested that systems relating to equity, equality, fairness and justice can have a significant impact on an individual's levels of trust and his or her relationship with others (Gaur, 2012). Employees who perceive their supervisors as being fair and objective are more likely to experience increased levels of loyalty, work morale, and job satisfaction, (Kilburg, 2012; Manz, Cameron, Manz, & Marx, 2008; Sadler-Smith, 2013; Zamahani, Ahmadi, Sarlak, & Sherkari, 2013). Burnes and Pope (2007) indicated that unfair, unjust, and unequal behaviours and practices could result in bullying, workplace aggression and ultimately turnover intention.

Respect

Respect is associated with organisational values such as integrity, vision and goal orientation (Carnevale, Grainer, & Meltzer, 1990; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Along with establishing healthy levels of trust among individuals, the COR and SET both advocate that reciprocal relationships based on the exchange of quality resources are also characterised by respect (Bellou, 2007; Blau, 1964; Homans, 1974). Respect has also been associated with a healthy psychological contract through which mutual obligations and beliefs (short term and long term) have been delivered (Alcover et al., 2012; Bellou, 2007). Furthermore, Fredrickson's (2004) Broaden-and-Build Theory (BBT) suggested that once individuals experience stability, safety and autonomy (emotionally and behaviourally), respect should be a focal point of the organisation.

According to the social identity theory, an individual is more likely to migrate to individuals and groups who display similar qualities and characters, viewing the group as an extension of the “self” (Cornelissen, Haslam, & Balmer, 2007; Dutton & Ragins, 2007). This means that individuals who seek relationships characterised by respect are more likely to relate with individuals or a group that share their views or beliefs - a phenomenon known as symbolic interactionism (Forsyth, 2014; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Symbolic interactionism refers to the shared beliefs and perceptions of policies, procedures and workplace practices; this is a social verification process with colleagues which strengthens the organisational culture (Zohar, 2010).

When interpreting an organisation’s values, respect is a result of supervisors who recognise an individual’s contribution towards other individuals and the organisation (Leat, 2008; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). When an organisation embraces a respectful environment characterised by integrity, positive outcomes such as authentic behaviours may occur (Cameron, Mora, Leutscher, & Calarco, 2011). These authentic behaviours include meaningfulness, kindness, compassion and forgiveness with increased confidence levels between employees and supervisors (Cameron et al., 2011). As a result, work-related antecedents such as satisfaction, engagement, organisational citizenship behaviours and levels of performance will increase, providing an environment that is conducive towards developing positive employment relations (Cameron et al., 2011; Froman, 2010; Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003).

Support

Support, which is a valuable resource and a buffer during negative experiences, results in strong cohesive bonds between individuals in the organisation (i.e. interrelational support) (Zapf, 2002). The BBT postulates that when individuals experience positive emotions, they are more likely to build enduring personal resources (emotional, intellectual, physical, and psychological), such as providing support to one another and also receiving support (Fredrickson, 2004; Waugh & Fredrickson, 2006). When individuals receive support - either from the organisation, team or other individuals - the social well-being theory suggests that an individual’s ability to effectively cope with social challenges is promoted (Keyes, 1998). Making use of the COR and SET, support is viewed as a valuable resource which serves as a buffer during negative experiences such as burnout and intention to leave (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer,

2010; Hobfoll, 1989; Liu, Hu, Wang, Sui, & Ma, 2013; Tsutsumi, Takao, Mineyama, Nishiuchi, Komatsu, & Kawakami, 2005).

According to the psychological capital (PsyCap) theory, resource availability affects the individual's efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience (Gamerschlag & Moeller, 2011; Larson, Norman, Hughes, & Avey, 2013; Shukla & Singh, 2013). As a result of this particular resource, positive outcomes such as positive emotions, positive behaviours and psychological stability and safety can be experienced (Kahn, 1990). According to Kahn (1990), support results in the psychological stability and safety of individuals, with individuals experiencing meaningfulness; however, when there is a lack of support and trust, an individual might withdraw. When an individual perceives a lack of support, these feelings and behaviours can spill over into the individual's personal life, resulting in negative home-life behaviours (Batt & Valcour, 2011). The spillover theory further suggests that these spillovers result in a cyclical series of events, having a further negative impact on the individual's behaviour (Batt & Valcour, 2011).

Support also plays a significant role in the individual's ability to attach to other individuals during times of adversity (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). The attachment theory suggests that an individual can either be anxious, avoidant or securely attached and his or her ability to attach to other individuals is reliant on the extent to which the individual perceives support from other individuals and the group (Avolio et al., 2009; Sluss et al., 2008).

Supervisory support which provides employees with a sense of empowerment - including valuable resources (such as support, time, and knowledge) - and promotes continued learning is known as capacity support (Mills et al., 2013; Ruth, Crawford, Wysocki, & Kepner, 2002). Furthermore, supervisors who encourage participative decision making, promote continued learning, and who provide valuable feedback regarding tasks (Mills et al., 2013; Ruth et al., 2002) have a profound impact on employee behaviours. A positive employment atmosphere is thus created which limits negative effects such as stress, fatigue, psychological distress and intention to leave (Chen, Westman, & Eden, 2009; Leblebici, 2012; Zamani, Gorgievski-Duijvesteijn, & Zarafshani, 2006).

Conflict Management

Conflict is often viewed as a precursor to negative workplace relations and arises due to differing opinions, perspectives and situations (Labianca & Brass, 2006). Negative workplace behaviours, such as gossiping and refusal to assist one another often occur when conflict is mismanaged and personalised. This ultimately results in a poor work climate (Venkataramani et al., 2013), with employees being more vulnerable to depression. Depression can be directly attributed to insufficient resources, leading to resource exhaustion (Hobfoll, 1989).

However, when supervisors are able to manage conflict appropriately and constructively, it can be beneficial in the sense that when conflict occurs within a group, it serves as an adhesive, binding the individuals within the group (Avey, Luthans, & Yousseff, 2010; Forsyth, 2014). Various interventions could aid with managing conflict constructively, such as an open door management style, participative and meaningful discussions surrounding policies, procedures and decisions (forums), as well as conflict resolution techniques (Forsyth, 2014). Avey et al. (2010) and Shuklah and Singh (2013) further argued that if individuals can overcome conflict in a positive manner (which can be viewed as constructive), it will promote positive relations within the employment setting.

Communication

Communication has been found to have a significant impact on individual and employment relations (Danna & Griffin, 1999). In the seminal work of Smith, Smith, Olian, Sims, O'Bannon, and Scully (1994), communication can in essence be viewed as a form of social integration, whereby individuals are attracted to a particular group. Characteristics associated with group integration when individuals enter a group, include satisfaction with the group, increased morale, and efficiency (Smith et al., 1994). Gaur (2013) further indicated that communication is an essential dimension required for an effective relationship among individuals (Manion, 2011). According to Manion (2011), communication should be open, honest, transparent and direct, avoiding any ambiguity or uncertainty

Supervisors who make use of social integration (group attraction, satisfaction, cohesion and efficiency), utilise transparent communication channels whereby clear explanations regarding decisions, policies and processes are given to employees, before gossiping and speculation occurs (O'Reilly, Caldwell, &

Barnett, 1989; Smith et al., 1994). As a result, group cohesion occurs, characterised by increased levels of member connectivity and morale, efficiency and satisfaction (O'Reilly et al., 1989; Smith et al., 1994). When communication is transparent and open, it serves as a tool to motivate, control, express and resolve conflict with mutually beneficial outcomes (Gamerschlag & Moeller, 2011). Bajnok et al. (2012), along with Bryson, Forth, and Kirby (2005), and Fielding (2006) indicated that communication contributes to healthy relationships and is essential for establishing and maintaining positive relations. Furthermore, Bryson et al. (2005) found that individuals are also more likely to experience support through communication; whereas Harter, Schmidt, and Keyes (2003) found that communication can and is often used as a tool to build trust among individuals.

On the basis of this literature support, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1a: Employment relations comprise six valid constructs, namely trust, respect, support, equity and equality, conflict management and communication

Hypothesis 1b: Each of the six constructs comprising employment relations shows reliability

Identifying and testing the reliability of the six constructs comprising positive relations at work could provide valuable insight into how these also affect the work engagement and turnover intention of employees.

Work Engagement

Engagement refers to organisational factors which have an effect on an individual's abilities to perform his or her job well, and is linked to his or her characteristics (Pienaar & Bester, 2008; Rich et al., 2010).

There are two schools of thought regarding engagement, which include Maslach and Leiter's (1997) approach, whereby engagement (characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy) and burnout (characterised by exhaustion, cynicism and lack of accomplishment) can be placed on a single continuum. The second school of thought indicates that work engagement comprises three dimensions, which include vigour (mental energy and resilience), dedication (feelings of pride, involvement and enthusiasm), and absorption - known as the positive antithesis of burnout (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008; Pienaar & Bester, 2008; Rothman & Jordaan, 2006; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). Work

engagement is a ubiquitous, persistent and positive state experienced by employees (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008; Kahn, 1990).

Thus, engagement refers to an individual's cognitive, behavioural and emotional state of involvement, passion and enthusiasm towards work (Harter et al., 2003; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006), and has been linked to productivity, performance and turnover intention (Townsend, Wilkinson, & Burgess, 2014). The dimensions of engagement translate into antecedents such as motivation and job satisfaction; and positive behaviours such as using personal initiative and continued learning (Jackson, Rothmann, & Van De Vijver, 2006; Pienaar & Bester, 2008).

When employees are disengaged, relations are negatively affected, resulting in a breakdown of the relationship and exacerbating the individual's intention to leave the organisation (Rich et al., 2010). Positive relationships which are characterised by trust, respect, support, equity, communication and effective conflict management, together with sufficient resource availability have a significant impact on engagement levels (Conchie Taylor, & Charlton, 2010; Danna & Griffen, 1999). Conchie et al. (2010) further stated that trust, for example, can modify risky behaviours such as wearing personal protection equipment when required.

Based on the literature regarding positive employment relations and work engagement, the following hypothesis was developed.

Hypothesis 2: Positive employment relations impact the work engagement of employees at a higher education institution

Turnover Intention

Due to the exorbitant costs which are experienced when an individual actually leaves an organisation, it is vital to identify an individual's propensity to leave the organisation (Venkataramani et al., 2013). Employee turnover occurs when individuals actually leave the organisation, sever the employment relationship and are no longer part of the organisational community (Netswera et al., 2005; Venkataramani et al., 2013). Turnover intention, on the other hand, can be defined as the desire to dissolve the employment relationship, with the employee no longer wishing to remain a member of the organisation (Bellou, 2007; Jaros, 1997). When individuals are faced with an inability to tolerate or

reduce uncertainty and the employment relationship is unstable, the individual will display turnover intention behaviours (Walsh, 1988). When employees intend to leave an organisation, behaviours such as withdrawal, lack of citizenship behaviours (Tziner, Fein, Shultz, Shaul, & Zilberman, 2012) and employee cynicism can be viewed as precursors (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006).

Inequality (Bellou, 2007), poor management, and lack of systematic and consistent human resource policies and practices (Khatri, Budhwar, & Fern, 1999) are all contributing factors towards turnover intention. Distrust, lack of support, disrespect, and inequity (negative employee relations) have all been found to link with aggression, bullying and turnover intention (Acquaah, 2004; Burnes & Pope, 2007).

Employee turnover remains a massive challenge for any organisation. On the basis of this literature support, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Positive employment relations impact the turnover intention of employees at a higher education institution.

Now that the six constructs constituting positive employment relations have been discussed and hypotheses have been formulated accordingly, the following section will describe the process that was utilised to validate the new scale measuring these constructs.

Validation of the Employment Relations Scale

When designing a new questionnaire or measure, various steps should be taken to ensure not only the validity of the items selected, but also of the questionnaire (Hinkin, 1998).

Validating a measuring instrument is most probably a more intensive method of research which requires extensive research by means of a literature review (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Germain, 2006; Hinkin, 1998; Rattray & Jones, 2005). Various literature review methods are available to researchers; however, a literature meta-synthesis had been selected for this study to better understand the phenomenon of positive employment relations (Creswell, 2009). A meta-synthesis is a qualitative method of research, whereby common themes and theories are identified throughout literature, irrespective of publishing dates (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009; Heyvaert, Maes, & Onghena, 2011; Sandelowski, Docherty, & Emden, 1997; Walsh & Downe, 2004).

