RETENTION FACTORS AND EMPLOYEE ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

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DECLARATION

I, Muleya Dasy, student number 11613069 hereby declare that this research dissertation has not been previously submitted at any other higher education institution or for publication and that it is my own work in design and in execution. All the reference materials contained therein have been duly acknowledged.

Name of student……………………………Signature……………………………Date……………

ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine the influence of retention factors on employee organisational commitment at a higher education institution in South Africa. The study follows a quantitative methodology in which self- administered questionnaires were used to collect data from a stratified random sample of 274 participants. The strata were grouped as academic and non-academic staff. Participants were then randomly selected from each stratum. Using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23, both descriptive and inferential statistics including correlation and regression analyses were conducted to determine relationships between retention factors and employee organisational commitment variables. The Retention Factor Scale was used to collect data on retention factors and Organisational Commitment Questionnaire was used to collect data on employee organisational commitment. The findings indicated that job characteristics, supervisor support, career development and work-life balance are significantly related to employee organisational commitment. Furthermore, the results revealed that of the six retention factors, career development was the most significant factor which had an impact on employee organisational commitment. The study concludes that retention factors and their impact may differ based on different institutions, therefore, it is recommended that every institution should figure out the retention factors which have the most impact on their employees and find ways to improve employee organisational commitment.

Key words: Retention factors, Employee organisational commitment, Higher education institution, Academics.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the retention factors and how they affect the commitment of employees in higher education institutions. The chapter also outlines the organisation model used in the study, aims of the research, research objectives and research hypotheses. The chapter gives an overview of the entire study.

1.2. Background of the study

The core operation of higher education institutions is dependent on its employees and their performance, which in turn determines the quality of graduates and the contribution they make to the society (Capellaras, 2005). A higher education institution that possesses appropriately qualified and committed employees has the ability to build and maintain a national and international reputation (Mahal, 2012). One of the key forces behind the long-term survival and sustainability of a higher education institution is its employees and their level of organisational commitment (Jeruto, 2010). Moreover, for employees to remain committed to the organisation, the employer should continuously revise the organisational retention strategies (Bushe, 2012). It is therefore important to create a workforce of high-quality employees who are committed to the organisation, so as to attain world class standards.

Meyer and Kirstern (2012) have stated that skilled and qualified people, including academics, are continually migrating from South Africa to developed countries. As a result, South African higher education institutions have to compete with one another as well as the organisations abroad for limited human resources (Meyer & Kirstern, 2012). This scenario can be observed in higher education institutions, where these institutions are increasingly competing with each other in order to attract, recruit and retain its employees (Samuel & Chipunza, 2013). The emphasis placed on research outputs has made this even more competitive as universities are rated based on, among other criteria, their research outputs (Meyer & Kirstern, 2012). This leaves the higher education institutions with the need to investigate the retention of employees in universities and try to ensure that their employees are retained (Samuel & Chipunza, 2013).

Higher education institutions in South Africa are faced with retention problems as well as the retirement swell (Pienaar & Bester, 2008). HESA (2011) stated that most of the academic professoriate will be retiring in less than a decade and that the academic pipeline would not be enough to fill the retirement gap. As a result the growing labour demand would not be met as, there would be a shortage of academic staff. Therefore, the higher education institutions management should address the core competencies that are required for successful careers (Netswera, Rankhumise & Mavundla, 2005). The higher education institution leaders must therefore understand the processes of attracting, developing and retaining employees (Theron, Barkhuizen & Du Plesis, 2014).

Moreover, previous researchers have stated that higher education institutions are facing challenges in retaining key and talented employees (Mokoditoa, 2011, Robyn, 2012; Hong, Hao, Kumar, Ramedran & Kadiresan, 2012). These researchers have stated the reasons for the high turnover as, among others, unfair promotion practices, institutional cultural issues and uncompetitive remuneration packages. The university management must ensure that it does not lose its staff members from the organisation, especially to competitors. Previous studies have indicated that the South African higher education institutions cannot afford to lose talented academic employees if they are to contribute to the country's sustained development (Netswera et al., 2005; Pienaar & Bester, 2008). The exit of talented employees from organisations is likely to impact it negatively because when top-performing employees leave the organisation, it is often costly to replace them.

According to Ng'ethe, Iravo and Namusonge (2012), there is limited research in developing countries on the management of talent in organisations and there are also few measurements that can be used to prevent employees from leaving their organisations. The retention of employees is a critical human resource issue and the higher education institutions should ensure that they have strong retention strategies, so as to keep their core employees in the organisation (Tanova & Holtom, 2008). It is also important to ensure employee organisational commitment, as it assists universities to accomplish their visions and missions (Ng'ethe, Iravo & Namusonge, 2012). In addition, the government expects the higher education institutions to play a vital role in developing the country through accelerating economic growth, supply scarce skills and reduce poverty.

The availability of skilled employees in higher education institutions is regarded as a critical strategic human resource strength which may give a competitive advantage to the university (Bushe, Chiwira & Chawawa, 2012). In order to improve on the competitive advantage higher education institutions have to know the factors which are important in retaining their employees (Mahal, 2012). Retention is defined as redesigning a range of human resource activities to provide better job satisfaction, improved employee commitment leading to turnover reduction (Dessler, Griffiths & Lloyd-Walker, 2007). According to Dockel (2003), there are six factors which may aid in retaining valuable employees in the South African organisational context. These factors are compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career advancement opportunities and work-life balance. Therefore, for the purpose of this study these six factors were considered.

Employee organisational commitment refers to a psychological state which binds an employee to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). It is also defined as "a state where individuals feel strongly drawn to the objectives, values and goals of their employer" (Nel, Werner, Du Plesis, Ngalo, Poisat, Sono, Van Hoek & Botha, 2011; p.15). Meyer and Allen (1991) add that employee organisational commitment consists of three sub-dimensions: (1) affective commitment, (2) continuance commitment, and (3) normative commitment. Affective commitment is when an employee chooses to stay with the present organisation out of a sense of emotional attachment. Continuance commitment occurs when an employee chooses to stay due to a sense of economic necessity or the perceived cost of leaving, while normative commitment is developed when one chooses to stay due to moral obligation (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Organisational commitment is recognised as an important factor in determining the employee work behaviour in the organisation (Nel et al., 2011). It links employees to the organisation and helps in enhancing the success of an organisation (Fornes, Rocco & Wolard, 2008). The changing nature of higher education institutions implies that in order to cope with the demand in universities committed employees are a necessity and the focus should be on acquiring a holistic understanding of attracting, developing and sustaining academic talent (Yahaya, Chek, Samsudin & Jizat, 2014). It would be important for the management of every university to ensure that they have strong retention strategies, so as to improve the commitment of employees to the organisation.

1.3. Problem statement

Despite the amount of research that has focused on retention factors and employee organisational commitment, the retention of employees continues to dominate as a major problem in South Africa (Jeruto, 2010; Nik Mutasim, Shahid & Alam, 2011; Van Dyk, 2012; Samuel & Chipunza, 2013). A positive relationship between retention factors and employee organisational commitment has been found in previous studies (Jeruto, 2010; Nik Mutasim, Shahid & Alam, 2011; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). However, these studies were conducted in different sectors and some studies did not consider all the retention factors. A study conducted by Nik Mutasim, Shahid and Alam (2011) in the banking sector in Pakistan revealed that a positive relationship exists between training and development and employee organisational commitment. However, the results from the banking sector in Pakistan might not be generalisable to employees at a higher education institution in South Africa due to the different laws and economies between the two countries.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Jeruto (2010) in the Kenyan higher education institutions revealed that training and development correlates with employee organisational commitment. The study revealed that employees who are afforded an opportunity for training and development are likely to be satisfied with their jobs and consequently choose to stay in the organisation. However, this study was conducted in Kenya and only focused on one retention factor; namely, training and development. Samuel and Chipunza (2013) conducted a study at ten higher education institutions in South Africa. However, the study focused on the attrition and retention of senior academics in higher education institutions. Therefore, since little information is known about the influence of retention factors and employee organisational commitment in higher education institutions, it is imperative to conduct a study of this nature in order to determine the influence of retention factors on employee organisational commitment in higher education institutions.

1.4. Aims of the research

The main aim of the study was to determine the influence of retention factors on employee organisational commitment among academics and non-academics in a higher education institution.

1.5. Research objectives

The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between retention factors and employee organisational commitment in a higher education institution.

1.6. Research hypotheses

The research hypothesises that:

H1:   There is a significant relationship between compensation and employee organisational commitment

H2:   There is a significant relationship between job characteristics and employee organisational commitment

H3:   There is a significant relationship between training and development and employee organisational commitment

H4:   There is a significant relationship between supervisor support and employee organisational commitment

H5:   There is a significant relationship between career development opportunities and employee organisational commitment

H6:   There is a significant relationship between work-life balance and employee organisational commitment.

1.7. Definition of key terms

1.7.1. Retention

It is defined as redesigning a range of human resource activities to provide better job satisfaction, improved employee commitment leading to turnover reduction (Dessler, Griffiths & Walker, 2007).

1.7.2. Employee organisational commitment

Employee organisational commitment is defined as the psychological state that binds the individual to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

1.7.3. Higher education institution

It is an institution which grants academic degrees in various subjects, for example universities or universities of technology (HESA, 2011).

1.8. Significance of the study

Based on the literature, the study seeks to determine the relationship between retention factors and employee organisational commitment in a higher education institution in South Africa. The retention of core employees is very important in organisations and it would be worthy to find out the ultimate retention factors which make employees commit to the organisation so that employers may know the strategies to use. The findings of the study may enhance the University management's knowledge about retention factors and employee organisational commitment and this may also help to influence the Human Resources policy. The study may also benefit the university management in further understanding the influence of retention factors on employee organisational commitment in the 21st Century. In addition, the study may also add information to the body of knowledge in reference to retention factors and employee organisational commitment.

1.9. Delimitation of the study

The study was conducted at a higher education institution in South Africa.

1.10. Layout of chapters

The study consists of five chapters.

1.10.1. Chapter One: Introduction and background to the study

The chapter outlines the introduction, problem statement, research objectives, research hypotheses and significance of the study.

1.10.2. Chapter Two: Literature review

Literature review discusses the higher education institutions in South Africa, the concept of employee organisational commitment, model of employee organisational commitment, factors influencing employee organisational commitment and the retention factor framework of Dockel.

1.10.3. Chapter Three: Research methodology

The chapter provides information on research design, research approach, population of the study, sampling and sampling procedure, data collection methods, data analysis and ethical considerations.

1.10.4. Chapter Four: Presentation of results

Chapter four presents the study results. The results are presented through descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The researcher also made use of tables and figures in presenting the results.

1.10.5. Chapter Five: Discussion of results, conclusions and recommendations for future

research

Chapter five discusses the demographic information, reliability results, correlation results and multiple regression results. The conclusions, limitations of the study and recommendations for future research were also outlined.

1.11. Chapter summary

The study aimed at determining the influence of retention factors on employee organisational commitment at a selected Higher Education Institution. The background of the study was given

and it highlighted on the retention factors and employee organisational commitment and how previous researchers viewed these variables. The gap from the literature was also identified which resulted in the formulation of research objectives. In order to answer the research objectives, research hypothesis were stated. The researcher also outlined the significance of the study and the layout of the chapters.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter the researcher outlines the concept of employee organisational commitment, theoretical approaches to employee organisational commitment and model of employee organisational commitment. Furthermore, the researcher also discusses factors influencing employee organisational commitment and the retention framework of Dockel, reviews theoretical literature on the variables of this study namely retention factors and employee organisational commitment. The researcher also explains the theoretical relationship between retention factors and employee organisational commitment.

2.2. The concept of employee organisational commitment

Organisational commitment has been studied extensively over the years and early studies viewed it as a "single dimension based on an attitudinal perspective, embracing identification, involvement and loyalty" (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974). The concept of organisational commitment has immensely grown in popularity on organisational psychology and industrial psychology literature (Eslami & Gharakhani, 2012). It predicts work variables such as organisational citizenship behaviour, job performance and turnover (Cook et al., 2013). An individual's sense of commitment to the organisation can be connected to factors such as empowerment, job insecurity and distribution of leadership (Jeruto, 2010). Employees who are committed to the organisation feel a connection with the organisation and understand the goals of the organisation (Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010). These employees tend to be more determined and are more proactive in offering their support and are highly motivated and show relatively high productivity levels.

