The effect of psychological capital, self-leadership and job embeddedness on work engagement among employees in the banking sector

by

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DECLARATION

I, Martha Harunavamwe, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is the true work of my own submitted in fulfilment of the requirements in respect of Higher Doctorate in the Department of Industrial Psychology in the Faculty of Economic Management Sciences at the University of the Free State. I have acknowledged all the sources consulted.

Signed: ……… Date:….23/09/2018

ABSTRACT

To survive in the competitive environment, organisations require an engaged workforce, however, most companies still struggle to engage their workforce particularly the banking sector. Thus, managers have shifted focus from conducting annual engagement surveys to proactively recognising positive psychology as a new way of improving work engagement. The current study examined the effect of psychological capital (PsyCap), self-leadership and job embeddedness on work engagement among banking sector employees. The main objective was to determine whether PsyCap, job embeddedness and self-leadership have a significant effect on work engagement. The secondary objectives was to determine whether differences exist in levels of work engagement among employees in the banking sector concerning age groups. The last objective was to identify the state of all the four constructs among employees in the banking sector. A quantitative and statistical modelling approach was applied. Data was gathered using a cross-sectional survey. The questionnaire was made up of four scales the (UWES, PCQ-24, JES and SLS). The reliability of all the four scales was measured using Cronbach's alpha, the goodness-of-fit statistics associated with each of the scales was determined, and all the constructs were valid and reliable measures. Respondents were recruited through convenience sampling procedure and 302 usable questionnaires were obtained.

The main objective was addressed using the stepwise regression analysis and results indicated five significant predictors of work engagement including hope, optimism, self-efficacy, behavioural strategies and organisational links, which explained 71% variance in work engagement. Hope had the highest contribution (R^2 = 0.59) since hopeful individuals are more goal-orientated, hence positive goal directed outlooks leads to frequent positive moods which enables engagement. Overall the regression model was statistically significant (F = 145.489; P =0.000). PsyCap resources explained a significant (R^2 = 0.680) variance in work engagement because PsyCap is a combination of psychological capacities that work as personal resources contributing significantly to engagement. The theoretical model in the study was tested using the Partial Least Squares Path Modeling (PLS). The measurement model gave adequate proof of

convergent validity and internal consistency. The results indicated that the key target construct's (work engagement) level of R^2 was high or substantial at level $R^2 = 0.703$. This means that PsyCap, self-leadership and job embeddedness explain the 0.703 variance in work engagement. No paths were found to be insignificant or show signs contrary to the hypothesized direction. The strongest indirect path to work engagement reported in the model was from self-leadership through PsyCap (β = 0.0.815) to work engagement (β = 0.621), which is positive and statistically significant, this path is highly recommended. The secondary objective was addressed using T-test, and no significant differences in levels of engagement were found between the two age groups. Both old and young employees operate under very strict regulations and their job activities are strictly monitored, they are both exposed to the same conditions and possibly get access to similar job and personal resources. For the third objective results indicated that work engagement levels in the banking sector are moderate, PsyCap levels are slightly higher compared to other variables, self-leadership levels were moderate, and job embeddedness levels low to moderate.

Conclusions from the study indicate that the accumulation of internal resources and job resources from PsyCap, self-leadership, job embeddedness significantly influence work engagement. Self-leadership strategies lays an initial foundation for positive organisations and can be used to expand the psychological resources and assist with increasing personal resources which eventually transform to work engagement. When work engagement is grounded in the principals of positive psychology and is more deeply explored in positive organisational scholarship, it offers genuine solutions to the disengagement problems experienced by banks. It was recommended that PsyCap can be enhanced through task-mastery experiences and positive role modelling which can be included into employee training and development initiatives. Future studies may focus on disentangling how different types of resources such as job resources and personal resources can develop over time because of engaging in proactive work behaviour.

Key Words: Work engagement, psychological capital, Self-leadership, job embeddedness and banking sector.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 Introduction

Organisations across the world are experiencing an employee engagement crisis, with serious and potentially devastating and lasting repercussions for the global economy (Mann & Harter, 2016). Even though most companies and leaders worldwide recognise the benefits of engaging employees, in practice employee engagement has barely budged in well over a decade globally (Johnson, 2011). Gallup's daily tracking statistics revealed that globally, only 13 per cent of employees are engaged. In the interviews of nearly 150 000 employees, it was revealed that a stunning number of employees are miserable, with only 30 per cent of the nation's working population being fully engaged, 52 per cent disengaged, and 18 per cent actively disengaged (Gallup, 2013).

Similarly, the Dale Carnegie Training Institute (2014) published statistics indicating that only 29 per cent of the workforce in the United States are fully engaged, which constitutes less than one-third of the US working population, while 45 per cent are not engaged and 26 per cent are completely disengaged. As a result of this, about $550 billion a year is lost due to loss of productivity caused by disengagement (Mann & Harter, 2016). It has been reported repeatedly that employee engagement is on the verge of decline and that there is a deepening disengagement among current employees. It is beyond imagination how hard businesses globally are struggling to survive when so few people are assisting in taking it forward (Bates, 2004; Anitha, 2014).

A comparison of work engagement crises across the world by Gallup (2013) indicates that Africa has the lowest levels of engagement–and South Africa is not spared. The impact of higher or lower levels of engagement among employees across the country can be tremendous, and includes, in effect, productivity, customer service, innovation, cost management, and ethical behaviour. Pillay (2009) indicates that South Africa is becoming interdependent and interconnected meaning the effects of globalisation are evident. For example, the mobility of skilled personnel is increasing; thus, the country

struggles with attracting and retaining the talent needed to sustain the required growth. Roberts (2013) confirms the above, indicating that firms operating in developing economies such as South Africa are finding it difficult to keep employees engaged amid growth and cost struggles, noting that only 9 per cent of the employees in the country are engaged, 46 per cent are not engaged and 4 per cent are actively disengaged. The UNISA Engagement Report (2014) concurs and states that engagement levels of employees in South Africa are quite depressing. Action should be taken to attempt to address the work engagement crisis in the country. Nigah, Davis and Hurell (2012) stated the same sentiments two years earlier, pointing out that, companies in South Africa are experiencing serious work engagement challenges, which are adversely impacting disengagement, as indicated by the large number of employees who are slowly becoming liabilities to firms, the low levesl of productivity. Above that, there is decrease in profits and customer satisfaction. A recent survey indicated that 20 per cent of business lost to competitors is due to poor service caused by this disengagement (Rothman, 2003).

Although work engagement challenges are being experienced across organisations in the country, the finance and banking industry seems to suffer the most, since they are operating in highly competitive circumstances (Sadlier, 2014). This is due to dramatic changes in the business landscape, which affected the banking sector most, as it is facing major resourcing challenges in expanding markets in Africa (Dale Carnegie Training Institute, 2014). The financial meltdown, depreciation and collapse of the rand as well as the economic recession have unquestionably tarnished the reputation of the banking sector and placed heavy demands on employees (Bersin, 2015). High client expectations lead to long working hours and constant stress levels for employees. These are some of the demands that overwhelm employees, leading to disengagement (Dale Carnegie Training Institute, 2014). Above that, frontline banking sector employees receive very low salaries and spend extensive time sitting at their desks staring at computer screens doing the same activities daily, which gives less meaning to their work (Dale Carnegie Training Institute, 2014). Lack of meaning at work leads to apathy

and detachment from one's work; thus, it is clear that the general working environment is not engaging (Mone & London, 2014).

As a result of the above-mentioned factors, banking sector employees are on the lookout for new opportunities, suggesting that employers will have to work harder than ever to retain the talent. Recent statistics indicate that 17,2 per cent of employees in the banking sector plan to quit their jobs soon, thus the industry already has one of the highest turnover rates (Mann & Harter, 2016). The ability of institutions to attract reputation-conscious employees is very low; therefore, leaders need to reconsider the way they think about employee engagement. It is time to create a strong recognition strategy that will enable employers to stay competitive and attract and retain top talent. If the industry is to stay relevant, innovative and progressive, high levels of engagement of current employees are necessary; hence, the sector needs to go above and beyond when engaging employees (Shuck & Reio, 2014). Making engagement happen should be the ultimate objective.

However, despite billions of dollars and countless hours invested in developing banking sector employees, banks still struggle with engaging and keeping talent (Sadlier, 2014). Research indicates that the banking sector is dominated by millennials who see the industry as a stepping-stone to other career options. They have high job mobility. They acquire knowledge and move from one firm to another, taking years of experience, acquired skills and potential clients with them, leaving the banks with a knowledge vacuum difficult to fill (McConnell, Brue & Macpherson, 2010). In addition, Pokorny (2011) notes that about 71 per cent of banking sector employees are not happy to stay with their companies until retirement. Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) echoed the same sentiments indicating that seven in every ten employees are disengaged and under-committed. In a survey by the Dale Carnegie Training Institute (2014), results indicated that only 10 per cent of employees plan to stay in the job, 42 per cent are open to offers from other companies and 28 per cent are actively looking for the next big opportunity. It has therefore become very difficult for firms to keep such calibre of employees in a company for long (Davenport, 2005).

Organisations seem to concentrate on invalidated, unfocused annual surveys, much like a traditional employee satisfaction survey; yet, basing engagement strategies on survey or metrics as the only solution has proved to be ineffective and unrealistic. It is just a "rinse and repeat" pattern, focusing on engagement periodically and not acting upon results (Mann & Harter, 2016). These flawed approaches pose significant barriers to improving work engagement and achieving lasting change, therefore, many organisations are on the lookout for new strategies to engage employees, align them to the company's objectives and values, and to recognise their achievements in order to drive greater business success (Bersin, 2015).

Fortunately, statistics indicate that firms in the top docile of engagement outperform their peers by almost 147 per cent in earnings per share, and have 90 per cent better growth trend than their competitors (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey & Saks, 2015). Organisations with high engagement levels are 78 per cent more profitable than their competitors (Frank, Finnegan & Taylor, 2004). Above that, research on work engagement has revealed several benefits, including that engaged employees are physically active, cognitively, and emotionally connected to their work, highly energetic, and self-efficacious (Bakker, Albrecht & Leiter, 2011).They have a positive attitude, create their own positive feedback in terms of appreciation, recognition and success (Bakker et al., 2011). Such employees are less likely to leave the organisation because they possess a positive fulfilling work-related state of mind characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2002). Therefore, one of the top priorities for organisations' management is to boost engagement through emphasising positive psychology, such as psychological capital and job embeddedness. The traditional engagement methods have proved ineffective in enhancing work engagement, hence positive psychology is compromised (Albrecht et al., 2015).

With reference to the above, firms have started using psychological capital and job embeddedness as ways to improving work engagement (De Waal & Pienaar, 2013). Job embeddedness is one way of securing engagement by strengthening employee links with the supervisors and colleagues (De Waal & Pienaar, 2013). Consistent with

this, Zhao and Liu (2010) highlight that individuals with high levels of job embeddedness are involved in, and tied to projects and people, they feel they fit well in their jobs and can apply their skills, and believe they will sacrifice valued things if they quit their jobs. In contrast, individuals who are not embedded in their work spend most of their time strategising and pursuing possible job alternatives and ways to leave the organisation, thereby failing to focus on their work, resulting in low productivity and complete disengagement (Kilburn & Kilburn, 2008). Moreover, embedded individuals are less likely to withdraw from their in-role and extra-role behaviours, which keeps their task performance and work engagement relatively higher than the less embedded. Lee, Burch and Mitchell (2014) found that highly embedded employees work harder, perform tasks better and engage in organisational citizenship behaviour in timely and appropriate manners which eventually result in organisational success.

Xanthoupoulou, Bakker, Demerouti and Schaufeli (2009) are of the opinion that organisations should employ internal psychological resources which encourage workers to become more engaged. Recent efforts to improve organisational performance have started to emphasise positive and proactive organisational behaviour, and positive emotions (Bakker, 2017). Psychological capital (PsyCap) introduces a new and more positive view towards strength focused sides of people and aims to increase people's development and performance (Larson, Norman, Huges & Avey, 2013). Instead of emphasising human capital, positive psychology is taking a lead and proving to be the best practise for knowledge economy, providing leverage and competitive advantage that are distinct from that afforded by human capital (Luthans & Jensen, 2002). Similarly, Nielsen and Daniels (2012) indicate that PsyCap provides an opportunity for organisations to improve employees' work environment and consequently enhance their work engagement. Nurturing positive organisational behaviours foster engaged employees and this is the key to ensuring high performance and lowering the risk of losing important talent and maintaining organisational effectiveness (Macky & Boxall, 2008). It has therefore become critical for modern firms to recruit and keep employees who are psychologically connected to their work, work beyond their job descriptions,

and are proactive, willing and able to invest fully in their roles (Mortazavi, Yadzi & Amini, 2012).

In addition, with most firms being characterised by wides-pread devolution of power, fragmentation of organisations into smaller entities and shared ownership, there is high demand on individuals to rely upon their positive psychological capital, high levels of engagement and potential for self-leadership to survive (Li & Mao, 2014). Banking sector employees are not comfortable with the rigid corporate structure and the traditional management is not an option. With the amount of stress that they have to deal with daily, upper management needs to eliminate the burden and make employees feel empowered, confident and valued through fostering self-leadership practices. This can boast engagement levels, lower turnover rates and achieve better customer care (Mauno, Kinnunen, Makikangas & Feldt, 2010). According to Saks (2006), psychologically positive individuals are good self-leaders and as leaders are no longer always around, it is becoming increasingly important to complement positive psychology and a leader-focused approach to work engagement (Breevaart, Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Tuckey, Bakker & Dollard, 2012). Thus, the concept of self-leadership, the process of influencing oneself to perform more effectively by emphasising PsyCap, has attracted significant attention since the 1990s and is widely being used in several highly successful organisations (Neck & Houghton, 2006).

Above that, the idea of the budding PsyCap and self-leadership has become a common practice and gained popularity in modern industries (Bersin, 2015). Effective interventions clearly support the utility of positive psychology, including PsyCap and job embeddedness, to engage employees (Luthans, 2002). However, scant evidence is available on the mechanisms that function between employees' PsyCap, job embeddedness, and self-leadership on work engagement. With most financial services steadily progressing into the technological economy, it is difficult to rely on simple notions of top-down, command-and-control leadership since most employees are not comfortable with such systems (Holtom et al., 2006). The banking sector employees are now often encouraged to lead themselves and share critical leadership roles that were once filled by traditional vertical leaders; this allows them to enjoy their work and link

well with the organisation, consequently becoming highly engaged (Pearce & Manz, 2005). Thus organisations can spend all the money in the world to survey employees and come up with ideas for improvement, but without empowering them to be self-reliant, positive and engaged, corporate investments will largely be wasted. It is time to re-imagine the role and purpose of engagement through embracing self-leadership and building a positive psychological environment in which employees can thrive and feel safe for a lengthy stay in the firm (Pearce & Manz, 2005).

However, PsyCap, self-leadership and job embeddedness can cause potential challenges, as noted by Devi (2009). PsyCap, if not well managed, results in over-confident employees who can easily get disengaged if not given enough authority and that can largely contribute to low productivity, high absenteeism and intention to quit. Self-leadership also presents serious challenges to employees, the most important of which probably being the amount of autonomy received by employees on how and when to perform their work. Pearce and Manz (2005) indicate that it requires individuals who are internally motivated and positive to self-lead. In addition, embedded individuals can only apply their knowledge and skills better when there is sufficient supervisory support or reciprocal obligation; they also feel stuck in the net from which they cannot release themselves, hence may not necessarily be absorbed in their work (Coetzee, 2013). Therefore, as much as organisations are adopting self-leadership, emphasising on job embeddedness and encouraging PsyCap, employee work engagement remains a major challenge in the financial service sector. This is causing enormous costs to the industry, and it is therefore crucial to empirically examine the combined effect of PsyCap, job embeddedness and self-leadership on work engagement as well as the differences in work engagement levels with regards to age.

Prevailing evidence suggests an age-related increase in work engagement indicating that, as age increases, the levels of engagement also increase (James, McKechnie & Swanberg, 2011; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Studies have established that age plays a significant role in the engagement levels of employees. Evidence postulates that younger employees have low levels of work engagement as a result of a lack of skills to deal with problems arising in the workplace, reality and transitional shock when entering

the workplace, lack of coping skills and less experience in the working environment (Duchscher, 2009; Ghorpade, Lackritz & Singh, 2007; Patrick & Lavery, 2007). Consistent with that, Laschinger, Wilk, Cho and Greco (2009) note that newly graduated employees who are entering the workforce experience lower levels of engagement due to limited experience, and less personal resources to deal with the job demands imposed to them.

However, contrary to the above, a recent study by the Dale Carnegie Training Institute (2015), discovered that with the ever-changing new technology in the banking sector, the tables have turned and the older employees are struggling to cope with the technological job demands as compared to their younger counterparts, resulting in high levels of engagement among younger employees. Similarly, in an age of comparative studies among academics on work engagement, no statistically significant differences were found in the levels of work engagement among academics with regards to age groups (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006).Thus research evidence on the relationship between age and work engagement has been mixed and is worth further investigation.

1.2 Problem formulation

The banking sector presents unique cases for employee disengagement due to on-going demands, strict laws and regulations, high client expectations and the overall changing environment it is experiencing (Sadlier, 2014). Considering that the image of the bank has been tarnished by the depreciating rand, economic recession and depleted employee confidence, one of the most disruptive and expensive problems facing this industry is disengagement resulting in huge losses through absenteeism, stress and mistakes by employees (Steel, 2002). Large numbers of customers are switching banks and insurance companies due to poor customer service (Sadlier, 2014). Retaining a strongly engaged workforce with a sense of fit and belonging to their jobs has become a top priority for many contemporary firms (Neininger, Lehmann & Henschel, 2010). Younger employees in the banking sector (millennials) are seeking personal career growth across different organisations owing to increased mobility opportunities in the global marketplace; therefore, keeping them engaged has become a nightmare (Feldman & Ng, 2007). The traditional top-down, bureaucratic leadership

approaches of the by-gone industrial era used by banks no longer make sense in a knowledge-based economy marked by complexity and instability (Marion & McKelvey, 2007). Firms are shifting away from a traditional top-heavy leadership paradigm to embrace a new model of leadership (self-leadership) that empowers employees to take greater responsibility for their work-related behaviours (Pearce & Manz, 2005).

Firms are also embracing PsyCap and job embeddedness as some of the best ways to aid in enhancing engagement. However, most organisations are still struggling with problems relating to disengagement. The combined effect of PsyCap, job embeddedness and self-leadership on work engagement has not been adequately addressed in the literature. Whether the employees with positive psychological characteristics are more attached to the organisation is not known (Sun, Zhao, Yang & Fan, 2011). Considerable research has focused on PsyCap and work engagement in the North American context (Sun et al., 2011; Donaldson & Ko, 2010; Bersin, 2014). To the knowledge of the researcher, relatively no research within the South African context has examined the combined and simultaneous effect of these three variables on work engagement in the banking sector environment. Therefore, it is worthy to investigate the combined effect of psychological capital, self-leadership and job embeddedness on work engagement among banking sector employees in the South African context.

1.3   Motivation for the proposed study

Due to widespread challenges of employee disengagement experienced by the organisations in general and the banking sector in particular, it has become imperative to engage employees in order to lower the escalated costs of disengagement (Swider, Boswell & Zimmerman, 2011). The present study focuses on examining the combined effect of PsyCap, self-leadership and job embeddedness on work engagement within the banking sector. This study analyses the existing growing body of research on PsyCap, job embeddedness and generally practiced self-leadership and endeavours to establish how these relate to work engagement in order to ensure high productivity, employee retention and individual work satisfaction. The study identifies the job and personal resources embedded in PsyCap, self-leadership and job embeddedness constructs that may be used to boast work engagement. Investigating the relationship

dynamics between these four constructs may ultimately contribute new knowledge that could be used to inform engagement practices in the banking sector aimed at retaining critical human capital and increasing profits in the South African banking sector.

1.4 Research questions

With reference to the problem statement, the following primary and secondary research questions can be stated:

1.4.1 Primary research question

Does psychological capital, self-leadership and job embeddedness have an effect on work engagement among employees working in the banking sector?

1.4.2 Secondary research questions

Do differences exist in levels of work engagement among employees working in the banking sector with regard to age groups?

What is the state of psychological capital, self-leadership, job embeddedness and work engagement among employees working in the banking sector?

1.5 Research objectives

1.5.1 Primary objective

To determine, by means of non-experimental research design, whether psychological capital, self-leadership and job embeddedness have a significant effect on work engagement among employees working in the banking sector.

1.5.2 Secondary objectives

To determine by means of a non-experimental research design whether differences exist in levels of work engagement among employees working in the banking sector with regard to age groups.

To identify the levels of psychological capital, self-leadership, job embeddedness and work engagement among employees working in the banking sector.

1.6 Formulation of research hypotheses

The following hypotheses were developed in exploration of the effect of psychological capital, job embeddedness and self-leadership, on work engagement.

Null hypothesis (H0):

Variances in work engagement scores cannot be statistically explained by psychological capital, self-leadership, and job embeddedness among employees working in the banking sector.

Alternative hypothesis (H1):

Variances in work engagement can be statistically explained by individuals' psychological capital, self-leadership, and job embeddedness among employees working in the banking sector.

Null hypothesis (H0):

There are no statistical significant differences in scores achieved on levels of work engagement with regard to age groups among employees in the banking sector.

Alternative hypothesis (H1):

There is a statistical significant difference in scores achieved on levels of work engagement with regard to age among employees working in the banking sector.

1.7 Chapter organisation

This section outlines the flow of the contents covered in each chapter of this dissertation.

Chapter 1: This section provides the introduction of the study as well as the background of the topic under investigation. The chapter then presents the section on problem formulation under which the significance of the study is explained, objectives are outlined, questions are provided and the research hypotheses are formulated.

Chapter 2: The section conceptualises and describes in detail the dependent variable (work engagement). The chapter begins with an introduction, followed by the definition

of the concept, then the theoretical underpinnings, models as well as approaches of work engagement. Towards the end a comprehensive discussion of literature on the relationship between work engagement and other variables is provided.

Chapter 3: This constitutes the second chapter on the literature review. The chapter focuses on a discussion of the first independent variable, which is psychological capital. Beginning with the introduction and definition of the concept, it then traces the origins, theories, models and recent trends in psychological capital. The end of this section provides a comprehensive discussion of the theoretical commonalities between psychological capital and work engagement.

Chapter 4: This is a continuation of the literature review specifically focusing on the second independent variable which is job embeddedness. A comprehensive discussion of the concept is given from its origins, definition, theories, models and approaches. An attempt to link it with the other independent variables is also presented. The theoretical commonalities between job embeddedness and work engagement are also fully discussed towards the end of this chapter.

Chapter 5: This chapter addresses the literature on the last independent variable, namely self-leadership. The chapter provides a discussion on the definition of the concept, the origins, its benefits to the modern organisation, theoretical underpinnings as well as models of self-leadership. A review of previous research in the area as well as the relationship between self-leadership and the other independent variables (job embeddedness and psychological capital) are presented towards the end of the chapter.

Chapter 6: This is the last chapter on the literature review; the chapter presents the integration of all constructs and provides an explanation of the indirect relationships between psychological capital, self-leadership, job embeddedness and work engagement. The chapter closes with a proposed theoretical model designed based on the previous research from the previous literature.

Chapter 7: This chapter addresses the research methodology, providing a detailed description on how the study was carried out. It includes the research design, selection

of test persons, data gathering, including a description of the instruments used to collect data, as well as the statistical methods used to analyse the data. In short, the chapter documents how the actual research process was carried out.

Chapter 8: The chapter presents the results and interpretation thereof. The chapter begins with the results on the reliability of measures, followed by descriptive statistics presenting the demographic characteristics of the sample. The chapter then presents the results for the primary research question and secondary research questions. The presentation includes comprehensive diagrams, discussions and an interpretation of the research findings.

Chapter 9: This is the last chapter of the study and presents the conclusions, recommendations, and limitations. It also provides directions for future research in the area.

1.8 Summary

This chapter has presented a general introduction, background of the study and problem statement. The presentation includes a brief background of the work engagement problems faced by organisations globally, then in the South African context specifically in the banking sector. The chapter also outlined the objectives of the study in relation to the proposed research questions. Based on the previous literature, research hypotheses have been formulated and presented. An outline of the motivation for the study was also provided. Emphasis was placed on the current work engagement problems in the South African banking sector.

CHAPTER 2
WORK ENGAGEMENT

2.1 Introduction

The study of work engagement evolved from the practitioner community and its emergence in academia is well documented. Schaufeli (2013) traced the study of work engagement back to Kahn (1990) where it was first mentioned in the *Academy of Management Journal*. Afterwards, it took another decade before the topic was picked up by other scholars. At the turn of the century, towards the end of 1999, the so-called positive psychology movement emerged and it was clear; work engagement fits into this novel approach that has gained significant momentum in the past decade (Shuck, 2011). Therefore, this positive psychology movement created the fertile soil that made work engagement research blossom in academia (Schaufeli, 2013). Its development in the 21st century can be attributed to two converging developments, which are: the growing importance of human capital and psychological involvement of employees in the business, as well as the increased scientific interest in positive psychological states (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

As highlighted above, the concept of work engagement was first theorised by Kahn (1990) and it has recently emerged as a potentially important area in the organisational behaviour literature (Simpson, 2009). The empirical study of work engagement has experienced dramatic growth in interest over the past few years, following the general trend toward the study of positive organisational behaviour constructs. This interest is justified, due to empirical findings suggesting the existence of a relationship between employee engagement and key organisational outcomes, for both individual employees and organisations at large (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002, Bakker, Albrecht & Leiter, 2011).