The literature meta-synthesis conducted in Chapter 2 of this study identified the six core constructs discussed in the previous section as comprising positive employment relations, namely trust, respect, support, equity and equality, conflict management and communication. Research has suggested that these constructs have an effect on employment relations, including individuals, team and organisational outcomes. In order to ascertain the extent to which these constructs impact the employment relationship, it was imperative to develop a measure which could determine this in a **holistic** manner. For this reason, the Employment Relations Scale (ERS) was developed by following these steps to ensure a valid measure (Hinkin, 1998; Hinkin, Tracey, & Enz, 1997).

Step 1: Item Generation

The deductive scale development approach has been used to identify the questionnaire items by making use of the theoretical definition of a construct to guide the item selection process (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Germain, 2006; Hinkin, 1998; Rattray & Jones, 2005). The deductive scale development approach assists in assuring content validity in the final scales and should capture the domain of interest. However, although this process is time-consuming, without appropriate understanding and research of the phenomenon, the measuring instrument could be invalid (Hinkin, 1998; Hinkin et al., 1997). This approach requires extensive knowledge and review of available literature to ensure that the phenomenon is clearly understood, resulting in content adequacy in the final scales (Hinkin et al., 1997).

True to the nature of the deductive scale development approach, a meta-synthesis was employed to acquire extensive knowledge and explore the phenomenon of positive employment relations (Heyvaert et al., 2011; Weed, 2005), laying the foundation and allowing for the development of a measuring instrument which will assist in evaluating positive relations in the workplace (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Germain, 2006). The core constructs which will be measured by the instrument include trust, respect, support, communication, equity and equality, and conflict management, having been identified through the meta-synthesis literature review.

Step 2: Content Adequacy Assessment

The content adequacy assessment served as a pre-test, identifying relevant- and discarding irrelevant items which assist in achieving construct validity (Germain, 2006; Rattray & Jones, 2005). *Construct validity* refers to specifying the item related to the construct, determining the extent to which the items

measure the same thing, and determining the extent to which the items measure the construct (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2011). Construct validity will reduce confusion surrounding the construct, ensure that the constructs are clearly defined and provide a valid conclusion of the relationship between the constructs (MacKenzie et al., 2011). A large variety of validated scales and questionnaires were consulted, identifying (initially) at least seven items per construct which were closely related to the properties of the core constructs as identified in the meta-synthesis (Rattray & Jones, 2005). These items were then adapted for the ERS by specifying each item as “supervisor”.

The first group to assist with the content adequacy assessment comprised master’s students within the field of labour relations, human resource management, psychology, industrial psychology and organisational psychology, as these students displayed sound knowledge of the subject matter (Hinkin et al., 1997). These individuals came from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, representing different language and age groups. The items along with the constructs and definitions were administered to the group, whereby the respondents were requested to categorise the items based on their similarity to the construct definitions – a process known as construct validity (Hinkin et al., 1997).

A second group, comprising more senior subject matter experts (senior academics representing the different fields mentioned in the previous paragraph), further assisted by differentiating and pairing various items with the construct definitions (Hinkin et al., 1997). This process resulted in item analysis (Germain, 2006; Maree, 2011; Rattray & Jones, 2005). *Item analysis* refers to the identification of items which are not suitable for the measuring instrument, eliminating items which a) are too easy or too challenging; b) are discriminating; and c) reveal item shortcomings such as bad wording (Maree, 2011). The panel of subject specialists was requested to evaluate the a) representativeness; b) comprehensiveness; and c) clarity of the items selected for the measuring instrument (Germain, 2006).

Once the relevant items had been selected for the measuring instrument, the instrument was designed.

Questionnaire Design

The items selected for inclusion in the ERS were written in English; they were short, clear, and concise; and “double-barrelled” items such as “my supervisor is intelligent and supportive” were avoided (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Positive items were selected to avoid possible acquiescent response bias, which refers to the participants’ tendency to agree with a statement or respond in the same way to items (Rattray & Jones, 2005).

Item Scaling

A total number of 37 items measuring the relationship between the supervisor and employee form part of the ERS. The ERS will assist in determining the effects these relations may have on individual outcomes. Each section measures a specific construct or dimension and sub-dimension (refer to Table 1) (Rattray & Jones, 2005).

Step 3: Questionnaire Administration

Table 1 identifies the various items (dimensions) and sub-dimensions (where applicable) which the items aimed to measure. The Table includes definitions per dimension and/or sub-dimension, along with an example of the questions asked; lastly indicating the number of the item as it appears in the ERS.

Dimensions, Sub-dimensions, Definitions and Lay-out of the ERS

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Definition	Example	Items
Trust	Competence	An individual's confidence in his own and another's ability to work independently at challenging tasks.	I have confidence in the ability of my supervisor.	13, 14, 15
	Congruence	A mutually rewarding exchange relationship of give and take.	My supervisor allows me to take ownership of my job.	16, 17, 18
	Consistency	Reliable, genuine and trusting interpersonal relations.	My supervisor behaves in a consistent manner.	19, 20, 21
Equity and Equality		Fairness in all aspects of work.	My supervisor rewards all individuals fairly for their hard work.	22, 23, 24, 25
Respect		Authentic, virtuous and altruistic behaviour that acknowledges diversity in the workplace.	My supervisor shows integrity when working with individuals from different cultures.	26, 27, 28, 29
Support	Interrelational support	Strong and cohesive bonds between supervisor and employees.	My supervisor and I are in complete harmony at work.	30, 31, 32
	Capacity support	Supervisory support that promotes continued learning and enhances employee empowerment.	My supervisor supports my attempts to acquire additional training or education to further my career.	33, 34, 35, 36, 37
Conflict Management		Creating a peaceful environment where different opinions are acknowledged and respected; structures and policies are in place.	My supervisor listens to my fears when I am uneasy with a decision.	38, 39, 40, 41, 42
Communication / Integration	Communication	Open and transparent communication.	My supervisor breaks news to us before rumours can be spread via the grapevine.	43, 44, 45, 46
	Group integration	Positive group interaction, inclusiveness, identification with the group.	At work, I feel really connected with my supervisor.	47, 48, 49

Section A, items 1 to 12, comprised the biographical questionnaire with items which ascertained demographics and employment characteristics of the sample population (including academic, administrative, technical or support staff).

Items numbered from 13 to 49 were placed on a seven-point Likert-scale, measuring the six constructs identified as comprising employment relations. The items which had been retained after the deductive scale development process were administered to a sample population ($n = 239$) at an HEI, with the aim of validating the psychometric properties of the ERS.

Step 4: Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a statistical method used to describe inconsistency among observed, correlated variables in terms of a potentially lower number of unobserved variables called factors (Germain, 2006; Hinkin, 1998). In other words, a factor analysis identifies which items belong together, measuring the same dimension or factor (Maree, 2011). This step is essential in determining how many underlying factors exist for a set of items with the aim of empirically supporting the literature models. Two types of factor analyses can be used and include exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis (Hinkin et al., 1997).

Exploratory factor analysis is used with the aim of clearly identifying items which closely relate the constructs identified (Maree, 2011). Eigenvalues greater than one, as well as the scree test further assist in identifying and retaining items which are closely related; and discarding items which do not correlate (Hinkin et al., 1997; Rattray & Jones, 2007). Exploratory factor analysis does not only discard and retain relevant factors, but can also identify additional factors which were not examined or were omitted (Rattray & Jones, 2007). Confirmatory factor analysis assesses and examines the factor structure of the scale, assessing the theoretical model with statistical analysis by making use of the chi-square (Germain, 2006; Hinkin, 1998). A non-desirable chi-square is indicative of a few fluctuations that had occurred, and if small enough, could be attributed to the size of the sample population (Hinkin et al., 1997).

Step 5: Internal Consistency Assessment

During this step, reliability - or internal consistency - is calculated making use of Raykov's reliability coefficient (ρ) (Raykov, 2009). According to Wang and Wang (2012), the cut-off value for reliability was set at 0.70. When the scale is statistically tested for internal reliability, the coefficients should either be

valued at 0.70, or very close to this figure. If the scale has shown low reliability, it is advisable to re-examine the validity of the existing items of the scale (Hinkin et al., 1997; Wang & Wang, 2012).

Step 6: Construct Validation

Construct validation makes use of convergent, discriminant and criterion-related validity to further gather evidence of construct validity (Hinkin, 1997). Convergent validity examines the extent to which the items correlate with the constructs measured, whereas discriminant validity assesses the degree to which they do not correlate with the measure. Criterion-related validity refers to the relationship between the new measures and variables, to such an extent that a hypothesis can be developed based on existing literature and theories. Criterion-related validity is provided once the hypothesised relations can be supported by statistical significance (Hinkin, 1998; Hinkin et al., 1997).

Step 7: Replication

The final step of the scale development process relates to the re-test, re-distribution and collection of new data, making use of the amended scale (Hinkin, 1998). However, replication will be omitted with this study with the possibility of review in future studies.

Tables 2 and 3 summarise the steps which have been taken to develop and test the validity and reliability of the ERS.

Table 2

Synopsis of the Initial Steps in Developing the ERS (adapted from Hinkin et al., 1997)

Step	Description	Process	Tools and/or Actions Required
Step 1	Item Generation	<p><i>Deductive scale development approach</i></p> <p>Requires extensive knowledge and literature surrounding the phenomenon</p> <p><i>Constructs identified through literature</i></p> <p>Trust, respect, support, communication, equity and equality, and conflict management. Selecting items based on the core constructs identified</p>	<p>Meta-synthesis of positive employment relations</p> <p>Based on the dimension and sub-dimension definitions, items were selected from validated scales and questionnaires (refer to Table 1)</p>
Step 2	Content Adequacy Assessment	<p><i>Construct validity</i></p> <p>Specify the item related to the construct, determining the extent to which the items measure the same thing and determine the extent to which the items measure the construct</p> <p><i>Item analysis</i></p> <p>Eliminating items which are too challenging, discriminating, have item shortcomings, and evaluating the items for representiveness, comprehensiveness and clarity</p> <p><i>Questionnaire design and item scaling</i></p>	<p>Items which were selected in Step 1, were adapted and administered to two groups for validity</p> <p>Group 1: Master's students in the field of labour relations, human resource management, sociology, psychology and industrial psychology</p> <p>Group 2: Senior lecturers, associate professors and professors who are subject matter experts in the above-mentioned fields</p> <p>Selected items were put in English in short, clear and concise sentences</p>
Step 3	Questionnaire Administration	<p><i>Questionnaire outlay</i></p> <p><i>Sample population</i></p>	<p>Items were categorised to measure a particular construct and placed under various sections, for example Section A identified the biographical characteristics of the population</p> <p>Items were placed on a 7-point Likert-scale</p> <p>The minimum requirement for the sample population was 200; whilst 239 questionnaires were finally collected</p>

Table 3

Synopsis of the Final Steps in Developing the ERS (adapted from Hinkin et al., 1997)

Step	Description	Process	Tools and/or Actions Required
Step 4	Factor Analysis	<p><i>Exploratory factor analysis</i></p> <p>Identifies items which closely relate to a construct</p> <p><i>Confirmatory factor analysis</i></p> <p>Assesses and examines the factor structure scale</p>	Statistical analysis program (i.e. SPSS)
Step 5	Internal Consistency	Testing reliability of the scale	Raykov's rho reliability coefficient (ρ). Cut-off value for reliability set at .70
Step 6	Construct Validation	<p><i>Convergent validity</i></p> <p>Examines the extent to which the item correlates with constructs measured</p> <p><i>Discriminant validity</i></p> <p>Assesses the extent to which the item does not correlate with the measure</p> <p><i>Criterion-related validity</i></p> <p>Relationship between the new measures and variables</p>	<p>During this step, items which are no longer valid must be reviewed and removed from the measure</p> <p>Using Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2014)</p>
Step 7	Replication	<p>Re-test; Re-distribute</p> <p>New data</p>	New data should be collected with the reviewed measure. This will be a recommendation for future studies.