However, it should also be noted that employees may remain in an organisation as a result of different commitments tying them to that particular organisation. These commitments may not be affective or psychological in nature, for example, if an organisation decides to restructure, this may only affect those employees with the least number of years in the organisation (Jeruto, 2010). As a result, those employees who would have been in the organisation for a long period of time get to stay for more years. It has been stipulated that the level of commitment to the

organisation may result from individual differences as different individuals may value different things within an organisation (Eslami & Gharakhani, 2012). If employees value the career development opportunities or compensation offered by the organisation, then their levels of commitment to the organisation will differ and will be enhanced, depending on their needs being met.

In addition, Cook et al. (2013) stated that employees who are committed to the organisation are effective, efficient and productive. These employees value the assistance they receive from the organisation and believe that the organisation values their efforts. Organisational commitment is critical in retaining employees and it has become a major concern in many organisations. Employers who are able to put in place organisational commitment strategies are likely to experience desired employee behaviour. This desired employee behaviour is created through psychological links between the employee goals and the organisational goals (Geldenhuys, Laba & Venter, 2014). Employees who are highly committed to the organisation make efforts to invest in the organisation and perform to the best of their abilities. Employees are also likely to be loyal to their organisation if their organisation appreciates them (Tladinyane, 2012).

Furthermore, employees who are highly committed to their organisations and identify with the goals of the organisation have little desire to leave the organisation. Similarly, employees who have meaningful and enjoyable jobs are less likely to quit compared to employees who dislike their jobs and do not find their jobs meaningful. Employees who are committed to the organisation have greater motivation and choose not to be absent from work and will desire to perform their duties well. It is also expected that employees who are committed to their jobs would be less likely to leave the organisation (Jeruto, 2010).

2.3. Theoretical approaches to employee organisational commitment

The commitment of employees to an organisation has been studied over time and a number of theories have been used to explain it (behavioural approach, social exchange theory and multi-dimensional approach). Some studies have used the behavioural approach to explain employee organisational commitment, while others used the social exchange theory (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 2013). In addition, some researchers have argued that employee organisational commitment cannot be studied without considering its multidimensional nature (Mowday et al.,

2013; Simons & Buitendach, 2013). These different theoretical approaches to the study of employee organisational commitment are briefly discussed below.

2.3.1. Behavioural approach

The behavioural approach views employee organisational commitment as being purely instrumental and not psychological (Becker, 1960). The approach assumes that employees remain in the organisation because of the perceived cost of leaving. It is concerned primarily with the measurable and observable aspects of human behaviour and describes commitment as maintaining membership in the organisation (Jeruto, 2010). In this regard the employee remains in the organisation because of investments tying him or her to the organisation, which would be lost if the employee does not maintain his or her membership to the organisation (Chang, Jia, Takeuchi & Cia, 2014). Some employees may find that they have little desire to remain with the organisation but cannot afford to leave. Hence, these employees will not be committed to the organisation but they will not leave due to fear of the costs associated with leaving.

Employees would therefore make side bets through staking their reputation, so as to remain in the organisation (Carlos, Rodrigues & Dibb, 2014). According to Jeruto (2010), organisations also make side bets for employees in order to keep them in a continued membership with the organisation. In addition, as the side bets accrue, it becomes more difficult for the employees to leave the organisation due to the fear of losing them if they leave the organisation. The side-bets may refer to an employee's promotion, education or pension fund and any other factors which may be perceived as rewards and may render alternative jobs unacceptable. These, however, do not however instil in employees the desire to contribute to the organisation's effectiveness and as a result the organisation may end up with employees who have little desire to remain in the organisation but cannot afford to leave (Carlos et al., 2014).

On the other hand, the behavioural approach has been often criticised for not leading to positive work attitude since the employee remains with the organisation only for purposes related to their investments (Meyer & Allen, 1997). As a result employees would remain in the organisation because they do not want to be perceived as job hoppers (Sehunoe, Viviers & Mayer, 2015). Thus, organisations therefore need to foster affective commitment in their employees and not

continuance commitment because affectively committed employees will not only remain in the organisation but will also contribute towards its success (Sehunoe et al., 2015).

2.3.2. Social exchange theory

The social exchange theory states that individuals commit to organisations so as to obtain certain benefits for their commitment from the organisation and that the employment relationship consists of social or economic exchanges (Cook, Cheshire, Rice & Nakagawa, 2013). It also states that human relationships are formed as a result of a subjective cost-benefit analysis and the comparison of alternatives (Jeruto, 2010). Employees' commitment to the organisation is likely to increase if there are favourable exchanges or rewards. On the other hand, if the organisation fails to provide enough benefits in exchange of the employees' efforts there is likely to be a decrease in organisational commitment (Slack, Corlett & Morris, 2015). The theory further states that, employees' respond to perceived good working conditions through working hard and engaging with their colleagues (Jeruto, 2010).

Employees may leave the organisation or engage in negative or bad work attitudes such as absenteeism or leaving the organisation if the working conditions are dissatisfactory (Slack et al., 2015). Employees who perceive that the organisation values and treats them fairly will feel obliged to work hard and pay back the organisation with positive work attitudes and behaviours (Netswera et al., 2005). As a result employees who perform enriched jobs are bound to express their gratitude through their commitment to the organisation (Coetzee, Mitonga-Monga & Swart, 2014). Thus, the social exchange theory posits that depending on the rewards that the employees get from the organisation, they may choose to either leave or stay with the organisation (Cook et al., 2013). There are two parties involved in a social exchange and both parties take responsibility for one another and depend on each other (Lawler, 2001). Therefore, employees may remain in the organisation for longer periods so as to gain benefits such as compensation or training and development.

In addition, the social exchange theory asserts that social behaviour is the result of an exchange process (Lawler, 2001). If the exchange is fair or deemed fair, the employee may choose to stay in the organisation. Therefore, an employee's commitment to the organisation develops as a result of an employee's satisfaction with the rewards that the organisation offers (Lawler, 2001).

In summary, in order to properly understand employee organisational commitment, all its three dimensions; namely, affective, continuance and normative commitment, must also be understood. Employees, in anticipation to receive benefits from the organisation, would therefore opt to stay in the organisation and stand a chance to enjoy the organisation's benefits (Slack et al., 2015). These benefits may be in the form of career development opportunities, availability of training and development opportunities and promotion. Therefore, in some instances, employees' commitment to the organisation may be a result of benefits they anticipate to receive and as a result may choose not to leave (Slack et al., 2015).

2.3.3. Multi-dimensional approach

The multi-dimensional approach of organisational commitment states that there is an on-going cyclical relationship between attitudinal commitment and behavioural approaches, whereby high levels of attitudinal commitment lead to committing behaviours, which then reinforce commitment attitudes (Becker, 1960). A later study by Mathieu and Zajac (1990) revealed that attitudinal commitment and behavioural approaches are not distinguishable from each other and that the measurement of each contains elements of the other. This approach posits that an individual may join an organisation due to attitudinal commitment but may continue to stay because of side-bets that would have accumulated (Simons & Buitendach, 2013).

Reichers (1985), in his earlier study, stated that commitment can be classified into three categories; namely, side-bets, attributions and individual or organisational goal congruence. Employees are believed to be committed to the organisation as a result of these side-bets. The existence of lucrative side-bets makes it hard for employees to leave their jobs, assuming that they would lose on big fortunes if the side-bets increase (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Employees would then be committed to the organisation as well as engage with their colleagues in order to remain in the organisation. When employees are engaged in the organisation, they develop a sense of loyalty towards the organisation (Slack et al., 2015).

According to Reichers (1985) side-bets suggest that the commitment of employees' in an organisation is a function of the rewards and costs associated with organisational membership. An increase in the number of years an employee spends with the organisation would also increase these rewards (Akoto & Akoto, 2014). In addition, attributions result when individuals attribute an attitude of commitment to themselves, which binds them to the organisation.

Furthermore, individual or organisational goal congruence occurs when individuals identify with the organisational goals and values. The commitment of employees to the organisation can therefore be understood as a collection of multiple commitments to the organisational goals (Jeruto, 2010).

2.4. Model of employee organisational commitment

There are three components of employee organisational commitment; namely, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). These three components of organisational commitment reflect different reasons as to why employees choose to stay at an organisation. They also describe the different ways of employee organisational commitment and the implications for employees' behaviour. The affective and normative components show attitudinal organisational commitment whereas the continuance component shows behavioural commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). These components are discussed below.

2.4.1. Affective commitment

Affective commitment refers to the positive feelings that assist employees to participate in the organisation (Morrow, 2011). It is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in the organisation and develops when an employee recognises his or her value and chooses to stay with the present organisation out of a sense of emotional attachment (Van Dyk, 2011). Employees with a high level of affective commitment will be less likely to be absent from work and they perform better than their colleagues (Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010). Affective commitment determines employees' feelings of attachment to the organisation and employees who have a strong affective commitment remain with the organisation because they want to (Morrow, 2011).

Affective commitment is influenced by factors such as role clarity, goal difficulty, receptiveness by management and feedback (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). An employee who has strong confidence in his or her abilities is likely to have higher affective commitment (Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010). This employee has positive feelings towards the organisation and identifies with it. An employee whose needs and expectations about the organisation are matched by their actual experience would be highly committed to the organisation affectively (Van Dyk, 2011).

The development of affective commitment involves identification and internalisation, identification is when employees desire to establish a rewarding relationship with an organisation and internalisation refers to the similar goals held by the employee and the organisation (Beck & Wilson, 2000).

In addition, employees who are affectively committed to the organisation are strongly engaged in their work, engage with their colleagues and are also loyal (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Employers who are loyal also a place higher value on their work and they view their work as important. The importance of affective commitment is that it shows the employees who are interested in the growth and overall success of the organisation (Mensele & Coetzee, 2014). In addition, affectively committed employees have a strong belief in the organisation's goals and values, have a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation and they also have a strong desire to remain in the organisation (Mensele & Coetzee, 2014).

2.4.2. Continuance commitment

Continuance commitment is a situation whereby an employee chooses to stay due to a sense of economic necessity or the perceived cost of leaving the organisation (Lumley, Coetzee, Takawira & Ferreira, 2011). Continuance commitment develops when an employee recognises that he or she may lose investments and perceives that there are no alternatives other than to pursue the current job (Dockel, 2003). Due to fear of losing benefits form the organisation, employees would decide to remain with the organisation (Bargraim, 2013). Individuals view the need to stay as profit which results from continued participation and the termination of service as a cost or an expense associated with leaving (Morrow, 2011).

Continuance organisational commitment will be strong when alternatives are few and the number of investments is high (Tladinyane, 2012). In addition, poor employment alternatives and accrued investments may force individuals to maintain their jobs and employees may remain in the organisations because they need to (Meyer & Allen, 1997). This means that these employees stay in the organisation due to other accumulated investments which they could lose such as seniority, pension funds or organisation specific skills. Continuance commitment is therefore characterised by an exchange framework whereby loyalty and performance are offered in return for material benefits and rewards (Tladinyane, 2012). Thus, the commitment of

such employees to the organisation is materialistic and such employees would leave the organisation if better employment opportunities arise.

Continuance commitment may assist in determining the employees' continued stay at their current organisation (Tladinyane, 2012). Those employees who stay or remain in the organisation because they have to do so have a strong continuance commitment (Lumley et al., 2011). These employees would rather lose their pension benefits or seniority than to terminate their employment. These employees remain in the organisation because they simply realise that the cost of leaving the organisation is too high. As a result, these employees may not have a desire to contribute and be part of the organisation (Tladinyane, 2012).

2.4.3. Normative commitment

The last component of organisational commitment is normative commitment. Normative commitment is when one chooses to stay due to a moral obligation and develops when employees internalise norms through socialisation and acceptance of the terms of a psychological contract (Dockel, Basson & Coetzee, 2006). Through internalisation of duties and obligations, employees become obliged to sustain their membership in the organisation (Tladinyane, 2012). In this instance the employees' feel obliged to remain with the organisation and stay because it is the proper thing to do (Lumley et al., 2011). An employee who is normatively committed does not mind the satisfaction or status enhancement that he or she gets from the organisation but instead considers it morally right to stay in the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

According to Meyer and Allen (1991) the moral obligation that employees have towards the organisation arises through the process of socialisation within the organisation. As a result, if the employee receives a benefit, he or she has to respond in kind. Therefore, the employee would feel the need to continue with the employment so as to keep on benefiting from the organisation. Moreover, if an organisation receives a benefit it places the organisation under the moral obligation to respond in kindness. Employees who stay because of normative commitment are likely to do what is right for the organisation and perform better (Jung & Yoon, 2016).