Work engagement has become an important construct and Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends' (2014) research indicated that 78 per cent of business leaders rate engagement as more urgent than important. In fact, the issue of engaging employees is

becoming one of the biggest competitive differentiators in business and should be viewed as a continuous, holistic part of an entire business strategy (Bakker et al., 2011). This is based on the idea that once the employees fall in love with their work and the environment, they treat customers better, innovate, and continuously improve the business (Bersin, 2014). As a result a new breed of engagement tools vendors, books, models, and workshops have emerged, focusing on building an irresistible organisation. Considering that the banking sector is highly strained by the economic down turn, once people join the bank managers have to continuously improve, redesign, and tweak the work environment to make it modern, humane, enjoyable and attractive and to ensure client satisfaction (Bersin, 2014). Modern organisations need to prioritise engagement activities with as much, or more, importance as other tasks. As such, they need to make sustainable engagement a practice they focus on, make time for, and schedule first for (Dik & Duffy, 2012).

The practice of work engagement is associated with a great deal of advantages, including that engaged employees have energy that is directed towards organisational goals and are more likely to work harder through increased levels of discretionary effort than those who are disengaged (Bakker, 2011). They are committed to high quality performance standards, which eventually benefit the organisation (Bakker & Leiter, 2010). They are physically, cognitively, and emotionally connected to their work, direct and focus their energy towards organisational goals (Macey, Schneider, Barbara & Young, 2009). Although, engagement at work is crucial for the individual, organisation and societal development, the problem persists (Dik & Duffy, 2012). Studies on work engagement lacks integration into the new work context characterised by psychological capital, job embeddedness issues and self-leadership practices and this could potentially intensify the difficulty in obtaining high levels of work engagement, especially in the banking sector in South Africa.

Work engagement has been found to be positively related to several organisational outcomes and job attitudes, such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment (Hakanen et al., 2006; Saks, 2006; Kotze, 2017), job performance and organisational citizenship behaviour (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Rich et al., 2010), and negatively related to

turnover intentions (Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Christian et al. (2011) also found that work engagement is positively related to task performance and contextual performance, which is highly important for the growth of most organisations. Work engagement at individual level has been demonstrated to be positively associated with work-related constructs such as general safety, individual job satisfaction, employee loyalty, job performance, and organisational citizenship behaviour (Markos & Sridevi 2010; Ram & Prabhakar, 2011). The construct has also been linked to organisational-level outcomes like in the research by Harter et al. (2002) where work engagement was found to be related to business-unit outcomes, such as customer satisfaction, productivity, profitability, and safety in a large sample of business units. With reference to the discussion above, it is clear that the concept of work engagement is worth investigating.

This chapter focuses on discussing the work engagement concept in detail. This includes fully defining the concept, explaining in detail the dimensions of work engagement, discussing the theoretical underpinnings, the models and the approaches to work engagement. Previous research was reviewed to enlighten the discussion on the relationship between work engagement and the independent variables. The chapter also provides information relating to how work engagement is measured and work engagement among different age groups. Finally, work engagement is discussed in the banking sector context.

2.2 Nature and definition of work engagement

Although there is a lot of interest in the concept of work engagement, numerous definitions of the concept have been proposed and at present, there is a lack of agreement and consensus on the way work engagement has been operationalised. Therefore, one of the first challenges presented by work engagement literature is the lack of a universal definition of the concept (Shuck, Ghosh, Zigarmi & Nimon, 2012). In actual fact, researchers have failed even to agree on the name for the construct arguing that it should be called *employee engagement,* while others suggest that it should be called *job engagement* (Rich et al., 2010) or *work engagement* (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2011). Thus, if researchers cannot agree on the name, it is even more complex to find a

holistic definition. Similarly, contemporary literature portrays that there is confusion, disagreements, and lack of consensus regarding the meaning and distinctiveness of employee engagement among scholars and practitioners (Bakker et al., 2011; Cole, Walter, Bedeian & O'Boyle, 2012; Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti & Derks, 2016). According to the experts in the area, the problem is due in part to the conceptual overlap of engagement with other established constructs, for example; job satisfaction, organisational commitment, entrepreneurship and job involvement (Cole et al., 2012; Shuck, Ghosh, Zigarmi & Nimon, 2012; Gawke et al., 2017).

As a result, researchers have attempted to show engagement as a unique concept by comparing it to other constructs. A very good example is presented by Christian et al. (2011) where engagement is distinguished from job satisfaction (an attitude about one's job or job situation), commitment (an emotional attachment to the organisation), and job involvement which is the degree to which one's job is central to one's identity. From this Christian et al. (2011) indicate that work engagement is considered to be a higher order motivational construct. In a further review of work engagement literature Christian et al. (2011) identified three common characteristics of engagement, which are: a psychological connection with the performance of work tasks, secondly the self-investment of personal resources in work, and thirdly a "state" rather than a "trait." Therefore, work engagement is relatively an enduring state of mind referring to the simultaneous investment of personal energies in the experience of work. It differs from other constructs (commitment, job satisfaction and job involvement) in that it is a broader concept involving a holistic investment of the entire self; focuses on work performed at a specific job; and involves a willingness to dedicate all resources such as physical, cognitive, and emotional resources to one's job (Christian et al., 2011).

Given the above, it is therefore crucial to revisit the first definition to appear in the academic literature, namely the one introduced by Kahn (1990) in his ethnographic study of the psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. Kahn (1990) defined work engagement as the harnessing of organisation members' selves to their work roles in which individuals employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during their role performances. It is

the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's preferred self in task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, involves personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional), and active, full role performance. This definition implies that, to be engaged, means to be psychologically as well as physically present when occupying and performing an organisational role (Rich et al., 2010).

Kahn (1990, p. 694) indicates that, when individuals are engaged in their work, they bring all aspects of themselves to the performance of their work roles. Thus, to be fully engaged means that employees display their full selves within the roles they are performing. Fully engaged individuals are entirely involved and use spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental energy at work (Breevaart et al., 2016). They display an increase in work effort, productivity, innovation, and work quality (Pater & Lewis, 2012). These individuals create a better work environment for other employees and for the employer (Schuck & Wollard, 2013). Contrary to that, when individuals are disengaged, they decouple themselves from their work roles (Kahn, 1990). Building from Kahn's (1990) definition of engagement, other researchers, such as Rich et al. (2010) also noted that when individuals are engaged they invest their hands, head, and heart in their job performance. Hence, it can be concluded that engagement is a more complete representation of the self than other constructs such as job satisfaction and job involvement, which represent narrower aspects of the self.

Another influential definition of work engagement is based on the literature on job burnout that defines work engagement as the opposite or positive antithesis of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). Deducing from that approach Maslach and Leiter (2008, p.498) define engagement as "an energetic state of involvement with personally fulfilling activities that enhance one's sense of professional efficacy". This definition implies that work engagement is characterised by energy, involvement, and efficacy, which is the direct opposites of the burnout dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy. Previous research on burnout and engagement has found the core dimensions of burnout (which are exhaustion and cynicism) and the core dimensions of engagement (which are vigour and dedication) to be indeed opposites of each other (Gonzalez-Roma, Schaufeli, Bakker & Lloret, 2006; Breevaart et al., 2016).

Another school of thought involving Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, and Bakker (2002, p. 72) defines work engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption." Vigour is characterised by high levels of energy as well as mental resilience while working. Dedication means being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of enthusiasm, significance, and challenge. Absorption is associated with being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in work, whereby time flies and individuals find it difficult to detach themselves from work (May et al., 2004). According to this definition engagement is not a momentary and specific state, but, rather, a more persistent and pervasive affective cognitive state that is not necessarily focused on any particular object, event, individual, or a certain behaviour. Hence, engaged employees always possess high levels of energy, are enthusiastic and fully immersed in their work, and diminish their response to destructions (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Gawke et al., 2017).

From the above discussion, there exist two major definitions of work engagement in the academic literature, Kahn's (1990) and Schaufeli et al.'s (2002). Although these two have some similarities and overlap, especially in terms of portraying engagement as being a motivational state, they also differ in several respects. Particularly, Kahn's (1990) definition is much more encompassing, as it includes the notion of personal agency as well as the argentic self; it also suggests something more distinct and unique as it pertains to placing the complete self in a role (Cole et al., 2012). Furthermore, according to Kahn (1990), engagement involves rational choices where individuals make decisions about the extent to which they will bring their true selves into the performance of a role. Thus, this definition is much deeper and more substantial than that provided by (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Although it is acknowledged and accepted that employee engagement is a multi-faceted construct, as previously suggested by Kahn (1990), for the sake of this study, focus will be on the work engagement definition by Schaufeli et al. (2002). They define work engagement as focused energy that is directed towards organisational goals, a transient, positive, fulfilling and work-related state characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption. This definition will be adopted because it is in line with the theoretical

framework of the study, which is discussed in paragraph 2.5. This definition also summarises the dimensions of work engagement that were used to measure the construct in this study as indicated in paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4. The concepts of vigour, dedication and absorption constitute three different dimensions of work engagement, namely physical, emotional, and cognitive (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The cognitive aspect concerns employees' beliefs about the organisation, its leaders and working conditions (Schuck & Wollard, 2013). The emotional aspect concerns how employees feel about the company, the leaders, and their colleagues, and whether they have positive or negative attitudes toward the organisation and its leaders (Bakker, 2017). The physical or behavioural aspect is the value added component reflected in the amount of effort employees put into their work, thus it concerns the physical energies exerted by individuals to accomplish roles (Lockwood, 2007). This is further explained below:

2.3 Dimensions of work engagement

Figure 2.1 below indicates that work engagement can be explained using the three dimensions which are vigour, dedication, and absorption as proposed by (Schaufeli et al., 2002).
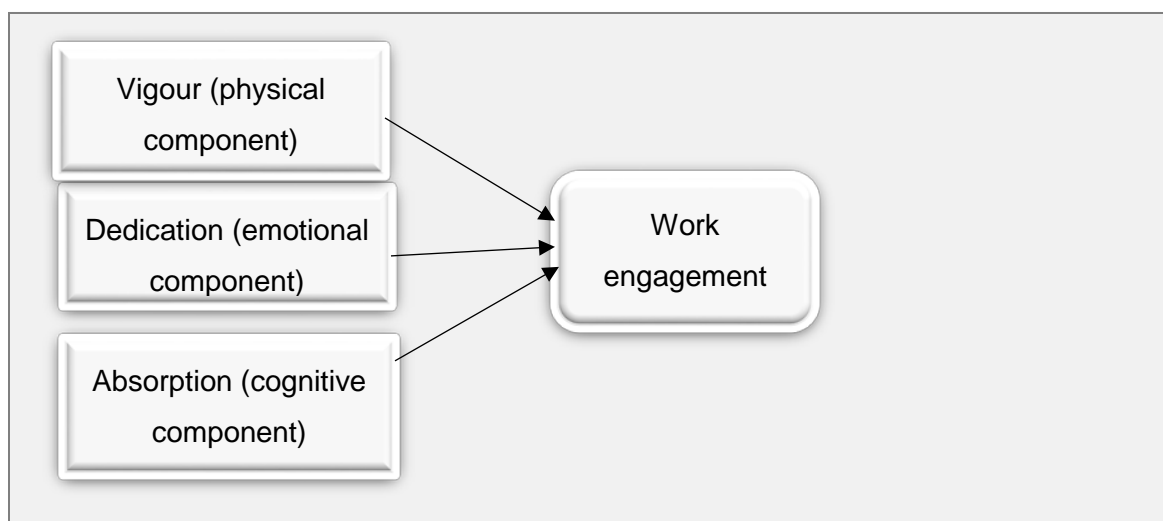
Figure 2.1 Dimensions of work engagement

(Schaufeli et al., 2002)

Vigour

Drawing attention to the physical component of work engagement, *vigour*, Chughtai and Buckley (2008) postulate that higher levels of vigour suggest an individual's increased readiness to devote effort within their work by not becoming easily fatigued, and developing the tendency to remain resolute in the face of task difficulty or failure. According to Bakker et al. (2009) vigour refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience experienced by employees while working, therefore it is high energy invested in work performance, even in cases where performance is challenging.

Dedication

Dedication constitutes the emotional component of work engagement characterised as putting one's heart into the job and it typifies an individual's strong sense of identification with their work (Chughtai & Buckley, 2008). Dedication also encompasses feelings of enthusiasm, passion, pride and challenge and indicates individuals' psychological involvement in their work, combined with a sense of significance (Gawke, Gorgieveski & Bakker, 2017). As noted by Broughs and Biggs (2014) dedicated individuals are strongly involved in their work and experience a sense of significance, enthusiasm, and challenge. Such individuals are inspired by work tasks and work to the best of their ability for the benefit of the organisation. Therefore, dedication is characterised by strong involvement in one's work, which results in positive feelings about work such as pride and inspiration.

Absorption

The cognitive component of work engagement, which is often interchangeable with the absorption dimension, is characterised by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in work, and feeling like time flies when working (Demerouti & Hetland, 2012; Breevaart et al., 2016). Absorbed individuals are completely immersed in their work so that time appears to pass so rapidly that they forget everything else that is around them and they often find it difficult to disengage or detach themselves from their work (Chughtai & Buckley, 2008). This component of work engagement refers to the full concentration, satisfaction and engrossment that individuals receive from performing

their job-related tasks (also referred to as the eudaimonic approach, thus deriving pleasure from work). All these dimensions result in highly engaged employees who perform their best and contribute to the success of the organisation.

2.4 Theories of work engagement

Since there are several definitions of employee engagement, there are also a number of theories of work engagement and as indicated by Shuck (2011) so far there is no generally accepted theory of work engagement. However, one thing common about these theories is that they all originate or stem from two primary areas of research which are job burnout and employee well-being (Maslach & Leiter, 1997) and Kahn's (1990) ethnographic study on personal engagement and disengagement. The following section provides a broad discussion of theories of engagement. Some of the theories are discussed in general and some in detail, as they are the basis of this study.

2.4.1 Kahn's (1990) Theory of work engagement

The first theory to explain employee engagement was found in Kahn's (1990) ethnographic study in which summer camp counsellors and members of an architecture firm were interviewed about their moments of engagement and disengagement at work. In these interviews, Kahn (1990) discovered that an individual's degree of engagement was a function of the experience of three major psychological conditions, which are psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability. Kahn (1990) is of the opinion that individuals who experience a greater amount of psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability will be more engaged in their work roles.

As indicated in Figure 2.2 below, in this theory, psychological meaningfulness involves the extent to which individuals derive meaning from their work and feel that they receive a return on investments of self in the performance of their role (Kahn, 1990). Thus, employees experience meaningfulness when they feel worthwhile, useful, as well as valuable, and when they are not taken for granted in the organisation. Psychological safety has to do with being able to employ and express one's true self without fear of negative consequences to one's self-image, status, or career (Kahn, 1990). Finally,

psychological availability refers to the belief that an individual has the physical, emotional, and psychological resources required to invest oneself in the performance of a work role.

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┌─────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Psychological           │   │ Psychological Safety│   │ Psychological Availability│
│ Meaningfulness          │   │                     │   │                         │
└─────────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ A feeling that one is   │   │ The employee's sense│   │ Belief that one has     │
│ receiving a return on   │   │ of being able to    │   │ physical, emotional     │
│ investment of oneself   │   │ show and employ     │   │ and cognitive           │
│ in a currency of        │   │ one's self without  │   │ resources to engage     │
│ physical, cognitive or  │   │ fear of negative    │   │ self at work            │
│ emotional energy        │   │ consequences to     │   │                         │
│                         │   │ self-image and      │   │                         │
│                         │   │ career              │   │                         │
└─────────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Dimensions of           │   │ Dimensions of       │
│ psychological           │   │ Psychological Safety │
│ meaningfulness          │   │                     │
└─────────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────┘

                              ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
┌─────────────────────────┐   │ Management perceives flexible   │
│ •Significant            │   │ and supportive allowing         │
│ contribution to the     │   │ employees control over work     │
│ organisation            │   │ Organisation norms and roles    │
│ •Organisation           │   │ are clear                       │
│ recognises employee     │   │ Employees feel free to express  │
│ commitment              │   │ their feelings                  │
│ •Challenging work which │   └─────────────────────────────────┘
│ contributes to personal │
│ growth                  │
└─────────────────────────┘

                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │ Work Engagement         │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
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Figure 2.2 Graphical presentation of Kahn's (1990) theory of work engagement

The theory therefore implies that employees will be more engaged in workplaces that provide them with physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary for them to perform their work roles. Similarly, May, Gilson and Harter (2004), in their empirical study to test Kahn's (1990) theory, also discovered that meaningfulness, safety, and availability were significantly related to work engagement.

Figure 2.2 above indicates that Kahn's (1990) theory of engagement implies that employees feel obliged to bring themselves more deeply into their role performances as repayment for the resources they receive from their organisation. When the organisation fails to provide these resources, individuals are more likely to withdraw and disengage themselves from their roles (Macey et al., 2009). Thus, the amount of cognitive, emotional, and physical resources that an individual is prepared to devote in the performance of their work role may be contingent on the economic and socio-emotional resources received from the organisation. When employees receive physical, emotional and cognitive resources from their organisations, they feel obliged to repay the organisation with their greater levels of engagement (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006; Gawke et al., 2017).

2.4.2 Social exchange theory

Another theory in line with the idea of repaying the organisation is the Social Exchange Theory (SET). Saks (2006) explained a stronger theoretical rationale on employee engagement through the SET arguing that obligations are generated through a series of interactions between parties who are in a state of reciprocal interdependence. The basic principle of SET is that employment relationships evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments as long as the parties abide by certain 'rules' of exchange. Cropanzano and Saks (2006) discovered that individuals tend to repay the organisation through their level of engagement; therefore, employees will choose to engage themselves to varying degrees in response to the resources they receive from the organisation. Therefore, SET provides a theoretical foundation to explain why employees choose to become more or less engaged in their work and organisation.

2.4.3 Broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions
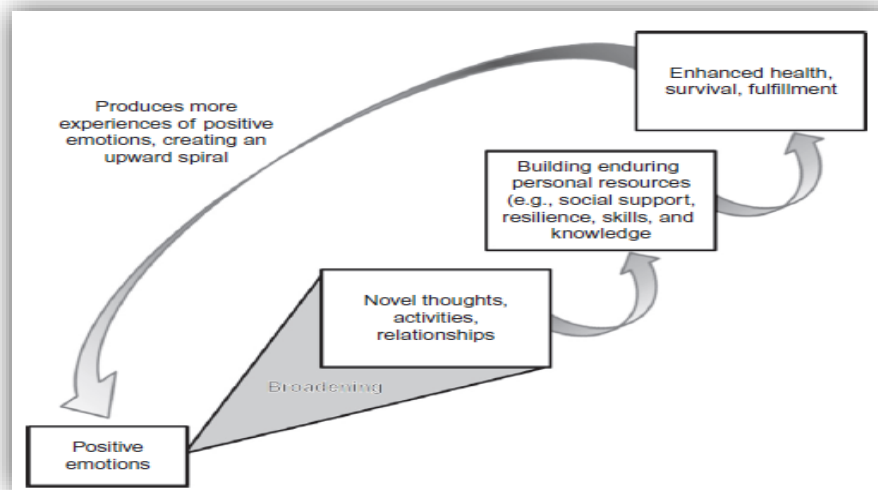
Figure 2.3 The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions,

(Adopted from Fredrickson and Cohn, 2008).

Work engagement can also be explained in terms of the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). As indicated on Figure 2.3 above, this theory outlines that certain positive emotions, such as joy, interest and contentment, share the capacity to broaden people's momentary thought–action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources, including physical, intellectual and psychological resources, through widening the array of thoughts and actions that come to mind. These resources, function as reserves that can be drawn on later to help people thrive; thereby triggering a gain cycle depicted in Figure 2.3 towards greater emotional well-being and more resources. Recent research Breevaart et al. (2016); Salanova and Schaufeli, 2007; Gawke et al. (2017) has shown that engaged employees often experience these positive emotions and that is why they are more productive. Positive emotions increase flexibility, creativity, integration and efficiency of thought (Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh & Larkin, 2003). Individuals who are happy are more sensitive to opportunities at work, more outgoing, very helpful to others, and more confident and optimistic (Gawke et al., 2017).

In an organisational context, Fredrickson and Losada (2005) note that when the ratio of managers' positive to negative emotions is relatively high during business meetings, they ask more questions, and their range between questioning and advocacy is broader, resulting in better performance and growth. This was supported by Bakker et al. (2008), who indicated that engaged employees have elevated levels of energy, are enthusiastic about their work, and are often fully absorbed in their work. Attridge (2009) notes that engaged workers are proactive job crafters who mobilise their own job challenges and job resources. Therefore, positive emotions not only make people feel good at that moment, but actually make them feel good even in future (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002; Gawke et al., 2017). Individuals build enduring psychological resources that trigger upward spirals toward emotional well-being. There is indeed evidence for an upward spiral of work engagement and resources.

2.4.4 Job burnout theory

Another theory on work engagement is based in the literature on job burnout. Maslach et al. (2001) discuss engagement as an expansion of the burnout construct, indicating that work engagement is the direct opposite of burnout and can be assessed by the opposite pattern of scores on the three Maslach-Burnout inventory (MBI) dimensions. Maslach et al. (2001) note that job burnout is the result of mismatches in six critical areas of organisational life, which are major organisational antecedents of burnout and include workload, control, rewards and recognition, community and social support, perceived fairness, and values.

According to this view, the greater the gap or mismatch between an individual and these six areas, the greater the likelihood of burnout. Conversely, the greater the match or fit between an individual and the six areas of organisational life, the greater the engagement (Maslach et al., 2001). Thus, engagement is associated with a sustainable workload, feelings of choice and control, accompanied with appropriate recognition and reward, a supportive work community, fairness and justice, as well as meaningful and valued work. This approach also suggests that, like burnout, engagement mediates the relationship between these six work-life factors and work attitudes (job satisfaction, organisational commitment) as well as stress-related health outcomes (Maslach &

Leiter, 2008). In short, this theory entails that mismatches lead to burnout, while matches lead to engagement, and burnout and engagement lead to work and health outcomes.

2.5 Models of work engagement

Two models, which describe work engagement and its elements, are briefly discussed. These include the recently developed model for the elements that drive work engagement (Bersin, 2015) as well as the popularly known job demands-resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Gawke et al., 2017).

2.5.1 Model for elements that drive work engagement

Table 2.1 below indicates five major elements (and 20 underlying strategies) that work together to make employees engaged and organisations irresistible (Bersin, 2015). In line with Kahn's (1990) theory, this model emphasises work meaningfulness, positive work environment, growth opportunity, and trust in leadership as major elements that drive work engagement (Bersin, 2015). These five elements have 20 underlying factors, which fit together into a whole system of engagement in an organisation that is held together through culture.

Table 2.1 Model for elements that drive work engagement (Bersin 2015).

Meaningful Work	Hands-on Management	Positive work environment	Growth Opportunity	Trust in leadership
Autonomy	Clear, transparent goals	Flexible work environment	Training and support in the job	Mission and purpose
Select to fit	Coaching	Humanistic workplace	Facilitated talent mobility	Continuous investment in people
Small, empowered teams	Invest in management development	Culture recognition	Self-directed dynamic learning	Transparency and honesty
Time for slack	Modern performance management	Inclusive, diverse work environment	High-impact learning culture	Inspiration
A focus on simplicity				

According to the model above, the most important part of employee engagement is job-person fit, so for employees to be engaged, jobs should be meaningful, individuals should have the tools and autonomy to succeed, the environment should be flexible and there should be honesty and transparency among leaders (Bersin, 2015). This is explained in detail below.

Meaningful work

The element of meaningfulness, as noted by Bersin (2014), implies that jobs must give individuals enough autonomy to be creative as well as time to learn, and perform well. Ton (2014) notes that companies that empower employees render them the tools to succeed, thus reducing the cost of underperformance. In the current economy nearly every business drives value through service, intellectual property, and creativity, making people the product; therefore, organisations should try to design jobs which give employees autonomy, mastery, and purpose.

Great management

The second element is great management. It is based on Huffington's (2014) idea that organisations survive through strong leadership and management of which companies have to develop and support great leadership to ensure success. According to Bersin's (2014) research, employees thrive through coaching, feedback, and opportunities to develop. Managers who criticise individuals, demand too much, or avoid communication create nothing but stress and fear among their subordinates (Bersin, 2014). One of the fastest growing competencies in leadership development programmes is "self-awareness," which relates very well with self-leadership (Huffington, 2014). To prove this, one of the companies in Canada increased engagement levels from 53 per cent to 83 per cent by simply changing its leadership philosophy, focusing on employee learning, and creating a culture of recognition and reciprocity (Pontefract, 2013).

Growth opportunities

The third element of the model is provision of growth opportunities which originate from the fact that one of the main reasons for high turnover rates is a lack of opportunity (Deloitte Development, 2013). Research by Huffington (2014) clearly indicates that

organisations which invest heavily in training, career development, and mobility outperform their peers in almost every industry. However, not everyone will move into management or get promoted; thus, organisations should also enable facilitated talent mobility which is one of the strongest drivers of engagement and continuous learning (Bersin, 2014). When individuals are given the opportunity to grow they stay excited and the business becomes more agile and innovative, and eventually high performers become embedded (Pontefract, 2013).