Research Objectives

Based on the literature review of positive employment relations and the constructs comprising employment relations, the following research objectives are formulated for this study, namely to:

1. determine the psychometric properties of a measuring instrument of employment relations; and
2. investigate the impact of positive employment relations on the work engagement and turnover intention of employees at an HEI.

Method

Research Design

This study followed a quantitative, non-probable, convenience sampling approach to achieve the research objectives (Creswell, 2009; Maree, 2011). A quantitative approach relies on numerical data, which tests the relationships between variables; and the formulation of hypotheses regarding the variables which can be observed or measured (Maree, 2011). When testing a measuring instrument or conducting preliminary studies to develop a measuring instrument and there are time constraints and urgency for results, the non-probable sampling method is selected. Convenience sampling is often beneficial during exploratory research, whereby the sample population is easily and conveniently available, providing a quick approximation of the truth (Maree, 2011). A cross-sectional survey design was furthermore utilised to collect the data on the experiences of employment relations, engagement levels and turnover intention of employees at a particular point in time (De Vos, Strydom, Fouchè, & Delport, 2011). Thus, the purpose of the cross-sectional survey allows the comparison between groups at one particular point in time (Gravetter & Forzano, 2006).

Research Procedure

The Ethics Committee of the North-West University approved this study [NWU-00335-14-A8]. Key individuals of a Higher Education Institution were approached, requesting permission to conduct this study at the HEI. Once permission had been received, a formal letter (which includes the risks and

benefits) and an informed consent letter with related documentation explaining the purpose of the study were then disseminated amongst employees at an HEI in South Africa (Connelly, 2014). Due to the strict standards of confidentiality, the province where the participating HEI is situated cannot be divulged. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured to all the participants who partook in the research project by having them place the signed consent forms in a box and sealing questionnaires in envelopes, or alternatively placing questionnaires in a separate and sealed box. It was also communicated to the participants that their participation in the study was voluntary and should they wish to withdraw, they might do so without prejudice (Connelly, 2014).

The questionnaires were personally distributed among the participants of the HEI who accepted and supported the research project. Participants represented various ethnic, gender, educational and language groups and no specific group was refused participation (Connelly, 2014). Questionnaires were printed in English and distributed as a hard copy in the month of October 2015 and collected every second day. Of the 269 questionnaires which were distributed, 239 (89% response rate) were returned over a period of three weeks.

The questionnaire comprised 61 items and took an estimated 15 - 20 minutes to complete. The completed questionnaires were then captured on an Excel spreadsheet as raw data, which was then converted into an SPSS data file for computing descriptive statistics (IBM Corporation, 2013).

Research Participants

The ERS included a biographical questionnaire on the personal characteristics of the participants, such as age, language and ethnicity; and organisational characteristics, such as organisational tenure, hours of work and type of employment (Muchinsky, Kriek, & Schreuder, 2007; Struwig & Stead, 2007).

The target group comprised employees ($n = 239$) employed at an HEI in South Africa. Table 4 indicates that females (61.9%) form the majority of the sample and more than half of the population was African (55.6%), followed by White individuals (36.4%), Coloured (5%) and Indian (2.1%). Among the population, only 15.1% was in possession of a PhD degree, with 19.2% of the population having a Master's degree. The majority of the population (33.7 %) was between the ages of 21 to 30, and 3.7% of the population employed at the HEI was aged between 61 to 70 years old. Furthermore, the dominant

language within the population was Afrikaans (33.1%), followed by Setswana (24.7%), with only 1.7% of the population speaking isiTsonga. Only 12.1% of the population was English speaking.

The personal and organisational characteristics of participants are presented in Tables 4 and 5 to follow.

Table 4

Characteristics of the Participants (n = 239)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	90	37.7
	Female	148	61.9
Ethnicity (Race)	White	87	36.4
	African	133	55.6
	Coloured	12	5
	Indian	5	2.1
	Other	0	0
	Age	18-20	4
	21-30	81	33.7
	31-40	62	26
	41-50	44	18.5
	51-60	29	12.3
	61-70	9	3.7
	71-80	1	0.4
Marital status	Single	97	40.6
	Married	124	51.9
	Widow(er)	4	1.7
	Remarried	2	0.8
	Divorced	11	4.6
Children	0-3	220	92
	4-7	13	5.4
	8-11	1	0.4
Language	Afrikaans	79	33.1
	English	29	12.1
	Sepedi	14	5.9
	IsiZulu	8	3.3
	Sesotho	27	11.3
	Setswana	59	24.7
	IsiXhosa	4	1.7
	IsiTsonga	4	1.7
	Tshivenda	1	0.4
	IsiSwati	1	0.4
	Other	11	4.6
	Educational level	Grade 12/Matric	53
FET N4-N6		12	5
Technicon Diploma		6	2.5
Technicon Degree		4	1.7
University Degree		25	10.5
University Honours Degree		44	18.4
University Master's Degree		46	19.2
University Doctorate		36	15.1
Other		13	5.4

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to missing values

Table 5

Work-Related Characteristics of the Participants (n = 239)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Section of Work	Academic	96	40.2
	Administrative	72	30.1
	Technical	28	11.7
	Support	41	17.2
Organisational Tenure	0-5 years	117	48.9
	6-10 years	34	14.1
	11-15 years	18	7.5
	15-20 years	5	2.5
	21-25 years	3	1.2
	26-30 years	7	2.9
	31-35 years	5	2
Type of Employment	Temporary	39	16.3
	Permanent	186	77.8
	Fixed term	13	5.4
Hours of Work	Up to 10 hours	24	10
	11-20 hours	29	12.1
	21-30 hours	10	4.2
	31-40 hours	66	27.6
	41-50 hours	85	35.6
	51 or more hours	24	10

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to missing values

Table 5 reveals that 40.2% of the population was employed as academic staff with the largest portion (48.9%) employed at the institution for shorter than five years. Furthermore, 77.8% of the population was permanently employed, with the majority of the individuals (35.6%) working 41-50 hours a week.

Measuring Instruments

In this study, the biographical questionnaire, the ERS, Work Engagement Scale and Turnover Intention Scales were used.

The *biographical questionnaire*, as suggested by Muchinsky et al. (2007), was developed to provide a base line for identifying the demographical characteristics of the participants. Participants were expected to provide, amongst others, their ethnicity, ages, marital status, home language, highest education level,

organisational tenure, type of employment and hours of work. The biographical questionnaire gave a clear indication of the demographics in the population.

Employment Relations Scale (ERS). The conviction for the development of a 37-item ERS was derived from the work done in Chapter 2 of this study, motivated by the fact that this is a relatively new concept with limited research available. No measuring instruments could be found that measure positive employment relations **holistically**, neither the effect these relationships might have on individuals in the workplace. Due to the scarcity of research pertaining to the field of positive employment relations, it became evident and critical that a questionnaire be developed, and as such determine the value and the role employment relations have on individuals and organisations. In order to develop a questionnaire, a qualitative research approach was used which resulted in a meta-synthesis of available/published positive employment relations-related manuscripts, to identify various constructs related to the phenomenon (Heyvaert et al., 2011).

The constructs which were identified, included trust (nine items; e.g. “My supervisor believes in my capabilities”), equity and equality (four items; e.g. “My supervisor acts in fairness with regard to all activities in my department”), respect (four items; e.g. “My supervisor shows kindness and compassion towards me”), support (eight items; e.g. “My supervisor supports me when I need him/her”), conflict management (five items; e.g. “My supervisor encourages us to speak up when we disagree with a decision”), and communication (seven items; e.g. “My supervisor communicates well and truthfully”). These items were measured on a seven-point Likert-scale, ranging from 0 (*disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The ERS was developed with the aim of measuring supervisory relations and the impact these relations might have on an individual in the workplace. Kouzes and Posner (2002), and Rothmann, Diedericks, and Swart (2013) found that individuals leave their supervisors or managers, and not their organisation. This provided motivation for this study to focus particularly on the relationship between the supervisor and the individual.

The *Work Engagement Scale (WES)*; Rothmann, 2010) was used to measure the engagement levels of individuals. The WES assessed cognitive engagement (e.g., “I am very absorbed in my work”, 3 items), emotional engagement (e.g., “I am passionate about my job”, 3 items), and physical engagement (e.g., “I feel energised when I work”, 3 items). A 7-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (*never or almost never*) to 7 (*always or almost always*) was used for the scale. Rothmann (2010) reported construct validity of the

WES with reliable alpha coefficients for cognitive engagement = 0.78; emotional engagement = 0.82; and physical engagement = 0.80.

The *Turnover Intention Scale* (TIS; Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000) was used to measure the turnover intention of individuals. The TIS consisted of three items, for example “I am planning to search for a new job during the next 12 months”. The TIS responses were measured on a 5-point Likert-scale, ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). A Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.83 was reported for the TIS, whilst Diedericks and Rothmann (2014) reported an alpha coefficient of 0.79 for the TIS in the information technology industry in South Africa.

Statistical Analysis

The SPSS 22.0 program (IBM Corporation, 2013) was used to convert the raw data into a file in order to compute descriptive statistics and frequencies. The Mplus version 7.31 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2014) was then used for structural equation modelling (SEM). SEM was used to test the structural and measurement models. The following indices produced by Mplus have been utilised in this study, namely a) absolute fit indices, including the chi-square statistic which tests absolute fit of the model, the Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR), and the Root-Means-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA); b) incremental fit indices, which included the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Hair, Black, Babin, & Andersen, 2010). TLI and CFI values higher than 0.90, were considered acceptable. A close fit between the data and model was indicated with RMSEA values lower than 0.08 and a SRMR lower than 0.05.

Results

The results of the tests done for the competing measurement models, as well as the results for the best measurement and structural models will be reported.

Testing the Measurement Models

Making use of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), a measurement model was tested to assess if each measuring item would load significantly onto the scales it was associated with. Furthermore, where data

showed skewness and/or kurtosis, the maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard error (MLR) adjusted the data to take these issues into account. All the latent variables were allowed to correlate with one another in all the models that were tested. Models 2, 3, and 4 were represented by a similar statistical framework as Model 1.

Model 1 measured trust as a second order latent variable, with competence (measured by three observed variables), congruence (measured by three observed variables), and consistency (measured by three observed variables) as first order latent variables. Equity - also a first order latent variable - was measured by four observed variables. Respect as a first order latent variable was measured by four observed variables. Capacity (five observed variables) and interrelational support (three observed variables) were both first order latent variables measuring support, a second order latent variable. Five observed variables measured the first order latent variable, conflict management. Communication was a second order latent variable, consisting of two first order latent variables, namely communication (measured by four items) and group integration (measured by three items).

Model 2 displayed the same statistical framework as Model 1, with the exception of trust, which was measured as a first order latent variable, with nine observed variables.

Model 3 followed the same statistical framework as Model 1, with the exception of trust (a first order latent variable, measured by nine items), and support (first order latent variable, measured by eight observed variables).

Model 4 measured three first order latent variables, which included trust (measured by nine items), support (measured by eight items), and communication (measured by seven items). All the variables in this model were the same as in Model 1.

Model 5 measured positive relations as a first order latent variable, with 37 observed variables. The variables found in this model were the same variables as found in Model 1.

The Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and Bayes Information Criterion (BIC) fit statistic indices, along with other indices, had been used to compare alternative measurement models. Models with the lowest AIC are indicative of the best fitting model, whereas BIC indicates model parsimony (Kline, 2010).

In order to improve Model 1, only two pairs of error variances were correlated to improve the chi-square value which indicated a better model fit. These errors could be attributed to an overlap of item content,

respondent bias, and/or social desirability (Byrne, 2010). A correlation between two items on work engagement was accepted (“I am very absorbed in my work” with “I get so into my job that I lose track of time”), which resulted in $\chi^2 = 2013.38$ ($df=1091$, TLI = 0.90, CFI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.05, SRMR = 0.04, AIC = 30206.49, and BIC = 30842.68). Furthermore, another correlation was made between capacity support (“My supervisor supports my attempts to acquire additional training or education to further my career” with “My supervisor provides the necessary resources for me to do my job”), which resulted in further improvement of $\chi^2 = 1975.35$ ($df = 1090$, TLI = 0.90, CFI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.05, SRMR = 0.05, AIC = 30153.42 and BIC = 30793.09). These correlations were allowed for the competing models to ensure the best fit among all the models that were evaluated.