Normative organisational commitment is strengthened by accepted rules about obligation between the organisation and its employees. The obligation is based on the social exchange theory which implies that a person receiving a benefit is under a strong normative obligation to repay the benefit in some way (Cook, Cheshire, Rice & Nakagawa, 2013). This means that employees often feel an obligation to repay the organisation for investing in them. According to Williams (2004) if an organisation is loyal to the employee or has supported his or her educational or career development efforts, the employee may report higher degrees of normative commitment.

2.5. Developing employee organisational commitment

Employee organisational commitment is a dynamic process which develops when employees are oriented to the organisation (Mowday et al., 2013). It develops based on the stages and levels of employee organisational commitment.

2.5.1. Stages of employee organisational commitment

Employee organisational commitment develops through the compliance, identification and internalisation stages as discussed below.

2.5.1.1. Compliance stage

The first stage in developing employee organisational commitment is the compliance stage, which is about the employee accepting influence from other employees for his or her own benefit (Allen & Shanock, 2013). At this stage the employee tends to adopt other employees' attitudes and behaviours so as to gain specific rewards and the employee would be continuance committed to the organisation as he or she evaluates the need to stay in the organisation (Mowday et al., 2013). This means that employees stay in the organisation as a result of what they receive. In other words, the employee does what seems safe to him or her so as to fit in with other colleagues.

2.5.1.2. Identification stage

At this stage employees are proud to be part of the organisation and try to identify their roles or impact within the organisation (George, 2015). The employees accept influence so as to

maintain a self-defining relationship with the organisation. In addition, employees may regard the roles they have in the organisation as part of their self-identity (Long, Ajagbe, Nor & Suleman, 2012). Employee organisational commitment at this stage is normative as employees remain with the organisation out of loyalty towards the organisation (Miller, 2003). They feel being in the organisation is the right thing to do and that they a duty to do in the organisation. Therefore, once employees identify themselves with the organisation, it becomes easy for them to commit to the organisation.

2.5.1.3. Internalisation stage

The internalisation stage occurs when an employee finds his or her own values to be in line with those of the organisation (George, 2015). The employee at this stage is affectively committed to the organisation and develops a sense of belonging. The employee chooses to stay because he or she wants to stay and is passionate about the organisation (Yahaya, Chek & Samsudin, 2014). At this stage the values of the employee are similar to those of the organisation.

2.5.2. Levels of employee organisational commitment

The figure below depicts the levels of employee commitment in organisations

An increasing level of commitment   **A decreasing level of commitment**

Higher level of employee			Higher level of employee

Moderate level of employee			Moderate level of employee

Lower level of employee			Lower level of employee
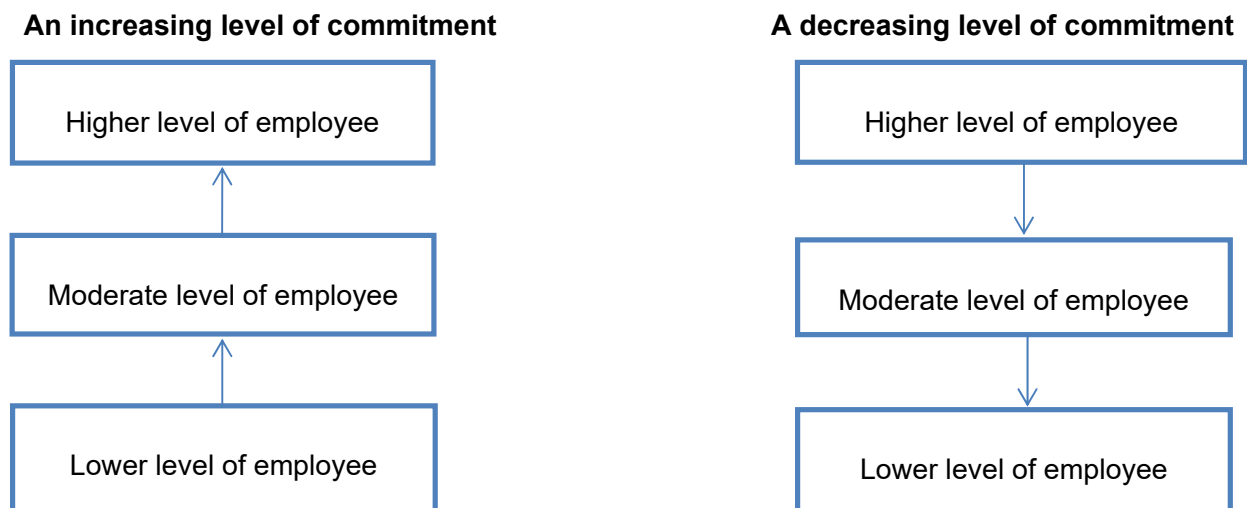
Figure 2.1: The levels of employee organisational commitment (Reichers, 1985).

There are different levels of employee organisational commitment which explain an employee's commitment to the organisation as shown in Figure 2.1. An employee's commitment to the organisation may range from low level to high level (Mowday et al., 2013). An employee who has a high level of organisational commitment accepts the values of the organisation and works towards achieving the goals and objectives of the organisation. At this level the employee is also willing to put more effort when doing his or her job and will stay because they want to (Miller, 2003).

The moderate level of employee organisational commitment is characterised by an average commitment to the organisation (Mowday et al., 2013). The employee also puts partial effort so as to remain in the organisation. At this level the employee is normatively committed to the organisation and stay because they feel it is morally right to do so (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). The low level of employee organisational commitment is characterised by no effort to remain in the organisation due to a lack of acceptance of organisational goals (Miller, 2003). At this level the employee is continuance committed and stays because they do not want to lose certain benefits, however, given the opportunity they will leave the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Employees' commitment to an organisation may move from lower level to a higher level or from higher level to a lower level. Commitment which moves to a higher level means that the employee is likely to stay in the organisation and not leave (Geldenhuys et al., 2014). It reflects that the employee values the organisation and is willing to put more effort in achieving the goals of the organisation. On the other hand, decreasing level of commitment shows that the employee is slowly losing interest in the organisation and may leave if an opportunity arises (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). At this instance the employee does not feel a sense of belonging and slowly loses interest in the organisation (Miller, 2003).

2.5.3. Factors influencing employee organisational commitment

Organisational commitment is related to how employees respond to their work satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Employees may feel affectively committed to an organisation if what they experience matches what they expected (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010). Employees need to feel that their basic needs are satisfied in order for them to feel a certain level of commitment to the organisation (Mowday et al., 2013). There are certain variables which may influence an

employee's commitment to the organisation. These include age, gender, race, marital status and tenure.

2.5.3.1. Age

An employee's age may have an influence on his or her commitment to the organisation. According to Ferreira and Coetzee (2010) younger employees are less affectively and normatively committed to the organisation than older employees. This is because older employees seek more of stability than greener pastures. These older employees would remain with the organisation because they want to and they feel obliged to be in the organisation. In addition, the aspect of age may also depend on the type of job that an employee does or the sector in which the job falls under (Wayne, Casper, Matthews & Allen, 2013).

2.5.3.2. Gender

Nowadays women do not want to sit at home and do house chores. As such, they also feel the need to have careers and the number of women in the work force keeps increasing. A study conducted by Nishat & Al-Esmael, (2014) in the service industry found that male participants were more committed to the organisation than female employees. These male employees were more committed to the organisation because they could do their job with less supervision. On the other hand, female employees who work in male-dominated industries may feel less committed to the organisation if they are not given access to career development opportunities (Martins & Coetzee, 2007).

2.5.3.3. Race

Race and employee organisational commitment have been found to have no significant differences in a study conducted by Coetzee, Schreuder and Tladinyane (2007). They stated that race does not have a major influence on the employee's commitment to the organisation. However, Lumley (2010) stated that black participants in the service industry are more committed to an organisation which provides them with an opportunity to show their dedication to the people or customers.

A study conducted by Friday and Moss (2004) revealed that black employees on various occupational classes such as blue collar and white collar had higher levels of organisational commitment than other racial groups. On the other hand, a study conducted by Erasmus (2008) revealed that white female employees are likely to be more committed in an organisation than their black female colleagues. The research highlighted factors such as rewards and benefits causing poor or low commitment among black female employees.

2.5.3.4. Marital status

An employee's marital status may have an influence on his her commitment to the organisation (Wayne, Casper, Matthews & Allen, 2013. Married people may have more financial responsibilities than single or unmarried people. As a result they may be more committed to the organisation (Martin & Roodt, 2008). However, the researcher is of the view that the influence of the employee's marital status may depend on that employee's situation or family dynamics. For example, an employee may be married but have no children and yet another employee may be unmarried but have more financial responsibility due to supporting his or her parents and siblings.

2.5.3.5. Tenure

A previous study conducted by Dockel et al. (2006) revealed that tenure relates positively to the employees commitment to the organisation. An employee who has worked for an organisation for a long period may feel more committed to an organisation than an employee who has just recently joined the organisation (Nishat & El-Esmael, 2014). The commitment of employees to an organisation is of great importance to the overall performance and success of that particular organisation. In general it is expected that if employees are committed to their organisation, their retention would increase. Employees who view their goals and values as similar to those of the organisation are likely to be committed to the organisation on an emotional level (Ferreira, Basson & Coetzee, 2010).

2.6. Effects of employee organisational commitment

Organisations face a crucial challenge of fitting the person to the organisation (Long et al., 2012). In order to successfully fit a person to the organisation, organisations should create

experiences of meaningfulness. These may include giving employees meaningful work which may ultimately lead to increased engagement and commitment at work. In addition meaningful work leads to employees performing better and increased levels of engagement and commitment (Mowday et al., 2013). Employee organisational commitment can have either a negative or a positive effect on the organisation.

Organisations which are devoted to their employees' development, well-being as well as their need for actualisation tend to have employees with high levels of commitment. The negative effect on the organisation implies that the commitment of employees is low and some employees may be unproductive. The low level of employees' commitment to the organisation may result in absenteeism, job dissatisfaction and staff turnover (Eslami & Gharakhani, 2012). Employees who have a low level of commitment to the organisation are likely to have fear of success, fear of failure and persistent under achievement of tasks, duties or responsibilities. These employees are also likely to have a negative mind-set and may discourage other employees from doing their duties or tasks (Bagga, 2013).

On the other hand, employees who contribute positively to their organisation show higher performance, productivity and lower levels of absenteeism (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Employees with higher levels of organisational commitment take greater efforts to perform and dedicate themselves to the organisation as well invest their resources in the organisation. In addition, positive effects of organisational commitment include attachment, citizenship behaviour and feelings of affiliation which would improve the employees' effectiveness and efficiency in the organisation. Employees who are committed to the organisation are likely to have a positive mind-set and contribute positively to the organisation (Bagga, 2013).

2.7. Managing employee organisational commitment

Employees must be internally motivated in order for them to remain committed to an organisation (Birt, Wallis & Winternitz, 2004). Thus in order to ensure survival and sustainability an organisation should always manage its employees' commitment (Samuel & Chipunza, 2007). Committed employees are most likely to remain in an organisation and are capable of moving the organisation to greater heights and would be hesitant to leave (Babbie, 2012). Moreover, in order to manage employee organisational commitment, organisations must consider flattening the organisational structure and thereby limit the hierarchical order of reporting and enable one

on one contact (Johnson, Sachau & Englert, 2010). The use of one-on-one contact will enable better communication and feedback between managers and employees. It will also encourage coordination of shared goals thereby ensuring that managers and employees are on the same level.

Employers in organisations have important roles to play in ensuring that the needed employee organisational commitment (Selesho & Naile, 2014). The old ways of offering job security and regular promotions in order to build employee organisational commitment are becoming impractical for many organisations (Yucel, 2012). Nowadays employees are looking for challenging work, work that will make them feel fulfilled. Therefore, it remains the employers' responsibility to consider better or improve on their retention practices. Managing the commitment of employees to an organisation is a challenging task for managers since they can not necessarily predict the employees' needs and global competition makes it even more difficult (Selesho & Naile, 2014).

Furthermore, it should be noted that the presence of employees in an organisation does not mean that all of them are committed to the organisation. An organisation can have many employees, yet only a few of them are committed to its overall success and achieving the organisational goals (Bagga, 2013). Employee engagement and retention lead to increased commitment in the organisation. As a result employees will be positive towards the organisation and may want to stay with the organisation (Yucel, 2012). Thus, in order for employees to remain committed to the organisation, employers should continuously improve their retention strategies.