An inclusive, flexible, fun environment

The fourth element encourages companies to be inclusive, flexible, and create a fun environment. This is supported by Bersin (2014), who notes that companies that have table tennis tables, that provide free food, and have flexible vacation time, care for their employees and have highly engaged employees. In addition, some companies also have bowling alleys, nap rooms and highly flexible cultures; thus, they focus on fun and value employee happiness which result in high engagement levels and ultimately better performance and huge profits (Huffington, 2014).

Trust in leadership

The last element is trust in leadership, which points out that inspirational leadership, associated with transparency and honesty that encourage individuals to contribute has become the soul of the business (Bersin, 2014). Employees need to know and understand the mission and purpose of the organisation, and the company should make continuous investments in employees through training and development. Pontefract (2013) has also notes that there should be transparency and honesty to ensure organisational success. In summary, the model implies that employee engagement is really what every business need now than ever before.

2.5.2 Job demands-resources model of work engagement

A second model of employee engagement is the job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), which has its basis in the burnout literature as well. This model was first referred to as the JD-R model of burnout by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli (2001) and it was used to demonstrate that burnout can

develop through two processes. Firstly, burnout results from high job demands, which lead to exhaustion. Secondly, a lack of job resources leads to withdrawal behaviour or disengagement of an individual from work.

In light of the job demands-resources (JD-R) model as postulated by Bakker and Demerouti (2007); Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), working conditions can be classified into two general categories, namely job demands and job resources. These two categories are applicable to virtually all occupations. The job demands refer to physical, psychological, social, as well as organisational features of the job that require sustained physical, mental, and/or psychological effort from an employee that result in physiological and/or psychological costs. The common types of job demands identified include role ambiguity, work overload, job insecurity, and role conflict. Unfortunately, Wu and Norman (2006), note that job demands have an inverse relationship with commitment and work engagement, thus an increase in job demands results in decreased organisational commitment and work engagement (Gawke et al., 2017; Bakker, 2017).

On the other hand, job resources refer to physical, psychological, social, or organisational features of a job that are functional in helping an individual to achieve work goals, reduce job demands, and stimulate personal growth (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), and learning, and development (Demerouti et al., 2001). Hence, resources are not only necessary to deal with (high) job demands but are also important in their own right. These job resources can come from the organisation and include pay, career opportunities, job security. They can also be interpersonal and social relations, such as supervisor and co-worker support, team climate, role clarity, participation in decision-making, skill variety, task identity and significance, autonomy, and performance feedback (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). According to Schaufeli, Bakker and Van Rhenen (2009), changes in job resources predict engagement over a period of one year showing that increases in social support, autonomy, opportunities to learn, and performance feedback were positive predictors of future work engagement. Similarly, a study by Albrecht (2010) consistently shows that job resources, such as social support,

performance feedback, and ability to apply a variety of skills, autonomy, and learning opportunities are positively associated with work engagement.

Basically, job resources and job demands operate through a number of processes to influence both work engagement and burnout. The job resources are responsible for activating a motivational process that lead to higher levels of engagement, positive attitudes and well-being, thus lowering the potential for burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Crawford et al., 2010). These job resources play both an intrinsic and extrinsic motivational role, thus the motivational potential of job resources can be *intrinsic*, since they satisfy and facilitate basic psychological needs, such as growth, learning, and development. They may also play an *extrinsic* motivational role, since resourceful work environments foster the willingness to dedicate one's efforts to the work task. Similarly, researchers have shown that job resources are extrinsic, since they are instrumental in achieving work-related goals (Bakker et al., 2017; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Gawke et al., 2017). For instance, supportive colleagues and performance feedback increase the likelihood of being successful in achieving one's work goals (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

In addition, job resources are also important because they assist individuals to cope with job demands and buffer the effect of job demands on job strain as well as on burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Conversely, high job demands exhaust employees' physical and mental resources and lead to a depletion of energy, increased stress that results in disengagement, burnout, and health problems (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2008). In a meta-analysis by Crawford et al. (2010), it was found that the relationship between job demands and work engagement depends on the type of job demand. Crawford et al. (2010) found that those job demands that are appraised as hindrances, such as stressful demands that thwart personal growth, learning, and goal attainment, such as role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload, are negatively related to work engagement. Whilst those job demands that are appraised as challenges including stressful demands that can promote mastery, personal growth, or future plans, including high workload, time pressure, and high levels of job responsibility, are positively related to engagement.

However, this model has its limitations. Crawford et al. (2010) note that the JD-R model does not include all relevant predictors of employee engagement while its greatest use is to broadly categorise *working conditions* as either resources or demands in predicting engagement. It should therefore be applied with caution. Figure 2.4 below is an illustration of the job demands-resources model indicating the interaction between the job demands and the job resources as well as the dimensions of work engagement and eventually the job performance outcomes.

The JD-R model of work engagement graphically depicted in the Figure 2.4 below, indicates that job resources and personal resources independently or combined predict work engagement. In addition, job and personal resources particularly have a positive impact on engagement when job demands are high. Work engagement, in turn, has a positive impact on job performance, which is an outcome sought by most organisations (Bakker & Leiter, 2010). Finally, employees who are engaged and perform well are able to create their own resources, which then again foster engagement over time and create a positive gain spiral that becomes continuous throughout a lifetime as indicated previously (Crawford et al., 2010).
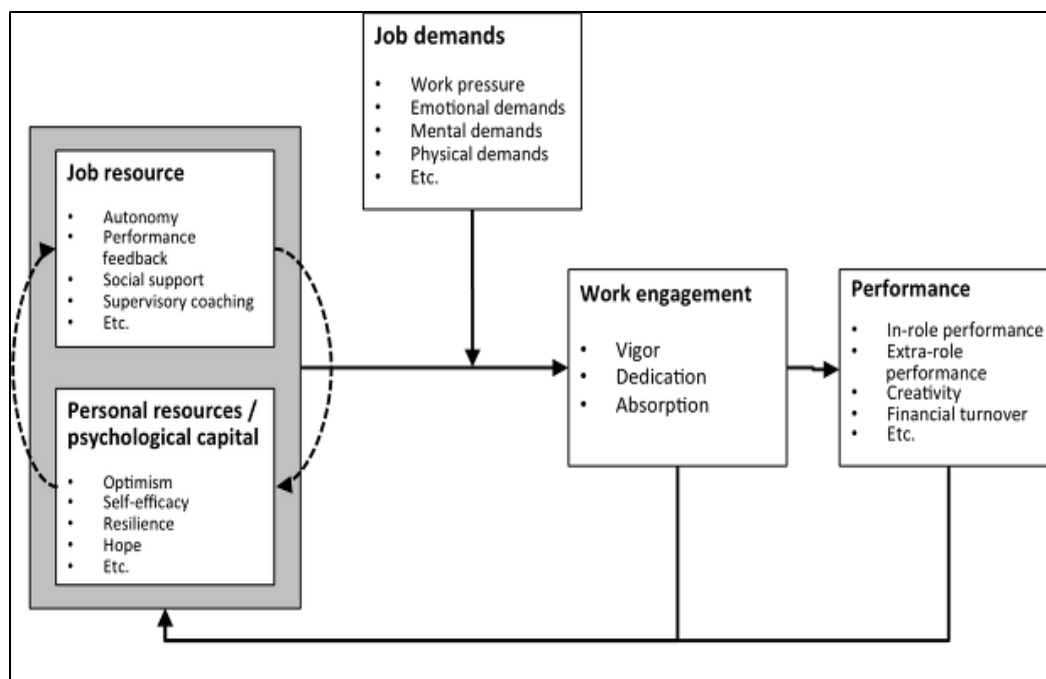
Figure 2.1 Job demands-resources model
(Bakker and Leiter, 2010)

For the sake of this research, attention was given to the job demands-resources model as the basis of the study because it provides theoretical connections between the four variables under study (work engagement, PsyCap, job embeddedness and self-leadership) and it can be applied in different work settings. It also relates well with the definition adopted for the study given in paragraph 2.2 and includes the three dimensions of work engagement discussed in paragraph 2.3. These dimensions formed the basis of the scale used to measure work engagement as discussed in paragraph 2.8. Thus, the job demands-resources model is in line with the definition, the theory and the scale. The model has also been successfully applied and is supported by recent studies like the one by Tabaziba (2015).

2.6 Relationship between work engagement, psychological capital, job embeddedness and self-leadership

The above discussion focused on conceptualising work engagement, providing several definitions, theories and models that explain work engagement. This section focuses on establishing the theoretical relationships between psychological capital, job embeddedness, self-leadership, and work engagement. The section concentrates on the composite constructs. The interactions between the attributes or dimensions of these constructs are discussed in the chapters addressing the exogenous variables. Towards the end of the literature review, the indirect relationships of the sub dimensions of the constructs are discussed as a way to propose the theoretical relationships between both constructs and their sub-dimensions (Chapter 6).

The context of this research is the engagement of employees in the banking sector in Free State, South Africa. More specifically, the research focuses on the combined effect of psychological capital, job embeddedness and self-leadership on work engagement. Given the importance of work engagement for both the individual and the organisation as explained above, and considering the economic recession affecting the banking sector, it is worthwhile exploring how a combination of certain variables influence work engagement as the first step towards promoting a culture of engagement among employees in the banking sector.

Organisations have implemented different practices to promote work engagement, including acknowledging and rewarding good performance, coaching employees by helping them with goal setting, and stimulating self-efficacy beliefs as well as engagement surveys (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006). Scholars such as Shimazu and Schaufeli (2009) suggest that training programmes should be available in organisations that aim to increase work engagement by focusing on building self-efficacy and beliefs that serve as self-motivating mechanisms. Also, positive organisational behavioural strategies (PsyCap and job embeddedness) have been advocated and widely encouraged (Sun et al., 2011) coupled with new leadership styles emphasising self-leadership practices that are consistent with effective human resources management practices (Bersin, 2015). Below is a detailed discussion of previous literature on the relationship between PsyCap, job embeddedness, self-leadership and work engagement.

2.6.1 Work engagement and psychological capital

As organisations seek ways to help employees navigate the ever-changing work environment, they are increasingly recognising the importance of positivity and concentrating on developing employee strengths, rather than dwelling on the negatives (Luthans, Avey & Patera, 2008). This calls for a more positive approach than the dominant negative perspective regarding employee disengagement. Work engagement research has confirmed the relationship between engagement and positive organisational outcomes indicating that employees who are engaged are highly energetic, self-efficacious and exercise influence over events that affect their lives (Bakker, Albrecht & Leiter 2011; Donaldson & Ko, 2010; De Waal & Pienaar, 2013). The construct of PsyCap introduces a new and more positive view towards the strength focused sides of people as it is a psychological resource which aims to increase people's development and performance (Larson, Norman, Huges & Avey, 2013). As highlighted earlier, employees with positive attitudes, create their own positive feedback in terms of appreciation, recognition, and success, hence they become highly engaged in their work (Bakker et al., 2011).

Available literature has shown that psychological resource capacities do have a positive impact on work-related outcomes such as work engagement as well as organisational commitment (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Specifically Simons and Buitendach (2013) identify that the PsyCap construct of optimism displays a significant positive relationship with work engagement, as well as with the sub dimensions of vigour, dedication, and absorption. Consistent with that, some of the dimensions of PsyCap such as self-efficacy have been shown to have a positive correlation with work engagement (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Several research studies have discovered the existence of a positive relationship between PsyCap and work engagements as composite constructs Xanthopoulou et al. (2007); Bakker et al. (2008); Hodges (2010); Simons and Buitendach (2013), however, the combined effect of PsyCap and other variables on work engagement with in the banking sector in the South African context has not yet been uncovered.

The concept of PsyCap has expanded a great deal with research findings showing that self-efficacy, organisational-based self-esteem, and optimism make a unique contribution to explaining variance in work engagement over time, over and above the impact of job resources (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). In addition, Avey et al. (2008) state that positive emotions mediate the relationship between PsyCap with its components of hope, efficacy, optimism, and resilience, and employee's attitude (engagement and cynicism). Othman and Nasurdin (2011) concur, noting that hope and resilience are two important factors to determine and improve work. Similarly, Larson et al. (2013) also confirmed the positive relationship between leaders' PsyCap and followers' engagement level of working adults in the United States of America. Moreover, research has shown that employees' behaviour and attitude positively affect the resourcefulness of the work environment, which, in turn, stimulates employees' work engagement (De Waal & Pienaar, 2013). Therefore, individuals who use their personal psychological resources, such as being optimistic and resilient in their work, were recently found to have high levels of work engagement (Mortazavi, Yadzi & Amini, 2012).
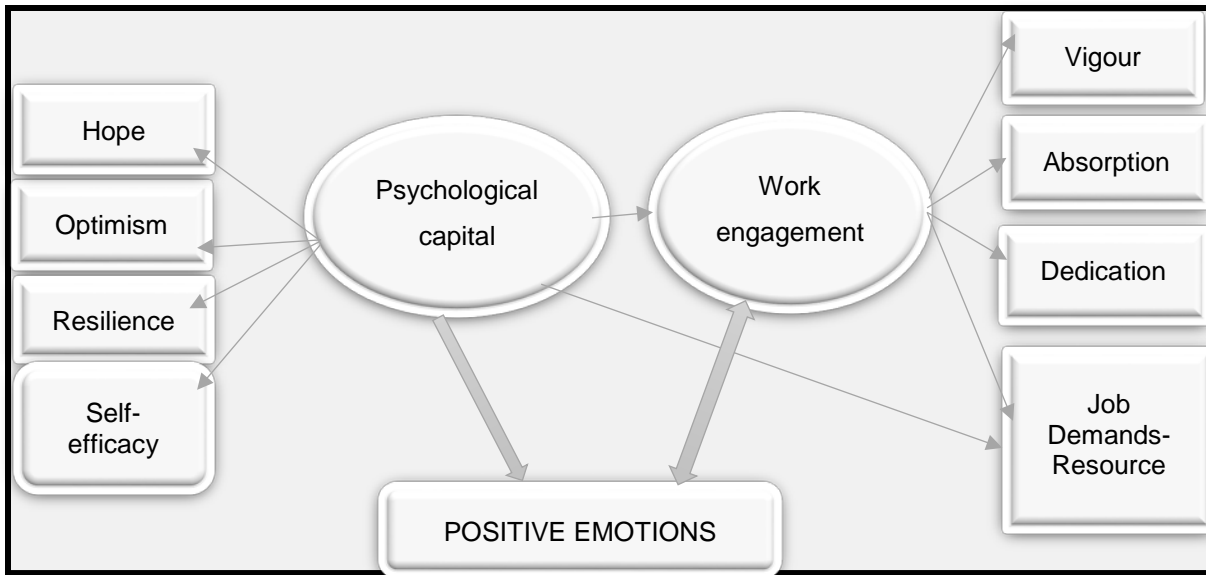
Figure 2.2 Conceptual model relating to psychological capital and work engagement
(Luthans et al., 2001)

Figure 2.5 above indicates the relationship between work engagement and PsyCap. The figure indicates the components of work engagement as well as the dimensions of PsyCap. As stipulated on the diagram, both work engagement and PsyCap concepts produce positive emotions among individuals and can both be explained in terms of the job demands-resources model as noted in paragraph 2.5.2.

2.6.1.1 Theoretical commonalities for work engagement and psychological capital

As highlighted in Figure 2.5, both work engagement and psychological capital result in positive emotions. This is well explained through the POB-based approaches to organisational research in the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions Fredrickson (2004) (see also paragraph 2.4.2). This theory explains well the relationship between PsyCap and work engagement, indicating that positive emotions positively broaden and build one's thought-action repertoires and lead to increased resources and more satisfied lives, which result in high energy levels; hence, engagement is achieved. Resources build up over time, increasing the individual's overall well-being, leading to more positive emotions that encourage higher resilience (Fredrickson, 2004).

The broaden-and-build theory provides the lens for understanding how PsyCap is linked to the work-related outcomes of work engagement (Fredrickson, 2004). As highlighted earlier (paragraph 2.4.3), the theory maintains that positive emotions such as joy, contentment and interest can broaden and build positive attitudes towards work. Therefore, positive emotions broaden an individual's thinking, enabling a more broadened outlook, which in turn help with the development of personal resources. The capacity of an individual to both broaden and experience positive emotions is important to one's ability to grow, flourish, and potentially enhance work engagement (Fredrickson, 2004). Further, Fredrickson (2001) indicates that positive emotions seem to broaden people's thought–action repertoire, implying that they constantly work on their personal resources.

In addition to the above, the two concepts can be explained based on the job-demands-resource model (JD-R) which presents a clear link to explain the relationship between the dimensions of PsyCap and the components of work engagement (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2009). According to the JD-R model, daily job resources, such as supervisor coaching and team atmosphere, contribute to employees' personal resources, which, in turn, contribute to work engagement. Albrecht (2010) notes that, among others, self-efficacy, resilience (dimensions of PsyCap), locus of control, and the abilities to perceive and regulate emotions are also positive predictors of work engagement. Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) also state that the dimensions of PsyCap, including self-efficacy, optimism and self-esteem, were found to be good predictors of work engagement. Moreover, individuals who are engaged are highly self-efficacious and believe that they can meet the demands they face in a broad array of contexts (Bandura, 2008). Optimistic individuals have a tendency to believe that they will generally experience good outcomes in life hence they are full of focused energy and are absorbed in their work. They experience positive emotions, including gratitude, joy, and enthusiasm and are reported to display high levels of work engagement. In addition, the JD-R model has been expanded to include personal resources, referring to those aspects of self that are generally linked to individuals' sense of ability to control and impact upon their environment successfully (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti &

Schaufeli, 2007). Personal resources are individual differences, including self-efficacy and optimism, which are dimensions of PsyCap, as well as organisational-based self-esteem believed to be activated by job resources and related to work engagement (Bakker, 2017).

Moreover, Kahn (1990) built up an engagement model (described earlier in paragraph 2.4.1) which recognised three psychological conditions, including availability, meaningfulness, and safety. Taken as a whole, meaningfulness was identified as strongly related with different outcomes of employees in terms of their engagement levels. Being psychologically and physically present during performing and occupying an organisational role (PsyCap) is basically what engagement of an employee is all about (Kahn, 1990). Consistent with this, Saks (2006) describes employee engagement as psychological presence, which shows two critical components (attention and absorption) of work engagement. From the above, it is clear that PsyCap, as a construct made up of different psychological capacities, is related to the concept of work engagement. A detailed discussion of the sub dimensions of PsyCap and engagement is provided in Chapter 3.

2.6.2 Work engagement and job embeddedness

The other independent variable under investigation alongside work engagement is job embeddedness. Work engagement and job embeddedness have both enjoyed dramatic growth in research interest over the past few decades and the two seem to overlap (Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010). However, to differentiate the two, Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008), indicated that work engagement represents a positive work-focused psychological state, whereas job embeddedness refers to a collection of forces that keep an employee in their job.

Table 2.1 Comparison between work engagement and job embeddedness

	Job embeddedness Mitchell et al. (2001b); Yao et al. (2004, p. 159).	**Work engagement** Schaufeli et al. (2002, p. 74)
Definition	Job embeddedness is defined as the Combined forces that keep a person from leaving his or her job.	Refers to a positive, fulfilling, Work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption.
Theory	Unfolding paths of turnover intentions, Theory of job embeddedness, job demands-resource model, social exchange theory.	job resource demands model, social exchange theory
Dimensions	Links, fit and sacrifice	Vigour, dedication and absorption

As indicated in Table 2.2 above and as highlighted earlier (paragraph 2.2) work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling state of mind, characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). In contrast, job embeddedness captures components of an individual's attachment to their job and consists of links, perceptions of person–environment fit, and the sacrifices involved in quitting a particular job (Zhao & Liu, 2010). Interestingly, despite some strong similarity in these two constructs and their theoretical basis, there have been limited empirical tests on how job embeddedness affects work engagement, specifically in the banking sector within a developing country like South Africa.

Widianto, Abdullah, Kautsar, Angga and Meiyanti (2012) echo the same sentiments indicating that, despite the rapid increase in popular attention given to these two constructs, there have been very limited attempts to determine the direct effect of job embeddedness on work engagement. However, considering that work engagement and job embeddedness share some important common characteristics, the two can possibly have an effect on each other (Gonzalez-Roma, Schaufeli, Bakker & Lloret, 2006). It is very important to examine the relationship between job embeddedness and work engagement, because firstly, although embeddedness infers that employees are enmeshed in a constraining web that keeps them in their jobs (Mitchell et al., 2001), it is not clear if embedded individuals are actually engaged in their work or are just stuck in

the web. Therefore, an in-depth understanding of the dynamic relationship between the two constructs as well as identifying relationships among their sub dimensions may provide practitioners with additional clues as to how employees become engaged on-the-job and what may be related to low employee engagement levels (Yavas, Babakus & Karatepe, 2008).

Previous researches are convincing on the fact that there is indeed a relationship between job embeddedness and work engagement considering that the theoretical underpinnings for examining the different dimensions of job embeddedness in relation to work engagement is well explained through the job demands-resources model (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). A good example is that since organisational links are characterised as formal or informal social ties to people in an organisation, they can be viewed as a job resource that foster work engagement (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001). However, in some cases organisational links may also result in greater workload, more work pressure, as well as higher work–family conflict, which may result in disengagement (Coetzee, 2013).

Contrary, to the above, when individuals are linked to the organisation and fit well in the organisational goals and their jobs, they become dedicated and absorbed in their work and enjoy it very well; therefore, job embeddedness is a possible predictor of engagement through organisational fit (Widianto et al., 2012). Consistent with this, highly engaged employees feel attached to their organisation, they have good relationships with supervisors and co-workers (links) in the workplace as well as with friends and other groups in the community (Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010). This implies that, if these individuals were to leave the organisation, they will have much to sacrifice. Inversely, in contrary to the popular findings, a recent survey notes that the longer employees stay with an organisation the less engaged they appear to become (Ferguson, 2011). Findings from old research of the CIPD (2006) on engagement confirm this, also indicating that employees who have been with the organisation for too long are less engaged (Truss et al., 2006). However, despite the above, Widianto et al. (2012) state that highly engaged employees are embedded and socially enmeshed in

the organisation and have low levels of turnover intentions and show favourable job performance, thus suggesting a reciprocal relationship.

2.6.2.1 Theoretical commonalities of work engagement and job embeddedness

The JD-R model described in paragraph 2.5.2 presents a clear link between work engagement and job embeddedness (Widianto et al., 2012). As an employee develops an increasing number of formal and informal connections to other people within the organisation, the social support network is viewed as a job resource that boosts motivational processes at work (Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010). Consequently, a larger social support network (increased links) may be a predictor of work engagement (Crossley, Bennett, Jex & Burnfield, 2007). In general, one would expect that as the number of organisational links increases, these links serve as job resources, which are likely to promote and sustain both work engagement and job embeddedness (Widianto et al., 2012). The demanding nature of modern work may make employees apathetic towards their work, and the characteristics of the jobs have the potential to make employees unwilling to remain in an organisation that may not provide them with a sense of fulfilment and accomplishment. Therefore, the social support network assists individuals to renew their energy through encouragement and general support (Crossley et al., 2007).

Contrary, lack of social and physical resources can lead to disengagement from one's work role and continuing emotional demands could lead to the depletion of emotional resources because work in the banking sector is emotionally draining (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). Those individuals who experience an overload tend to withdraw or disengage from their work role in order to replenish their energy levels. However, if such individuals have strong links with colleagues and supervisors they can revive their energy (May et al., 2004). In sum, both engagement and embeddedness result from an accumulation of individual resources. As such we expect them to be related constructs (both resource-based). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) report that engaged employees are likely to have a greater attachment to their organisation and a lower tendency to leave their organisation, suggesting that work engagement is the one that influences job embeddedness. Consistent with that, from the perspective of the Social Exchange

Theory, the presence of job resources (links: supervisor and colleagues) makes employees repay their organisation through work engagement, as discussed in paragraph 2.4.2.

In addition, engaged employees appear to be in more trusting and good relationships with their supervisors/managers and thus report positive job outcomes, such as reduced turnover intentions and high quality job performance (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). In the research done by Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008) results indicate that work engagement can change over time based on changes in job conditions (job demands, job resource), since it is not particularly stable. However, job embeddedness can change more slowly, since more radical events or shocks would reduce job embeddedness, hence, employees with adequate resources in the workplace are highly engaged with their work and consequently become more embedded in their jobs. Such individuals have high quality job performance and display low levels of turnover intentions. In empirical terms, Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008) postulate that a significant positive association exist between work engagement and job embeddedness.

It is therefore clear that the availability of job resources such as work social support and job autonomy within an organisation enhances employees' work engagement (Bakker & Bal, 2010). However, it should be noted that engaged employees are embedded in their jobs, because they find that their future career goals and plans fit with the organisational culture and the demands of their jobs (Hakanen, Schaufeli & Ahola, 2008). Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008) indicate that both engagement and embeddedness have a unique shared variance with performance but only embeddedness share a unique variance with turnover intention. The above discussion indicates that there is no clear literature on the direction of influence between the two, however, for the sake of this study, the empirical investigation sought to find the effect of job embeddedness on work engagement. Further theoretical underpinning for examining the different dimensions of job embeddedness in relation to work engagement components is discussed in Chapter 4.