These models were tested for the best fitting measurement model by making use of Mplus 7.31 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2014). The fit statistics of the competing measurement models are presented in Table 6. Model 1 fitted the data best as determined by comparing the AIC and BIC values (the lower the value, the better the fit); CFI, TLI (the higher the value, the better the fit); and RMSEA and SRMR (the lower the value, the better the fit). According to Hu and Bentler (1999), these values indicate a good fit of the model to the data as CFI and TLI were equal to or higher than 0.90 and RMSEA was equal to 0.05. Thus, the best fitting measurement model was selected by viewing the different fit statistics of the model in totality.

Table 6

Fit Statistics of Competing Measurement Models

Model	χ^2	df	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	AIC	BIC
1	1975.35	1090	0.90	0.91	0.05	0.05	30153.42	30793.09
2	2167.22	1114	.089	0.90	0.06	0.05	30382.14	30938.37
3	2238.98	1116	0.88	0.89	0.07	0.05	30481.01	31030.30
4	2261.20	1118	0.88	0.89	0.07	0.05	30507.55	31049.88
5	2762.17	1124	0.83	0.84	0.08	0.05	31183.28	31704.75

χ^2 , chi-square statistic; df , degrees of freedom; TLI, Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI, Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; SRMR, Standardised Root Mean Square Residual; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayes Information Criterion.

In Table 7, Models 2 to 5 underwent a Satorra-Bentler difference test to ascertain if any of these models revealed a better fit compared to Model 1 (Satorra & Bentler, 1999). Models 2 and 3 were the only two models with chi-square differences with less than 100 points. The results in Table 7 indicate that Model 1

remained the better fit compared to the competing models when comparing change in chi-square values. The other models differed significantly from Model 1, and for this reason, they were worse fitting.

Table 7

Difference Testing for Changes in Chi-square in Competing Measurement Models

Variable	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	<i>p</i> -value
Model 2	71.55	5	0.00**
Model 3	96.81	7	0.00**
Model 4	118.56	9	0.00**
Model 5	294.40	15	0.00**

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Based on the best fitting measurement model (Model 1), it is clear that there is a significant relationship among all the variables. Table 8 indicates the correlations generated by Mplus 7.31 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2014) for the hypothesised model.

Table 8

Correlation of the Variables of Measurement Model 1 (n = 239)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Trust	1.00**				
2. Equity	0.88**				
3. Respect	0.90**	0.86**			
4. Support	0.95**	0.88**	0.95**		
5. Conflict	0.90**	0.85**	0.93**	0.94**	
6. Communication	0.91**	0.86**	0.92**	0.97**	0.95**

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Based on the fit statistics, Model 1 displayed the best fit, indicating model parsimony and statistically significant correlations among the variables.

Testing the Structural Model

The structural model was based on the best measurement model (Model 1). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) had been used to test the factorial validity of the measurement model; thereafter the model was

evaluated with regression analysis (Byrne, 2010). Testing latent variable modelling, Table 9 shows the composite reliability coefficients of Raykov's rho (Raykov, 2009), which range from 0.82 to 0.95, indicating acceptable reliability, according to Wang and Wang's (2012) cut-off value of 0.70. The relationships between all the variables were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) with either a small, medium or large effect. According to the results in Table 9, all variables were significantly and positively related to work engagement, ranging from 0.44 to 0.48. Turnover intention was negatively and significantly related to all the variables (-0.18 to -0.34).

Based on this structural model, positive relations comprised six pathways towards 1) trust ($\beta = 0.95, p < 0.01$); 2) equity ($\beta = 0.89, p < 0.01$); 3) respect ($\beta = 0.95, p < 0.01$); 4) support ($\beta = 0.99, p < 0.01$); 5) conflict ($\beta = 0.96, p < 0.01$); and 6) communication ($\beta = 0.97, p < 0.01$). Additionally, positive relations were found to be a significant predictor of work engagement ($\beta = 0.50, p < 0.01$) and turnover intention ($\beta = -0.35, p < 0.01$).

The model displayed acceptable fit: $\chi^2 = 1975.35, df = 1090, TLI = 0.90, CFI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.05, SRMR = 0.05, AIC = 30146.70, \text{ and } BIC = 30720.31$.

Table 10 and Figure 1 show the standardised path coefficients estimated for the hypothesised model. Based on Figure 1, it is evident that 25% of the variance in work engagement could be explained by positive employment relations. Additionally, positive employment relations explained 12% of the variance in turnover intention.

Table 9

Correlation Matrix and Raykov's Rho Reliabilities of the Structural Model (n = 239)

Variable	ρ	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1a. Trust – Competence	0.90											
1b. Trust – Congruence	0.89	0.90**										
1c. Trust – Consistency	0.92	0.90**	0.94**									
2. Equity	0.94	0.79**	0.82**	0.81**								
3. Respect	0.95	0.84**	0.88**	0.87**	0.85**							
4a. Support – Interrelational	0.91	0.82**	0.86**	0.85**	0.83**	0.89**						
4b. Support – Capacity	0.92	0.82**	0.86**	0.85**	0.83**	0.89**	0.88**					
5. Conflict	0.93	0.84**	0.88**	0.88**	0.85**	0.91**	0.89**	0.89**				
6a. Communication	0.93	0.82**	0.86**	0.85**	0.83**	0.89**	0.87**	0.87**	0.89**			
6b. Communication – group integration	0.91	0.85**	0.89**	0.89**	0.86**	0.92**	0.90**	0.90**	0.93**	0.96**		
7. Work engagement	0.94	0.44**	0.46**	0.46**	0.44**	0.47**	0.46**	0.46**	0.48**	0.46**	0.48**	
8. Turnover intention	0.82	-0.31**	-0.32**	-0.32**	-0.31**	-0.33**	-0.32**	-0.32**	-0.33**	-0.32**	-0.34**	-0.18**

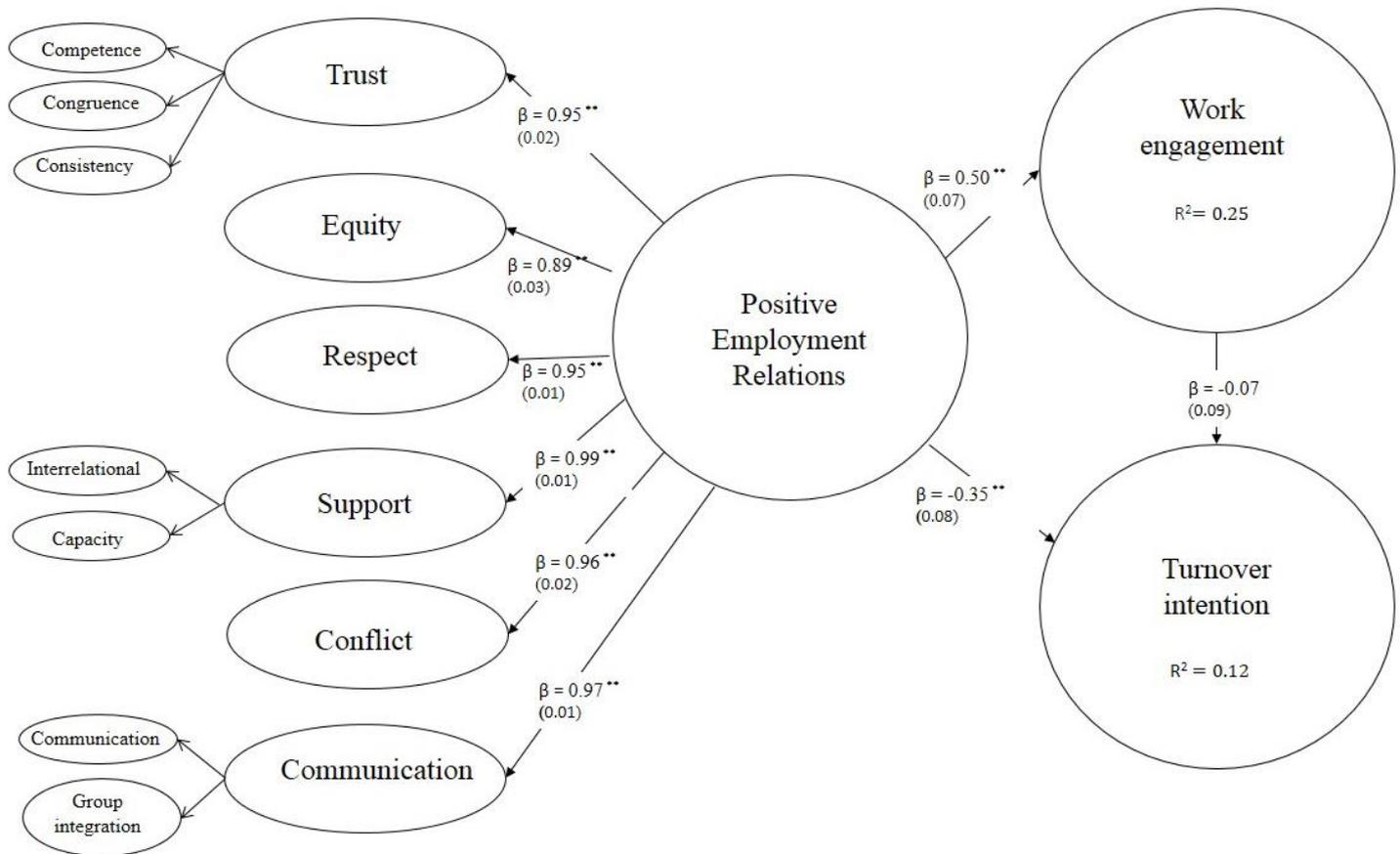
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Table 10

Standardised Regression Coefficients of the Variables

Variable	Estimate	SE	Est/SE	P
1. Trust	0.95	0.02	51.74	0.00**
2. Equity	0.89	0.03	31.48	0.00**
3. Respect	0.95	0.01	68.58	0.00**
4. Support	0.99	0.01	80.43	0.00**
5. Conflict	0.96	0.02	45.24	0.00**
6. Communication	0.97	0.01	100.51	0.00**
7. Work engagement	0.50	0.07	7.72	0.00**
8. Turnover intention	-0.35	0.08	-4.06	0.00**

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$



* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Figure 1. The structural model of positive employment relations

Making use of the measurement and structural models, the following hypotheses can now be reviewed.

Hypothesis 1a: Employment relations comprise six valid constructs, namely trust, respect, support, equity and equality, communication and conflict management.

The aim of the study was to test if employment relations comprised six constructs, namely trust ($\beta = 0.95$, $p < 0.01$), equity ($\beta = 0.89$, $p < 0.01$), respect ($\beta = 0.95$, $p < 0.01$), support ($\beta = 0.99$, $p < 0.01$), conflict management ($\beta = 0.96$, $p < 0.01$) and communication ($\beta = 0.97$, $p < 0.01$). Table 9 indicates that all six constructs were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) and had the expected direction; the reliability coefficients of the ERS have also been found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). Based on the statistical evidence, Hypothesis 1a is accepted.

Hypothesis 1b: Each of the six constructs comprising employment relations shows reliability.

The above hypothesis aimed at testing the internal reliability of each of the six constructs comprising employment relations. This was done by making use of Raykov's rho composite reliability test (Raykov, 2009), with a cut-off value of 0.70 (Wang & Wang, 2012). Raykov's rho was used instead of Cronbach's alpha coefficient, as the latter may over- or underestimate scale reliability, whereas Raykov's rho may lead to higher estimates of true reliability, also testing if a common factor underlies a set of variables (Raykov, 1998).