It is important for a higher education institution to have committed employees who will not leave the organisation as soon as better offers arise elsewhere. Therefore, a university needs to have both academic and non-academic staff who would be reluctant to leave the organisation but instead strive for the success of that particular university. Employees' willingness to leave an organisation is likely to decrease if their level of organisational commitment is high (Samuel & Chipunza, 2013). According to Coetzee (2005) an organisation that has committed employees has the highest possibility to prosper because committed employees are more productive and save costs through effective and efficient delivery of goods and services.

Moreover, other ways to manage commitment include providing adequate resources for the staff, flexible working hours, health centres and rewarding best employees for doing their tasks on time and efficiently (Yucel, 2012). According to Mehta, (2014) a valued employee should be given a salary package at par or more than the existing industry at average in order to get him or her to stay within the organisation. However, giving an employee more money can have undesired side effects, for example, some employees may view it as unfair and may develop a mind-set that in order to get a salary increase, they have to threaten to leave. In addition, giving an employee a higher salary package may have organisation-wide differentials (Simon, 2011).

2.8. The concept of employee retention

In order to understand the retention factors, it is important to first discuss employee retention. Employee retention refers to a practice where a range of Human Resource activities are redesigned to provide increased job satisfaction and, as a result, improved employee organisational commitment leading to high employee retention (Dessler et al., 2007). It can also be defined as a productive and efficient advance towards the employee management who are considered to be the organisation's greatest assets (Mehta, Kurbetti & Dhankhar, 2014). Employee retention is a technique adopted by organisations to maintain effective employees and meet operational requirements. Employee retention is therefore a priority for most organisations.

The increase in competition and globalisation makes it more difficult for organisations to retain their employees, as most of them would be attracted to organisations with better offers. Higher education institutions also face these retention problems as they often compete with other institutions or those abroad for top academics (Samuel & Chipunza, 2013). Higher education institutions should curb labour turnover, as it may lead to employee frustration due to increased loads of work for the remaining staff and a decrease in student enrolment (Tsinidou, Gerogiannis & Fitsilis, 2010). The reasons as to why employees leave must be determined in order to reduce labour turnover because high labour turnover affects the competitive edge of an organisation.

The retention of employees has become an important strategic aspect for the organisation, as it is not only vital to have the best employees but it is equally necessary to be able to retain these

employees for the long term benefits to the organisation (Dessler et al., 2007). The provision of team-building opportunities by an organisation may enable interactions between employees and thus could lead to employees feeling reluctant to leave the organisation (Dessler, 2011). Mahal (2012) states that the reason employees leave their organisations may differ depending on their age. Naris and Ukpere (2010) also state that some employees decide to leave due to factors such as working conditions, excessive workload, financial rewards and work-life balance. Employers must therefore implement strategies in order to retain these employees regardless of the size of the organisation.

Employee retention should be done on key employees. Key employees are those employees who hold critical positions in the organisation and these critical positions give the organisation a competitive advantage (Browell, 2003). It is important for retention to be aimed at top performing employees and not those with a lower performance. Top performing employees inspire others, add value and contribute to the overall success of the organisation (Browell, 2003). The retention of employees may however differ from organisation to organisation in the sense that some employers may view retention as reducing the employee turnover rate whereas some may view it as compensation and benefits related (George, 2015).

When an organisation decides to define its own employee retention strategy, one of the challenges it faces is to decide on the factors to consider. These factors have to be considered as the foundation for that retention strategy. Browell (2003) states that an organisation must look at the trends in order to determine the factors which are likely to have an impact on its employees. These factors may differ due to the type of organisation and its location, thus organisations must therefore take note of the factors which will apply to their type of organisation (Mahal, 2012). In addition, the retention of existing employees and the ability to entice a stream of new employees is a necessity for the success and advancement of organisations (Cascio, 2006).

Employees who are committed to their organisations show better performances as well as low intentions to leave, thus, employee commitment helps employee retention (Yucel, 2012). In order for employees to be committed an organisation should have well planned initiatives and processes so that employees may not think of leaving the organisation. According to Mehta et al. (2014) employers who have happy employees are likely to achieve individual and

organisational goals and also increase the overall performance of the organisation. It would take a lot of effort and resources for the organisation to retain its employees, however, it would be beneficial as these employees are important for the organisation's overall success. Therefore, higher education institutions must treat their employees well because they add value to the organisation (Bagga, 2013).

2.8.1. The retention factor framework of Dockel

Retention factors may have an impact or influence on the employees' decisions on whether to stay or leave the organisation (Bailey, 2013). These factors tend to play a role when employees decide to stay in the organisation or leave. According to Biju (2015) these factors should be taken into consideration wherever employers seek to improve retention strategies. There are 8 factors which were identified by Dockel (2003) to retain valuable employees. However, for the purpose of this study, only six factors will be considered. These factors are briefly discussed below.

2.8.1.1. Compensation

Compensation refers to an organisation's competitive remuneration package which includes the incentives, benefits and base salary (Nel, Werner, Du Plesis, Ngalo, Poisat, Sono, Van Hoek & Botha, 2011). Money is the primary factor that is used by most organisations to attract potential employees' as well as to retain valuable employees. In addition, both monetary and non-monetary rewards may improve an employee's attachment to the organisation (Dessler et al., 2007). Compensation is the primary motive in employment seeking and has a strong and significant relationship to employee organisational commitment (Spector, 2008). According to Rumpel and Medcof (2006) organisations must consider the rewards (monetary or non-monetary) which are more valued by employees and would determine whether the configuration of these rewards will assist in achieving the desired retention effects.

Compensation also takes into consideration financial rewards and benefit packages (Nel, Werner, Du Plesis, Poisat, Botha, Sono, Mey & Ngalo, 2013). Financial rewards are paid to employees by their employers in the form of a salary or commission for services rendered (Nel et al., 2013). All financial rewards are extrinsic and extrinsic motivation is based on tangible rewards such as bonuses, pay raises and paid time off. According to Samuel and Chipunza

(2013) the salary of academics in South Africa especially those in senior positions compares favourably with others in the world. Employers of choice provide a comprehensive employee benefits package to retain employees (Nel et al., 2013).

Employees' benefit packages include various types of non-wage compensation provided to employees in addition to their normal wages or salaries (Nawab & Bhati, 2011). Compensation offers employees an opportunity for autonomy, recognition and security. It also improves an employee's self- worth and thereby leading to affective commitment. Employees would be reluctant to leave an organisation if they are satisfied with their compensation. However, if employees feel that they deserve more for the work they do for an organisation they may leave and seek work elsewhere (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010). Thus, compensation plays a vital role in the employees' decision on whether to stay or leave the organisation.

2.8.1.2. Job characteristics

Job characteristics may include opportunities to work with different people, varied work, freedom and opportunities to solve challenging problems (Dockel, 2003). A sense of purpose, flexible working hours and minimal grievances between staff and employees provide a better working environment. When discussing job characteristics, it is also important to look at job autonomy and skills variety. Job autonomy in the workplace refers to how much freedom employees have while working (Simon, 2011). Employee job autonomy, both at the organisational level and at the individual level, is related to higher employee work performance and low intention to leave thereby enhancing employee organisational commitment (Musah & Nkuah, 2013). One benefit in higher education institutions is that academics have autonomy of the hours and pattern of working (Samuel & Chipunza, 2013).

Skill variety refers to the extent to which the job requires a person to utilise multiple high level skills (Pretorius & Roodt, 2009). It also refers to the abilities that are needed to perform a specific job. Different jobs have different skill variety, some jobs require employees to have different skill sets in order to perform a job. Employees who are not closely monitored in their jobs or duties are likely to be committed to the organisation. The high level of autonomy that the employees possess correlates negatively with turnover (Noor, 2011). A medium positive correlation exists between skill variety and employee organisational commitment, employees

develop a sense of competency by working in a job with high skill variety and thus be affectively committed to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Employees prefer jobs that promote helpfulness, are interesting and contribute to people's lives, they consider the jobs to be critical in achieving meaningful work (Noor, 2011). Employees who view their work as meaningful are likely to have positive attitudes regarding their jobs and are effective in the organisation (Steger & Dik, 2010). Job characteristics such as autonomy, skill variety and feedback on results drives work engagement which leads to positive work outcomes, such as organisational commitment (Steger & Dik, 2010). When employees find meaningfulness in their work, their performance in the organisation improves. In addition, employees who are highly committed to the organisation tend to make greater efforts to perform and invest their resources in the organisation.

2.8.1.3. Training and development

Training is a critical factor for personal and professional development. Employees are likely to stay for a longer period in an organisation that promotes career opportunities through learning and applying what they learnt back to their jobs (Lumley, 2010). Employees who are afforded training and development opportunities are more likely to feel self-worth and important to the organisation (Noor, 2011). The provision of proper training by organisations to their employees enables employees to feel that the employers have their best interest at heart. In addition employees who understand the expense of training may develop a sense of commitment towards the organisation. The provision of training to employees should be viewed as an essential investment strategy for employee growth and development (Dockel, 2003). Training should therefore improve the fit between the employee and the job as well as increase employee attachment to the organisation.

The availability of training and development opportunities supports the growth and development of employees (Kraimer, Seibert, Wayne, Liden & Bravo, 2011). Training and development is an important factor for employee retention. Employees may perceive it as organisations investing in them and regarding them as valuable resources (Kraimer et al., 2011). Training employees may be costly to the organisation however, in the long run it is beneficial as it increases the overall performance of the organisation (Du Toit & Coetzee, 2012). Training employees may also

enable an organisation to be competitive against its rivals. In order for training to be successful it must be need based such that the organisation will do assessment first and find out those areas and those people who need training. Furthermore, retention strategies which engage employees with career challenges and competitive wages are more effective for employees of any age (Sinha, 2012).

Employees may perceive training and development as the organisation's way of showing that they value them and thereby building a stronger affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). On the other hand, there may be a stronger continuance commitment if training provides organisation-specific skills that only contribute to status within the organisation, but will not transfer to external jobs (Tladinyane, 2012). Thus training should have little effect on continuance commitment. On the other hand, employees with low levels of learning orientation do not respond to development support with greater commitment (Maurer & Lippstreu, 2008). Employees who feel that they are growing and learning may be reluctant to leave the organisation (Tladinyane, 2012). However, employees may leave if they feel that they are not given enough learning and growing opportunities. It is therefore important for the University management to ensure that its employees are given a fair chance of training and development opportunities so as to curb turnover.

2.8.1.4. Supervisor support

In higher education institutions, supervisor support refers to the supervisory behaviours from head of departments and deans of faculties (Thatcher, Liu, Stepina, Goodman & Treadway, 2006). Supervisor support has a positive effect on employees' retention. It entails recognition and feedback from supervisor. Every employee would be glad to have a supervisor who gives them feedback and encourages them to do their best. Managers who are approachable, accessible, trusted and respected and who listen, assist and encourage employees to remain fully engaged with the organisation (Allen, Shore & Griffeth, 2008). Supervisors and managers should be able to provide recognition and rewards in a consistent manner across the organisation. Supervisors who are properly trained on recognition tend to recognise and reward their employees (Van Dyk, Coetzee & Takawira, 2013).

Employees expect and value direct feedback from supervisors in respect of their work done (Van Dyk et al., 2013). Feedback from supervisor on work done is likely to motivate employees and uplift their spirits. The feedback may be positive or negative. By getting feedback from their supervisors employees are likely to believe that their supervisors are showing some interest in their work (Thatcher et al., 2006). Employees who receive feedback and support from their supervisors are likely to be motivated and perceive that their efforts are worthwhile and valued (Morrow, 2011). Employees who receive support from their supervisors are likely to be more affectively committed to the organisation (Thatcher et al., 2006).

It is vital for supervisors to give their subordinates support and enable or allow them to try out new skills and participate in decision making. This may boost employees' morale and may ultimately lead to affective commitment (Morrow, 2011). In addition, the degree to which employees' feel that their contributions are valued and that their employers care for their well-being is inversely related to voluntary turnover.