2.6.3 Work engagement and self-leadership

Another variable that have interestingly developed as a possible way to engage employees is self-leadership. This is based on the idea that most organisations now operate in much flatter organisations and often team leaders are the managers; the traditional idea that work engagement is driven by one organisational manager seems to be out-dated (Bakker, 2017). Organisations are striving to get hold of autonomous individuals who are self-endorsed, volitional and self-determined, individuals who can set their own goals and when they attain such goals their energy levels increase (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Although self-leadership research has led to a substantial body of literature, relatively little research has examined this concept relative to work engagement within the banking sector context. To concur, Bryant and Kazan (2012) note that, despite an increased focus on leadership research in general over the past decades, considerable research has not uncovered the effect of self-leadership on work engagement although available information reveals positive effects of self-leadership on work-related outcomes. In addition, previous literature has uncovered organisational benefits associated with self-leadership, such as having an engaged and empowered work-force, improved goal setting and results, faster and better decision making, more creativity and innovation, as well as collaborative team efforts (Jooste & Roux, 2014).

According to Nielsen and Daniels (2012), a sense of employee engagement, along with self-leadership and self-efficacy, provide a comprehensive yet nuanced picture of employee success. Although several beneficial effects of self-leadership on employees and organisations have been shown, very little literature links it to work engagement. Several studies have shown that certain leadership behaviours contribute to work-related resources, such as decision latitude, how and when to perform the work, feedback about work, social support, and opportunities to use skills (Nielsen & Daniels, 2012; Tuckey, Bakker & Dollard, 2012). Since self-leadership is characterised with high levels of decision latitude, which is also one of the resourceful work environments required for one to be engaged, self-leadership can potentially influence work engagement based on that idea (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014).

In a similar vein, the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) presupposes that the motivational orientations that guide behaviour have important consequences for healthy behavioural regulation and psychological well-being. It distinguishes between the various types of motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic) based on the reasons or goals that drive the behaviour. Considering that intrinsic motivation is linked to dimensions of work engagement, there seems to be a possible yet indirect relationship between self-leadership and work engagement. According to Tims and Bakker (2010), self-managing individuals have the authority and control to make decisions. As job resources hold intrinsic value to people and people are motivated to gain, protect, and regain resources, this latitude to decide how to perform work makes it likely that self-leading individuals mobilise their own resources whenever they are able to, since people are motivated to conserve and accumulate more resources (Hobfoll, 2002).

On days that individuals use self-goal setting, they set specific goals, which may provide them with an opportunity to acquire new skills, awareness and monitoring of one's own behaviour. This is depicted through self-observation, which implies providing feedback about how well one is performing work and punishing dysfunctional behaviour. Therefore, self-leadership is linked to work engagement through the mobilisation of job resources (Tims & Bakker, 2010). In addition, it has been convincingly shown that positive self-evaluations predict goal setting, motivation, performance, and job and life satisfaction, which are more desirable organisational outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014).

Furthermore, from the JD-R model, personal resources can be viewed as having positive self-evaluations that are linked to resilience and refer to individuals' sense of ability to successfully control and have an impact on their own environment (Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis & Jackson, 2003). Optimal work environments are characterised by high job resources, high challenging demands and low hindrance demands; a self-managing individual has the ability to control and successfully manipulate the resources to suit his or her own needs, therefore self-leading individuals can positively influence the resourcefulness of the work environment and consequently, contribute to employees' work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). With the above information

in mind, self-leadership is associated with high levels of decision latitude, which is also one of the work environment resources required for one to be engaged, therefore self-leadership can potentially influence work engagement positively (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). The higher an individual's personal resources, the more positive the person's self-regard and the more goal self-concordance are expected to be experienced. Individuals with high goal self-concordance are intrinsically motivated to pursue their goals (self-goal-setting), and as a result, they trigger higher performance and are highly absorbed in their work (Tuckey, Bakker & Dollard, 2012).

2.6.4 Proposed model for the direct relationship between all the variables

With reference to the literature discussed above on the relationship between work engagement and psychological capital, job embeddedness and self-leadership), as supported by the job resource-demands model (paragraph 2.5.2). Drawing conclusions from the previous researches, theories and models discussed above, Figure 2.6 is the proposed comprehensive conceptual model for the direct combined effect of PsyCap, job embeddedness and self-leadership on work engagement.
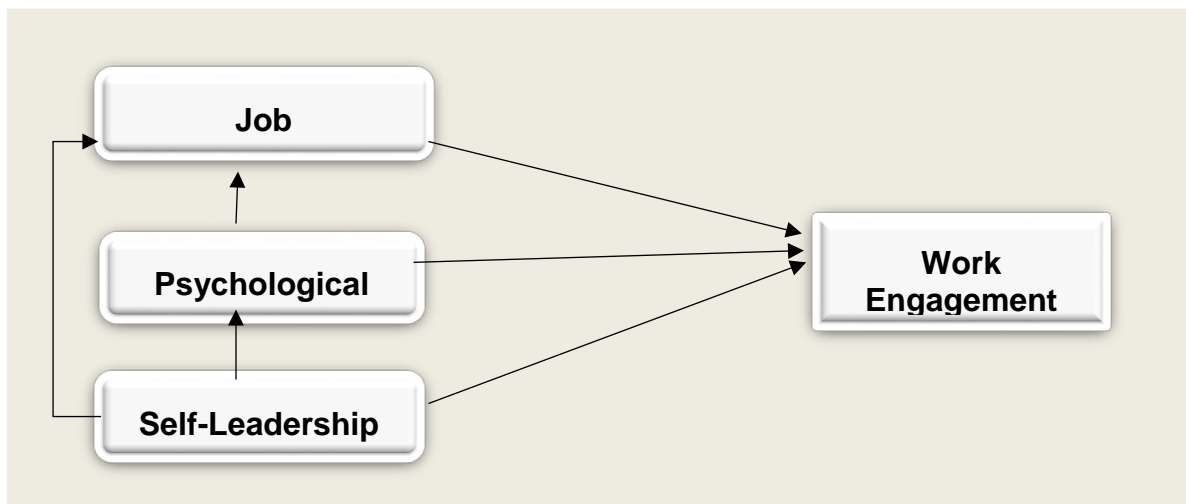
Figure 2.3 Proposed model for the direct relationships.

(Source: Self-elaboration based on previous literature).

The model shows that there are three independent variables and one dependent variable. It indicates the rational link among the variables. However, to the knowledge of

the researcher self-leadership and PsyCap have no recorded direct relationship, but their sub-components interact (Houghton & Yoho, 2005), as is explained later in Chapter 5 paragraph 5.7. It also shows a direct relationship between PsyCap and work engagement as discussed by Mortazavi et al. (2012); De Waal and Pienaar (2013); Xanthopoulou et al. (2009); and Kotze (2016) (see paragraph 2.6.1). Their sub-components also relate (Simons & Buitendach, 2013).

In addition, the model also indicates a direct link between work engagement and job embeddedness as discussed in paragraph 2.6.2 and noted by various researchers (Takawira, 2015; Widianto et al., 2012; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). A relationship between self-leadership and work engagement is also reported as discussed in paragraph 2.6.3. A number of researchers (Breevaart, et al., 2016; Gomes, Curral & Caetano, 2015; Nielsen & Daniels, 2012; Bakker, 2017) supports this link. There is also a relationship, though negative, between self-leadership and job embeddedness as indicated in paragraph 5.8 (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman & Johnson, 2005). Conclusively the job demands-resources model discussed earlier in paragraph 2.5.2 represents an interaction between some of the variables under investigation. The research framework suggests that self-leadership has an impact on both job embeddedness and PsyCap and when combined, influence work engagement.

2.7   Signs and symptoms of poor work engagement

Hakanen et al. (2006) indicate that engaged employees often experience positive emotions that include happiness, joy, and enthusiasm; they have better health; create their own job and personal resources; and transfer their engagement to others. On the contrary, disengaged individuals display the opposite and cost the organisation a great deal. Stilwell (2011) notes that certain behaviours and actions have left some managers wondering what will really be going on with some individuals in the organisation. Fortunately, Dik and Duff (2012) note that there are red flags that managers can watch for to determine their employees' level of engagement. In most cases employees join the organisation full of enthusiasm and willing to share many new ideas and experiences (Dik & Duff, 2012). However, when disengagement creeps in they withdraw. Thus, a subtle lack of enthusiasm can be chalked off to the employee having

a bad day, but when an individual who used to pitch in a lot of ideas all the time suddenly has nothing to contribute in meetings, it is a sign of negative engagement creeping in (Gallup's State of the American Workplace, 2012).

A negatively engaged employee can withdraw by not participating in meetings, opting to remain in his office during elective office gatherings, or even calling in sick more often (Stilwell, 2011). When employees are not engaged they do not speak up even when they know things aren't being dealt with honestly and directly. Some individuals fail to fulfil their commitments with excuses, explanations, rationalisations and finger pointing rather than a rigorous and energetic desire to get to the source of the problems (Bersin, 2015). Such are signs of disengagement.

Furthermore, Dik and Duffy (2012) state that poor work engagement can be detected by individuals being oppositional all the time. Employees who regularly cut down other employees' efforts or are always oppositional to other people's suggestions, ideas or requests indicate a red flag for negative engagement. This sort of behaviour directly affects other employees and can actually result in general low morale among all the employees, which can be detrimental to the performance of the organisation at large. Similarly, Bersin (2015) notes that consistently disagreeable or argumentative behaviour leads to stress within the workplace, which can ultimately damage the productivity and atmosphere in the workplace. This can result in organisational problems being discussed and debated endlessly, with little lasting improvement from repeated attempts at resolution (Stilwell, 2011). Below is a comprehensive list of the signs and symptoms of poor engagement identified and discussed by (Stilwell, 2011).

- *High turnover*–the rate of employees leaving the organisation become greater than what is expected, retention of talent globally is becoming more critical in a world where the organisations' intellectual capabilities are the key sources of maintaining competitive advantage (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Ryder, 2010).
- *Absenteeism*–the amount of time employees are away from work is hurting organisational performance. When employees are disengaged, being at work is

the last place they want to spent time and about $84 billion is lost annually due to absenteeism (Mann & Harter, 2016).

- *Disgruntled/complaining/whining employees*–generally negative comments about the work and the organisation become common and poison the general working environment.

- *Employees and managers blaming others*–employees bring complaints to management without accepting any responsibility for their contribution to the problems.

- *Lack of teamwork*–there is absolutely no cooperation and collaboration on tasks that require teamwork to succeed.

- *Difficulty attracting and retaining talent*–organisations cannot find the right people for the work that needs to be done and in some cases when the right people are there they tend to be attracted to opportunities elsewhere.

- *Difficulty developing talent, especially leadership talent*–employees not aspiring to or stepping up to leadership roles on teams, on projects, and for open positions.

- *Poor product and service quality*–employees fail to do their best work, not paying attention to customer needs, and not showing a high level of concern for quality.

- *Customer dissatisfaction*–there is general and consistent customer complaints that could have been prevented if employees cared more about the work that they are doing.

- *Low compliance with rules, regulations, and processes*–employees fail to pay special attention to the legal and normative expectations of the organisation and they put the organisation at risk by their complacency.

- *High injury rate and poor safety*–individual employees are neglecting the standards that create a safe work environment.

- *Lack of innovation and creativity*–organisations with no creativity, no new ideas or new products and service indicate poor work engagement.

Such symptoms have been exhibited in most organisations, especially in the financial service sector, and it is time to investigate and find out how such situations can be improved.

2.8 Work engagement measurement

With reference to the previous discussion on the definition, and given the lack of consensus surrounding the meaning and definition of employee engagement, it should not be surprising that there also exist concerns about how to measure employee engagement. Over the years, researchers have measured employee engagement by using three major approaches, namely engagement as a description of conditions, which people work, engagement as a behavioural outcome, and engagement as psychological presence. Literature has shown that at least seven different scales have been developed to measure work engagement and that exclude Gallup's Engagement Survey (Harter et al., 2002), and the Maslach Burnout Inventory, which has also been widely used. Rothbard (2001) developed a 9-item scale that consists of four items that measure attention and five items that measure absorption. May et al. (2004) developed a 13-item scale based on the three components of Kahn's (1990) definition of engagement which includes four items to measure cognitive engagement, another four items to measure emotional engagement, and five items to measure physical engagement.

Further, Saks (2006) developed a 6-item scale to measure job engagement and 6-item scale to measure organisation engagement. Rich et al. (2010) developed an 18-item scale that includes six items which measure each of Kahn's three dimensions of engagement (physical, emotional, and cognitive). In addition, Soane et al. (2012) developed a 9-item scale that includes three items to assess intellectual engagement, affective engagement, and social engagement. Recently, Stump, Tymon and Van Dam (2013) came up with a two-dimensional measure of engagement for professionals in technically oriented work groups which measures felt engagement and behavioural engagement. Finally, there exists the commonly used Utrecht work engagement scale (UWES), which consists of 17 items measuring vigour, dedication, and absorption.

Most of the above-mentioned measures are based on Kahn's (1990) definition of engagement. On the other hand, UWES relates more to the literature and measurement of burnout. Schaufeli et al. (2002) note that while engagement is the positive antithesis of burnout, it is distinct and therefore should be measured independent of burnout using

a separate scale rather than using the opposite profile of MBI burnout scores. Despite what researchers have said about the UWES, the scale has enjoyed popularity and has been widely used while other scales have seldom been used, and in most cases have been used in only one study (Cole et al., 2012). The UWES was developed based on the definition of work engagement and its three dimensions (vigour, dedication, and absorption) (refer to 2.3) and it has become the most popular and most frequently used measure of engagement (Bakker et al., 2011; Cole et al., 2012; Crawford et al., 2010; Rich et al., 2010).

Therefore, irrespective of all the criticisms put forward against this scale, in the current study work engagement was measured using the UWES, given that the definition adopted for the study in paragraph 2.2 is a summary of the UWES that explains the dimensions of work engagement provided in paragraph 2.3. Thus, it fits well with the definition. It also relates well with the theoretical basis of the study which is the job demands-resources model explained in detail in paragraph 2.6 and finally the UWES has been validated in several countries, including, South Africa (Storm & Rothmann, 2003), Spain (Schaufeli et al., 2002), and the Netherlands (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003), therefore it can be safely applied.

2.9   Work engagement and the banking sector

While the discussion above prepares the setting for incorporating the variables of the present study, the subject of this research, namely banking sector employees from different age groups have been selected. The banking sector refers to a broad range of institutions that manage money; any institution that lends money or that invests money (Mauno et. al., 2015). This industry is highly regulated and strict on what employees can access at the office (Dale Carnegie Training Institute, 2014). It is also used as a career stepping-stone by many young employees, therefore experiences the highest levels of turnover and disengagement. The units of analysis of banking sector employees can be defined as those individuals rendering labour services in the banking institution (Mauno et al., 2015).

The banking sector has a unique role in every economy in terms of the systemic risks associated with it. Transactions between banks can spread risk across the sector and into the wider economy, which is not usual for other businesses (Danish, Saeed, Mehreen, Aslam & Shahid, 2014). That leaves the banking sector as one of the most important sectors of all economies. The endless competition among individual banks has indicated that employees are the differentiator, hence engaged employees are the ultimate goal for success (Danish et al., 2014). However, a national representative sample of 150 banking employees revealed that 65 per cent of the workforces are not engaged and this calls for immediate action (Noren, 2015). The question is what really causes such disengagement in the banking sector? According to Danish et al. (2014), for employees in the banking sector the clock is never off with different markets in different time zones leading to long and broken hours which eventually result in high stress levels, high turnover, and easy burnout. There is extensive time spent sitting at desks, staring at computer screens. One of the more problematic issues in the banking sector is fraud; another is big bonuses given to the wrong people. Both of these lead to demoralisation (Dale Carnegie Training Institute, 2015). The banking sector is a high stress environment in which proper engagement is a requirement to ensure that employees stay productive and resist burnout.

According to Danish et al. (2014), job demands in the banking sector are overwhelming, due to the financial meltdown and the economic recession. Further, work demands, and high expectations due to diminishing global economy was felt the hardest amongst those working in the banking sector (Dale Carnegie Training Institute, 2015). The core of improving engagement levels in banks is to provide unparalleled leadership and encourage self-leadership. The traditional managerial approach in the banking sector is broken with regulations to uphold and follow at nearly every corner, the long hours of work, the changing economy, and fraud issues; traditional management is no longer an option (Danish et al., 2014). Unfortunately, it is one thing bank managers fail to realize. But with the amount of stress that employees have to deal with on a daily basis, upper management can eliminate the burden and make employees feel empowered,

confident, and valued, leading to higher levels of engagement, lower turnover, and better customer service (Dale Carnegie Training Institute, 2015).

Many writers and researchers have lauded work engagement as the key to an organisation's success and competiveness (Bakker et al., 2011; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Actually, claims have been made that organisations with employees who are engaged possess higher shareholder returns, profitability, high productivity, and have amazing customer satisfaction (Crawford, LePine & Rich, 2010). Unfortunately, despite its great importance, according to some overseas findings half of all American workforces are either not fully engaged or are completely disengaged (Mann & Harter, 2016). This apparent problem has been referred to as an engagement gap that is costing almost all organisations and the economy at large billions of dollars a year in lost productivity (Bates, 2004; Johnson, 2011). One of the major challenges faced by organisations is that they have adopted a one-size fits all strategy to address engagement problems yet different employees have different needs.

2.9.1 Work engagement among different age groups

In relation to the above, Van der Walt and Du Plessis (2010) note that today's workplace is diverse, has changed a great deal over the past few years and employees of different ages have different needs. Individuals of all ages are included in the workforce and are in different phases of their careers, ranging from entry-level employees (young adulthood) to employees that have reached retirement age (older employees) (James et al., 2011). Despite the popularity of work engagement in the recent literature, only a few studies have investigated the substantial effect of age on work engagement (James et al., 2011). With reference to some popular beliefs, older employees are often associated with diminishing motivation and enthusiasm for work (Billett, Dymock, Johnson & Martin, 2011). This situation poses a great challenge for organisations, as older workers are often associated with reduced abilities and negative work-related outcomes (Billett et al., 2011).

Similarly, extensive research has shown that common stereotypes relate older workers to decreasing motivation, reduced performance, and even unwillingness to adapt to

work-related changes and to learn new things (Bal, Reiss, Rudolph & Baltes, 2011; Billett et al., 2011). To be more specific, a poorer subjective health (indicator of functional age) is associated with lower vigour and lower dedication (Hakanen, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2006). Contrary to the above, in a study done some time ago, a large sample of employees in a retail setting indicated that older workers displayed much higher levels of engagement compared to their younger equivalents. Consistently, Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova (2006) noted that, work engagement tends to be slightly higher among older workers with more experience in the job, but these differences are small and insignificant. In an age comparative study among academics on work engagement, no statistically significant differences were found in the levels of work engagement among academics with regards to age groups (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006). Surprisingly, studies have actually concluded that older workers seem to have higher levels of engagement than younger or middle aged employees (Pitt-Catsouphes & Matz- Costa, 2008). Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova (2006) concurred with that indicating that engagement increases with age but only to a limited extent.

Therefore, although literature supports the notion that older employees exhibit higher levels of engagement than middle-aged and younger workers, with the new practices, which foster psychological capital, job embeddedness and self-leadership embraced well by young employees, it remains unknown on how work engagement levels differ across age groups in the South African banking sector. The South African banking sector workforce is composed of individuals from different age groups. Numerous studies centre their attention on the inclusion of minorities (Lackritz & Singh, 2007; Patrick & Lavery, 2007), but variation in work engagement across different age groups in the workplace has not received much attention in the South African banking sector context. This study will therefore focus on banking sector employees in South Africa and will further make comparisons with regards to different age groups (young and older employees).

2.10 Recent trends in work engagement

Most of the recent research in work engagement is predominantly focusing on the capacity of personal resources to foster and sustain work engagement as well as viewing work engagement as a positive construct (Gawke, Gorgieveski & Bakker, 2017). Personal resources predicted higher and more stable experiences of work engagement; therefore organisations seeking to boast work engagement should focus on providing an environment that facilitates the expansion of both personal and job resources (Gawke et al., 2017). In addition, Kotze (2017) noted that a number of personal resources have been identified as antecedents of work engagement in literature and were empirically investigated. These include self-efficacy, optimism, organisational self-esteem, and resilience (Bakker, 2009; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2007). Kotze (2017) investigated the role of PsyCap, self-leadership, and mindfulness on work engagement. The results indicated that PsyCap mediates the relationship between mindfulness and work engagement by increasing affect, hope, and optimism. Thus, issues relating to proactive behaviour and positivity have recently dominated the literature on work engagement.

Other related studies were done by Yu, Xu and You (2015) and Tabaziba (2015) and results indicate that work engagement closely relate to PsyCap and mindfulness. Most of the researchers on psychological capital, self-leadership and work engagement seem not to agree on which of the constructs are the antecedents, the effects or outputs, or the mediators (De Waal & Pienaar, 2013; Shaoping et al., 2015; Tabaziba, 2015). It is clear that in the past few years work engagement has attracted much attention. Gawke et al. (2017) noted that in the occupational context, most scholars often are interested in work engagement because of its relationship with employee levels of energy and motivation and employee performance. Every organisation requires their employees to be motivated, proactive, responsible and involved. By building work engagement, synergy is created between individual employees and the organisation as a whole, meaning that optimal outcomes for both occur (Bakker, 2017). The above discussion has clearly indicated that personal and job resources play key roles in the work engagement process. Therefore, since the relationships between the resources from

PsyCap, job embeddedness and self-leadership have not yet been explained in one model, the current study aimed to fill this gap by creating and testing a combined model of these constructs based on the literature review.

2.11 Summary

This section provided an overview of the literature related to work engagement encompassing various aspects of the concept from its definition, origins, theories, models and approaches. The chapter further established the theoretical integration of work engagement and the independent variables of the study, namely psychological capital, job embeddedness, and self-leadership. Different theories such as the social exchange theory, the broaden-and-build theory, as well as the conservative of resource theory were used to provide in-depth knowledge about the variables under study. Special attention was given to the job-demands-resource model (JD-R) which is applicable to the relationship that exists between the variables under investigation. Drawing conclusions from theories and previous studies, a proposed model for the direct relationships between the variables was framed and tested. Finally, a brief discussion of the research setting, including the banking sector and the units of analysis (banking sector employees), and the differences in terms of age were provided. The following chapter discusses the first independent variable, psychological capital.

CHAPTER 3

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL

3.1 Introduction

For several decades, psychology has generally dealt with the treatment of mental illness, despite the fact that other areas of research and application have existed since its origins (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). In 1998, Martin Seligman initiated Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB) with the objective of shifting focus from mental illness to mental health to build human strength (Seligman, 1998). In 1999, Fred Luthans integrated positive psychology to the organisation and started the POB research work. Thus at the end of the twentieth century a new approach in psychology, known as positive psychology, emerged and gained popularity among researchers (Seligman, 2002). The positive psychology movement is an established branch of knowledge focused on positively oriented human strengths and capacities at work rather than on weaknesses and ill health (Gable & Haidt, 2005). Its classical aim was to assist ordinary individuals to live a more meaningful and productive life as well as to fully realise the potential that exists in human beings (Seligman, 2002). Based on positive psychology constructs and empirical research, Luthans, Luthans and Luthans (2004) determined the four psychological resources that best meet the (POB) scientific criteria, namely hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism which were then termed Psychological Capital (PsyCap).

Therefore, Luthans et al. (2004) introduced psychological capital (PsyCap) as a measure comparable and complimentary to measures of human, social and physical capital. It is one of the core constructs of (POB) that work well with employee well-being (Cooper, 2005). PsyCap is a core psychological factor of positivity in general, and POB criteria meeting states in particular, that go beyond human and social capital to gain a competitive advantage through development of "who you are" (Luthans et al., 2005). Thus, PsyCap is rooted in the positive psychology movement, which emphasises the concepts of strengths, excellence, thriving, happiness, flourishing, resilience, and optimal functioning (Donaldson & Ko, 2010).

Over the years considerable research attention has been given to the study of PsyCap in the workplace (Nelson & Cooper, 2007; Wright & Cropanzano, 2007). The psychological dimensions of PsyCap have been linked to overall workplace attitudes and performance (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007), such as higher job satisfaction, work happiness and organisational citizenship (Avey, Luthans, Smith & Palmer, 2010; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Consistent, PsyCap has been found to affect variables such as job satisfaction (Luthans, Norman, Avolio & Avey, 2008), and employee well-being (Avey et al., 2010). In addition, some dependent variables of PsyCap, such as stress and turnover intentions, have been confirmed (Luthans & Jensen, 2005). However, although PsyCap has enjoyed research popularity as indicated above, Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2007) discovered that the concept of PsyCap still needs to be explored further to ascertain its value as a tool for both broadening understanding of employee behaviour as well as applying a positive schema to management practice.

In this section, the literature discussion focuses on one of the independent variables: psychological capital. The concept is defined and its dimensions identified and explained fully, theories of its foundations and integration are also discussed as well as empirical findings on the concept and how they relate to other relevant concepts. A discussion of how it can be developed is provided and towards the end, a description of how it is measured is outlined. PsyCap in the banking sector is also explored.