Trust consisted of three first order latent variables, namely competence ($\rho = 0.90$), congruence ($\rho = 0.89$) and consistency ($\rho = 0.92$). Respect ($\rho = 0.95$) and equity ($\rho = 0.94$) also displayed internal reliability. The first order latent variables of support (interrelation support, $\rho = 0.91$; capacity support $\rho = 0.92$), as well as conflict management ($\rho = 0.93$) were considered reliable. Lastly, the first order variables of communication (communication $\rho = 0.93$; group integration $\rho = 0.91$) also displayed internal reliability. Only two correlations from capacity support had been allowed. Each construct's reliability therefore displayed statistical significance ($p < 0.01$), leading to Hypothesis 1b being statistically supported and accepted.

Hypothesis 2: Positive employment relations impact the work engagement of employees at a higher education institution

This hypothesis aimed at investigating the effect positive employment relations might have on employees' engagement levels. Positive employment relations significantly impacted the work engagement of employees ($\beta = 0.50$), explaining 25% of the variance in work engagement which can equate to the hypothesis being supported, and therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 3: Positive employment relations impact the turnover intention of employees at a higher education institution.

Positive employment relations had a statistically significant impact on turnover intention ($\beta = -0.35$), with 12% of the variance in turnover intention explained. Although the variance

explained for turnover intention seems small, it falls within the medium range (9% - 24%) (Satorra & Bentler, 1999; Wang & Wang, 2012). A possible explanation for this could include various aspects which comprise turnover intention, such as organisational and job characteristics - namely pay, promotion, size of the work unit; peer group interactions, such as role clarity, task repetitiveness and job content; and personal characteristics, such as personality (Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979). This means that positive employment relations can, to a certain extent, predict an individual's intention to leave. The hypothesis is therefore supported.

Thus, in this study the ERS showed criterion-related validity as the hypothesised relations were all supported by being statistically significant.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to identify the psychometric properties of an instrument that measures positive employment relations and to test whether these constructs displayed validity and reliability. The study furthermore aimed at determining the effects employment relations might have on the work engagement levels and turnover intention of employees at an HEI.

The ERS measured the validity and reliability of the following six constructs comprising positive employment relations, namely trust, equity, respect, support, conflict management and communication. Each item underwent a content adequacy assessment to ensure its validity (Hinkin, 1998). The only items from the ERS that were correlated were two capacity support items ("My supervisor supports my attempts to acquire additional training or education to further my career" (item 37)) and "My supervisor provides the necessary resources for me to do my job" (item 36)), which could be attributed to individuals perceiving education and training as a resource with which to perform tasks efficiently and effectively. Making use of Raykov's composite reliability test (Raykov, 2009), all the constructs displayed internal reliability - ranging from 0.82 to 0.95 - which indicates that the ERS is valid and reliable.

Based on the statistical findings of this study, trust (competence, congruence and consistency) was found to be a contributing construct ($\beta = 0.95$) towards fostering positive employment relations. Liu, Siu, and Shi (2009), and Kelloway, Turner, Barling, and Loughlin (2012) found trust to be a mediator between leadership and employee well-being. Trust plays a

significant role in fostering positive employment relations, in the sense that trust provides an avenue to exchange quality and valuable resources among individuals and their supervisors within the employment setting (Thau et al., 2008).

Equity was also found to be a contributing construct to the formation of positive employment relations ($\beta = 0.89$). Equitable, fair and balanced relationships provide a sense of stability in that each individual is treated fairly and is provided with a fair and equal opportunity for growth and development. Shields (2010) found that equity begins by questioning inequitable practices, justice and democracy, as well as leaders who behave in an inconsistent manner. Kiersch and Bryne (2015) found that leaders can influence employees' perceptions of equity and justice; thus either creating a fair environment that positively influences an individual's well-being, or creating an environment that has a directly opposite, adverse effect. Kerwin, Jordan, and Turner (2015) stated that justice (equity) - or rather the lack thereof - predicted intragroup conflict.

Respect ($\beta = 0.95$) - a significant dimension of positive employment relations in this study - among individuals and their supervisors provides a psychologically safe and healthy work environment (Gaur, 2013) where individuals are able to learn from their mistakes without fearing judgment (Carmeli & Gittel, 2009). Henry (2011) found that when individuals from stigmatised groups are subjected to respectful treatment, they are more likely to experience increased job satisfaction.

Augsberger, Schudrich, McGowan, and Auerbach (2012) found that an individual's intention to leave the organisation is related to his or her perceived levels of support. Support ($\beta = 0.99$) was statistically significant and was found to be a reliable dimension of positive employment relations in this study. Other studies that verify the importance of support in the workplace are, for example, the study by Aldea-Capotescu (2013) that found that supervisor support mediates the job satisfaction and emotional demands of employees; whereas Esra (2015) found that perceived organisational support mediates affective commitment whilst negatively mediating turnover intention.

Conflict management ($\beta = 0.96$) is crucial in maintaining healthy relationships, and could have positive effects (such as problem solving) or adverse effects (such as poor decision making) in the workplace. Parolia, Chen, Jiang, and Klein (2015) found that when conflict is managed appropriately, it promotes co-operation, efficiency in completing tasks, and trust among individuals. Young (2013) also found that the conflict management culture of an

organisation that advocates collaboration between the different parties relates significantly to positive individual outcomes.

Open and transparent communication between the supervisor and employee is crucial for positive employment relations ($\beta = 0.97$), whereby Men (2014) found that open, transparent, day-to-day communication structures and leadership contribute to an individual's evaluation and perception of the organisation, shaping the organisation's internal reputation. Johansson (2015) found that communication can be used as a managerial tool with which to empower employees through promoting participative communication strategies.

In order to identify the psychometric properties of positive employment relations, six main constructs which comprise positive employment relations had to be identified. It was also critical to identify potential behavioural characteristics and mental traits which best relate to the constructs and could be converted into a score for statistical analysis. It was essential to determine how effective these potential behavioural characteristics and mental traits statistically represented the constructs of positive employment relations. Based on the statistical findings of the ERS, it was clear that the six constructs which had been identified, did in fact display valid and reliable psychometric properties.

Aside from testing the validity and reliability of the ERS, a further aim of this study was to determine the effect positive employment relations might have on the work engagement and turnover intention of employees at an HEI.

This study found that the ERS predicted 25% variance in the work engagement of employees at an HEI. Individuals who are able to engage in meaningful relationships (i.e. relationships characterised as being trusting, supportive, respectful, fair and open to communication, with the ability to manage conflict) with their supervisors, experience increased work engagement levels. The findings of positive employment relations' impact on work engagement within the HEI context in this study are significant, considering the various challenges that are currently confronting this sector in South Africa. Due to various student protests and complex internal dynamics currently being experienced, employees have been burdened by an inequitable distribution of work tasks which is demoralising (Ramdass & Kruger, 2009). The #FeesMustFall protests resulted in a 0% tuition increase for 2016, a concession which might lead to a financial deficit accumulating to millions, resulting in a "snowball" effect; thus, workloads keep increasing, student-lecturer ratios increase, employees become burdened with administrating the mass student influx, financial and other resources become limited or even

extinct, additional staff appointments are near non-existent, wage increases remain minimal, whilst uncertainty due to restructuring and lack of management structures is rampant. All these mentioned factors might have a significant impact on the work engagement levels of employees (Govinder, Zondo, & Makgoba, 2013; Ramdass & Kruger, 2009).

Poon (2013) found that work engagement is directly related to the individual's ability to emotionally relate, attach and identify with the organisation; a finding which was supported by this study. The theoretical foundation of positive employment relations proposes that work engagement levels are affected by relationships within the work environment; therefore determining the individual's cognitive, behavioural and emotional state towards work (Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). For instance, with the restructuring and transformation process currently in progress in the higher education sector communication structures - which serve as a tool to prevent uncertainty - lose their 'transparency', resulting in communication hierarchies which obstruct essential communication; thus having an adverse effect on trust among individuals and the institution (Ramdass & Kruger, 2009). Therefore, positive employment relations can contribute towards encouraging work engagement among employees within HEIs, despite the mentioned negative circumstances plaguing this sector.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) argued that individuals do not leave organisations; they rather leave their managers. Rothmann, Diedericks, and Swart (2013) found that manager relations, characterised by low levels of support and poor trust, have an indirect effect on an individual's intention to leave due to an unfulfilled need for autonomy (i.e. the desire to work independently and freely). Riggle, Edmondson, and Hansen (2009) found that perceived organisational support has a strong negative effect on an employee's intention to leave the organisation (explaining 25% of the variance).

In this study, the relationship between the individual and supervisor has a significant, yet moderate effect on an individual's intention to leave (explaining 12% of the variance). Possible reasons for this could include the employment dynamics of the higher education sector. Academic employees at an HEI are able to manage their own hours of work to a great extent (flexi-time), whilst employees in general receive ample opportunities for personal growth and development (Govinder et al., 2013). The most attractive benefit of being permanently employed at an HEI would be the generous financial study rebates for employees and their immediate family members. When looking at the organisational tenure of the respondents, of the 239 respondents 30.2% of the population has been with the HEI for longer than five years, irrespective of the nature of the employment relationship.

Concluding the results of this study, it is clear that positive employment relations comprise trust, equity, respect, support, conflict management and communication. The six constructs comprising positive employment relations must be viewed holistically and should not be fragmented in any way. The holistic approach does not, however, refute or minimise the importance of each of these constructs. Furthermore, although leadership is inextricably interwoven into each of these constructs, it has not been identified as a construct, for leadership is not a construct *per se*, but rather creates the context in which positive relations can take place at work.

Limitations and Recommendations

This study displayed some limitations. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the study, the relationships between the variables were identified at a particular point in time, making it impossible to prove causal relationships between the variables. The population sample size was relatively small; however, it displayed a degree of demographics representative of the actual population. The ERS was a self-report measure, relying on participants conveying the information which could result in data contamination (Spector & Jex, 1991).

Based on the findings of this particular study, it is recommended that the four items which displayed a high correlation (two items from the WES and two support items from the ERS) be reviewed. When items display a high correlation with one another, the reliability of the items are compromised, and for this reason the items should be reviewed and adjusted accordingly.

This was the preliminary test of the ERS, testing for validity and reliability. As per Table 3, step 7 (initial steps in developing the ERS), it is recommended that the ERS be re-tested after the two problematic support items had been reviewed. The ERS should then be re-distributed in a different setting, capturing new data, in order to standardise the questionnaire in a South African context.

It is clear that positive relations between the supervisor and employee have a significant impact on employee work engagement levels. For this reason, it is essential for supervisors and the organisation to build an organisational climate which is conducive towards building trusting relationships between individuals and supervisors or management. Interventions which could be used to slowly and systematically adjust the organisational climate in order to

pave the way for positive employment relations could include succession and leadership development planning (long term planning). Succession planning and leadership development planning will involve the selection and development of future leaders, before the current supervisors exit the employment relationship. Furthermore, should succession planning fail to identify the ideal candidate, candidates can be sought externally; however, the recruitment process and induction of the candidate should be reviewed to ensure the best candidate for the newly formed organisational climate will be selected (person-job fit). Human resource strategies, such as coaching and mentorship programs can also be initiated, aimed at equipping supervisors with the relevant skills to establish, maintain or rebuild trust among individuals within their team.

When there is a lack of trust, or trust has already been breached, it often manifests through a lack of communication and information sharing, poor collaborative working conditions and perceived favouritism (unfairness and inequality). Initiatives which could also be implemented to redress these issues could include workshops and informal workplace forums addressing the importance of transparent and sound communication. Furthermore, strengthening trust among teams can be addressed by making use of team-building sessions, requiring teams to effectively collaborate in completing tasks. This will give rise to collaboration within the organisational context, whilst maintaining healthy competition.

To improve trust levels, the supervisor's communication methods can be altered to an "open door policy", making the supervisor more approachable and providing the necessary resources for effective communication. This will result in employees willingly engaging with the supervisor more frequently and more openly. Possible initiatives which could be used to enhance communication between the supervisor and individual could also include regular meetings and workshop forums which require extensive and honest communication between the parties.

These communication interventions will also assist in effectively managing conflict. Conflict should be dealt with in a constructive manner and can be achieved by encouraging a collaborative conflict management style among employees. Acknowledging differing opinions will also display a sense of respect, not only toward the employee, but the employee will also display respect toward the supervisor for acknowledging his or her opinion. Furthermore, by acknowledging differing opinions, individuals can creatively generate and integrate solutions.