2.8.1.5. Career development opportunities

Career opportunities are the interior and exterior opportunities that employees may have (Van Dyk, 2011). The interior opportunities may be in the form of promotion or a move within the organisation whereas the external opportunities entail obtaining a job externally (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2012). An organisation's adherence to career-oriented practices is positively related to employee organisational commitment (Cardy & Lengnid-Hall, 2011). It is important for employers to help their employees maintain the skills they need to remain viable in the job market. It is also important for creative employees who are self- motivated to be given an opportunity to contribute their stake in the organisation (Van Dyk, 2011). Employees who are not given an opportunity may decide to leave for jobs that will meet their new challenges or where they will be given opportunities (Bhati & Kumar, 2013).

Previous studies have shown that career growth increases employees' affective commitment to their organisations and reduces their intentions to leave (Joao, 2010; Weng, McElroy, Morrow & Liu, 2010). Globalisation and the advances in technology may cause a change in the skills needed from time to time, this therefore means that specialised skills may be seen as common skills with the changes in technology (Joao, 2010). Employees should understand their own career path within an organisation which would them motivate them to remain in the

organisation so as to achieve their personal career goals (Coetzee & Gunz, 2012). Employers should offer career development opportunities to their employees so as to enhance their stay in the organisation.

2.8.1.6. Work-life balance

Work-life balance entails perceiving a satisfactory balance between one's personal life and work schedule (Munsamy & Bosch-Venter, 2009). A well-balanced work-life allows employees to have periods away from work to take care of family matters. Work-life balance is focused on a flexible and stress free environment through making provision for childcare facilities where and if necessary (Weng et al., 2010). In order to assist in ensuring work-life balance higher education institutions may come up with a program that will be committed and consistent with an overall culture that values work-life balance (Parkes & Langford, 2008). Work-life balance benefits include flexible schedules, parental leave and childcare assistance (Nel et al., 2013).

An organisation must have an employee friendly and cultural environment that is responsible to the community as a whole. Employees who have work-life balance are significantly committed to the organisation and express significantly lower intention to leave the organisation (Tladinyane, 2012). Given the above information, all the retention factors should be taken into consideration in order to retain and improve the commitment of employees in the organisation. Thus, the university management should make sure that all the retention factors are fairly or equally balanced so as to enhance employee organisational commitment.

2.8.2. Variables influencing retention factors

According to Van Dyk (2011), there are variables which may have an influence on the retention factors. These factors are age, gender, trust, job levels, aging workforce, economic conditions, career success and career mobility.

2.8.2.1. Age

An employee's age has an influence on his or her decision to stay or leave the organisation (De Cuyper, Mauno, Kinnumen & Makikangas, 2011). A study conducted by Govaerts, Kyndt, Dochy and Baert (2011) revealed that there was a positive relationship between age and retention

factors regarding the intention to stay. The study further revealed that there was negative relationship between age and retention concerning the intention to leave. In addition, the study revealed that younger employees are likely to leave their current jobs more often than older employees because older employees may face difficulties such as age discrimination.

2.8.2.2. Gender

In the 21st Century females and males have different career need and expectations and as a result may have an influence on retaining employees in the organisation (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007). Women place a higher rating on intrinsic values such as development opportunities, challenging work and autonomy. In addition, professionally trained and qualified women prefer to develop their careers in a pattern such that they would prefer moving to another field of specialisation after fully developing on a certain field (Woodd, 2000). Furthermore, female employees who work in male-dominated occupations are likely to have more difficulty moving up the hierarchy. As a result female employees who work in male-dominated occupations may have less access to career development opportunities.

2.8.2.3. Trust

Employees are likely to have high trust or low trust depending on the kind of relationship they have with their colleagues and supervisors. Employees who highly committed to the organisation may feel betrayed if they are treated unfairly and this may result in their turnover (Bal, Ciaburu & Jansen, 2010). On the other hand, if employees who have lower commitment levels in the organisation feel unfairly treated they will feel like they are not valued in the organisation. As a result employees who feel like they have been betrayed by the organisation are likely to look for alternative employment elsewhere (Bal, de Lange, Ybena, Jansen & van der Velde, 2011).

2.8.2.4. Job levels

There are different job levels in organisations and employees are treated differently depending on these levels and some jobs may be of strategic importance to the organisation (Cappelli, 2009). According to McDonnell (2011) talent management tends to be more focused on organisational leaders and less focused on other employees especially those in lower levels and

this may demotivate them. Thus the different job levels play a role may have an impact on employees' commitment to the organisation if they feel like they are unfairly treated due to their job levels in the organisation.

2.8.2.5. Aging workforce

Organisations are likely to have aging workforce in their midst. This may be positive or negative, depending on the overall organisational perspective (Hankin, 2005). An aging workforce may lead to negative effects when most of the employees have to retire and it may lead to positive effects if the aging workforce shares their employees with the new employees and train them on how to perform the jobs. According to Van Dyk (2011) the South African workforce may be affected by the AIDS pandemic. Thus, employees with certain skills in technical work may become scarce in the years to come.

2.8.2.6. Economic conditions

If economic conditions are favourable this may increase individuals' aspirations for more fulfilling jobs whereas if the economic conditions are weak, individuals may be unwilling to leave their jobs, even if the jobs are unsatisfying (Feldman, 2002). In situations where the economic conditions are good, employees may be more selective about the jobs they accept and may also be willing to wait for long periods till they find the best available jobs in the labour market. In addition, poor economic conditions also make it difficult for individuals to accumulate enough resources to invest in new opportunities. As a result, poor economic conditions may increase job insecurity (Feldman, 2002).

2.8.2.7. Career mobility

The mobility of employees is likely to be motivated by the availability of alternative jobs in the labour market (Weng et al., 2010). Employees would feel the need to be mobile if there are new firm increases or new alternative job increases in the labour market (Mahal, 2012). On the other hand, the availability of career opportunities within an organisation may increase the employees' intention to stay at their current organisation (Dessler, 2011). Some organisations or occupations have higher entry barriers than others, for example, psychologists and specialists. As a result, these occupations have many rules and regulations (Mahal, 2012).

2.8.2.8. Career success

Individuals often enter new careers with high expectations and at times these expectations may be fulfilled or may not be fulfilled (Van Dyk, 2011). Individuals may evaluate their new occupations, so as to justify the sacrifices they made in leaving their former jobs. As a result, subjective career success is likely to be positively associated with occupational mobility (Van Dyk, 2011). On the other hand, subjective career success may differ for each employee, depending on what they value as important to achieve in their career (Bhati & Kumar, 2013). According to Geldenhuys et al. (2014), when employees change jobs to take advantage of more interesting and involved duties and responsibilities, external job mobility is likely to be associated with greater subjective perceptions of career success.

2.9. The relationship between retention factors and employee organisational commitment

Figure 2.2 below seeks to conceptualise the concepts of retention factors and employee organisational commitment. It depicts the possible relationship that each retention factor might have with employee organisational commitment.

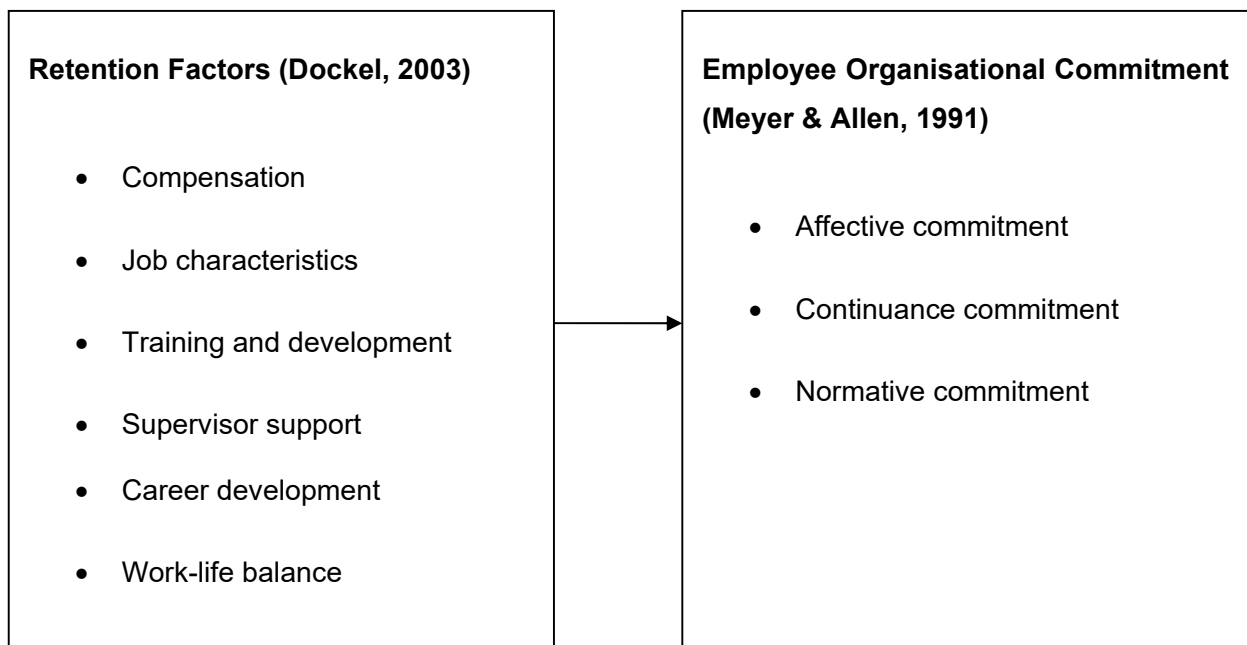| **Retention Factors (Dockel, 2003)**	**Employee Organisational Commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991)**
• Compensation • Job characteristics • Training and development • Supervisor support • Career development • Work-life balance	• Affective commitment • Continuance commitment • Normative commitment

Figure 2.2: The theoretical relationship between retention factors and employee organisational commitment (Self-developed).

An employee's level of commitment to the organisation may either be high or low depending on certain factors. Employees who are more satisfied with their jobs are likely to be highly committed to the organisation and may have low turnover rates, low absenteeism and good performance (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010). In higher education institutions employees who are highly committed may be willing to go the extra mile for the University so as to produce good results. In terms of academic staff these may ensure that the university produces high quality graduates through effective ways of teaching students. In terms of non-academic employees, these may seek to ensure that they perform their jobs effectively and efficiently so as attain the university's goals (Sayyed & Bashir, 2015).

2.9.1. Compensation and employee organisational commitment

According to Sayyed and Bashir (2015) a competitive compensation package may be effective in attracting and retaining employees, however, such a strategy may not increase the employees' level of commitment. Some employees may decide to stay in the organisation due to the competitive compensation they receive and some may leave the organisation because of dissatisfaction with their compensation (HESA, 2011). The differences in salary between the higher education institutions and private sectors is growing. As a result, academics end up being lured by these private sectors. It is vital that compensation structures be structured such that they are customised to retain academics and hinder them from leaving (HESA, 2011). Thus, higher education institutions should ensure that their compensation packages are competitive and adequate such that employees would not feel the need to leave their current jobs.

2.9.2. Job characteristics and employee organisational commitment

The degree of freedom and independence enjoyed by employees in planning and organising their work may have an impact on the commitment of employees in the organisation (Van Dyk, 2011). Employees may feel a sense of attachment to the organisation if the job requires them to have a high skill variety (Samuel & Chipunza, 2013). Moreover, skill variety is more related to attitudinal commitment due to the increased feeling of belonging. Employers should therefore ensure that the type of jobs that employees do require them to have a variety of skills as this would enhance the commitment of employees in the organisation.

2.9.3. Training and development and employee organisational commitment

A study conducted in the banking sector in Pakistan revealed that training and development has an impact on employee organisational commitment (Nik Mutasim, Shahid & Alam, 2011). Employees who perceived training and development as an effort by the organisation would be committed to the organisation and would stay in the organisation for a longer period. Higher education institutions which provide training and development to their employees are likely to have committed employees who are engaged to their jobs (Nik Mutasim et al., 2011).

2.9.4. Supervisor support and employee organisational commitment

The kind of relationship that employees have with their employers can affect organisational commitment either positively or negatively (Sayyed & Bashir, 2015). Employees are more comfortable with employers who are accessible, trusted, approachable and respected and listen, assist employees in their duties and encourage them to remain in the organisation (Sayyed & Bashir, 2015). When employees find their supervisors to be fair and supportive, they tend to be more committed to the organisation. In addition, employees may also be committed to the organisation if they find value through work relationships (Van Dyk, 2011).