3.2 Nature and definition of psychological capital

PsyCap is a second order, multi-dimensional construct and a latent variable reflected by four psychological resource capacities, namely self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Generally, it is viewed as a composite and multi-dimensional construct that assists in addressing human capital issues in modern organisations (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). PsyCap emphasises the positive nature and strengths of individual employees and the role this has on fuelling their growth and work-related performance (Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa & Li, 2005). Thus, it can be classified as positive organisational behaviour (POB). According to Luthans (2002), POB must meet five criteria to differentiate it from other positive approaches. These criteria must be grounded in theory and research; they must be valid measurement;

unique concepts; state-like constructs; and managed for performance improvement. Based on these criteria, Luthans (2002) initially identified five constructs to be included in POB: the previously mentioned self-efficacy, hope, optimism, subjective well-being (happiness), and emotional intelligence. At a later stage, Luthans (2002) then introduced resilience as another construct that could be classified as POB. Consistently, a number of researchers have investigated different positive constructs in the literature; however, only four constructs, namely efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience have been identified as highly correlated criteria with regard to the POB definition (Cameron et al., 2003; Nelson & Cooper, 2007; Kim & Lee, 2013; Luthans & Youssef et al., 2007). Therefore, PsyCap is positively related to the field of positive organisational behaviour because it is based on theory and research, measurable, state-like or open to development, and related to positive work outcomes (Luthans, 2002).

In relation to the above, Chaplin and Goldberg (1988) note that psychological traits are elements that are considered more fixed or stable over longer periods, while states are characteristics that are more dynamic and can vary during different experiences. Since the psychological capacities that make up PsyCap are states and not traits, as mentioned earlier, the presence of these in an individual can be influenced over time, thus states are something to be trained and cultivated in an individual (Luthans et al., 2015). PsyCap is developed through a pattern of investment of psychic resources that result in obtaining experiential rewards from the present moment while also increasing the likelihood of future benefits. It is about the state of components of one's inner life (Kalla, 2016). Therefore there are ways we can influence the presence of these elements to the benefit of the organisational system and enhance productivity, increase retention, and add overall long-term sustainable economic value to the organisation (Luthans et al., 2015).

Given the background above, the concept was first defined as "the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in the modern workplace" (Luthans, 2002). In 2005, Luthans et al. (2005) explicitly defined PsyCap as the core psychological elements of individuals' general

positive nature, which is specifically represented as the state of mind to comply with the standards of positive organisation performance. In this definition, it is clearly outlined that PsyCap is beyond human and social capital, and is able to make individuals obtain competitive advantages through the targeted input and development.

According to Luthans et al. (2005), the above definition can be understood from the following four aspects. Firstly, it is based on the positive psychology paradigm that emphasises the positivity and human advantages. Secondly, it is made up of the psychological state that complies with the standards of positive organisation conducts, including uniqueness, theoretical and research base available, being effectively measured, and being represented as a state. Thirdly, it is beyond human capital (what you know, such as knowledge, skills, perspectives and capabilities) and social capital (which explains who you know, relationships, working networks connected with each other and friends). It is actually concerned about who you are, including self-confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience. Fourthly, it improves performance and enhances the competitive advantage through its investment and development. Consistent with the above, in a study by Simons and Buitendach (2013) PsyCap was defined as an inexhaustible power in the soul and a momentum for an individual's sustainable development.

After two years of comprehensive research and practice, Luthans and colleagues (Luthans et al., 2007) compiled a detailed definition of the multi-dimensional construct. They define PsyCap as the individual's positive psychological state of development characterised by hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy. They further provide an explanation for the dimensions pointing out: (1) self-efficacy as having confidence or the ability to attain a goal and put in the necessary effort to succeed at a given challenging task. (2) optimism refers to making a positive attribution about succeeding now and in future; (3) hope, persevering towards goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals in order to succeed; and (4) resilience, when beset by problems with adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond to attain success.

Mortazavi, Yazdi and Amini (2012), also supported this definition noting that PsyCap refers to an individual's positive psychological state of development characterised by

having *confidence (self-efficacy),* to face and put effort in to succeed at challenging tasks. Being *optimistic,* involves making a positive attribution about succeeding in the future and persevering towards goals and redirecting paths in order to succeed. *Resilience* means having *hope* and the ability to recover after adversary to achieve success. PsyCap can be viewed as who you are and what you can become in terms of positive development (Wright & Cropanzano, 2007). For the sake of this study the definition provided by Luthans et al. (2007), namely PsyCap as the individual's positive psychological state of development characterised by hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy was used because it correlates with other scholars (Wright & Cropanzano, 2007; Mortazavi et al., 2012; Abbas, Raja, Darr & Bouckenooghe, 2014). It also provides a combined motivational effect that is broader and more impactful than the other definitions. In addition, the definition fully explains the four individual components of PsyCap that goes along with the theory and that were used to measure PsyCap in the current study, thus it is in line with the theoretical underpinnings and the measurement applied in the study as described in paragraph 3.4 and 3.6.

3.3 Conceptualising PsyCap components

From the definition provided by Luthans et al. (2007) discussed above (paragraph 3.2), it is clear that PsyCap is made up of four psychological resource capacities or components, which include self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. These four have theoretical frameworks contributing to the core construct of PsyCap explained below. Figure 3.1 below summarises the components of PsyCap and indicates that those psychological capacities are unique, can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement.
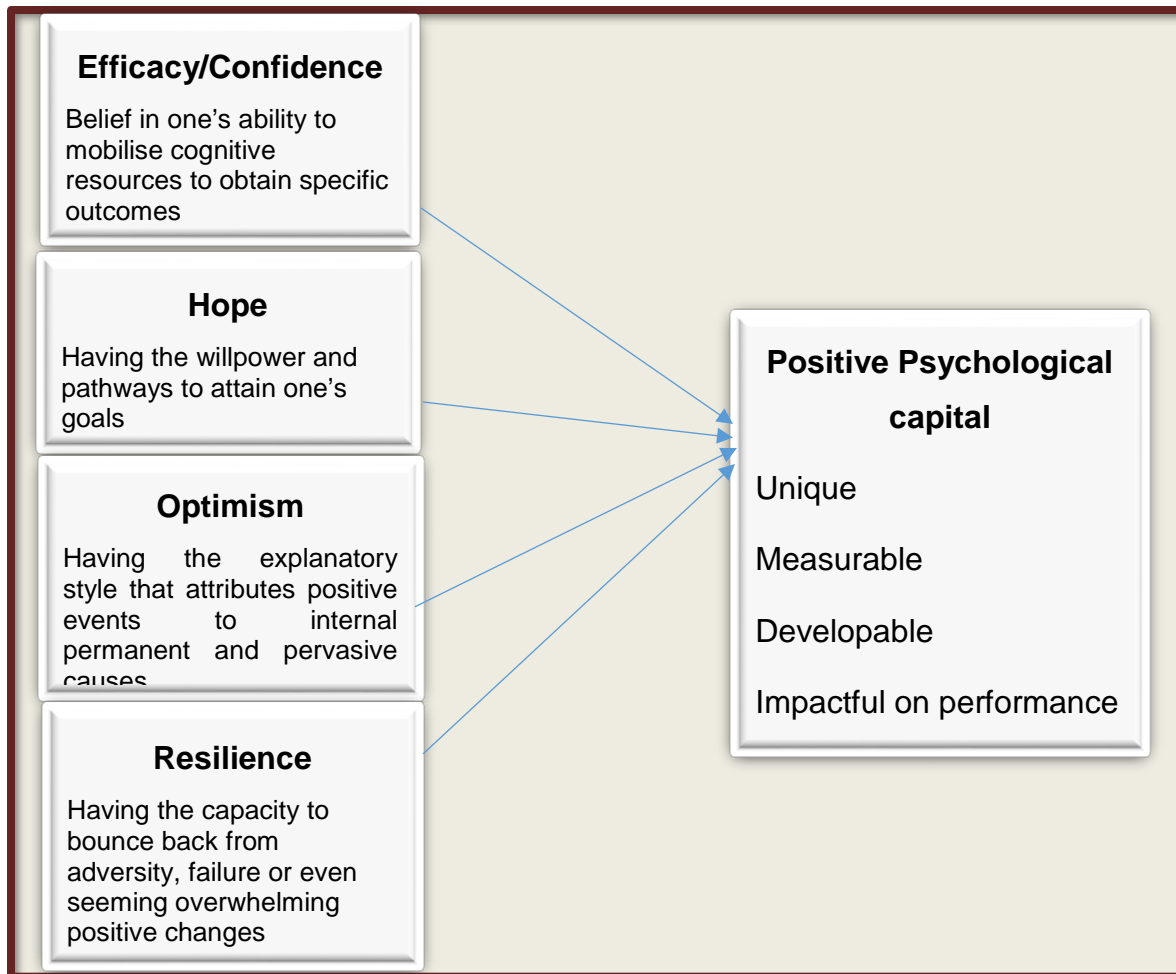
Figure 3.1 Dimensions of psychological capital

(Luthans & Youssef, 2004: 152)

Figure 3.1 above outlines the four components of PsyCap and their brief explanations. It also indicates that PsyCap is unique, measurable, and developable. Detailed explanation of the dimensions is provided below:

3.3.1 Resilience

Resilience is defined as the developable capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict, failure, or even positive events, progress, and increased responsibility (Luthans et al., 2015; Luthans, 2002). It is arguably the most important positive resource to navigating a turbulent and stressful workplace such as the contemporary banking sector. According to Luthans et al. (2015), resilience refers to the

ability to recover from adversary and to positively progress and increase in work. Resilient individuals have a firm acceptance of reality, a deep belief, often buttressed by strong values that life is meaningful and an astounding ability to improvise and adapt to significant change. They use adversities as a springboard to reach higher ground (Abbas et al., 2014). When beset by problems and adversity, resilient employees sustain and bounce back and even beyond to attain success (Luthans et al., 2007). According to Coutu (2002,) resilience is characterised by a staunch view of reality that promotes emotional stability and provides positive coping potentially enhancing job embeddedness.

Resilience has been widely investigated; however, most researchers studied the relationship between resilience and workplace performance (Harland et al., 2005; Luthans et al., 2015; Luthans et al., 2006; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). In the contemporary world, career consultants are always urging employees to be prepared for wrenches in their career plan and develop the ability to adjust, bounce back, and make transitions (Trunk, 2007). Modern day organisations are characterised by change even to the extent of downsizing and restructuring remaining mainly with the "survivors". Compelling evidence indicate how such events can create considerable stress and negative consequences for these remaining employees (Paeka, Schuckert, Kimc & Lee, 2015). An ability to be resilient is therefore needed to help individuals recover from adversity or personal setbacks when they happen and be able to perform well.

Research indicates that resilient individuals are better equipped to deal with the stressors in a constantly changing workplace environment, as they are open to new experiences, are flexible to changing demands, and show more emotional stability when faced with adversity (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Moreover, Luthans, Avolio, Avey and Norman (2007) indicate that there are possible links between resilience, commitment, and work engagement, and Youssef and Luthans (2007) note a positive link between resilience and work happiness. Additionally, resilience has been empirically linked to more effective coping mechanisms and behaviours that facilitate growth and development (Paeka et al., 2015; Luthans et al., 2007). In this regard, Youssef and Luthans (2008) propose that this may lead to improved work engagement,

even though employees may experience their current situation and job requirements as unfavourable.

3.3.2 Self-efficacy

The second dimension of PsyCap is self-efficacy; it is based on Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory. Bandura (1997) first defined self-efficacy as belief in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments. However, when it is applied in the workplace context, self-efficacy can be defined as an individual's conviction about his or her abilities to mobilise and circulate the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action necessary to successfully execute a specific task within a given context (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Self-efficacy has been strongly linked with high work-related performance outcomes (Bandura & Locke, 2003). In several meta-analysis reports, self-efficacy has proved to be a crucial component of PsyCap because it was found to be strongly and positively related to work-related performance (Judge et al., 2007).

However, it should be noted that self-efficacy affects the way individuals perceive and interpret events, of which those with low efficacy are easily convinced that efforts to address difficult challenges are futile, hence more likely to experience negative stress symptoms and perform poorly (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). On the other hand, Bandura (2008) notes that employees with higher levels of efficacy are more likely to perceive challenges as surmountable, if they are given sufficient competencies and efforts. Most research in this area has focused on approaches that can successfully develop self-efficacy, including mastery experiences and social persuasion (Bandura, 2008). Efficacy also has been shown to be related to the socialisation and retention of new employees (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo & Tucker, 2007) and the organisational commitment and turnover intentions of existing personnel (Harris & Cameron, 2005). Finally, Rothmann (2003) also found that positive psychological constructs such as self-efficacy could have a mediating effect on occupational stress, burnout, and work engagement.

3.3.3 Hope

The third component of PsyCap is hope. It is defined as the positive motivational state based on interactively derived sense of successful agency and pathways (Snyder, 2002). It has two dimensions (pathways and willpower). As indicated by Simons and Buitendach (2013), willpower is an individual's agency or determination to achieve goals. 'Way power' is one's ability to devise alternative pathways and contingency plans in order to achieve a goal in the face of obstacles. Therefore, agency refers to goal-directed energy and pathways to the planning to meet goals. Hope enables individuals to be motivated to attain success with the task at hand by looking for the best pathway (Avey et al., 2008). In addition, Avey (2006) notes that hopeful individuals are more likely to have established functional and realistic goals that are challenging providing them with directed motivation and self-directed determination. Hopeful individuals also possess the willpower to, and are capable of, generating alternative paths to their desired destinations should the original ones become blocked, hence they can self-lead.

The concept of hope has demonstrated importance in the workplace and has made a significant contribution to PsyCap (Duggleby, Cooper & Penz, 2009). Researchers discovered that hope predicted job performance beyond cognitive ability and self-efficacy (Peterson, Walumbwa, Byron & Myrowitz, 2009). Consistent with that, Peterson and Byron (2007) found hope to be associated with job performance, satisfaction and retention. In addition, Youssef and Luthans (2007) report a relationship between hope and profitability, leadership and supervisor-rated performance. Furthermore, Youssef and Luthans (2007) also report that hope has a positive effect on employee satisfaction, organisational commitment and work happiness. Hopeful individuals persevere toward goals and, when necessary, redirect their paths to goals in order to succeed. Thus, hope protects an individual's perceptions of vulnerability, uncontrollability and unpredictability (Snyder, 2002). Finally, Weick and Quinn (1999) state that sustaining employees' hope is necessary for employee well-being and can actually lead to work engagement.

3.3.4 Optimism

The last dimension of PsyCap is optimism. It is regarded as being realistic, flexible and a dynamic construct that can be learned and developed (Peterson, 2000). Optimism is defined as an attribution style that explains positive events in terms of personal, permanent, and pervasive causes, as well as negative events in terms of external, temporary, and situation specific ones (Seligman, 2000). As noted by Youssef et al. (2007), optimism is both realistic and flexible. It is associated with a positive outlook but is not an unchecked process without realistic evaluation (Youssef et al., 2007). Therefore, optimism is defined by persistence and pervasiveness; these are two key dimensions of how people explain events differently (Carver & Scheier, 2002). People with an optimistic outlook see setbacks as challenges and opportunities that can eventually lead to success (Luthans et al., 2015). It refers to individuals who make internal, stable and global attributes regarding positive events such as task accomplishments (Medlin & Faulk, 2011). Therefore, optimism is making a positive attribution about succeeding now and in the future.

This construct has been found to be linked with several favourable workplace outcomes like job satisfaction, job performance, organisational commitment, and work happiness (Luthans et al., 2015; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Consistent with that Arakawa and Greenberg (2007) discovered that optimism correlates well with employee engagement and employee performance. Similarly, a study by Medlin and Faulk (2011) found that optimistic employees are more likely to be highly engaged and enthusiastic to reach organisational goals. This is because they are positive and confident about the future, and tend to attribute failure to external causes or individuals around them and avoid reduction in their effort (Luthans et al., 2007; Seligman, 2000). It encourages employees to assess the utility of holding on to feelings of guilt or shame, as those negative feelings could limit their ability to appreciate and learn from the positives of a situation and even hinder future risk taking (Schneider, 2001). Optimism was also found to be a key moderating factor in the relationship between job characteristics and job strain (Totterdell, Wood & Wall, 2006). Finally, just like self-efficacy, optimism is amenable to

development through Schneider's (2001) three-step process, which includes leniency for the past, appreciation for the present, and the opportunity to see for the future.

PsyCap: The Concept of H.E.R.O.

Lately the construct of PsyCap has been summarised using the acronym HERO, meaning, hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (Luthans et al., 2015). As discussed earlier, each of the PsyCap elements stands singularly, and each is grounded in theory, validated with empirical research data, has positive impact on attitudes, behaviours, and performance, and is considered a psychological state not trait, hence developable (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007). When all four distinct elements are combined and are present in a situation with the proper organisational antecedents, the employees' motivational inclination to accomplish tasks and goals is increased beyond that of motivation from the distinct elements alone (Luthans et al., 2015). Thus, PsyCap is a higher-order construct.

3.4 Theories of psychological capital

As mentioned earlier in paragraph 3.2, PsyCap is a multi-dimensional construct made up of four components (Luthans et al., 2007). Each of the four sub-components of PsyCap described above in paragraph 3.3 has considerable theory and research that can contribute to developing an integrative theoretical foundation for PsyCap (Avey et al., 2011). However, it should be noted that the four positive constructs of PsyCap reviewed above have been shown to have conceptual independence (Luthans & Jensen, 2002; Luthans et al., 2015; Snyder, 2002), as well as empirically based discriminant validity (Bryant & Cvengros, 2004; Carifio & Rhodes, 2002). Despite this, Avey et al. (2011) state that there is a common, underlying link that runs between them and ties them together, that is, a higher-order core factor (PsyCap). To support this, Simons and Buitendach (2013) traced back the definition of PsyCap, and note that this commonality or underlying link among the constructs is a mechanism shared across each of the facets that contribute to a motivational propensity to accomplish tasks and goals.

To understand the theories of PsyCap, it is important to review a relevant discussion of conceptual frameworks provided by Law and colleagues (1998) which fully explains the nature and epistemology of multidimensional constructs such as the proposed higher order factor PsyCap. Law, Wong and Mobley (1998) provided a conceptual framework for determining how multidimensional constructs can relate to a core factor. They describe the latent model that characterises what is referred to as PsyCap, a core construct that underlies the four dimensions of hope, resilience, optimism, and efficacy. The higher-order core construct of PsyCap represents the commonality among the four component dimensions and has both conceptual and empirical support (Luthans et al., 2004; Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Luthans, Youssef et al., 2007). To be more specific, multidimensional constructs may have components relating to a core-underlying factor whereby the shared variance or commonality between each facet or construct comprises the higher order factor (Law et al., 1998). Therefore, the higher-order factor of PsyCap may represent the common source of variance such as common mechanistic processes connecting the four constructs of hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy (Luthans et al., 2015).

The nature of a higher-order factor being made up of distinct components as proposed here has become very common in organisational behaviour research. Good examples includes constructs such as transformational leadership composed of charisma, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation (Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1999); and empowerment, composed of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact as well as self-evaluations, consisting of self-esteem, generalised efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability (Judge & Bono, 2001). These are all considered higher-order factors. They can be best described as having distinct dimensions, which are indicators of a higher-order construct or an overall core factor.

In the case of PsyCap, there is both conceptual and preliminary research to support the proposed higher-order factor with Bandura (1997) concluding that those high in self-efficacy are more resilient to adversity. Similarly, Snyder (2000) also state that those high in hope tend to be more confident regarding specific tasks (self-efficacy) and can

quickly bounce back (resilience) after temporary hopelessness. Thus although each of the components has demonstrated discriminant validity across multiple samples when compared with each other (Bryant & Cvengros, 2004; Carifio & Rhodes, 2002), there is also some growing evidence to support the fact that an overall core construct exist (PsyCap) (Luthans et al., 2015). Even though hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy may have conceptual independence and discriminant validity, they may also make a unique theoretical and measurable contribution to a higher order core construct of PsyCap, representing an individual's positive appraisal of circumstances and probability for success based on motivated effort and perseverance (Simons & Buitendach, 2013).

3.4.1 Positive psychological theory

The primary theoretical framework on which this chapter is grounded is positive psychology defined as "the scientific study of what makes life worth living" (Lopez & Snyder, 2009). This theory was developed with the goal of shifting the emphasis away from what is wrong with people to what is right with people, thus focusing on strengths rather than weaknesses (Wright & Cropanzano, 2007). The theory emphasises that it is better to be interested in resilience than in vulnerability, and to be concerned with enhancing and developing wellness, prosperity, and the good life as opposed to the remediation of pathology (Luthans et al., 2015). A trend towards a positive research framework has been already identified in 2010, and is clearly linked to a similar trend in the broader field of psychology (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). Positive psychology, first described by Seligman–and the subject of much recent work (Wright, 2003) –moves away from a traditional focus on the analysis of illness, behavioural dysfunction, and psychopathology and looks towards building strengths. For the purpose of this study, positive psychology theory was used as the theoretical framework, because it relates well to the definition adopted for the study (paragraph 2.2). Another popular theory in positive psychology which explains PsyCap well is the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Wright, 2003).

3.4.1.1 Broaden-and-build theory

One example of POB-based approaches to organisational research is the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). This theory is a proposal that positive emotions such as joy, contentment, and interest can lead to the expansion of thought-action repertoires resulting in increases in social, psychological, and physical resources (see Chapter 2 paragraph 2.4.3). The increase in available personal resources allows individuals to foster friendships, to develop skills, and to recover energy as required in an effort to further progress in goal pursuits (Fredrickson & Brannigan, 2005; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). The capacity of an individual to both broaden and experience positive emotions is important to one's ability to grow and flourish in a career (Fredrickson, 2004). Therefore, investing in PsyCap may yield substantial returns beyond more traditional forms of capital investment (Luthans et al., 2006). The broaden-and-build theory postulates that, whereas negative emotions narrow focus and attention and prepares the body to respond to or avoid a specific challenge; positive emotions broaden attention, focus, cognitive processing and lead to flexible, approach-based response tendencies (Fredrickson, 2001).

According to this theory, instead of resulting in physical, action-oriented tendencies, positive emotions expand cognitive functioning and result in thought-action tendencies that enhance novel responses, creativity, and good social interactions (Fredrickson, 1998). Positive emotions are therefore responsible for broadening attention, cognitive capacities, and ways in which people interact with their environment, thereby fostering resources that facilitate growth and well-being. Consistent with this, the broadening effects of positive emotions have the ability to cancel out, or undo, the narrowing effects of negative emotions (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998). In summary, researchers who have used the broaden-and-build theory have empirically demonstrated that, relative to negative or neutral emotions, positive emotions have the ability to broaden thought-action repertoires (Fredrickson & Brannigan, 2005) to build physical, social, psychological, and intellectual resources (Fredrickson, 2001), and to undo the physiological effects of negative emotions (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998). Therefore, individuals who are hopeful, resilient, and optimistic and have high self-efficacy possess

positive emotions and have the ability to broaden thought-action repertoires and foster resources that facilitate their growth and well-being (Fredrickson & Brannigan, 2005).

3.4.2 Conservation of resources theory

In addition to the above, the conservation of resources theory (COR) by Hobfoll (2002) sees the attainment and preservation of resources as the prime human motivation to perform. Employees seek to obtain resources, as well as apply them in life. This theory has been used to describe the functioning of PsyCap as a higher-order construct, consisting of its constituent components or dimensions of hope, optimism, resilience and efficacy (Avey et al., 2011). The COR conceptualises gain spirals (Hobfoll & Shirom, 2000), where positive reciprocal relationships exist between positively oriented individual states. The idea of gain spirals is used to explain the better predictive power of the second order construct of PsyCap, compared to any of the individual constructs of hope, optimism, resilience as well as efficacy (Luthans, Avolio, Avey & Norman, 2007; Sweetman & Luthans, 2010).

Valuable findings from the psychological resource theories postulate that individuals possess certain resources that are valued in and of themselves, which include self-esteem and health, or that facilitate the obtainment of valued ends such as money and social support (Hobfoll, 2002). In his review of various psychological resource theories, Hobfoll (2002) argues that self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, and goal target and pathways (such as hope) are important resources for individuals. However, he points out that it is not at all clear that these resources function solely as independent constructs, but clearly outlines how human efforts are directed towards achieving accumulation of resources. In line with the idea of gain spirals, described in the COR theory, Sweetman and Luthans (2010) conceptualised the relationship between PsyCap and work engagement as being a reciprocal one. This is explained in detail in Chapter 6.

3.5 Models of psychological capital

There are several models that can be used to explain the concept of PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2007), including the holistic model of positivity at work and beyond developed by

Youssef and Luthans (2013). Another model is PsyCap, whose components and outcomes were developed by (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). A detailed description of these two models is provided below.