When an employee receives support from the supervisor, the individual will more likely be able to cope more effectively with the negative effects of adversity. This then results in a more resilient workforce and limits the negative effects, such as stress and burnout. Aside from supervisor support, other interventions could include employee wellness programs that could provide individuals with support.

Lastly, it is essential for the supervisor to act in a fair, equitable and consistent manner with all employees, irrespective of the situation. The supervisor must allow equal opportunities for each individual in respect of personal growth and development and should avoid creating the perception of favouritism. The organisation should therefore encourage the supervisor to build balanced relationships with employees. The supervisor should be attentive of individuals who abuse certain situations for special attention; clear and firm boundaries should be set for such individuals.

Future research can examine the effects positive employment relations might have on co-workers, with particular focus on other individual outcomes such as job satisfaction, commitment, social well-being and organisational citizenship behaviour. Future studies should investigate the effects positive employment relations might have on an individual's psychological contract, well-being, and motivational levels. Due to the deficit of literature and empirical studies pertaining to positive employment relations, various approaches can be taken to investigate the effects of positive employment relations in the employment sector. It is imperative that a larger population sample which is representative of the population demographics be selected in different industries.

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CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the conclusions of the current study according to its general and specific objectives. In addition, the limitations of the study are discussed and recommendations are made for both the organisation and for future research.

4.1 Conclusions

The general aim of this study was to examine how positive employment relations were conceptualised in literature, determining the psychometric properties thereof and the effects positive employment relations might have on the work engagement and turnover intention of employees at a higher education institution.

Examine how positive employment relations are conceptualised in literature

The first objective of this study was to examine how the term “positive employment relations” is conceptualised in literature. A meta-synthesis literature review was utilised for this purpose, which entails - via Atlas ti7 – consulting available literature on the topic, irrespective of publishing dates. The aim of this approach was to identify common themes, constructs and theories (Weed, 2005). It became prevalent that although the phenomenon positive relations is an emerging field of research, positive employment relations have not yet enjoyed as much research exposure as the former. Positive employment relations fit into the ambit of positive psychology which focuses on the flourishing of individuals and organisations by studying the conditions and processes that contribute towards achieving the optimal functioning of individuals and organisations (Gable & Haidt, 2005). From the extensive search and criteria filtration, only sixteen published manuscripts (from an initial 200) eventually remained relevant to the study.

It became evident that positive employment relations is a multi-dimensional concept comprising six dimensions, namely trust, equity and equality, respect, support, conflict management, and communication. The dynamics between all these constructs can be illustrated by using the analogy of an umbrella. The six components constituting positive employment relations are the different segments of an umbrella – all six are essential in order

for the umbrella to be able to be functional – that is to provide cover and/or protection. Thus, the whole is better than the sum of its parts.

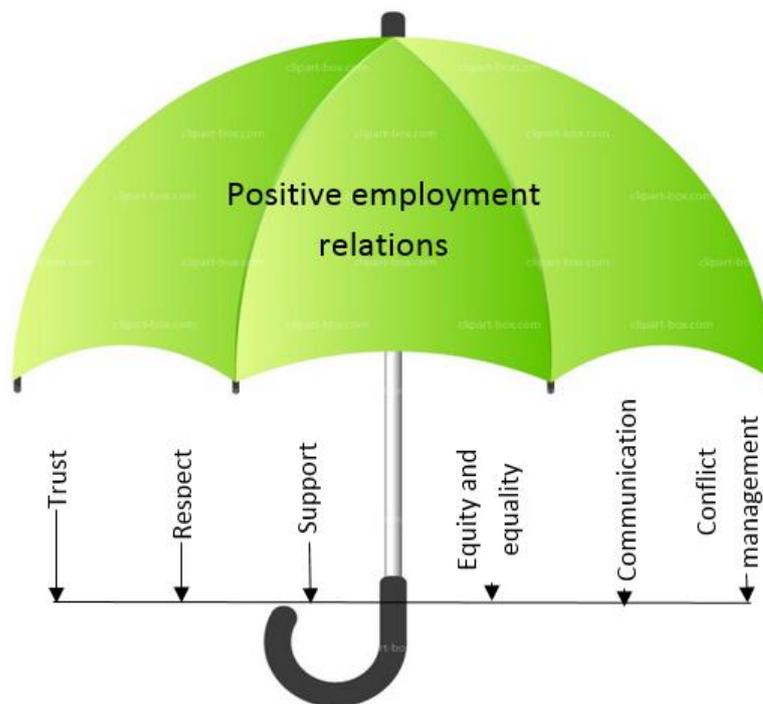


Figure 1. The umbrella-concept of positive employment relations

Omission of any one of the constructs which were investigated will result in an imbalance and could have subsequent devastating effects on the individual and team, with a ripple effect throughout the entire organisation. If individuals respect one another, communicate effectively, provide support, perceive equity and equality in the workplace, and are able to manage conflict accordingly, yet are unable to trust one another, it could deplete the individual's resources.

No studies could be found that approached this concept in a holistic manner; studies were fragmented by studying each of the six constructs individually. According to the available literature, positive employment relations specifically attend to relationships which develop among individuals within the employment context; relationships that are characterised by mutual giving, receiving and caring (Ragins & Dutton, 2007). Conceptualising the phenomenon according to a holistic approach required a strong theoretical foundation, including various theories such as the Conservation of Resources theory (COR) (Hobfoll, 1989), Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964), Psychological Contract (Rousseau, 1995), Psychological Capital (PsyCap) (Luthans & Youssef, 2004), Spillover Theory (Hecht

& Boies, 2009), Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000), Psychological Conditions (PSyCon)(Kahn, 1990), Broaden-and-Build Theory (BBT) (Fredrickson, 2004), Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS) (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003), Social Well-being Theory (Keyes, 1998), Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and the Attachment Theory (Bretherton, 1985).

Based on the theoretical frameworks of the study, it was found that employment relations require high quality relationships which allow individuals to build, maintain, conserve and exchange valuable resources (emotional, physical, and psychological) (SET; Blau, 1964; COR; Hobfoll, 1989). The exchange of resources also has a significant impact on the state of the individual's psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995), whereby mutual expectations and obligations are created, thus defining the relationship. When quality resources are exchanged, efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience are promoted (PsyCap; Luthans & Youssef, 2004), leading to employees experiencing psychological safety (PsyCon; Kahn, 1990), and stable relationships (BBT; Fredrickson, 2004).

Not only do resources build, define and maintain relationships, but depending on the availability or absence thereof can impact an individual's behavioural and emotional responses outside the employment setting (Spillover Theory; Hecht & Boies, 2009), such as the ability to face social tasks and challenges (Social Well-being Theory; Keyes, 1998), and to identify and attach with groups and the organisation (Social Identity Theory; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Attachment Theory; Bretherton, 1985). When employment relations are perceived as being positive, individuals gain a sense of autonomy, competence and relatedness, which in turn enhance the quality of their relationships (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Organisations that embrace positive employment relations by encouraging positive organisational processes and attributes create a virtuous organisation; that is seeking goodness for its intrinsic value which leads to improved human conditions (Cameron et al., 2003).

Leadership was not identified as a construct comprising positive relations at work for the mere reason that leadership provides the **context** in which positive employment relations take place. Leaders are not only responsible for cultivating respect (Carnevale, Grainer, & Meltzer, 1990), but are also required to balance relationships (equity and equality; Gaur, 2013), manage conflict (Forsyth, 2014; Hobfoll, 1989), employ effective communication strategies which could foster trust (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002), and provide support to employees (Leblebici, 2012). It has been found that individuals tend to migrate toward

relational leaders who uphold these qualities and promote personal growth and development. It has furthermore been found that positive deviant behaviour (the willingness to over exceed and go beyond what is expected) will result when a positive organisational culture is created and positive organisational support is present (Sadler-Smith, 2013). Therefore, the cardinal role of management and leadership cannot be viewed in isolation, as individuals more than often leave the employment situation due to their leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Aside from leaving leadership, employment relations have been found to have significant outcomes on individual, team and organisational levels. On an individual level, positive employment relationships have a significant influence on an individual's job satisfaction, levels of commitment, job and task engagement and organisational citizenship behaviours. On a team level, the team becomes more adaptable and resilient, and stable and cohesive team relationships ensue. Organisational outcomes include a virtuous organisation that is characterised by staff retention, organisational citizenship behaviours, workplace harmony, and efficiency (Kilburg, 2012; Manz, Cameron, Manz, & Marx, 2008; Ribeiro & Rego, 2009). Creating a positive work environment, which includes positive relationships between the supervisor and individual, will result in a ripple effect. This ripple effect can be felt from individual level through to the customers, clients and stakeholders who will experience the positive effects.

“Your employees come first. And if you treat your employees right, guess what? Your customers come back, and that makes your shareholders happy. Start with employees and the rest follows from that” - Herb Kelleher, co-founder and former CEO of Southwest Airlines in the United States of America.

Determine the psychometric properties of a measuring instrument of employment relations

The second objective of this study was to determine the psychometric properties of an instrument that was developed to measure employment relations. Based on the constructs identified in Chapter 2 of this study, it became evident that trust, equity and equality, respect, support, conflict management, and communication encompassed positive employment relations. The initial steps for developing a measuring instrument, as suggested by Hinkin, Tracey, and Enz (1997), were followed to ensure construct and content validity of the selected items. Based on the construct and content analysis, every step was taken to ensure the validity of the employment relations scale, i.e. that the items measure what they intend to

measure. The questionnaire was disseminated with the aim of determining reliability (stability and consistency) of the measuring instrument (Rattray & Jones, 2005).

Various measurement models were tested to ensure that the best fitting model was selected. Selecting the best fitting model relied on the lowest chi-square, Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Standardised Root Mean Residual (SRMR), Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), Bayes Information Criterion (BIC), and highest Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI). Of the five models which were tested, Model 1 proved to be the best fitting model in terms of the theoretical foundation and the statistical data.

The Employment Relations Scale (ERS) is a newly developed measuring instrument, aimed at measuring the effects positive relations might have on an individual in the workplace. To date, not a single measuring instrument could be found that investigated the effects these relations might have on individuals in the workplace in a holistic manner. The study confirmed that positive employment relations comprise the six constructs mentioned before. Positive employment relations comprised six pathways toward the six constructs, namely trust, equity, respect, support, conflict management, and communication. Each item was found to be statistically significant.

Internal reliability was tested by making use of Raykov's rho, with the cut-off point for composite reliability set at 0.70 (Raykov, 2009; Wang & Wang, 2012). The internal reliability test found that trust - comprising competence ($\rho = 0.90$), congruence ($\rho = 0.89$), and consistency ($\rho = 0.92$) - all exceeded the proposed cut-off point; therefore confirming reliability for trust. Equity ($\rho = 0.94$), respect ($\rho = 0.95$), and support - comprising interrelational support ($\rho = 0.91$) and capacity support ($\rho = 0.92$) - also exceeded the cut-off point for reliability. Conflict ($\rho = 0.93$), communication ($\rho = 0.93$) and the other sub-dimension of communication, namely group integration ($\rho = 0.91$), all measured above 0.70; thus further confirming internal reliability.

Based on the statistical findings of this study, trust (competence, congruence and consistency) was found to be a contributing construct ($\beta = 0.95$) in fostering positive employment relations. Trust plays a significant role in fostering positive employment relations in the sense that trust provides an avenue to exchange quality and valuable resources among individuals in the employment setting (Thau, Bennet, Mitchell, & Marrs, 2008). If a supervisor is unable to display trust or confidence in an individual, it is likely that the individual will not gain a sense of autonomy or self-accomplishment; therefore, the individual is unable to flourish due

to a lack of available resources (Mills, Fleck, & Kozikowski, 2013). Failure to trust can have a devastating impact on an individual's ability to grow in a personal capacity; therefore negatively impacting his or her ability to collaborate with his or her supervisor when it comes to executing tasks (Bajnok, Puddester, McDonald, Archibald, & Kuhl, 2012). Furthermore, individuals who cannot be trusted and who do not trust others are more likely to engage in cynical, selfish behaviours, characterised by uncooperative, non-collaborative and hostile actions towards others.