2.9.5. Career development opportunities and employee organisational commitment

The availability of career development opportunities can affect the commitment of employees in the organisation (Sehunoe et al., 2015). Employees who have a strong perception that they may be promoted are likely to be committed to the organisation. However, employees who have a strong perception that they might find employment elsewhere may become less committed to the organisation as they consider the alternatives (Sehunoe et al., 2015). In this instance, employees are continuously calculating the risks of remaining and leaving the organisation. Employees' commitment to the organisation can vary or be determined by the responsibilities that they have. Some individuals may be reluctant to leave their spouses or children and advance their careers and may choose to stay in the organisation instead (Coetzee et al., 2014).

2.9.6. Work-life balance and employee organisational commitment

Employees who have a well-balanced work-life are likely to be committed to the organisation and would feel reluctant to leave the organisation (Slack et al., 2015). These employees are likely to be good performers and have the ability to motivate themselves and are likely to have less stress. Employees whose career orientations are compatible with their job settings are likely to have an increased commitment to the organisation (Bargraim, 2013). Employees whose work-life balance is under control are more committed to the organisation and would express lower intention to leave their current organisation. These employees are therefor, likely to remain in the organisation (Bargraim, 2013).

Furthermore, Samuel and Chipunza (2013) in their study at higher education institutions revealed that senior academics stated challenging work, inter-personal relationship access to research resources and job security as factors that would make them stay in the universities for longer periods. As a result, senior academics in higher education institutions would be more committed if the mentioned factors were present. However, this might not be the same with young academics and non-academic staff who might be having different needs and different levels of commitment. Therefore, employers have to know the factors which influence their employees to commit to the organisation.

It is important for an organisation to have committed employees' who are forever willing to put more effort and remain in the organisation (Van Dyk, 2011). Committed employees give an organisation a competitive advantage over their rivals. Therefore, organisations should also have lucrative retention strategies which would enable their employees to stay in the organisations. Thus, continuous improvement of the retention strategies would also give an organisation a competitive image. Therefore, in order to improve employees' commitment to the organisation, employers should meet their needs both as employees and individuals as well as ensure that they are motivated so as to achieve the organisation's goals and maximize employee organisational commitment (Salami, 2008).

2.10. Chapter summary

The chapter discussed the education sector reform in South Africa, the concept of employee organisational commitment, factors influencing employee organisational commitment and

retention factors. Furthermore, the chapter outlined the relationship between retention factors and employee organisational commitment and managing employing organisational commitment as indicated by previous authors. Employers should be able to identify retention factors which enhance employees to commit to the organisation.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The chapter focuses on the research design, population and sampling and sampling procedure. It also highlights the data collection methods that were used and how the questionnaire was administered. It discusses the manner in which the data analysis was carried out. The research methodology chapter explains how the research was carried out, where the data came from and the kind of data gathering techniques that were used.

3.2. Research design

For the purpose of this study a survey was used. A survey is used to obtain information from groups of people (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The information obtained may be concerned with the interrelationships between variables within these groups. When using a survey, the data may be collected through personal interviews, telephone interview or questionnaires. In this particular research, a questionnaire was used to collect data (Bless, Higson Smith & Smith, 2013).

3.3. Research approach

A quantitative research method was used in this study. Quantitative research entails the collection of data numerically, regards the relationship between theory and research as deductive and adopts an objectivist conception of social reality (Bryman & Bell, 2011). It can also be defined as a formal, objective, systematic process in which numerical data are used to obtain information (Burns & Grove, 2005). Quantitative research is used to examine relationships among variables, describe variables and to determine the cause and effect interactions between variables (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The quantitative approach was more appropriate for this study because collecting data using quantitative methods enables the researcher to study a large number of respondents within a short period of time. The use of same instruments and questions enables standardised information to be gathered. The quantitative method also enabled the researcher to test the relationships between the dependent and independent variables using statistical techniques.

3.4. Study population

Population is defined as the total number of items, people or objects under study (Kumar, 2013). The target population of this study (852) was made up of the male and female, academic and non-academic staff. The academic staff is made up of the lecturers and non-academic staff is made up of the administrators and the service staff. The target population was therefore drawn from the University of Venda employees.

3.5. Sampling and sampling procedure

Sampling refers to a subset of the total population whose characteristics will be generalised to the entire population (Bless et al., 2013). For the purpose of this study probability sampling was used. Probability sampling is when the probability of including each element of the population can be determined (Bless et al., 2013). The probability sampling method was used because it enables the researcher to indicate the probability with which sample results deviate in differing degrees from the corresponding population values (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). In addition, it is a reliable method to eliminate sampling bias.

The stratified sampling method was used in this study because the population was made up of a heterogeneous population. The population was divided into groups called strata, such that each strata represented academic staff and another represented non-academic staff. The researcher went on to perform simple random sampling from each stratum. The members of a particular stratum were thus more homogeneous than the population at large. The stratified sampling method was used because it allows for any small minority to be properly represented and reduce sampling bias. In addition, the stratified sampling method captures key population characteristics in the sample and provides a sample that is highly representative of the population (Babbie, 2012).

To ensure that the sample was representative of the entire population, an online Raosoft sample size calculator was used. It calculates sample based on a 95% confidence interval, 5% margin of error and with the assumption of 50% response rate. A minimum of 265 participants was recommended. However, 300 questionnaires were distributed and 274 were returned. As a result, the researcher used 274 as the sample size.

3.6. Data collection methods

The questionnaire method was selected because it is an inexpensive method for data collection. The main advantages of using self-administered questionnaires were that they are cheaper to administer, are a quick and efficient way to obtain information from a large number of participants and the use of questionnaires secures participant anonymity (Bless et al., 2013).

3.6.1. Measuring instruments

Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data in this research. A close-ended questionnaire was used. A close-ended questionnaire is one which offers participants a range of answers to choose from and the participants are then asked to tick the appropriate boxes (Babbie, 2012). A questionnaire consists of questions that are designed to seek appropriate information for data analysis.

Section A consists of the participants' biographical information where data about their age, gender, tenure and marital status was collected. Section B is made up of the Retention Factor Scale which collected data about the retention factors and Section C consists of the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire which collected data on the academic staff commitment to the institution.

The *Retention Factor Scale* (RFS) was developed by Dockel (2003). The questionnaire was used to measure retention factors. It consists of 24 items and some of the items included in this instrument are "I am likely to stay because of my recent salary raise" and "I am not going to leave this organisation because there are enough development opportunities for me in this organisation". A 5 point likert scale was used to score the items and it made use of designations such as 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree. The questionnaire has evidenced good psychometric reliability. In a study conducted by Van Dyk, Coetzee and Takawira (2013) medium to high Cronbach's alpha coefficients were obtained; compensation (0.95), job characteristics (0.67), training and development (0.88), supervisor support (0.83), career opportunities (0.73) and work-life balance (0.88).

The *Organisational Commitment Questionnaire* (OCQ) was developed by Meyer and Allen (1997). The 18 items questionnaire was used to measure organisational commitment. Some of the items included in the instrument are "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation" and "If I got another offer for a job elsewhere, I would not feel it was right to leave my organisation". The instrument used a 5 point likert scale to score the items and it made use of designations such as 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree.

Previous research has proven that the questionnaire is reliable. According to Bushe (2012) the alpha of 0.87 for affective commitment, 0.75 for continuance commitment and 0.79 for normative commitment were found. All the total correlations were above 0.3 hence showing a sufficient correlation of each item. The participants' responses will be rated using a 5-point Likert scale labeled as 1* strongly disagree, 2* disagree, 3* neither agree nor disagree, 4* agree, 5* strongly agree.

3.7. Pilot study

The pilot study was carried out to ensure that the items in the questionnaire were clearly stated and had the same meaning to participants. it was also done to give the researcher an idea of how long it would the participants to complete the questionnaire. In addition, it was also done to ensure that it did not have repetitive items and that the guidance for completing the questionnaire was clear.

3.8. Research procedure

The researcher sought permission to conduct the study at the University of Venda from the Research and Innovation Directorate. After being granted permission to conduct research in the university the researcher went on to seek consent from the participants. The researcher then distributed the questionnaires to those participants who had agreed to be part of the study. The participants were informed of their voluntary participation and the confidentiality of their information. The questionnaires were then collected at a later stage after giving the participants reasonable time to complete them.

3.9. Data analysis

The statistical analysis was carried out with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 (IBM-SPSS Institute, 2013). Descriptive statistics was used to describe the data collected in summary form for example the frequencies and percentages. The use of descriptive statistics is important in summarising data and it is vital in interpreting the results of quantitative research.

The correlation analysis was used to determine if there is any correlation between retention factors (compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career development opportunities and work-life balance) and employee organisational commitment. Correlation analysis measures the direction and strength of the relationship between two variables. In this instance retention factors are the independent variables and employee organisational commitment is the dependent variable.

Multi-regression analysis was also used to identify the most contributing factor on employee organisational commitment. Multi-regression attempts to model the relationship between two or more explanatory variables.

3.10. Ethical considerations

The study was conducted among employees of the University of Venda. The ethical considerations which were taken into consideration include the informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity of participants. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the importance of their participation and how the results were to be used. The researcher made sure that the participants were not deceived into taking part in the study. The participants were also assured that they would not be harmed in any way when taking part in the study

The researcher also indicated that participation was voluntary and in case participants felt like forfeiting their participation they could do so. In addition, no one was forced to participate in the study. Participants took part in the study on their free will. The participants were also assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. To ensure confidentiality, the participants

did not have to fill in or write their names on the questionnaire. Finally the participants were given enough time to respond to the questionnaire.

3.11. Chapter summary

The study population, sampling and sampling procedure were outlined. The study population comprised of employees from the University of Venda, both academic and non-academic staff. In addition, the data collection methods, measuring instruments and research procedure were reported on. A close-ended questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants. Furthermore, the researcher outlined the ethical considerations which were observed during the course of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the presentation of results. The chapter also presents descriptive statistics results, correlation analysis results and regression analysis results which were obtained from the data. The reliability of the measuring instruments was established using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. The researcher also made use of tables in the presentation of data.

4.2. Reliability of the variables

Table 4.1: *Reliability coefficients*

Scale	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha	Level of reliability
Compensation	5	0.66	Good
Job characteristics	3	0.58	Fair
Training and development	4	0.76	Good
Supervisor support	5	0.66	Good
Career development	3	0.82	Very good
Work-life balance	4	0.59	Fair
Employee organisational commitment	18	0.85	Very good

The Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the reliability of all constructs. The correlation coefficient ranges from plus or minus one. A high Alpha coefficient means that the reliability is also high. The recommended Alpha coefficient should have a value of 0.70, a coefficient above 0.70 is deemed excellent whereas one that is below 0.70 has limited applicability. According to Pallant (2010) an item's total correlation should be greater than 0.30 if not then it would suggest that the item is measuring a different thing entirely. All the Cronbach Alpha coefficients in this study were above 0.30 which means the items were reliable.

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for three scales were above 0.70; namely, training and development (0.761), career development (0.818) and employee organisational commitment

(0.854). These coefficients were excellent and reliable. In addition, Table 4.1 above shows that the Cronbach Alpha's coefficients of compensation (0.655) and supervisor support (0.664) were below 0.70 but above 0.50 which means they were good. Job characteristics (0.583) and work-life balance (0.585) were below 0.7 but above 0.5, this means that they were fair.

4.3. Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics outlines an overview of the demographic profile of the sample. The study revealed the demographic results of the following variables, gender, age, race, home language, marital status, position, qualification and years of service.

Table 4.2: *Demographic statistics (gender and age)*

Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	134	48.9
Female	140	51.1
Age		
30 years and below	48	17.5
31-39	88	32.1
40-49	54	19.7
50-59	68	24.8
60 years and above	16	5.8

Table 4.2 above shows that among the participants 134 (48.9%) were males, while females were 140 (51.1%). The results also revealed a gender imbalance in the sense that most of the participants were females. In addition, most of the participants were aged between 31-39 years 88 (32.1%), followed by 50-59 years 68 (24.8%), 40-49 years 54 (19.7%), 30 years and below 48 (17.5%) and the least number of the participants were those aged 60 years and above 16 (5.8%).