3.5.1 Holistic model of positivity

As highlighted in the introduction, PsyCap can be traced back to the movement of positive psychology. The holistic model of positivity summarises the processes associated with achieving POB as well as outlining its objective, which is merely to shift focus from mental illness to mental health. Scholars have referred to it as the positive elevation of processes and outcomes (Cameron & Caza, 2004).
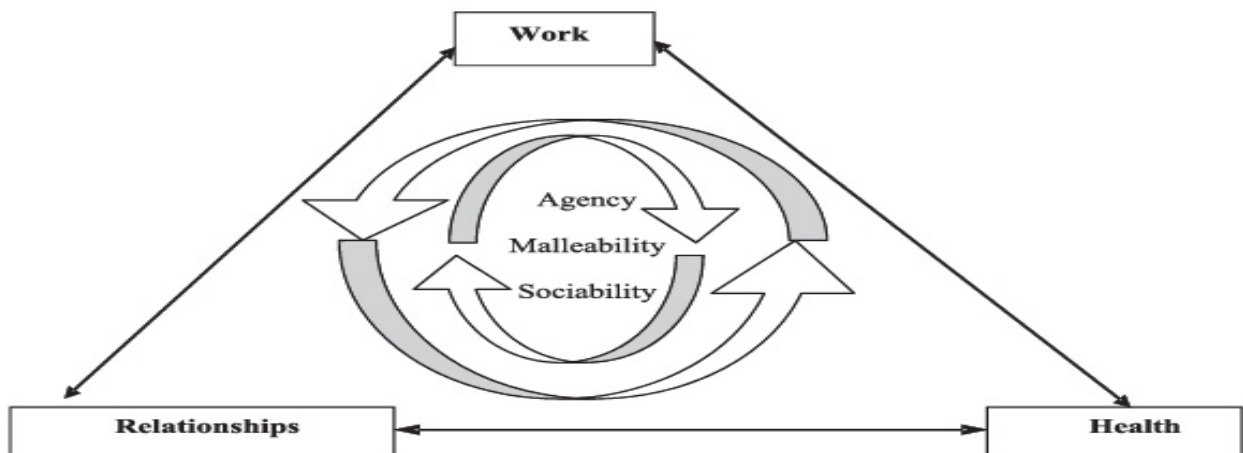
Figure 3.2 Holistic model of positivity **(Youssef & Luthans, 2013)**

The model above explains the mechanisms that account for the manifestation of intentional behaviours (Youssef & Luthans, 2013). These behaviours depart from the norm of a reference group in honourable ways to dramatically exceed common or expected performance that is associated with spectacular results, surprising outcomes, extraordinary achievement and exceptional performance; all leading to organisational success (Cameron, 2008).

As indicated in Figure 3.2 above, positive deviance clearly goes beyond ordinary success or effectiveness encompassing all areas of life, including work, relationships,

and health, all leading to well-being. Thus, it is referred to as the H-R-W model. This model clearly indicates that effective positive intentions result in better work performance, good physical and mental health, and building good relations inside and outside the organisation (Youssef & Luthans, 2013).

3.5.2 Model of psychological capital, its components and outcomes

The model of PsyCap and its components emphasise that in hypercompetitive business environments, PsyCap is one of the central constructs, which plays a crucial role in achieving organisational performance (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). The model clearly outlines the components as discussed earlier in paragraph 3.3 and provides information on the outcomes based on previous researchers' findings. Experts in the area emphasised the need for further investigation on the concept to generalise its effects on different work related variables in different work context (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007; Avey, Luthans & Mhatre, 2008; Avey et al., 2011). As indicated by the model, notable researchers support the positive research trend, and had previously argued that psychologists have little knowledge of the valued subjective experiences that contribute to desired organisational outcomes and psychological health (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Consistent with this, Wright (2003) further suggests that the great emphasis on negative aspects of human nature is one reason why much applied psychological research is seen to have little relevance to organisational scholarship; it is time to shift the focus to more positive approaches.

Fortunately, the work of Luthans (2002a, 2002b) has done much to integrate positive psychology to the organisational context as well as to start POB research work. Building on the foundation laid by Seligman (1998); Luthans (2002) contends that the need for an examination of POB that moves beyond the popular style of self-help publications for practicing managers, towards research-backed, theoretically sound solutions to real-world problems, is ripe (Luthans, 2002a, 2002b). As depicted in the model below (Figure 3.3), several research findings note PsyCap to be related to positive organisational outcomes and to be negatively related to negative organisational outcomes (Kappagoda, Othman & Alwis, 2014; Chen & Lim, 2012). In a large body of literature, the construct PsyCap has been shown to predict a wide range of work-related

behavioural and attitudinal outcomes (Avey et al., 2008). To be specific, PsyCap has been related to increased job performance (across various measures of performance and sources of performance ratings); it has also been related to job satisfaction, organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviours (Avey, Reichard, Luthans & Mhatre, 2011; Youssef & Luthans, 2013).

The model exhibit below indicates that PsyCap has been found to have positive relationships with mastery orientation as well as innovation (Luthans, Youssef & Rawski, 2011). In recent studies, for example by Chen and Lim (2012), PsyCap was found to be highly related to perceived employability, psychological well-being (Avey, Luthans, Smith & Palmer, 2010), and happiness (Kappagoda et al., 2014; Culbertson, Fullagar & Mills, 2010). Moreover, PsyCap on several occasions has been found to be negatively related to undesirable phenomena, such as cynicism, turnover intentions, stress, anxiety, and deviance (Avey et al., 2011; Kappagoda et al., 2014). In addition, PsyCap was also found to be negatively related to alternative job search behaviours (Avey, Luthans & Jensen, 2009), dimensions of burnout such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and personal accomplishment (Cheung, So-kum Tang & Tang, 2011), not forgetting incivility and counterproductive work behaviours discovered by (Roberts, Scherer & Bowyer, 2011).
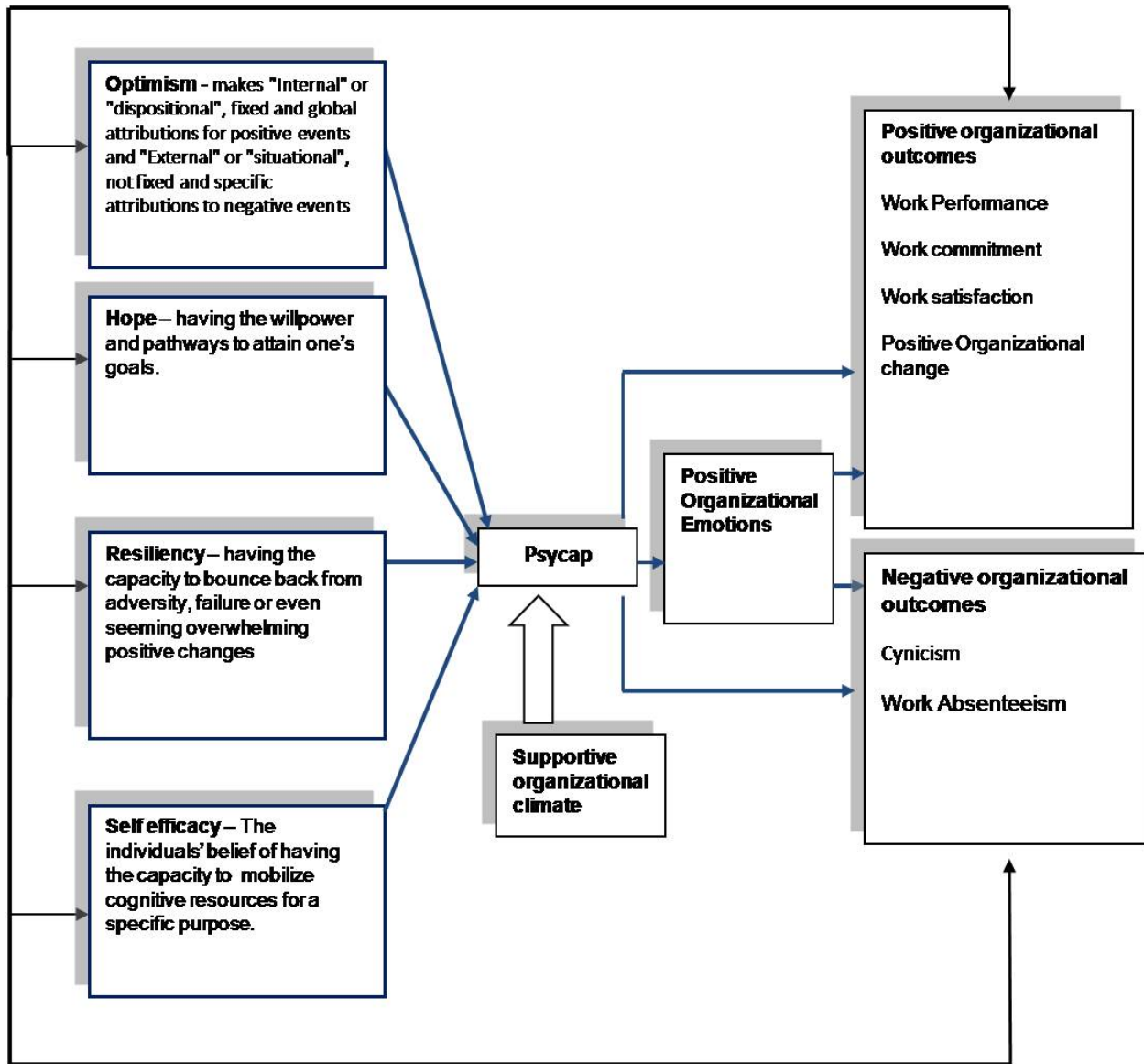
Figure 3.3 Model of psychological capital, its components and outcomes

(Luthans & Youssef, 2004).

For the purpose of this research, the model of PsyCap with its components and outcomes as presented in Figure 3.3, was used as the basis for the study. This model was chosen because it expresses the dimensions used to measure the construct of PsyCap as explained in paragraph 3.6. The model is also in line with the definition of PsyCap adopted for this study and the theory on conceptualising psychological capacities in paragraph 3.3. Finally, the model indicates PsyCap as a developable construct, thus aligning well with the nature of the study. This is explained fully below.

Given the above model and research findings, it is clear that PsyCap provides a framework that enables scholars to extend current research into POB.

3.5.3 Double-loop framework for PsyCap
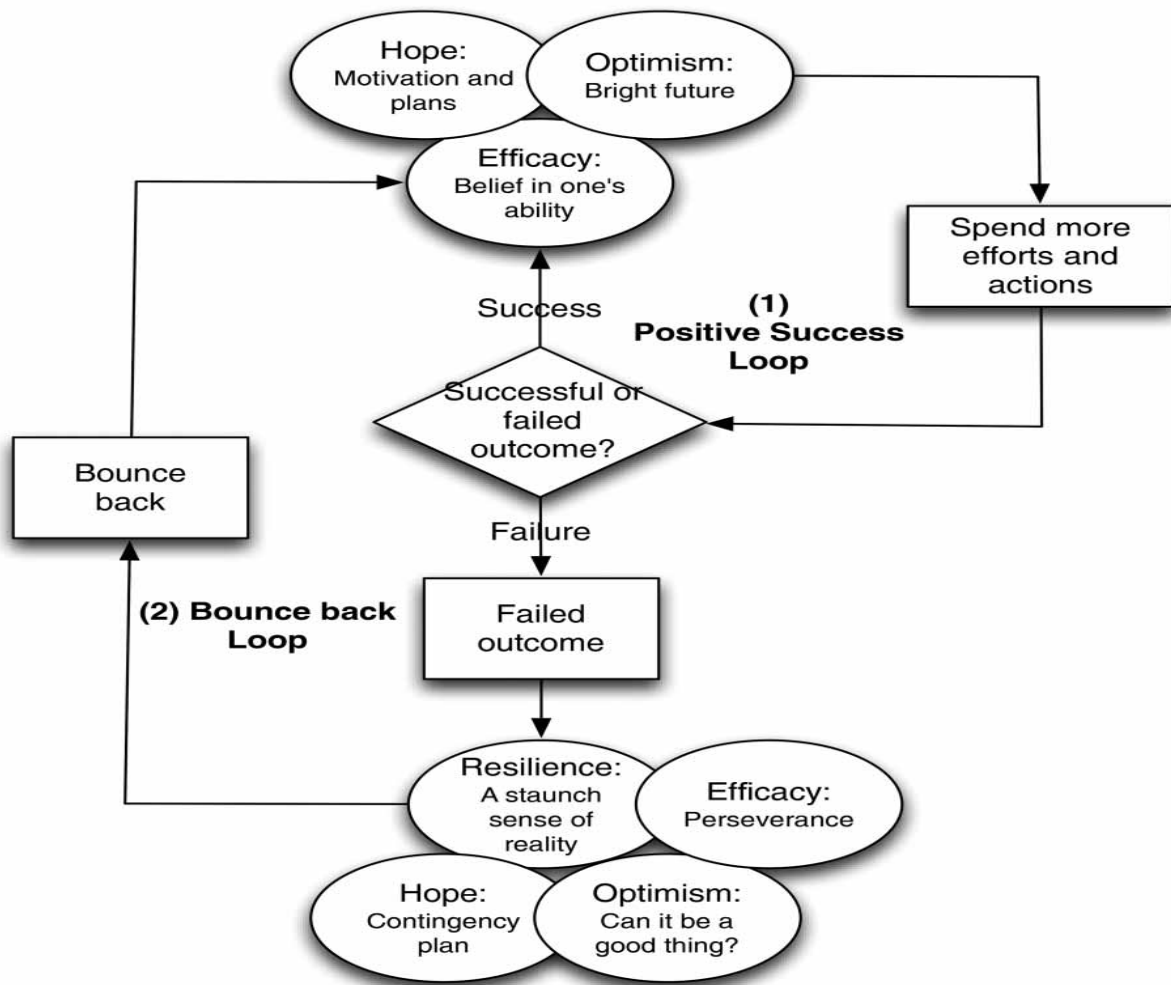
Figure 3.4 A double-loop framework for PsyCap

(Sweetman et al., 2010).

At the beginning of this chapter a discussion of the components of PsyCap was presented; however, Luthans et al. (2007) suggest that PsyCap goes beyond the four components (optimism, efficacy, hope and resilience), arguing that it may be greater than the sum of its parts. Each facet of PsyCap enables both unique and common parts

of cognitive and motivational resources. When combined, the cognitive and motivational resources are expected to have effects that are both broader and deeper (Nafei, 2015). Empirical research also supports the notion that studying PsyCap as a core construct predicts job outcomes better than studying any of its individual components (Sweetman, Luthans, Avey & Luthans, 2010). Figure 3.4 is an illustration of how the combined components of PsyCap can better influence employees' performance.

According to the framework, there are two loops: one is a positive success loop and the other is a bounce-back loop (Avey, 2014). In the positive success loop, hope is the first construct. Individuals with a high amount of hope possess strong motivation and the ability to generate multiple pathways to accomplishing their goals (Sweetman et al., 2010). Following hope is self-efficacy in which individuals with high self-efficacy expend more effort to reach goals. Self-efficacy can then act as a self-motivating mechanism through which people mobilise emotions, cognitive resources, or courses of action needed to reach the goal (Tabaziba, 2015). The third component is optimism. Employees who are optimistic expect positive outcomes for themselves regardless of their personal ability (Avey, 2014). The construct of optimism about the future can be capitalised on in domains where efficacy or hope have not previously been established, thus individuals can be optimistic simply because they have faith in life.

In a further discussion, Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2015) note that highly optimistic individuals generally have a positive perspective, and when combined with high levels of efficacy and hope, they are likely to be persistent in pursuing several alternative pathways to their goals. Kalla (2016) further indicates that when such individuals successfully accomplish a task, they are more likely to attain even higher levels of hope, efficacy, as well as becoming more optimistic, and even believe more that they can achieve success in future. Therefore, the success loop is a positive and cyclic loop (Luthans et al., 2015). However, Kalla (2016) warns that these higher levels of hope, efficacy, and optimism cannot guarantee perpetuated success, as setbacks always occur. In addition, Nafei (2015) notes that it can even worsen in cases where there is repeated failure, or rejection which might act as formidable roadblocks in life, preventing individuals from moving forward or attaining their set goals. As such, those individuals

tend to dwell on disappointments, which translates into depression, helplessness, and hopelessness and as a result they tend to view many aspects of their lives negatively and turn every negative event into a catastrophe; thus, they have a negatively skewed view of life (Luthans et al., 2015).

The bounce back loop then becomes important because it takes people from a devastated state back to a normal psychological state (Kalla, 2016). Thus, the component of resilience becomes relevant and resilient individuals unfalteringly accept reality and do not exaggerate its negative aspects and avoid skewed responses (Luthans et al., 2016). Resilient people are characterised by a lucid perception of reality characterised by perseverance and adaptability. Although it is tempting for people to give up or take the easy path when facing obstacles, it takes courage and emotional stamina to fight for success, and resilient individuals always demonstrate this ability (Kalla, 2016). Capability can therefore serve as the foundation of motivation in the face of difficulties and accordingly, in relation to perseverance, resilience and efficacy reinforce one another.

In summary, in the bounce-back loop, individuals with higher PsyCap remain optimistic during setbacks, generate plans to change the situation for the better, and feel efficacious in their own abilities to persevere (Luthans et al., 2015). They experience a wide range of positive emotions, and device contingency plans, perseverance, confidence, and willingness to take action. All these assist them to bounce back from setbacks and they become more resilient to adverse situations each time they effectively bounce back from a previous setback (Kalla, 2016).

3.6 Recent trends in psychology capital

According to Avey (2014), a recent meta-analysis suggests that since 2005 there have been several studies on psychological capital predicting optimal individual performance, behaviours such as citizenship, deviance, and attitudes, including satisfaction, commitment, well-being, and turnover intentions. However, there seem to be silence as to the antecedents of PsyCap (Nafei, 2015). Besides the basic examination of developmental interventions, little is known about how an individual reaches and

stabilises at a given level of PsyCap. Tabaziba (2015) notes that an organisation that can figure out a means for increasing the presence of PsyCap and is thriving at the individual level will generate benefit for the individual employees and improve their organisational outcomes. Thus, an understanding of the mechanisms of PsyCap can help satisfy the needs of employees and increase employee satisfaction and commitment, and improve employees' well-being (Nafei, 2015). Consistent with that, Dahlgaard-Park (2012) noted that organisations that can make efforts to deepen their understanding of the inner needs of employees and incorporate the understanding into the organisational activities know better how to activate their human resources in terms of muscle, heart, brain, and spiritual dimensions. Such organisations are guaranteed success.

3.7 Approaches used to develop psychological capital

As highlighted above, PsyCap is unique, positive state, developable and effective (Li, 2014). This implies that PsyCap can be intervened and used. Meanwhile, psychological capital is cognitive from the perspective of a mental and physical point of view (Li, 2014). Luthans et al. (2015) note that, according to a series of comprehensive statistical analyses of the intervention and application of psychological capital, two conclusions can be drawn. One: the positive relationship between psychological capital and individual performance which was revealed to be 0.45, meaning in all the factors which have promoted effect on individual performance, PsyCap can explain 45% of the individual performance (Luthans et al., 2015). Two: PsyCap miniature intervention can make individual psychological capital increase by at least 2%. Thus, PsyCap interventions have potential and practical significance. Utility analyses indicate that investing in the development of PsyCap can result in very substantial returns (Kalla, 2016). The authors further note that in total, PsyCap provides theory, research, measurements, and methods of application for the new resource of psychological capital, a resource that can be developed and sustained for competitive advantage (Luthans et al., 2007).
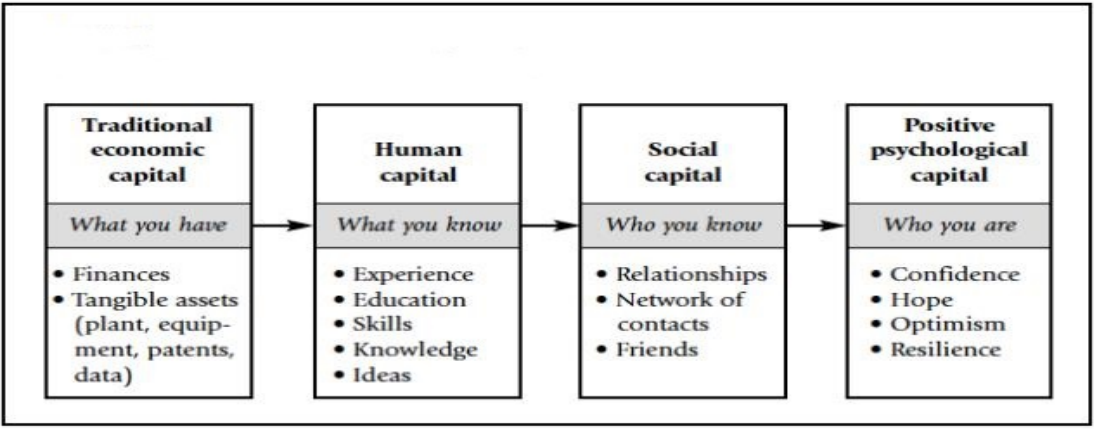
Figure 3.5 Expanding capital for competitive advantage

(Snyder, 2000)

As indicated in Figure 3.5, like human and social capital, PsyCap can be invested in and managed among individuals (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The fortunate part is that, unlike traditional financial capital and tangible assets that come with extra costs to the organisation, PsyCap can be developed at relatively little monetary cost. Figure 3.5 also indicates the different capital that individuals possess or can acquire for a competitive advantage.

PsyCap, as well as its dimensions of self-efficacy Bandura (2000), hope Snyder (2000), optimism Luthans, et al. (2007) and resilience Bonanno (2005); Youssef & Luthans (2005) are situational based, open to development and change. PsyCap and each of its psychological capacities can be developed and trained. The positive psychological capacities outlined above are states (rather than fixed traits), therefore they are open to development, and all have proven guidelines for their enhancement (Luthans et al., 2004). Drawing from the work of Bandura (1997), an effective confidence-building development programme could use the following approaches to develop PsyCap (in order of importance):

1. Mastery experiences or performance attainments. Potentially the most powerful approach for developing confidence since it entails direct information about success. It requires situational processing, such as the complexity of the task, and cognitive processing, such as the perception of one's ability. Mastery of experiences gained

through perseverance and learning ability form a strong and lasting sense of confidence among individuals (Snyder, 2000).

2. Vicarious experiences or modelling. Individuals vicariously learn by observing and modelling relevant others who are reinforced. As noted by Bandura (1999), "If people see others like themselves succeed by sustained effort, they come to believe that they also have the capacity to succeed. Conversely, observing the failure of others instils doubts about one's own ability to master similar activities." It should be noted that vicarious modelling is particularly important for those with little direct experience and as a very practical strategy to enhance confidence through training and development programmes (Bandura, 2000).

3. Social persuasion: Telling individuals that they have what it takes to be successful is another way that can be used to develop confidence among individuals (Bandura, 200). It is the duty of the respected, competent individuals to develop confidence as psychological capital in employees by persuading them that they can do it. However, too often, a small negative comment or even nonverbal gesture can have a big impact on emotions and confidence and the unfortunate part is that, giving positive feedback and pointing out strengths for successfully accomplishing a task is not processed with as much impact as the negative (Masten & Reed, 2002). This approach therefore encourages influential individuals to be genuine, provide objective information, and then take follow up actions to actually set up the developing employee for success rather than failure.

4. Physiological and psychological arousal. Feelings are very important and people often rely on how they feel, physically and emotionally, to assess their capabilities. In most cases negative feelings such as (fatigue, illness, anxiety, depression, stress), will generally detract greatly from confidence (Masten & Reed, 2002). However, unless faced with a serious illness, physical or psychological negativity may result in only a temporary loss of confidence, so one should avoid making a binding decision based on negative feelings (Bandura, 2000).

The following section provides information on how single dimensions of PsyCap can be developed at both individual and organisational level.

Table 3.1 Developing self-efficacy summary

Perspective	
Employee	Self-efficacy can be nurtured by allowing individuals to participate in professional training, asking others and studying hard to improve professional quality and skills (Nafei, 2015). Through professional achievements, employees can then increase self-efficacy, especially in the particular field he or she is good at.
	Example motivation (Luthans, 2008): After the factor analysis of success one gained from similar levels of own self or high similarity of the job scene, employee can increase self-efficacy through enhancing the factors, which are beneficial to success, and reducing the harmful ones.
Organisation	It is the responsibility of organisations to give employees positive reinforces, like attention, recognition and positive feedback, as a way to develop self-efficacy (Luthans et al., 2015).
	Rich professional trainings and other employee assistance programs should be available to employees to improve their abilities.
	Also establishing open and equal enterprise culture, provide health and fitness programs, informal social activities and parties to fire up employee psychologically and physiologically can help to develop self-efficacy (Kalla, 2016)

Developing the component of hope

1. Individuals may set and clarify organisational and personal goals that are measurable, specific and challenging (Guangyi & Shanshan, 2016). This process should include numbers, percentages, and target dates when the goal must have been accomplished (Luthans et al., 2006). However, if the initial level of hope is very low, it is advisable to start off with a relatively easy goal that can be attained easily in order to achieve some degree of hope before moving on to more challenging goals (Snyder, 2000).

2. Make use of the stepping method to break the goals down into manageable sub-steps that will mark progress and create the direct experience, small wins and successes (Masten & Reed, 2002).

3. Individuals should also develop at least one alternative or contingency pathway to their goal with an accompanying action plan (Luthans et al., 2006).

4. At every stage it is important to acknowledge enjoyment in the process of working toward goal achievement, and avoid focusing solely on the final attainment. Individuals should be prepared and willing to persist in the face of obstacles and problems no matter what (resilience) (Bandura, 2000). The idea of formulating pathways will assist to frame the realisation that obstacles may appear and subsequently help spur persistence as problems emerge (Bandura, 2000).

5. Individuals should be prepared and skilful in identifying when and which alternative pathways to choose when the original route to goal accomplishment is no longer feasible (Masten & Reed, 2002). The scenario planning and training can help build such skills.

6. Above that, individuals should also be prepared and skilled in knowing when and how to "re-goal" to avoid the trap of false hope (Bandura, 1999). It is important to recognise when persistence toward a goal is no longer feasible, regardless of the chosen path. In the case where the original goal is absolutely blocked, then it is important to recognise when and how to alter or change it (Masten & Reed, 2002). Rehearsals and experiential training can strengthen this re-goaling insight and skill.