Equity was also found to be a contributing construct to the formation of positive employment relations ($\beta = 0.89$). Equitable, fair and balanced relationships provide a sense of stability in that each individual is treated fairly and is provided with a fair and equal opportunity for growth and development. Perceptions of favouritism and discrimination can be eliminated through the effective implementation and management of organisational policies (Bingham & Duran-Palma, 2013), and supervisors who are able to set boundaries for regular offenders who take advantage of situations.

Respect among individuals and their supervisors is achieved by understanding and considering individual differences and opinions. By so doing, a psychologically safe and healthy work environment can be created (Gaur, 2013). In this study respect ($\beta = 0.95$) is a significant contributor towards positive employment relations and can be linked to supervisors who are able to build respectful relationships with and among employees. When such relationships are established, individuals are more likely to experience increased levels of job satisfaction and are less likely to terminate their services with the organisation (Augsberger, Schudrich, McGowan, & Auerbach, 2012; Henry, 2011). In a work environment that is characterised by showing respect for diversity (i.e. individual differences), employees display an increased sense of comfort when making mistakes, whereby they are able to own up to and learn from the mistake, without fear of judgment (Carmeli & Gittel, 2009). This in turn, fosters a positive work environment that is characterised by co-operation and collaboration between the relevant parties (Bajnok et al., 2012).

Support ($\beta = 0.99$) was also found to be statistically significant and a reliable cornerstone of positive employment relations. Warszewska-Makuch, Bedyńska, and Żołnierczyk-Zreda (2015) found that support moderated the relationship between the supervisor and workplace bullying in their study. Bentley, Teo, McLeod, Tan, Bosua, and Gloet (2016) found support

in the workplace to be associated with individual well-being, and job satisfaction, also serving as a buffer against psychological strain when job demands increased (Rodwell & Munro, 2013). Emotional demands, affective commitment and turnover intention of individuals are found to be mediated by support received from the supervisor and organisation in more recent studies by Aldea-Capotescu (2013) and Esra (2015). Support has also been found to mediate organisational citizenship behaviours (Siddiqi, 2014) which, in turn, predict turnover intention (Chen, Yu, Hsu, Lin, & Lou, 2013). All these findings from various other studies reiterate the importance of support as a construct of positive employment relations in this study.

Conflict management within the workplace can have a significant impact on group and an individual's effectiveness. Young's (2013) findings indicated that collaborative conflict management has a positive effect on job satisfaction, which promotes a positive working atmosphere. Parolia, Chen, Jiang, and Klein (2015) found that effective conflict management promotes trust and co-operation among individuals, as well as efficiency in completing tasks. Managing conflict is crucial in maintaining relationships and, if managed incorrectly, could have detrimental effects on an individual (lack of job satisfaction, trust and co-operation) and the organisation (poor decision making). The findings in these studies confirm the impact of effective conflict management ($\beta = 0.96$) on positive relations in the workplace.

Communication, being the sixth pillar of positive employment relations, is a powerful tool at the disposal of supervisors. Transparent, open day-to-day communication which is accompanied by good leadership shapes an individual's perception of the organisation; thus creating an internal organisational reputation (Men, 2014). Communication strategies are tools provided to supervisors that can promote employee participation and empowerment (Johansson, 2015). In this study it is clear that communication ($\beta = 0.97$) is a catalyst for positive employment relations. Transparent and effective communication can build trust, resolve conflict in a constructive manner, and maintain employee morale. Without effective communication, however, it will be near impossible to effectively build and maintain employment relationships, not to mention manage conflict; a situation which will eventually give rise to employee cynicism and perceptions of inequity.

Investigate the impact of positive employment relations on the work engagement and turnover intention of employees at an HEI.

The third objective of the study was to investigate the impact of employment relations on the work engagement and turnover intention of individuals employed at an HEI. The Work Engagement Scale (WES; Rothmann, 2010) and the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS; Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000) were utilised to measure - in conjunction with the ERS - the extent to which employment relations affect individuals at an HEI.

With the recent student protests, HEIs have been pressurised to restructure and transform due to an unprecedented growth and demand for higher education (Mail & Gaurdian Africa, 2015), resulting in an increasing workload for employees (Ramdass & Kruger, 2009). Furthermore, the #FeesMustFall protest saw a zero percent increase in tuition fees for 2016, exacerbating an already financially strained and limited budget of the higher education sector (Higher Education Transformation Summit, 2015). This means that despite the increased workload, additional staff appointments will be unlikely due to a budgetary deficit exceeding millions of Rands; a situation that can only further demoralise an already stressed HEI workforce (Ramdass & Kruger, 2009). Although the financial constraints might not be solved in the immediate future, leaders in the various sections can play a pivotal role in enhancing workplace morale by merely utilising positive employment relations as a tool to engage the workforce.

This study has proven that positive relations between the supervisor and employee have a significant impact on an individual's engagement levels, explaining 25% of the variance. The quality of the supervisor-individual relationship with regard to trust, respect, equity, support, conflict management and communication determines the individual's cognitive, behavioural and emotional state towards his or her work (Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). This means that when the relationship between the supervisor and the individual is characterised by high levels of trust, respect, equity, support, effective conflict management, and sound communication, the individual will feel engaged in his or her work-related tasks and activities.

Positive employment relations also had a significant impact on the turnover intention of employees at an HEI in this study, explaining 12% of the variance. Although the variance is not that large, it is still considered a moderate result. This simply means that individuals who experience negative employment relations will not necessarily leave the organisation, despite

the findings of Kouzes and Posner (2002), and Rothmann, Diedericks, and Swart (2013), the latter in a South African study, which indicated that individuals leave their supervisors and not the organisations. Furthermore, internal restructuring dynamics, such as communication structures, management structures, increasing administration processes, and changes to internal and external policies to ensure gradual transformation of the higher education sector often lead to employee uncertainty. The lack of job security might contribute to employees exiting the higher education sector (Higher Education Transformation Summit, 2015).

In this study 30.2% of the population had been with the organisation for longer than five years which can lead one to conclude that despite negative relationships, the organisational benefits outweigh the negative experiences. Organisational benefits could include ample flexi-time arrangements for academia, the ability to administer private consulting practices whilst being permanently employed, medical aid and pension benefits, opportunities for growth and development, generous financial rebates towards the class fees of permanently employed employees' immediate family members, etcetera.

Retaining academia is critical for succession planning, whereby skills and knowledge transfer to younger successors is required to ensure adequately trained individuals who will assist in shaping the academic future of others. The role of support and administration staff within higher education cannot be overlooked, as these staff members provide vital support to academia and students. Administration and support staff ensure that student enrolments and administration processes occur smoothly without any hitches, whilst simultaneously ensuring that the financial capacity (through student tuitions, grants and bursaries) of the institution is managed accordingly. Support and administrative staff are also faced with increased workloads due to the increasing demand for tertiary education. Furthermore, the demand for HEI transformation leads to business systems and processes which are continually being reviewed, placing more pressure upon support and administrative staff (Ramdass & Kruger, 2009).

One of the greater challenges HEIs are facing today include the turnover intention and actual turnover of these vital employees. Failing to recognise the potential void these individuals could create when they leave the institution, could result in inadequate successors who are unable to perform their duties to the specific standards as demanded by HEIs (Ramdass & Kruger, 2009). Lack of knowledge and skills transfer leads to the so-called brain-drain, whereby the loss of expert knowledge is lost and will never be gained back.

Positive employment relations - as complex as the relationship may be - not only impact an individual's ability to engage in work tasks, but also his or her ability to remain with the HEI.

4.2 Limitations

Based on the qualitative meta-synthesis literature review of this study (Chapter 2), the following limitations were identified. The research consists purely of literature pertaining to positive employment relations, making it difficult to make predictions and determine the actual outcomes based on theories (Maree, 2011). However, the aim of this particular study was to conceptualise the phenomenon - positive employment relations - rather than predict relationships. Conceptualising positive relations in the workplace provided a theoretical model for future studies to build on and even elaborate; and to determine and predict various outcomes on three different levels, namely individual (job satisfaction, engagement, and turnover intention), team (adaptability, stable relationships, and resilience), and organisational outcomes (virtuous organisations, performance and retention of talent).

Furthermore, the literature may not make generalisations pertaining to one specific population, group of individuals or particular environmental setting (Maree, 2011); this being an emerging concept with limited research integrating the fragmented components comprising positive employment relations. This study approached fragmented research, integrating and approaching the concept holistically, irrespective of the population being studied.

The results of the meta-synthesis literature review could also be influenced by the researcher's personal ideas, opinions and bias (Creswell, 2009); however, a large array (more than 200) of manuscripts were reviewed, making use of two sets of criteria to select the relevant literature; thus limiting researcher bias.

Interpretation of the literature may not be understood within the scientific community (Maree, 2011). Although the literature review may contain sufficient information, argumentation and justification of the research may be lacking (Creswell, 2009). To ensure that the interpretation, argumentation and justification of the research were relevant to the research community, the manuscript was peer reviewed by two senior subject matter specialists who specialise in qualitative research methods. They provided valuable inputs regarding the content, which was then addressed accordingly.

Regarding Chapter 3, the ERS is a newly developed questionnaire, with two items which had significantly high error variances that could negatively affect the reliability of the measure. Therefore, these two items of support were correlated; thereafter yielding acceptable reliability.

The interpretation of the findings was limited by the cross-sectional design of this study, which allows identification of relationships between variables at a particular point in time. Causal relationships between the variables were impossible to prove due to the study being based on data correlations.

Although the sample size was relatively small, the population was relatively diverse in terms of ethnicity, age, gender, educational level, organisational tenure etc. Despite the small sample size, the ERS was validated and reliability was proven, displaying significant relationships between the variables.

The ERS was a self-report measuring instrument which could result in contaminated data by common method variance. The data contamination can be attributed to the questionnaire relying on participants to convey information (Spector & Jex, 1991).

4.3 Recommendations

4.3.1 Recommendations to Solve the Research Problems

Positive relations between the supervisor and employee have been found to have a significant effect on the employee's engagement levels. Thus, it is essential that the organisation and supervisors collaborate in creating an organisational environment which is conducive towards building trusting, respectful, supportive and equitable relationships.

Interventions - such as succession planning and leadership development planning - can be incorporated to slowly and systematically adjust the organisational climate towards becoming 'relationship friendly'. Leadership has a profound impact on relationships, and for this reason organisations can make use of succession planning to identify and develop potential internal successors. Identifying internal candidates increases the availability of experienced and capable individuals who have already established significant and meaningful relationships with other employees, and who are aware of and understand the everyday difficulties and challenges employees experience. Furthermore, leadership development planning can also be

used to assist supervisors in establishing meaningful relationships. The leadership development plan should include on-the-job experience, coaching and formal training. Job experiences provide the supervisor with in-depth knowledge of workplace relationships; whereas coaching can provide the supervisor with the appropriate resources to maintain and enhance these relationships. Formal training will provide supervisors with essential tools (such as effective communication and conflict management skills) to further facilitate healthy relationships.

Where succession planning and leadership development plans fail to identify the appropriate supervisor from the internal processes, recruitment processes for this position should be reviewed. Ideally, supervisor competencies should be defined, including integrity, information sharing, building trusting relationships and anticipating problems before they arise (Ulrich, Brockbank, Johnson, Sandholtz, & Younger, 2008).

Should the candidate be recruited externally, other initiatives such as an appropriate induction process should also be implemented. This will allow the supervisor to familiarise him/herself with the surroundings and tasks, as well as understand the organisational culture and adapt to it accordingly. It would also be suggested that an informal meeting take place between the newly recruited supervisor and his employees, providing all individuals with the opportunity to informally meet, discuss individual expectations, and determine the best way forward for all parties involved.

Making use of these initiatives will not only contribute towards developing a new organisational climate, but will also provide candidates who will pay particular attention to establishing meaningful relationships among various individuals.