Table 4.3: *Demographic statistics (race and home language)*

Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Race		
Black	261	95.3
White	13	4.7
Home language		
English	2	0.7
Afrikaans	12	4.4
Zulu	3	1.1
Sotho	15	5.5
Pedi	30	10.9
TshiVenda	130	47.4
XiTsonga	28	10.2
Xhosa	7	2.6
Ndebele	8	2.9
Swati	1	0.4
Other	38	13.9

The results in Table 4.3 show that most of the participants were black 261 (95.3%), while whites were 13 (4.7%). In addition, Table 4.3 shows that the home language that most of the participants speak is Tshivenda 130 (47.4%), other 38 (13.9%), Pedi 30 (10.9%), Xitsonga 28 (10.2%), Sotho 15 (5.5%), Afrikaans 12(4.4%), Ndebele 8 (2.9%), Xhosa 7 (2.6%), Zulu 3 (1.1%), English 2 (7%), and Swati 1 (0.4%). The category named other represents participants who are foreigners in South Africa and their home languages are not official languages in South Africa. These may be employees who are originally from Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Germany or any other countries outside South Africa.

Table 4.4: *Demographic statistics (marital status and position)*

Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Marital status		
Single	66	24.1
Married	203	74.1
Divorced	3	1.7
Widowed	2	0.7
Position		
Academic	176	64.2
Non-academic	98	35.8

Table 4.4 above shows that most of the participants were married 203 (74.1%), followed by single participants 66 (24.1%), divorced 3 (1.7%) and only two of the participants were widowed 2 (0.7%). This shows that most of the university employees are married. In addition, most of the participants were academic staff 176 (64.2%) and 98 (35.8%) were non-academic staff.

Table 4.5: *Demographic statistics (qualification and years of service)*

Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Qualification		
First degree	13	4.7
Honours	73	26.6
Masters	143	52.2
PhD	44	16.1
Years of service		
Below 1 year	25	9.1
2-5	100	36.5
6-10	67	24.5
11-15	51	18.6
15 years and above	31	11.3

Table 4.5 above also shows that most of the participants have a master's degree as their highest qualification 143 (52.2%), followed by those who have an honours degree 73 (26.6%), PhD 44 (16.1%). Few participants had a first degree 13 (4.7%) as their highest qualification. Moreover, only 25 (9.1%) of the participants had worked at the University of Venda for less than

a year, followed by 31 (11.3%) who worked at the institution for 15 years and above, 51 (18.6%) had worked at the university for a period between 11 to15 years, 67 (24.5%) had worked for a period between 6-10 years and most of the participants had worked for a period between 2-5 years 100 (36.5%).

4.4. Inferential statistics

The results on the correlation analysis and regression analysis are outlined below. The correlation analysis showed the relationships between retention factors and employee organisational commitment. The regression analysis results showed the significance of the retention factors on employee organisational commitment.

4.4.1. Correlations of retention factors and employee organisational commitment

The Pearson-product correlation assesses the possible relationships between the independent and dependent variables. The results revealed that compensation is not related to employee organisational commitment ($r=0.072$; $p=0.233$). This means that as compensation improves or decreases employees commitment to the university does not change. Therefore, it shows that employees' commitment to the university is not impacted by compensation. In addition, a positive significant relationship was found between job characteristics and employee organisational commitment ($r= 0.470^{**}$; $p=0.000$) as shown on Table 4.6 below. This means that as employees become more aware of their duties and what they are supposed to do in their jobs, their commitment to the organisation increases. Therefore employees who know what they supposed to do will be more committed to the university.

Table 4.6: *Correlations for retention factors and employee organisational commitment*

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Compensation	*r*-value	1						
	p-value							
2. Job characteristics	*r*-value	0.329**	1					
	p-value	0.000						
3.Training and development	*r*-value	-0.197**	0.176**	1				
	p-value	0.001	0.003					
4. Supervisor support	*r*-value	-0.009	0.374**	0.198**	1			
	p-value	0.880	0.000	0.001				
5. Career development	*r*-value	0.149*	0.494**	0.025	0.462**	1		
	p-value	0.014	0.000	0.663	0.000			
6. Work-life balance	*r*-value	0.177**	0.457**	-0.023**	0.179**	0.283**	1	
	p-value	0.003	0.000	0.001	0.003	0.000		
7. Employee organisational commitment	*r*-value	0.072	0.470**	-0.094	0.203**	0.520**	0.458**	1
	p-value	0.233	0.000	0.122	0.001	0.000	0.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2tailed)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2tailed)

The results further revealed that training and development had no impact on employee organisational commitment (r=-0.094; p= 0.122). This means that as training and development improves employees' commitment to the organisation is not affected. This also means that the commitment of employee to an organisation is not influenced by training and development. Furthermore, a positive significant relationship was found between supervisor support and employee organisational commitment (r=0.203*; p= 0.001).Supervisor support entails the

support and feedback that employees get from their supervisors. Therefore, this means that employees' commitment to the organisation is likely to increase if they are given the support they need by their supervisors and feedback on their tasks or duties.

Career development had a positive significant relationship with employee organisational commitment (r= 0.520**; p=0.000). This means that as career development opportunities arise in the university, employees feel more committed to the organisation and they will be reluctant to leave the institution. Career development opportunities may be in the form of promotion with the institution or a better job externally. A positive relationship was found between work-life balance and employee organisational commitment (r=0.458**; p= 0.000). The relationship was positively significant. This means that as employees are able to balance their work and private lives, they will be more committed to the organisation.

4.4.2. Multiple regression analysis

Multiple regression predicts variation in the dependent variable which occurs due to influence from the independent variable (Bless et al., 2013). Multiple regression analysis was carried out to determine the retention factor which has more influence on employee organisational commitment.

Table 4.7: *Model Summary (retention factors and employee organisational commitment)*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.641	0.411	0.400	7.889

    a. Predictors: (Constant), compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career development, work-life balance

The model summary in Table 4.7 shows the extent that the retention factors predict employee organisational commitment. The prediction is assessed using R square and the higher the R square value, the higher the prediction or determination. The R square value when multiplied by hundred percent shows the percentage of dependent variable that is determined by the

independent variable. In this instance, 41% of employee organisational commitment is predicted by retention factors.

Table 4.8: *Regression analysis for retention factors and employee organisational commitment.*

Dependent variable: employee organisational commitment	B		Std.err.	*p*-value
Compensation	-0.331		0.149	0.027
Job characteristics	1.191		0.332	0.000
Training and development	-0.134		0.087	0.128
Supervisor support	-0.342		0.159	0.033
Career development	1.416		0.203	0.000
Work-life balance	1.138		0.212	0.000
R^2		0.411		
F		37.410		
Sig		0.000		

The results obtained from the multiple regression analysis in Table 4.8 above show that some variables have a significant effect on the employees' commitment to the organisation (F=37.410; *p=0.00)*. The findings from the regression analysis indicate that five of the retention factors have significant impact on employee organisational commitment. These five retention factors are compensation (β=-0.331; p=0.027), job characteristics (β=1.191; p= 0.000), supervisor support (β=-0.342; p=0.033), career development (β=1.416; p=0.000) and work-life balance (β=1.138; p=0.000). The only variable which was not significant was training and development (β=-0.134; p= 0.128).

Table 4.8 shows that job characteristics (β=1.191; p=0.000), career development (β=1.4.16; p=0.000) and work-life balance (β=1.138; p=0.000) are significant predictors of commitment. This means that employees are likely to commit to the University if they understand their job characteristics, are afforded career development opportunities and have a work-life balance. In addition, the results show that career development (β=1.416; p= 0.000) explains the most variance. The availability of career development opportunities gives employees hope that they may be considered for promotion hence this may enhance employees to commit to the institution.

4.5. Chapter summary

The chapter provided the presentation of results. The results revealed the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the variables under study. The correlation analysis was carried out to determine the possible relationship between retention factors and employee organisational commitment. Multiple regression analysis was also carried out to identify the most significant retention factor. The results revealed that career development was the most significant retention factor which contributed to the commitment of employees at the university.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1. Introduction

The chapter discusses the study results, study limitations and recommendations for future research. The main objective of the study was to analyse and find whether retention factors have an impact on employee organisational commitment. This chapter also gives a concluding view on the findings of the study.

5.2. Discussion of the results

The demographic information, reliability, correlation and regression results are discussed below.

5.2.1. Demographic information

The results revealed that most of the participants were females 140 (51.1%) and married 203 (74.1%). The results further show that most of the participants were in the academic sector 176 (64.2%) and that the age group which participated more was between 31-39 years 88 (32.1%). In addition, more black employees 261 (95.3%) participated in the study and the highest qualification that most participants had was a master's degree 143 (52.2%). Furthermore, the results revealed that most of the employees were Venda speaking 130 (47.4%) and most of the participants had worked at the university for a period between 2-5 years 100 (36.5%).

5.2.2. Reliability results

The reliability results revealed that all the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the variables were above 0.50 and therefore they were good (Pallant, 2010). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the retention factors compensation (0.655), job characteristics (0.583), training and development (0.761), supervisor support (0.664), career development (0.818) and work-life balance (0.585). These coefficients are similar to those by Van Dyk, Coetzee and Takawira (2013) which ranged from medium to high (0.67 to 0.95). Furthermore, the reliability coefficient

for employee organisational commitment (0.854) was consistent with that of Meyer and Allen (1997) whose coefficient for employee organisational commitment was above 0.70.

5.2.3. Correlation results

The correlation analysis results were used to explain the hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis one: There is a relationship between compensation and employee organisational commitment

The analysis results revealed that there is no relationship between compensation and employee organisational commitment (r=0.072; p=0.233). This means that employees' commitment to the organisation is not influenced by the compensation that they receive. There might be other factors besides compensation which also make employees commit to the university. We therefore accept the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no relationship between compensation and employee organisational commitment.

Since these employees work at a higher education institution, it is possible that there are other factors which influence them to remain in the organisation other than compensation. These factors may include career development opportunities, work-life balance or supervisor support. In addition, some factors which may have an impact on an employee's decision to either stay or leave the organisation may be the location of the organisation. Employees may feel reluctant to leave if the organisation is located close to their homes because they will be getting time to spend with their families. Hence, they may not consider compensation but would rather be in the organisation due to other factors which influence them to remain in the organisation (George, 2015).

Hypothesis two: There is a relationship between job characteristics and employee organisational commitment

There was a significantly positive relationship between job characteristics and employee organisational commitment (r=0.470**; p=0.000). This means that as employees' understand their jobs more their commitment to the university increases. An example in this case would be

a lecturer who understands the classes that he or she has to teach, the venue and the modules. This means that the particular employee would be aware of his or her job characteristics and what he or she is expected to do. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a relationship between job characteristics and employee organisational commitment.

This is consistent with a study done by Musah and Nkuah (2013) which found that job autonomy is related to higher work performance thereby enhancing employee organisational commitment and as a result employees would be reluctant to leave the organisation. Furthermore, Noor (2011) indicated that a high level of autonomy that these employees have correlates negatively with turnover and thereby enhancing commitment.

Hypothesis three: There is a relationship between training and development and employee organisational commitment.

The results revealed that training and development and employee organisational commitment had no relationship (r=-0.094; p=0.128). This means that training and development do not have any impact on employee organisational commitment. We therefore accept the null hypothesis and conclude that training and development has no influence on employee organisational commitment. The findings are inconsistent with Lumley (2010), who suggested that employees would commit to their organisations and stay longer if they are given training and development opportunities.

In this instance, training and development has no impact on the employees' commitment to the organisation. Thus employees may value the training and development they receive from the organisation. However, it might not influence their commitment to the organisation. Thus, the availability of training and development opportunities does not increase the employees' commitment to the organisation and would not influence them to stay in the organisation for a longer period.

Hypothesis four: There is a relationship between supervisor support and employee organisational commitment

The results revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between supervisor support and employee organisational commitment (r=0.203*; p=0.001). This means that as supervisors give feedback and recognition to the employees their commitment to the organisation increases and they view their contribution in the organisation as valuable. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that a relationship exists between supervisor support and employee organisational commitment.

Employees feel worthwhile and valued when they receive feedback from their employers or supervisors. For example, an intern may feel motivated and valued if his or her supervisor recognises the intern's efforts in the organisation. These results are consistent with the findings by Thatcher et al. (2006) and Morrow (2011) who revealed that employees who receive support and recognition from their supervisors are likely to be affectively committed to the organisation.

Hypothesis five: There is a relationship between career development and employee organisational commitment

The results revealed a significantly positive relationship between career development and employee organisational commitment (r=0.520**; p=0.000). This means that the availability of career development opportunities at the university plays a larger role in enhancing commitment. If career development opportunities exist in the university, employees would feel the need to stay and improve on their careers. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a relationship between career development and employee organisational commitment.