Table 3.2 Developing hope summary

Perspective	
Employee	Hope is developed by setting clear, practical and challenging goals, which can be decomposed systematically. As a result, victories of small targets can increase the hope of achieving ultimate goal. (Guangyi & Shanshan, 2016) In order to achieve those goals, employees should have clear cognition of strong motivation, which can reduce the risk of giving up goals when getting in trouble. Also making alternative plans for target to increase the possibility of success (Luthans et al., 2015)
Organisation	Having a hopeful manager also increase the hope of employees because such managers can guide employees to set elastic targets through authorization, bottom-up decision-making and communication (Nafei, 2015). Hope is also facilitated if organisations provide employees with supportive resources, such as fund, interaction and sharing training to help them overcome impediments (Tabaziba, 2015). Organisations can make each member draw up a plan in line with actual development through team cooperative system, and let them constantly adjust, this can enhance their ability to make, manage plans and deal with emergencies.

The above discussion has provided a comprehensive indication of how to develop hope and self-efficacy. Unfortunately, the guidelines for developing optimism and resilience are not as extensive or proven as those for self-efficacy are and hope (Bandura, 2000), but there is still enough indirect evidence to be of value.

Table 3.3 Developing optimism

Perspective	
Employee Cognitive Perspective	To develop optimism, Luthans (2008) noted that, employees should objectively face their setbacks, treat controllable factors oriented with problems, do a proper judgment and analyse uncontrollable factors from the angle of the best possible.
	The next step as instructed by Cao (2012) is for the employee to carry on the visualisation of active meditation to arouse the power of the subconscious mind. No matter how bad the situation is, employees need to see and enjoy the positive side.
	Then think about the future: employee should rationally attribute the positive aspects to his or her own, persistence and universal reasons.
Social Perspective	Social capital including harmonious interpersonal relationship, supportive social networks can enhance the level of employee's optimism. Thus through associating with positive people, taking part in positive social activities and others, employee can shape and improve their ability of optimism.
Organisational behaviour perspective	Organisations are encouraged to create a positive and relaxing working environment and conduct activities that are more informal.
	Optimistic managers, that are concerned about development of the subordinates is crucial to assist, employees make progress and success through authorisation and imparting knowledge, skill and ability. Such managers also guide employees to attribute success to own, persistent and universal causes.
	Managers should administer more rewards to employees, especially positive, constructive feedback and social recognition and attention.

On top of what is given in the table above, there are specific optimism training programmes in industry, such as the guidelines provided by the American Express Financial Advisors (2004). In addition, Schulman (1999) offers some specific guidelines for building optimism that can be applied to enhance PsyCap. These include identifying self-defeating beliefs when faced with a challenge, evaluating the accuracy of the beliefs, and eliminating dysfunctional beliefs, replacing them with more constructive and helpful ones that have been developed accurately (relates well to self-leadership cognitive strategies). Although known for their earlier work on dispositional optimism, Carver and Scheier (2005) discuss strategies that can be used to develop optimism.

Though scant evidence exists on optimism development, Seligman (1998) also offers support on optimism development through the process called learned optimism.

Table 3.4 Developing resilience: summary

Perspective	
Employee	As a way of improving own resilience, employees should improve their education, knowledge and skills (human capital) through:
	Learning; building supportive social networks (social capital) and participation in social activities (Kalla, 2016).
	Do more exercise and maintain good habits to ensure a healthy body and abundant energy (positive psychology).
Organisation	A guide to employees given by the organisation enabling them to establish values, such as keeping balance between work and daily life and keeping good living habits, to be beneficial to the organisation's performance (Guangyi & Shanshan, 2016).
	Close attention should be given to employees' thoughts and feelings in the face of adversity, and effective coping mechanisms to help them overcome adversity to achieve growth must be employed.

Likewise there is considerable research and evidence that resilience is also open to development (Youssef & Luthans, 2005) and various methods have proven successful in building resilience, such as the use of positive emotions (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004), altering perceived level of risk or personal assets (Masten, 2001), as well as generally fostering self-enhancement and development (Luthans, Vogelgesang & Lester, 2006). Above that, a number of clinical practices and certain identified attributes of resilient individuals have been used, including social competence, problem solving skills, autonomy, and a sense of purpose and future, which can all be used for the enhancement of PsyCap (Snyder, 2000). Moreover, specific resilience development programmes for individuals and organisations have already started to emerge. Reivich and Shatte (2002) have conducted interactive, activity-based training programmes to develop participants' resilience skills and have identified skills that can be placed into two categories: "know thyself" skills as well as "change skills". In all types of firms, research has pointed towards avoiding negative thinking traps when things go wrong, testing the accuracy of beliefs about problems and coming up with ways that can be used to find solutions as well as remaining calm (Masten & Reed, 2002).

3.8   Psychological capital in the banking sector

A few studies have been published on psychological capital in the banking sector; however, a recent survey by Sekoere (2015) indicates that employees working in the banking sector reported high levels of hope and optimism. These individuals are more goal orientated, and highly motivated to goal achievement. In addition, even when faced with difficult clients, these employees remain positive; thus they perform well in service delivery and complaint-handling processes (Kappagoda, Othman & De Alwis, 2014). It is also important to note that high levels of PsyCap were reported among individuals with managerial positions as compared to general employees (Kappagoda et al., 2014). Bank managers who possess high levels of optimism maintain a positive perspective and do not make disasters out of setbacks. They control their emotions, recognise what is within their sphere of influence, see and discuss the problem as an opportunity, and provide a solution-orientated perspective. In addition, the results of another study done on the banking sector by Ziyae, Mobaraki and Saeediyoun (2015) demonstrated that a positive and significant relationship exists between the dimensions of psychological capital (self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience) altogether and banking innovation. These findings are in line with previous studies in the same area (Jafri, 2012).

Moreover, Ziyae et al. (2015) also note that optimism plays an influential role on the employees' general approach to job duties, with those high in optimism expecting success when presented with a challenge. In general, PsyCap investments in the context of the banking sector were found to have a significant and positive correlation with job performance (Kappagoda et al., 2015). Therefore, the practise of PsyCap in the banking sector has been recommended as a way to increase employees' job performance. Consistent with that, Ziyae et al. (2015) note that, due to the key role of innovation in the banking sector, branch managers are proposed to embrace and support the new ideas and methods of banking being introduced to obtain competitive advantage. Through applying the concept of PsyCap innovation, particularly in service delivery and understanding, customers' needs can be achieved if managers and employees stay hopeful and are resilient (Ziyae et al., 2015).

3.9 Measurement of psychological capital

PsyCap is a relatively novel construct, which is made up of four dimensions, including hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy. The four scales that were determined to best measure the concept include the scale for hope by Snyder et al. (1996), the scale for resilience constructed and validated by Wagnild and Young (1993), the scale for optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985); and finally the scale for self-efficacy by (Parker, 1998). According to Jensen and Luthans (2006), each of these four selected scales possesses considerable psychometric support across multiple samples in prior research. The four selected scales provided the foundation and pool of items from which the researchers developed the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) measure. To construct the questionnaire, the researchers used two major criteria. Firstly, it was proposed that each of the four constructs would have equal weight in the scale, so only the best six items from each of the four measures were selected.

In 2002, a measure of PsyCap, derived from the four constructs (hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience) that form the PsyCap was constructed and validated by Luthans (2002). The three items that represented the respective individual scales best, based on factor analytic results, were taken to form the new scale. A reliability coefficient of 0.69 was obtained in the South African sample, and the factor structure was established with confirmatory factor analysis. Response options are on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 'strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree'.

Following that, Luthans et al. (2007) further developed the 24-item PsyCap Questionnaire (PCQ24); this scale includes six items for each of the four components in which items are measured on a six-point Likert scale. The following four scales were included: first, hope Snyder et al. (1996), then resilience Wagnild & Young (1993), followed by optimism Scheier & Carver (1985) and self-efficacy (Parker, 1998; Luthans et al., 2007). Items from these scales were pooled and formed the basis for the development of the PCQ-24. The current study used the PCQ-24 scale because it has demonstrated high reliability and construct validity in earlier studies (Avey et al., 2010; Luthans et al., 2008). It has also demonstrated adequate internal consistency and construct validity in the literature. The following alpha reliability coefficients were

reported: Self-efficacy .84, hope .82, resilience .81, and optimism .70. The entire PsyCap questionnaire has alpha reliability in the range of .89–91 (Luthans et al., 2007). In addition, this is the scale that matches well with the definition adopted for the study (see paragraph 3.2) and the theory and model (see paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5).

3.10 Summary

This chapter provided a comprehensive discussion of PsyCap, including the nature and definition of the construct, the theoretical framework and models, the dimensions as well as possible organisational outcomes. Various issues related to the development of the dimensions of the concept were presented. An analysis of the recent research in the area of PsyCap was also provided. The chapter closes with a discussion on how the construct can be measured. The following chapter focuses on another independent variable, which is closely related to PsyCap, namely job embeddedness.

CHAPTER 4
JOB EMBEDDEDNESS

4.1 Introduction

Job embeddedness is a relatively new construct developed to capture a more comprehensive employee-employer relationship. Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sabalynski and Erez (2001) incepted the concept, in an effort to improve the traditional employee turnover models. These models were believed to only modestly predict turnover; hence Mitchell et al. (2001) propose job embeddedness as a better alternative model to explain employee retention. Job embeddedness, as its name suggests, was developed merely with the intention to explain how a combination of different factors play a role to influence individuals' decisions to stay in a particular job (Mitchell et al., 2001). Rather than focusing on why employees leave the organisation, scholars have shifted their attention to the new outlook to understand why people stay. Thus, the concept represents a new perspective on what motivates employees to stay, and moves scholarly attention beyond dissatisfaction-induced leaving (Lee, Mitchell, Sablynski, Burton & Holtom, 2004). Inversely, for many decades, researchers have focused on and presented a vast sum of answers to the question "why do employees leave?" which proved inadequate to address the turnover crisis (Van Dyk, 2012).

In the process of creating this alternative model for explaining why employees stay, Mitchell et al. (2001) refer to the research by Lee and Mitchell (1994) unfolding the model of turnover and using it to describe job embeddedness as "a net or web in which an individual can become stuck" (Mitchell et al., 2001). According to this concept, individuals who are highly embedded are strongly attached to the workplace and possess several closely connected ties in both the community and organisation they work in (Felps, Mitchell, Hekman & Lee, 2009). Thus, job embeddedness can be regarded as a collection of forces that influence employee retention and is conceptualised as having three components, which include links, fit, and sacrifice (Felps et al., 2009). Subsequent research in the area has discovered job embeddedness as an overall construct capturing the combined forces that keep people from leaving their job

and represents the accumulated psychological, personal, and professional reasons why an employee would stay in a job (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006).

Similarly, research by Cho and Son (2012) portrays job embeddedness as a broad-based retention (and withdrawal) construct that captures a sizable portion of the decision to participate, both on and off the job and can be used to predict withdrawal behaviours, such as decreasing organisational citizenship behaviour, decreasing performance, and increasing absence. Further, Holtom et al. (2006) state several benefits associated with the concept. They point out that job embeddedness is a strong predictor of a number of positive job outcomes such as employee attendance, retention Mallol, Holtom & Lee (2007), and performance Lee et al. (2004), as compared to the well-known and accepted psychological explanations such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Jiang, Liu, Mckay, Lee & Mitchell, 2012).

Despite its critical role in employee retention and effective job performance, empirical research concerning job embeddedness in the banking sector is sparse; yet service delivery and service quality are crucial for the survival of the banks whose employees have intense face-to-face and voice-to-voice interactions with customers (Yavas, Babakus & Karatepe, 2008). Much of what is known regarding job embeddedness is based on the samples derived from the developed Western countries Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney & Taylor (2009), yet locally there is considerable evidence of the benefits to organisations of having a strongly engaged workforce whose members feel a sense of fit and belonging to their firms (Meyer & Maltin 2010; Morrow, 2011).

In this section, a comprehensive description of the concept of job embeddedness is provided, as well as its definition, components, theories, models and approaches. The discussion also includes theoretical connections with the dependent variable and the measurement issues. Towards the end of the discussion, empirical findings on the concept's relationship with the previously discussed independent variable (PsyCap) are provided.

4.2 Nature and definition of job embeddedness

As indicated in paragraph 4.1 above, job embeddedness is relatively new and still somewhat hazy in its definition. Mitchell et al. (2001) introduced the concept as a new conceptual framework to explain why individuals stay in organisations. The construct was derived from Lewin's field theory and it represents a broad constellation of influences on an employee's intent to stay. Mitchell et al. (2001) first defined job embeddedness as a representation of a broad cluster of ideas that influence an individual's choice to remain in a particular job, and operate like a net or a web in which employees become enmeshed or stuck. According to Lewin's (1951) field theory, individuals who are highly embedded possess several closely connected ties within a perceptual life space known as links in both the community and the organisation. Similarly, Holtom et al. (2005) note that individuals with a greater number of strands become more enmeshed in the web and have greater difficulty leaving their job (sacrifice much). These individuals are more likely to remain at their current job than those with fewer connections in the organisation as well as in the community (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Another school of thought defined job embeddedness as a broad constellation of psychological, social, and financial influences on employee retention (Yao, Lee, Mitchell, Burton & Sablynski, 2004). These influences are broad and are therefore present on the job as well as outside the employee's immediate work environment. This definition, however, does not specify the influences. Fortunately, Mitchell (2001) defines job embeddedness as on the job and off the job factors associated with individual links, fit, and sacrifice. It refers to the collection of forces that influence employee retention, and emphasises all factors that keep an employee in the job, rather than the psychological process one goes through when quitting (Mitchell, 2001). This definition assumes that the more links, the better fit, and the more sacrifices the more likely an employee will stay in a job. Mitchell et al. (2001) opine that if an individual gets increasingly attached to an organisation (more links), he or she would be stopped by the multiple attachments in case of some events, even though the individual may have the

idea of leaving. Hence individuals with a high level of job embeddedness will stay in the organisation even if it is not a satisfactory working environment (Mitchell, 2001).

For the purpose of this study, the definition by Mitchell (2001) was used because it is clearer and consists of the three components of job embeddedness (link, fit and sacrifice) which are all important on and off the job (see paragraph 4.3). This definition is theoretically relevant and is in line with the framework discussed in paragraph 4.4.2 portraying job embeddedness as an overall construct conceptualised as the combined forces that keep individuals from leaving their jobs (Yao et al., 2004).

4.3 Theories describing job embeddedness

According to Zhao and Liu (2010), there exist two previous ideas that help explain the core of job embeddedness, which are embedded figures and field theory (Lewin, 1951). Five decades later, in 2001, Mitchell and colleagues then developed the job embeddedness theory based on Lewin's (1951) field theory. Below is a description of the two theories and an explanation of the composite construct of job embeddedness.

4.3.1 Lewin's field theory and the embedded figures

Two well-known bodies of research, namely Lewin's field theory and the research on the embedded figures test Sekiguchi et al. (2008), inspired the development of theories that explain job embeddedness. As far back as 1951, Lewin proposed that embedded figures, which refer to a picture used in psychological tests, are images that are enveloped in their backgrounds; the foreground image is so closely enmeshed into its surrounding background that it becomes increasingly difficult to separate foreground from the background. Thus, Lewin (1951) suggests that employees see themselves enmeshed in a network of forces and connections in which the self may be loosely or strongly attached to various factors in the environment.

Similarly, relating this to the job embeddedness concept, field theory is an idea that individuals have a perceptual life-space where almost all the aspects of their lives are presented and connected in such a way that their behaviour is determined by the totality of their situation (Lewin, 1951). Therefore, according to this theory, job embeddedness

can be described as a web of constraining forces that cause an individual to become stuck in different aspects of his or her life, such as a job or family or even community. Building on the above idea, individuals are viewed as part of a complex web of relationships and attachments (Mitchell et al., 2001). The more extensive the web, the more lines connect the many aspects of the individual's life, and the stronger the ties.

Mitchell and Lee (2001) concur that the images in the theory are attached to their background in various ways, and they become hard to separate causing the embedded figures to become part of the surrounding model. Thus, Allen (2006) postulates that in this field theory, behaviour becomes a function of the field or life space of the individual, including the person and the psychological environment as it exists for that particular person. Therefore, some aspects of the individual's life are embedded and connected in this field and the effects of a given stimulus are dependent on the nature of this field (Mitchell et al., 2001). The field theory provides the perceptions of people connected to every space in their lives, whether small, large, near, or far. Job embeddedness thus represents a broad cluster of ideas that influence an employee's choice to remain in a job, operating like a net or a web in which an individual becomes enmeshed (Zhao & Liu, 2010). Consistent with this, the social exchange theory indicates that relationships evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments if the parties abide by certain 'rules' of exchange (Swider, Boswell & Zimmerman, 2011). When such relationships are strong they become very difficult to break, hence individuals stay longer. Conversely, a person who has a job that is relatively isolated, with few friends or connections to a project or people will experience less disruption in his or her web should he or she decide to leave (Holtom et al., 2006).

4.3.2 Theory of job embeddedness

Based on Lewin's (1951) field theory discussed above, Mitchell et al. (2001) established the job embeddedness theory or theory of staying, in an effort to explain why employees stay in their organisations, as well as to improve the traditional employee turnover models that had failed to predict turnover. According to this theory, for an employee to stay, his or her personal values, career goals and future plans must fit well with the larger corporate culture and the demands of his or her immediate job such as job

knowledge, skills, and abilities (Swider et al., 2011). The better the fit, the higher the likelihood that an individual will feel professionally and personally tied to the organisation. A number of threads that link an employee and his or her family to the social, psychological, and financial web sustains this, which includes work and community (Mitchell et al., 2001). The aspect of sacrifice implies that leaving an organisation results in perceived cost of material or psychological benefits that are forfeited by departure, including losing contact with colleagues, non-portable benefits, valuable projects, and perks. The more one has to give up when leaving, the more difficult it is to sever employment with the organisation (Mitchell et al., 2001).

This theory has been supported by a number of researchers indicating that job embeddedness provides an explanation beyond what is explained by job satisfaction and organisational commitment when predicting variance in individual turnover across diverse populations (Swider et al., 2011). Exploring theories on job embeddedness opens a variety of avenues to develop strategies that may motivate employees to stay with an organisation, thus, widening the scope and depth of the existing literature (Sekiguchi, Burton & Sablynski, 2008; Zhao & Liu, 2010). In this theory, Mitchell et al. (2001) describe job embeddedness as a net or web in which an individual can become entangled, implying that employees stay in the organisation, because they have a number of formal or informal connections with their co-workers and friends, and want to benefit from various opportunities in the organisation or the community at large. The job embeddedness theory also contends that employees' fit with the job and the organisation encourages them to stay on the job if they can use their skills well (Swider et al., 2011). Similarly, Holtom, Mitchell and Lee (2006) state that a person who is highly embedded could experience more disruption in the web if he/she were to sever ties at the central intersection in the web. The authors crystallised theory around job embeddedness with the focus on staying through their premise on links, fit, and sacrifices. Therefore, the theory postulates that job embeddedness refers to a relatively new construct that examines an individual's

- links to other people, teams and groups;
- perceptions of individuals fit with the job, organisation and community; and

- belief about what they would have to sacrifice if they leave their job.

4.4   Dimensions of job embeddedness

Job embeddedness is made up of three components, which include links, fit, and sacrifice (Felps et al., 2009). These three components form a three-by-two matrix associated with an individual's organisation and community, which further suggest six sub-dimensions, including fit-organisation, fit-community, links-organisation, links-community, sacrifice-organisation, and sacrifice-community (Mitchell et al., 2001). However, while job embeddedness comprises three by two dimensions, organisational and community embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001), researchers discovered that organisational dimension better predicts most organisational outcomes than does the community dimension (Allen, 2006; Lee, Mitchell, Sablynski, Burton & Holtom, 2004). In addition, in the event where job relocation is not a factor, this organisational dimension better predicts employee retention as compared to the community dimension (Jiang, Liu, Mckay, Lee & Mitchel, 2012; Allen, 2006; Coetzee, 2013, Lee et al., 2004). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, examination of job embeddedness components were limited to the organisational dimension, hence only three organisational dimensions (links, fit, sacrifice in the organisation) were focused on. These components are discussed in detail as the theory of job embeddedness or theory of staying by Mitchell et al. (2001) in paragraph 4.3.2.

As highlighted in Figure 4.1 below, the critical aspects of job embeddedness include the links that people have on and off the job. The extent to which they perceive their fit to the environment that they live and work in; as well as the sacrifices that they would make in giving up their job specifically relating to how this action would affect the other aspects of their life (Mitchell et al., 2001). Thus, Mitchell et al. (2001) treat job embeddedness as the sum total of its components and dimensions. The additive or cumulative effect of the components and dimensions of job embeddedness suggests that while the components and dimensions can independently predict outcomes, the bundled resources are, indeed, greater than the separated parts (Coetzee, 2013).

Below is a graphical presentation of the construct job embeddedness and its components.

Figure 4.1 Dimensions of job embeddedness

(Mitchell et al., 2001, p. 1104−1105)

Lee et al. (2004) independently examined the two dimensions (organisation and community) and discovered that the organisation dimension better predicted most organisational outcomes such as job performance and work engagement than did the community dimension. Although both dimensions appear to share significant variability with work engagement, the organisational dimension has shown a stronger relationship with the outcome than does the community dimension (Coetzee, 2013). Allen (2006) and Sekiguchi et al. (2008) indicate that the specific nature of the organisational dimension better predict outcomes such as job performance and work engagement because both constructs are bound by the same context (work). Community dimension could influence work-related outcomes if the work context spills over into home context (Coetzee, 2013). The organisational dimensions are explained in detail below.

4.4.1 Links

As highlighted in paragraph 4.4.2, links is one of the dimensions of job embeddedness, which refers to the extent of an individual's ties with other people and activities at work and off the job (Holtom, Mitchell & Lee, 2006). It is defined as discernible connections between people and institutions and separated into two factors, namely organisation and community links (Lee et al., 2004). Organisational links consider the formal and informal connections that exist between an employee and other people or groups in the organisation (Mitchell et al., 2001). Links-community recognises the significant influence that family, marital status or other social institutions exercise on individuals and their decision making (Holtom et al., 2006). The links aspect of embeddedness suggests that employees have formal and informal connections with other entities on the job. As the number of those links increases, embeddedness becomes higher (Holtom et al., 2006).Thus, the more links to the workplace or community, the more embedded individuals will become (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Similarly, Friedman and Holtom (2002) suggest that the more connected an individual is–professionally and socially–to the organisation, the more likely he/she is to stay in their organisation. Consequently, the decision to leave the organisation will likely require extensive deliberation and the act of leaving will be an immense effort. An individual who has more roles, responsibilities, and relationships would have a more complex web than otherwise. The person with the more complex web is more embedded in a situation and would experience more disruption in the web if he or she severed ties at a central intersection in the web (Morrow, 2011). The person with more strands connected to his or her job would be more embedded to his or her job (Coetzee, 2013). Holtom and O'Neill (2004) also indicated that being embedded in an organisation is associated with reduced intent to leave and actual leaving; therefore, individuals embedded in their jobs are less likely to leave than those who are not embedded.

Conversely, failure to develop meaningful work relationships could indicate that employees are less likely to stay in their present situation (Crossley et al., 2007). With reference to the above, job embeddedness seem to suggest that a number of strands connect an individual employee and his or her family, psychologically and financially, to

a web that includes work and non-work friends, the community, and the physical environment where they live (Allen, 2006). The bigger the increase in the number of these links, the greater embeddedness is achieved and the larger the number of links between the person and the web, the greater the likelihood that an employee will stay in the organisation (Morrow, 2011). Consistent with that, Takawira (2012) suggests that the higher the number of links between the individual and the organisation and the community, the more he or she is bound to the job.

In summary, links describe the extent to which an individual is connected to other people and activities in the organisation and community, including the relationships one develops at work, such as connections with one's supervisor or co-workers and being a member of a particular working team.

4.4.2 Fit

According to the theory of staying, the second dimension of job embeddedness is fit, which refers to an employee's perceived compatibility or comfort with the organisation, the job, as well as the surrounding community (Mitchell et al., 2001). It is the extent to which an individual perceives that the job, organisation, and environment complement other areas and aspects of his or her life space (Felps et al., 2009). Just like links, fit is divided into two factors, namely organisation and fit-community. Fit-organisation reflects an employee's perceived compatibility of comfort with an organisation, including one's values, career goals, and plans for the future, which must fit with the larger corporate culture as well as the demands of the immediate job (Mitchell et al., 2001). Tangible examples of organisational fit include job knowledge, skills, and abilities that are well used by the organisation (Coetzee, 2013). Fit-community in turn captures how well a person perceives that he/she fits the community and surrounding environment in which he or she resides. This takes into account religious climate, weather, facilities or general culture of the location (Mitchell et al., 2001). When combined, these two dimensions describe the extent to which the organisation and community are perceived as being a good fit with the individual's interests, within and outside of work (Takawira, 2012).

In general, the fit dimension seeks to delineate through the perspectives of individuals how they best fit into the job, community, and organisation reflecting the employees' compatibility with the organisation or comfort perceived by an employee within the organisation (Takawira, 2012). The closer one's personal views, values, and goals are aligned with those of the organisation, the higher the likelihood that an employee will be embedded (Mitchell et al., 2001). Consistent with that, Mitchell et al. (2001) argue that the better the fit, the higher the likelihood that an employee will feel professionally and personally tied to the organisation. Similarly, a large body of studies have found that perceived person-organisation fit and perceived person-job fit were significantly negatively correlated with intention to leave (Jiang et al.,2012; Takawira, 2012).