When dealing with trust, including lack of trust and breach of trust, various workshops can be presented, discussing the importance of trusting relationships, and identifying the root causes of distrust and breached trust among individuals and their supervisors. These workshops can address aspects such as communication and fairness (equity) which could have a significant impact on an individual's trust levels. Other initiatives could include team building sessions and activities which enhance trust among the supervisors and individuals. Typical activities can include blindfolding individuals, who will then need to trust their supervisor – unequivocally - and follow his or her instructions to navigate through obstacles. Emphasis should be placed on individuals, team and supervisor collaboration within an organisational context.

Effective communication remains paramount towards establishing and maintaining trust, reducing and managing conflict among individuals and the supervisor. Simple communication strategies, such as an “open door policy”, can make the supervisor seem more approachable. Other alternatives include informal forums where individuals can communicate informally with the supervisor regarding any employment matter or issue; also encompassing regular meetings and teambuilding games that focus on communication.

Communication interventions will further assist in alleviating conflict within the workplace. Effectively managing conflict can be achieved by encouraging a collaborative conflict management approach, acknowledging differing opinions, and resulting in creative and integrative solutions. Supervisors, who acknowledge individual opinions and the diverse nature of their workforce, will display a sense of respect towards the employee who will then reciprocate respect.

Personal wellness programs and employee assistance program interventions pertaining to employee wellness can be initiated, with the aim of providing support to individuals. However, supervisors provide a more direct and immediate source of support. Teambuilding will result in establishing supportive relationships; whilst communication further provides support to the individual.

To ensure fairness and avoid favouritism, the supervisor should afford equal development and training opportunities to each individual. Balancing relationships between the supervisor and individual can be achieved by providing appropriate training to the supervisor; alternatively, coaching the supervisor to be attentive to individual circumstances and setting boundaries for each individual. Training which could assist in improving one-on-one interactions with individuals can be provided to supervisors. Training can provide the supervisor with the relevant tools, knowledge and understanding of employee dynamics and how to deal with unique situations. Along with communication initiatives, quality leadership where the supervisor acts in a fair, consistent and equitable manner toward all employees - irrespective of diversity - is also required.

Despite implementing interventions to assist in establishing positive employment relations, employee buy-in is required to ensure the success and viability of these interventions.

In sum, these words by the well-known author, Stephen Covey, reiterate the importance of positive relations in the workplace: “A cardinal principle of Total Quality escapes too many

managers: you cannot continuously improve interdependent systems and processes until you progressively perfect interdependent, interpersonal relationships...” (Covey, nd).

4.3.2 Recommendations for Future Research

In order to better understand positive employment relations, literature needs to further expand and conceptualise the phenomenon. More attention should be paid to work-related antecedents such as commitment, job satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviour, motivation, well-being at work, and flourishing on individual and organisational levels. These studies should not be limited to HEIs, but should expand to include other industries and sectors in South Africa. International research should further be conducted to gain a holistic and international perspective of the phenomenon. Incorporating the phenomenon of positive employment relations into labour relations management and human resource strategies could assist in effectively managing individuals and achieving organisational success.

Furthermore, future qualitative studies should approach participants by conducting personal interviews, and not solely relying on available literature. This will allow the researcher to determine individuals' general feelings regarding the topic, by paying attention to the phenomenology of participants' lived experiences.

There is a major void in literature which thus far has failed to view positive employment relations from a holistic perspective. More holistic and integrative models on positive employment relations are required and should be extended internationally. Future research should include causal models of positive employment relations for all professions within a South African context, as well as internationally. This will make a significant contribution towards a further understanding of the phenomenon and enhancing conditions within the employment context.

Based on the findings of this particular study, it is recommended that the two items of capacity support which displayed a high correlation, be reviewed to ensure reliability. This will result in removing, replacing or adjusting the items accordingly. After reviewing the ERS, it is suggested that the questionnaire be re-tested by disseminating the questionnaire in a different setting. This could then result in standardising the measuring instrument in a South African context.

Longitudinal studies will assist in remedying cross-sectional limitations by avoiding population generalisation, resulting in more reliable data. This can be done by distributing the questionnaires equally between participants (i.e. 50% managers and 50% employees). Such studies will not only validate causal relationships, but will also provide more accurate insight into other variable outcomes that contribute towards positive employment relations.

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ANNEXURE A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Employment Relations Questionnaire

Welcome

Working in an organisation means that, as an individual, one third of a 24-hour day is spent at work. Therefore, spending such a large amount of precious time at work can become a severe burden if one is not happy... Relations at work can be deeply rewarding for the individual, the team and the organisation. When relationships within the organisation are viewed as positive for the employer and employee, individuals and teams tend to communicate, support and trust one another, building and exchanging valuable resources. When relationships within the organisation are viewed as negative, however, the organisation carries the risk of losing talented employees, or having a disengaged workforce. This questionnaire will attempt to measure the quality of relationships within your job environment.

I am currently an enrolled Master's student in Labour Relations Management at the North-West University, Vaal Triangle Campus and I have to write two research articles on a value-adding topic in fulfilment of the requirements to obtain this degree. The title of my research is *Positive employment relations: An exploratory study*.

I cannot attempt this research without your participation. Therefore, thank you so much for your willingness to assist.

How I would like you to complete the questionnaire:

- Please give your first and natural answer - try not to dwell too long on each question
- Please base your answers on how you most recently felt (\pm the last 3 months), unless the question asked you to do otherwise

This questionnaire comprises 61 questions and will take you only about 20 minutes to complete!



All information will be treated **confidentially** and your **anonymity** will be guaranteed. The information gathered from your participation in this project will be used for no other reason than the purpose of this study. My supervisor and I function under **a strict code of ethics** that forbids us to distribute or use information otherwise. So, please be honest with your responses, as it will help ensure the success of this project. Remember, you have the right to withdraw from this research at any stage – without penalty of whatever nature!

For further enquiries, please feel free to contact us:

Student: Stacey Smith

Supervisor: Dr Elsabé Diedericks

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Section A

Biographical Questionnaire

1. Gender

 Male Female

2. Race

 White
 Indian African
 Other Coloured

3. How old are you?

 years

4. How long have you been working for this organisation? _____

5. In which section do you work?

 Academic Administrative Technical Support

6. On which campus do you work?

 Vanderbijlpark
 Mafikeng
 Potchefstroom

7. How are you employed?

 Temporary
 Permanent
 Fixed term

8. Marital status

Single

Widow/widower

Divorced

Married

Remarried

9. Number of children

10. Home language

Afrikaans	
English	
Sepedi	
isiZulu	
Sesotho	
Setswana	
isiXhosa	
isiTsonga	
Tshivenda	
isiSwati	
Other	

11. Please indicate your **highest level of education / qualifications**

Matric / Grade 12	
FET N4-N6	
University of Technology diploma	
University of Technology degree	
University degree (3 years)	
University honours degree	
University master's degree	
University doctorate	
Other (not included in the options above)	

12. Please give a rough estimate of the total number of **hours** you work in a typical week

<input type="checkbox"/>	Up to 10
<input type="checkbox"/>	31 – 40

<input type="checkbox"/>	11 – 20
<input type="checkbox"/>	41 – 50

<input type="checkbox"/>	21 - 30
<input type="checkbox"/>	51 or more

Section B

The purpose of this survey is to measure how you view the genuineness and trustworthiness of relations between you and your supervisor. You may agree or disagree with the following statements.

In ALL statements, supervisor refers to your direct head (administrative support and technical); for lecturers it refers to your Head of Department OR School Director.

In statements 13 – 21, please mark your response with an X over the appropriate number.

Remember to mark ONLY ONE X per statement!

0	1	2	3	4	5	6				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree				
ITEM				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I have confidence in the ability of my supervisor				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. My supervisor makes me feel that I can accomplish the most difficult tasks				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. My supervisor believes in my capabilities				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. My supervisor gives me tasks to do that enhance my potential Employability				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. My supervisor acknowledges my rights as an employee				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. My supervisor allows me to take ownership of my job				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. My supervisor is genuinely concerned about my well-being				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. My supervisor behaves in a very consistent manner				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. My supervisor always has my best interests at heart when it concerns my career path				0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Section C

The purpose of this survey is to measure how you view the fairness in which activities take place at work. You may agree or disagree with the following statements.

In statements 22 – 25, please mark your response with an X over the appropriate number.

Remember to mark ONLY ONE X per statement!

0	1	2	3	4	5	6				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree				
ITEM				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. My supervisor acts in fairness with regard to all activities in my Department				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. My supervisor is unbiased/objective when dealing with my concerns				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. My supervisor rewards all individuals fairly for their hard work				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. My supervisor applies the same standards to everyone when decisions are made				0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Section D

In this section we wish to establish whether the different parties in the employment relationship behave in such a manner that diversity is acknowledged and respected. ***In statements 26 – 29, please mark your response with an X over the appropriate number. Remember to mark ONLY ONE X per statement!***

0	1	2	3	4	5	6				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree				
ITEM				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. My supervisor is careful that his or her behaviour does not negatively affect myself or the department				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. My supervisor shows kindness and compassion towards me				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. My supervisor shows integrity when working with individuals from different cultures				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. My supervisor shows integrity when working with individuals who are/believe different(ly) from him/her				0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Section E

In this section we wish to establish the measure of support rendered between the different parties in the employment relationship. ***In statements 30 – 37, please mark your response with an X over the appropriate number. Remember to mark ONLY ONE X per statement!***

0	1	2	3	4	5	6				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree				
ITEM				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. My supervisor and I are in complete harmony at work				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. My supervisor supports me when I need him/her				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. I am comfortable having my supervisor depend on me at work				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. My supervisor compliments work well done				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. My supervisor gives supportive feedback on my performance				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. My supervisor empowers me to participate in important decisions				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. My supervisor provides the necessary resources for me to do my job				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
37. My supervisor supports my attempts to acquire additional training or education to further my career				0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Section F

This section will measure to what extent the work environment is free of conflict by listening to and respecting differences in opinion. ***In statements 38 – 42, please mark your response with an X over the appropriate number. Remember to mark ONLY ONE X per statement!***

0	1	2	3	4	5	6				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree				
ITEM				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. My supervisor has an open door management style				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. My supervisor takes steps to minimise conflict in our department				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
40. My supervisor attempts to change organisational rules/policies that are non-productive or counterproductive				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
41. My supervisor encourages us to speak up when we disagree with a decision				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
42. My supervisor listens to my fears when I am uneasy with a decision				0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Section G

This section will measure the strength of communication and the integration of team members in your department. ***In statements 43 – 49, please mark your response with an X over the appropriate number. Remember to mark ONLY ONE X per statement!***

0	1	2	3	4	5	6				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree				
ITEM				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
43. My supervisor freely communicates information to our department				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
44. My supervisor communicates well and truthfully				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
45. My supervisor clearly explains why certain changes are necessary				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
46. My supervisor breaks news to us before rumours can be spread via the grapevine				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
47. I regard my supervisor as being a good person				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
48. My supervisor involves me in social activities at work				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
49. At work, I feel really connected with my supervisor				0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Section H

Please read the following statements (50 – 58) and indicate how each statement relates to the work you usually do. It is expected of you to indicate your agreement with each of the statements by choosing the appropriate response from the scale (1-7) and marking the number of your choice.

Remember to mark ONLY ONE X per statement!

1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
Never or almost never		Very infrequently		Quite infrequently		Sometimes		Quite frequently		Very frequently		Always or almost always	
50.	I get so into my job that I lose track of time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
51.	I am very absorbed in my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
52.	I feel I am able to contribute new ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
53.	I am passionate about my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
54.	I am enthusiastic about my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
55.	I get excited when I perform well on my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
56.	I feel a lot of energy when I am performing my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
57.	I am full of energy in my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
58.	I feel alive and vital at work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					

Section I

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain a picture of how you evaluate specific aspects of your organisation. Please read each statement (59 – 61) carefully and cross **X** the number (from 1-5) that best describes how you feel. Do not skip any questions. **Remember to mark ONLY ONE X per statement!**

1 Totally disagree		2 Disagree		3 Somewhat agree, somewhat disagree		4 Agree		5 Totally agree	
59.	I frequently think of quitting my job				1	2	3	4	5
60.	I am planning to search for a new job during the next 12 months				1	2	3	4	5
61.	I can find a job with another employer with about the same pay and benefits I now have				1	2	3	4	5

The End

Thank you so much for participating!