This finding is consistent with previous studies which revealed that career development opportunities increase employees' commitment to the organisation (Joao, 2010; Weng, McElroy, Morrow & Liu, 2010). These previous studies revealed that employees' intentions to leave an organisation may be reduced if they are afforded career development opportunities. Thus, university employees would be more willing to remain in the institution if career development opportunities exist.

Hypothesis six: There is a relationship between work-life balance and employee organisational commitment

The results show that there was a positive significant relationship between work-life balance and employee organisational commitment (r=0.458**; p=0.000). This means that as employees' manage to balance their work and private lives they become more committed to the university. In addition, the researcher is of the view that employees who have poor work-life balance may have poor performances, high absenteeism, low morale and this may impact on their commitment to the university.

The findings are consistent with those by Tladinyane (2012) which revealed that employees who have work-life balance are significantly committed to the organisation. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a relationship between work-life balance and employee organisational commitment.

5.2.4. Discussion of regression results

The regression analysis was done so as to determine the retention factor which has more influence on employee organisational commitment. The results revealed that five of the retention factors namely compensation (β= -0.331; p= 0.027), job characteristics (β= 1.191; p= 0.000), supervisor support (β= -0.342; p= 0.033), career development (β= 1.416; p= 0.000) and work-life balance (β= 1.138; p= 0.000) had an influence on employee organisational commitment except for training and development (β= -0.134; p= 0.128). However, career development was the most significant factor and compensation was the least significant. Thus, an organisation which has career development opportunities is likely to have committed employees. On the other hand, the results revealed that compensation does not enhance employees' commitment to the organisation. The results also revealed that a fair level of employee organisational commitment was indicated by the R^2 value (41.1%).

5.3. Conclusions

This study aimed at finding out the impact of retention factors on employee organisational commitment among employees at a higher education institution. The data was collected using a questionnaire from the University of Venda employees, both academic and non-academic staff. The results of the study revealed that indeed retention factors have an impact on employee organisational commitment. The results revealed that four of the retention factors had impacts on employee organisational commitment namely, job characteristics (r= 0.470**; p= 0.000), supervisor support (r= 0.203*; p= 0.001), career development (r= 0.520**; p= 0.000) and work-life balance (r= 0.458**; p= 0.000). Job characteristics, supervisor support, career development and work-life balance had a positive relationship with employee organisational commitment.

Furthermore, the results showed that compensation (r= 0.072; p= 0.233) and training and development (r= -0.094; p= 0.128) had no relationship with employee organisational commitment. This means that they do not have any influence on the employees' commitment in the organisation. In addition, the multiple regression analysis results also revealed that career development (β= 1.416; p= 0.000) was the most significant retention factor to employee organisational commitment and compensation (β= 0.331; p= 0.027) was the least significant. Conclusively, the study sought to find out if retention factors had an impact on employee organisational commitment.

5.4. Limitations of the study

The first limitation would be that the study was conducted at one HEI in South Africa and therefore the results cannot be generalised to all Universities or to other sectors, such as the mining sector, nursing sector or the military sector. In addition, the results obtained from the University of Venda in South Africa may not be applicable to other universities in Africa or the world at large. There were only two races which participated in the study; namely, black and white. Although the University of Venda is slightly diverse in terms of the race, most of the participants were black. As a result, such results might not be generalised to white-dominated universities.

The researcher also noted that some participants were not so willing to participate in the study. For example, some employees hinted that they were too busy to fill in a questionnaire. This was

a limitation in the sense that it could be possible that those employees who refused to participate in the study had crucial information that could have been useful for the study. The collection of data at a single point in time was also exhausting.

5.5. Recommendations for future research

Higher education institutions should take into consideration the retention factors which impact on the employees' commitment to the institution and improve on them so as to curb employees' desires to leave the organisation. The university management should also consider improving on their retention strategies through seeking other factors which may play a role in enhancing the commitment of employees to the university. In addition, the government should increase the budget allocation in higher education institutions and promote fairness among universities such that the gap between top ranked universities and low ranked universities is closed or reduced to ensure that employees remain at a particular institution for longer periods.

The higher education institutions should also consider designing suitable incentives and bonus structures for academic staff. It would also be of importance for the university to consider emotional intelligence as an important retention factor and address it with adequate leadership programs. These programs should educate university leaders or those in top management on suitable recognition practices with measurable and clear performance outputs so as to improve on the overall organisational performance and enhance employees' commitment to the organisation.

For future research the research can be carried out in more than one university for comparison purposes so as to find out if the results differ on universities or are similar regardless of where the universities are based. In addition, in future researchers should consider conducting qualitative interviews so as to draw more subjective responses from participants. The university management should devise a retention strategy that will assist in ensuring that the employees do not look for work elsewhere. Furthermore, for future research, a variable such as location should be included so as to find out if the employees are committed because the university is near their homes or they are committed due to their attachment to their jobs.

5.6. Chapter summary

The study was aimed at finding the possible relationships between retention factors (compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career development and work-life balance) and employee organisational commitment. This chapter discussed the demographic statistics and variables such as age, gender, race, home language, marital status, position, qualification and years of service were outlined. Finally, the chapter also discussed the correlation as well as the multiple regression analysis.

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ANNEXURE A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND LABOUR RELATIONS

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

In terms of the ethical requirements of the University of Venda, I invite you to complete this form as an indication of your permission for this Institution's employees and managers to voluntarily participate in this study.

I..hereby confirm that I have been fully informed about the procedures, activities and purpose of this study. I was given full opportunity to ask any questions and I understand that participants can withdraw from the study at any stage and time.

I therefore hereby **Give/Do not give** my consent for the staff and any relevant member to voluntarily take part in the study as outlined. (**Cancel out the inapplicable**).

Signature ....Date..

Researcher Signature..Date..

ANNEXURE B: QUESTIONNAIRE COVER LETTER

Dear Participant

I am a Masters student in the School of Management Sciences, Department of Human Resource Management and Labour Relations. I would like to conduct a research study on retention and organisational commitment. I would greatly appreciate your assistance by participating in this research study. You do not have to reveal your name when completing the questionnaire and all your responses will be confidential. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

Your contribution to this study is extremely important and its success depends on the number of participants who complete the questionnaire. It will take you 10 – 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

I look forward to your participation and thank you in advance.

Yours Sincerely

Muleya Dasy (Miss)

Masters Student (11613069). Cell: 0715196163   Email: muleyadasy@gmail.com

ANNEXURE C: QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: <u>Biographical Data</u>

Please answer the following questions by ticking in the appropriate boxes.

1. **Gender**

Male(1)	Female(2)

2. **Age**

30 years and below(1)	31-39 years(2)	40-49 years(3)	50 -51 years (4)	60 years and above(5)

3. **Race**

Black(1)	White(2)	Coloured(3)	Asian(4)	Other(5)

4. **Home language**

English (1)	Afrikaans (2)	Zulu (3)	Sotho (4)	Pedi (5)	Tswana (6)
TshiVenda (7)	XiTsonga (8)	Xhosa (9)	Ndebele (10)	Swati (11)	Other (12)

5. **Marital status**

Single(1)	Married(2)	Divorced(3)	Widowed(4)

6. Position

Academic (1)	Non-academic (2)

7. Qualification

First degree (1)	Honours (2)	Masters (3)	PhD(4)

8. Years of service

Less than 1 year (1)	2-5 years (2)	6-10 years (3)	11-15 years (4)	15 years and above (5)

Section B: Retention Factor Scale

Please carefully read the statements below and for each statement indicate your response Use the scale provided below.

SCALE:

1= Strongly disagree	2= Disagree	3= Neither disagree nor agree	4= Agree	5= Strongly agree

COMPENSATION					
1. I am likely to stay because of my recent salary raise	1	2	3	4	5
2. I may not leave this organisation because of my competitive total salary package	1	2	3	4	5
3. I still have more years in this organisation because of their pay structure	1	2	3	4	5

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4. I would leave this organisation due to the way their administer pay	1	2	3	4	5
5. I would leave this organisation because of the way in which raises are determined	1	2	3	4	5
JOB CHARACTERISTICS					
6. I am likely to leave this organisation because my job denies me any chance to use my personal initiative or judgement in carrying out the work	1	2	3	4	5
7. I am likely to leave because my job is quite simple and repetitive	1	2	3	4	5
8. I would stay for more years because my job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work	1	2	3	4	5
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT					
9. I am likely to stay with this organisation because it is providing me with job specific training	1	2	3	4	5
10. I may not leave because I can apply the training I receive in this organisation	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am not going to leave this organisation because there are enough development opportunities for me in this organisation	1	2	3	4	5
12. I am staying with this organisation because I have the opportunity to be involved in activities that promote my professional development	1	2	3	4	5
SUPERVISOR SUPPORT					
13. I am likely to leave because I feel undervalued by my supervisor	1	2	3	4	5
14. I may leave this organisation because my supervisor almost	1	2	3	4	5

never gives me any feedback about how well I complete my work					
15. My supervisor seldom recognises an employee for work well done	1	2	3	4	5
16. I may not look for work elsewhere because my supervisor often lets me know how well he thinks I am performing the job	1	2	3	4	5
17. I will be staying with this organisation because my supervisor rewards a good idea by implementing it and giving the responsible employee(s) credit	1	2	3	4	5
CAREER DEVELOPMENT					
18. I will be staying in this organisation because my chances for being promoted are good	1	2	3	4	5
19. I will not leave because there are enough career opportunities for me in this organisation	1	2	3	4	5
20. I am going to stay in this organisation because an employee's career development is important to this organisation	1	2	3	4	5
WORK-LIFE BALANCE					
21. I may not leave this organisation even if I often feel there is too much work to do	1	2	3	4	5
22. I may not leave this organisation even if my work schedule is often in conflict with my personal life	1	2	3	4	5
23. I may not stay in this organisation because my job has negative effects on my personal life	1	2	3	4	5
24. I will leave this organisation because my job affects my role as a spouse and / parent	1	2	3	4	5

Section C: Organisational Commitment Questionnaire

Please read carefully through these statements and indicate your answer. This section seeks to determine your level of commitment in the organisation. Use the scale provided.

SCALE:

1=Strongly disagree	2= Disagree	3=Neither disagree nor agree	4=Agree	5=Strongly agree

1.	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside it	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I think that I could easily become attached to another organisation as I am to this one	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I would turn down another job with more pay in order to stay with this organisation	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organisation	1	2	3	4	5
7.	This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Sometimes I worry about what might happen if something was to happen to this organisation and I was no longer a member	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my	1	2	3	4	5

	job without having another one lined up					
10.	It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation now	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I feel very loyal to this organisation	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I am loyal to this organisation because I have invested a lot in it emotionally, socially and economically	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I think that people these days move from organisation to organisation too often	1	2	3	4	5
15.	If I got another offer for a job elsewhere, I would not feel it was right to leave my organisation	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I do not think that wanting to be a company man or company woman is sensible anymore	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I am loyal to this organisation because my values are largely its values	1	2	3	4	5
18.	My organisation deserves my loyalty because of its treatment towards me.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for your time and participation.

ANNEXURE D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Ms D Muleya
Student No: 11613069

PROJECT TITLE: **Retention factors and employee organisational commitment at the University of Venda.**

PROJECT NO: **SMS/16/HRM/04/0806**

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr TS Setati	University of Venda	Supervisor
Mr H Ngirande	University of Venda	Co-Supervisor
Ms D Muleya	University of Venda	Investigator - Student

ISSUED BY:
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date Considered: June 2016
Decision by Ethical Clearance Committee Granted
Signature of Chairperson of the Committee: ....
Name of the Chairperson of the Committee: Prof. G.E. Ekosse

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

9 May 2017

School of Management Sciences
University of Venda
Private Bag X5050
Thohoyandou
0950

Dear sir/madam

This letter serves to certify that I have proof-read Ms Dasy Muleya's dissertation, titled, "Retention Factors and Employee Organisational Commitment at the University of Venda".

The proof-reading entailed editing some parts of it, where I felt it would make the document more understandable; for example, to avoid wordiness, redundancy; subdividing a long sentence into two or three shorter ones, etc. However, I have not tempered with the content of the dissertation, except where I found that this constituted repetition or made the content confusing.

The dissertation is now ready for submission and/or examination.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely

V.T. Bvuma
Mobile: 083 423 9227

University of Venda

ANNEXURE F: TURN IT IN REPORT

RETENTION FACTORS AND EMPLOYEE ORGANISTIONAL COMMITMENT AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Muleya D

ORIGINALITY REPORT

%**23**	%**15**	%**10**	%**16**
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