Organisational fit assesses how the individual perceives his or her work in the organisation and whether the individual feels that there is congruence between what he or she wants to do or can do and what he or she is actually doing (Mitchell et al., 2001). Consistently, Coetzee (2013) identifies primary determinants of person-organisation fit as congruence of the norms and values of the organisation with the values of the person. Thus, an employee's personal values, career goals, and plans for the future must fit with the larger corporate culture and the demands of his or her immediate job. Takawira (2012) provides a very good example of high organisation fit, indicating that if an individual values being environmentally friendly, and works for an organisation that supports recycling, then such individual would feel that he or she fits well with the organisation. Similarly, the better the fit with the community and the surrounding environment, the less likely the employee is to leave. Finally, it can be concluded that if employees fit well in their jobs, they will be willing to deal with customers' requests happily and successfully and thus have elevated levels of work engagement (Takawira, 2012).

4.4.3 Sacrifice

The last job embeddedness dimension described in the theory is sacrifice, defined as the material and psychological benefits that an employee would lose if he or she chose to leave the organisation (Holtom & Inderrienden, 2006). It is further described as the ease with which a person feels that links can be broken, or the perception of what they

would give up if they were to leave their current position (Takawira, 2012). Sacrifice is separated into two factors: sacrifice organisation and sacrifice community (Mitchell et al., 2001). Sacrifice-organisation captures the perceived cost of material or psychological benefits that may be forfeited by leaving one's job; this may include personal losses such as giving up colleagues, projects or perks (Mallol, Holtom & Lee, 2007). The greater the sacrifice, the more difficult the decision to leave will be. Alongside sacrifice-organisation is sacrifice-community, which becomes an issue if one has to relocate.

According to Mallol et al. (2007), leaving a community that is attractive and safe, and where one is liked or respected, can be very difficult. Most individuals would prefer to change jobs, but stay in the same home due to fear of community sacrifice (Mallol et al., 2007). Similarly, leaving an organisation might mean loss of individuals, such as colleagues, loss of a project, or special treatment (Holtom & Inderrienden, 2006). The dimension of sacrifice therefore captures the perceived cost of material benefits that may be forfeited by leaving the job or the pain and loss associated with leaving a job focusing primarily on the tangible losses that would be incurred if the individual leave the job and the community (Coetzee, 2013). Thus, the more an employee gives up when leaving, the more difficult it is to sever employment with the organisation. In relation to this, Takawira (2013) notes that there are less visible, but still important potential sacrifices suffered by leaving an organisation, including opportunities for advancement, flexible work hours, and job stability. Moreover, various advantages accrue to individuals who stay long enough in an organisation, including sabbatical leave granted after five years of employment at several universities, so taking a new job elsewhere could mean giving up much of the accrued advantages (Jiang et al., 2012).

Holtom and Inderrienden (2006) further indicate that when individuals leave an organisation, they might lose interesting projects, pleasant perks, lovely colleagues, gained respect, compensation, benefits such as retirement and health care, as well as promotional opportunities. Similarly, the cost of quitting would also include loss of moving from a harmonious community, in which all the neighbours are united, or leaving a very safe neighbourhood for an unknown world. In addition, Mitchell et al. (2001) note

that the more an employee would have to give up when leaving, the more difficult it would be for him or her to leave the organisation and community. Interestingly enough, Mallol et al. (2007) highlight that in most cases, these perceived sacrifices are built into existing measures of job satisfaction or organisational commitment and they facilitate work engagement. A large number of studies provide support for sacrifice indicating that turnover rates were negatively associated with the attractiveness of the pay and benefits provided by different organisations (Takawira 2012; Feldman & Bolino, 1998).

Conclusively, these three dimensions interact with each other as indicated by Ng and Feldman (2010). According to them, individuals who value developing close ties with co-workers and work groups (links) and who desire jobs that are compatible with their goals and values (fit), and that provide desirable perks (sacrifice), basically feel more embedded and engaged in their work. Therefore, high levels of job embeddedness generally indicate that employees feel a sense of compatibility between their personal career needs, goals and values and those of the job as well as the organisation (Jiang et al., 2012). It also indicates that they experience positive formal and informal connections between themselves and the organisation and therefore perceive the costs of leaving the job as being too high; therefore, they would rather stay (Mitchell et al., 2001). Given the discussion above, for the purpose of this research, the job embeddedness theory / theory of staying was used as the theoretical framework to describe the concept, because it aligns well with the definition provided in paragraph 4.2, and summarises the dimensions in paragraph 4.3, which were also described in this theory. The dimensions were also used as items to measure the concept as described in paragraph 4.8. This theory was also chosen because it has been relevantly and successfully applied in recent studies on job embeddedness (Takawira, 2013; Coetzee, 2013).

4.5 Models of job embeddedness

In 1994 Lee and Mitchell developed an alternative model aimed at explaining how and why people leave organisations. This model was known as the 'unfolding model of turnover'. The model postulates that many events happen on-the-job, and some of them may be positive, but a given event does not cause everyone to think about leaving.

Instead, Lee and Mitchell (1994) argue that an event causes some people to consider leaving an organisation. Research done by Hulin and his associates (Hanisch & Hulin, 1990; Hulin, 1991; Hanisch, Hulin & Roznowski, 1998) has demonstrated that individuals often withdraw from unfavourable work situations in multiple ways. Rather than the obviously expected quitting from the job, individuals may increase their tardiness, absenteeism, or lower their work effort (Taris, Kalimo & Schaufeli, 2002). Also, research on distributive justice and equity theory demonstrates that when someone experiences an injustice, including some of the events which Lee and Mitchell (1994) describe as negative shocks (e.g. skipped for promotion), this can lead to distress and eventually quitting (Greenberg, 2006).

Even though this model existed by 1998, far less was known about the psychological process behind remaining with one's organisation Maertz and Campio (1998) since the two notable theories of employee turnover Maertz and Campion (1998), Hulin's withdrawal model Hulin (1991) and Lee and Mitchell's unfolding model Lee and Mitchell, (1994) were all focusing on why employees leave. Fortunately, the subsequent job embeddedness construct by Mitchell et al. (1999) was introduced and it represents different approaches toward understanding employee withdrawal. The integration of the elements of each of these models seem to provide greater leverage than focusing on individual models taken alone especially in understanding what factors affect an employee's attachment or withdrawal from an organisation. Unfortunately, the models developed along these paths, although successful in identifying turnover predictors, tend to explain only a limited percentage of quits (Mallol, Holtom & Lee, 2007). A detailed description of the unfolding model is presented below.

4.5.1 Unfolding model (Negative shocks)

Lee and Mitchell (1994) developed the unfolding model of turnover, as highlighted above. One of the major components of this model is the notion of shocks, which are events that cause a person to begin to think about leaving. Following that the negative shocks model was discovered by Holtom et al. (2005) who defined and examined the impact of significant organisational or community events (shocks) as causes of staff turnover in organisations.
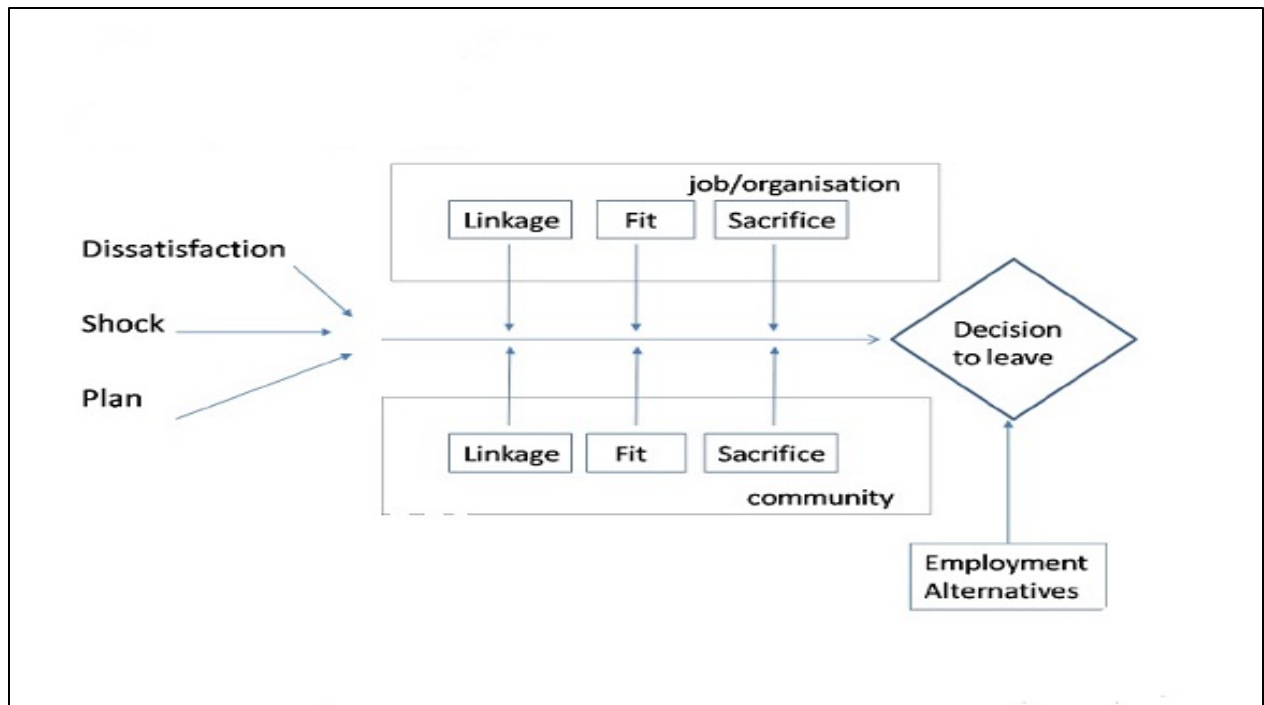
Figure 4.2 Unfolding model of turnover

(Adopted from Holtom, Mitchell, Lee & Eberly, 2008).

Figure 4.2 above shows some of the aspects that trigger turnover intentions; these include dissatisfaction, plan, and shock. According to the diagram, all three are influenced by links, fit, and sacrifice (both organisation and community) and these three dimensions determine the decision of an employee to leave the organisation. The model dwells more on the issue of shocks. Shock is defined as a particular, jarring event that initiates the psychological analyses involved in quitting a job (Holtom et al., 2008). This model has the ability to help distinguish between functional and dysfunctional turnover (Maertz & Campion, 1998) and identifies four paths that organisational leavers follow. These are the following:

1. Path 1 refers to the shocks that trigger a pre-existing plan. In this situation, little thought is given to employee attachment to the organisation and the leavers experience shocks that are primarily personal, positive, and expected.

2. Path 2 includes leavers who reconsidered organisation attachment just after experiencing shocks that were organisational and negative, without conducting a job search. There is no pre-existing plan developed.

3. Path 3 refers to leavers who tend to experience mostly unexpected, positive shocks such as job offers. In this path, individuals decide to leave after considering alternatives.

4. In Path 4, employees generally decided to leave because of low job satisfaction levels; some conducted a job search and others did not.

According to Holtom et al. (2008), this theory should be used in conjunction with other theories. From this theory, it can be suggested that organisations incorporate the effect of shocks into their retention plans, because high levels of job embeddedness appear to *buffer* the effect of thoughts of leaving associated with negative events. A good example is when someone experiences a negative event and considers leaving, but if highly embedded they will stay. Similarly, Holtom et al. (2006) found that the shock-induced leavers have a statistically significant higher level of overall job embeddedness than non-shock-induced leavers do. It was also discovered that job embeddedness among stayers was higher for both the shock-induced leavers and for non-shock-induced leavers. Conversely, Holtom, Burton and Crossley (2012) found that individuals who are high in negative affectivity and who experience shocks are less likely to remain embedded, consequently they are more likely to search for a new job and engage in counterproductive behaviours.

4.5.2 Job demands-resources model (job embeddedness as a resource).

Another model that can be applied to explain job embeddedness and relate it to work engagement is the previously mentioned (Chapter 2 paragraph 2.4) job demands-resources model. The two dimensions of job embeddedness (organisational and community) reflect that most people occupy at least two life spaces: one at work and another one at home (Mitchell et al., 2001). As opposed to affective general work attitudes such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and work engagement that fluctuate over time, the dimensions of job embeddedness develop far more slowly over time (Allen, 2006) and are more stable (Mitchell et al., 2001). The two dimensions

of job embeddedness (links and fit) can be considered as job resources that enable individuals to perform their duties on a daily basis.

As noted by Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008), job embeddedness can be conceptualised as a state of abundant resources, a definition that aligns with Hobfoll's (1998) notion of a resource caravan. Based on that school of thought, it can be argued that, the links components of job embeddedness represent person-to-person relationship resources. The the fit component describes the sense of belonging that an employee feel with the job, the company, and the community. Finally the sacrifice component that speaks directly to the primacy-of-loss tenet of the conservative of resources theory. Hobfoll (1998) delineated seventy-four resources that are contingent upon employment, which are all in constant threat of being lost in the event that an employee loses his or her job. Thus, employees faced with the threat or actual loss of resources without replenishment is more likely to be motivated to protect and discretionarily invest remaining resources. Therefore, the threat of losing resources would increase employee motivation to perform and will possibly increase their energy or vigour. From this perspective, job embeddedness is a motivational force energising, directing, and sustaining behaviours, leading to work engagement (Hakanen, Schaufeli & Ahola, 2008).

4.5.2.1 Job embeddedness and work engagement as resources

In addition to the above, the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1998) proposes that individuals are motivated by the desire to obtain and protect resources, or those things they personally value. When those resources are acquired, they may be further invested to obtain additional resources (Hobfoll, 2001). The two concepts, engagement and embeddedness, therefore developed as a result of an abundance of accumulated resources, although the two have different resource bases. The resources contributing to engagement are more specific to the nature of the work, hence are known as workplace-dependent, for example flexibility. Conversely, embeddedness resources are restricted to the organisation and the position that one occupies. In this circumstance, when an individual moves to another organisation, they cannot move the links with other people with them. Further, the perceived fit necessarily changes due to

the new work environment (Hobfoll, 2001). Specific motivational resources such as flexibility, balance, diversity, interdependence, and tolerance for failure increase both engagement and job embeddedness (Hakanen, Schaufeli & Ahola, 2008). Therefore, there is an indisputable connection between work engagement and job embeddedness that can be explained through the resource base.

4.6 Outcomes of job embeddedness

Research in a variety of settings, ranging from a community hospital to financial institutions and state departments has demonstrated the value of job embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001). In explaining employee retention, the concept incorporates on-the-job and off-the-job factors that were not included in the traditional models of turnover. With the talent war in process, most organisations are investing in initiatives that attract, develop and retain the best and brightest individuals in order to best position themselves for the war (Hesselbein & Goldsmith, 2009). Recent studies indicate that the attraction, development, and retention of valued employees are among the most critical issues faced by organisations since replacement costs have proved to be far higher than the salary of the departing individual (Sun, Zhao, Yang & Fan, 2012; Morrow, 2011). Given the above crisis, it is clear that the job embeddedness construct has suddenly become a hot topic both in the academic and contemporary world.

As highlighted above, research regarding employee embeddedness has recently received much interest with extensive research into the concept (Sekiguchi, Burton & Sablynski, 2008). Job embeddedness has been found to predict several organisational outcomes, including organisational citizenship and job performance (Holtom et al., 2006a). The concept also moderated the positive effect of volitional absences on turnover, the negative effect of job performance on turnover and the negative effect of organisational citizenship behaviour on absence (Lee, Mitchell, Sablynski, Burton & Holtom, 2004).

Consistent with that, Sekiguchi et al. (2008) state that job embeddedness plays a positive role in employee performance such as providing additional resources to the employee when the quality of leader member exchange (LMX) is high. In support of

that, Sekiguchi et al. (2009) also state that the more embedded an employee is in an organisation the better the perception into leader-member exchange that therefore impacts performance and organisational citizenship behaviour.

In the study done by Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney and Taylor (2009) results indicate that job embeddedness fully mediated the relationship between compensation, supervisory support, growth opportunity and an employee's intention to quit, but training did not embed employees in their jobs. Moreover, Felps et al. (2009) examined a model of turnover in which the decision to stay at or leave a job is influenced by co-workers' job embeddedness and job-search behaviours. They state that co-workers' job embeddedness explained variance in voluntary turnover and co-workers' job-search activity increased the next individual's likelihood of turnover.

Moreover, Ramlall (2003) states that people stay in an organisation because of the location, compensation, and work itself and these employees only choose to leave the organisation due to low compensation, lack of challenging work, and lack of opportunities for career advancement. The results of the research directly coincide and strengthen the job embeddedness components identified by (Mitchell et al., 2001). Thus, as job embeddedness scores increase the employee's intention to leave decreases. The degree of job embeddedness therefore highlights the extent to which an employee feels bound to an organisation (Crossley et al., 2007). To concur, Tsui et al. (2009) explains that this sense of binding is due to a process of social exchange, of which the more an employee fits into an organisation the more that individual has to sacrifice when leaving.

Further research in the area has also discovered that on-the-job embeddedness shields the impact of negative shocks on organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) as well as job performance (Crossley et al., 2007; Tsui et al., 2009). It can therefore be concluded that individuals who display high levels of job embeddedness remedy their perception of equity post shock by working hard and smart (Burton et al., 2009). Conversely, employees who display low levels of job embeddedness will increase absenteeism, turnover and decrease performance and OCB post shock (Burton et al., 2009). To further exacerbate Burton et al. (2009) point out that a shock presents a push force on

an individual to start thinking about leaving the organisation while job embeddedness represents a pull force on the individual to stay with the organisation.

4.7   Approaches to enhance job embeddedness

From the discussion above, it is clear that job embeddedness has become a very important construct especially as a way of ensuring retention. Experts in the area have proposed methodologies that organisations can use to increase employee embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001). These include promoting links through building activities that connect employees with people and projects within the organisation, selection and training to ensure employee fit with their job or the organisation, and financial incentives and benefits tied to longevity (Holtom, Mitchell & Lee, 2006). In addition, Van Dyk (2012) indicates that training and development opportunities, characteristics of the job, supervisor support, and career development opportunities significantly increase employees' perceived fit with the organisation and encourage them to stay.

Further, several organisations are longing to embed their employees. Giosan, Holtom and Watson (2005) discovered that, to enhance job embeddedness, employers should focus on certain issues, among which are: increasing perceived organisational and supervisory support to the employees, encouraging employees to take advantage of benefit programmes, providing training opportunities to improve skills, providing clearly defined rules for organisational newcomers as well as job incumbents. The authors further state that the fewer job alternatives a person perceives, the higher the probability that they will exhibit high fit and perceive a larger sacrifice to leave the organisation. In addition, Felps et al. (2009) list some specific interventions that organisations might use to increase job embeddedness and retention. These include:

   a) providing common learning experiences for new workers,
   b) utilising a careful selection process,
   c) improving perceived supervisor and organisational support,
   d) being creative with work scheduling,
   e) offering creative benefits packages,
   f) hiring locally,

g) supporting community service,

h) encouraging involvement in professional organisations, and

i) providing home-buying assistance

4.8 Job embeddedness and psychological capital

Job embeddedness, like PsyCap, belongs to the scope of Positive Organisational Behaviour. They influence each other and together contribute to better performance (Crossley et al., 2007). Although very few studies have been published on the relationship between PsyCap and job embeddedness, it has been proven that employees with higher PsyCap experience a higher level of organisational commitment and they also exhibit less turnover intentions (Luthans & Jensen, 2005; Avey et al., 2009). Individuals with a positive psychological state are more easily linked with and embedded to the organisation and their job. They are also more easily adaptive to and highly competent for their post.
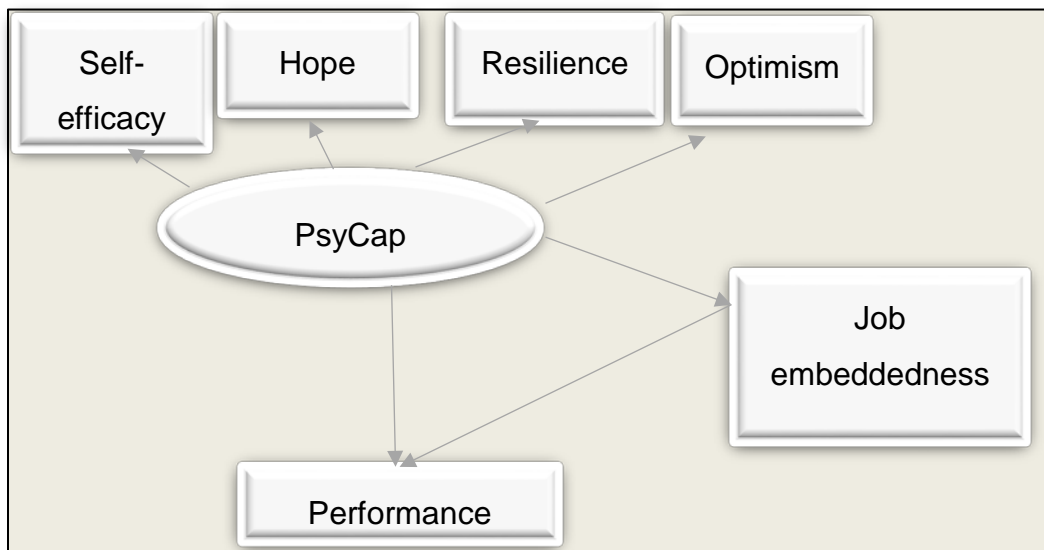
Figure 4.3 PsyCap and job embeddedness research model

(Adopted from Sun, Zhao, Yang & Fan, 2012)

In the study by Sun et al. `(2012) results show a statistically significant relationship between self-reported PsyCap, job embeddedness, and performance as shown in Figure 4.3 above. In addition, Sun et al. (2012) state that improving the individual accumulated psychological state of employees would influence their retention intention,

suggesting that PsyCap is the original internal motivation for employees to stay with their organisations. Both positive psychology and a positive retention sense embody a positive state. As noted by Sun et al. (2012), Figure 4.3 above indicates that job embeddedness is an important mediating link between PsyCap and job performance and there is a direct relationship between PsyCap and job embeddedness. Thus, the two constructs directly and indirectly influence each other; therefore positive psychology elements such as optimism, self-efficacy, hope, and resilience are all positively related to job embeddedness (Sun et al., 2012).

4.9   Measurement of job embeddedness

Job embeddedness is a formative measure, which represents a focus on the accumulated, generally non-affective, reasons why a person would not leave a particular job (Mitchell et al., 2001). The construct is classified as an aggregate multi-dimensional construct formed from a two by three matrix of dimensions and its indicators are causes of embeddedness and not reflections (Mitchell et al., 2001). The concept is primarily assessed using one of two measures that exist, which include the composite scale developed by the scholars who introduced the concept Mitchell et al. (2001), as well as the global measure (Cunningham, Fink & Sagas, 2005). There also exists a short format of job embeddedness scale developed by (Holtom, Mitchell, Lee & Tidd, 2006).

The composite measure of job embeddedness Mitchell et al. (2001) is formed when one adds together equally weighted facets. It is designed to quantify the six dimensions of job embeddedness: fit, sacrifice, and links, both on-the-job and off the job. The initial composite measure consisted of 48 items, which were thought to represent predictors of an individual's embeddedness on and off the job. The more items endorsed by the examinee, the more embedded the individual was considered embedded in the job, and higher levels of embeddedness imply a lower likelihood of quitting. Holtom et al. (2006) designed a shorter version of the composite scale with 21 items. This scale has been used and similarly predicts voluntary quitting. Most of the items are Likert-type items such that the responses indicate the level of agreement or disagreement with the

statement. There are also several fill in the blank or the yes/no items included in the scale.

However, further research in the area suggests that the composite measure of job embeddedness has theoretical and statistical limitations; as a result, Cunningham et al. (2005) developed an alternative seven-item global job embeddedness measure that assesses general attachment to the organisation. The global measure of embeddedness assumes that the whole is greater than the sum of its part, but assesses overall impressions of attachment by asking general questions. The global scale is short and was constructed by generating a list of items that were circulated for comments and revised accordingly. The scale is composed of seven original items and the authors argue that a lengthy questionnaire can lead to careless responding as indicated by (Breaugh & Colihan, 1994). Therefore, consideration was given to develop a small number of items that would adequately capture the content domain (Crossely et al., 2007).

A close comparison of the two scales indicates that the composite scale has an advantage of theoretical richness but Crossley et al. (2007) are of the opinion that the composite measure still needs improvement to meet the requirements of a formative measurement model, as well as to test the predictive validity in different research settings. On the other hand, the global measure has a statistical advantage because it is based on the reflective measurement model. Above its compactness, the global measure has an advantage of brevity when restrictions on survey length exist (Crossely et al., 2007). However, the global measure also has its limitations, including that it does not highlight the non-attitudinal and off-the-job factors as the composite measure does. Actually, it does not cover the depth gleaned from the composite scale (Crossely et al., 2007).

Given the above discussion, for the sake of this study the short version of the composite measure by Holtom et al. (2006) was adopted because, as compared to the global measure, the composite measure has the advantage of theoretical richness and contributions and it explicitly includes non-attitudinal and on-the-job components. In addition, the study also aimed to explore the associations between the components of

job embeddedness and outcomes. Therefore, the composite scale was used due to its theoretical richness, statistical advantages and it aligns well with the definition, and the theory adopted for the study in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4.2. This scale has also been used successfully in recent studies on job embeddedness (Takawira, 2012).

4.10 Demographic variables influencing job embeddedness

Some demographic variables have been identified as precursors to job embeddedness and these include age, gender race as well as educational level. In terms of age, which is part of this study, Tanova and Holtom (2008) suggest that older employees are less likely to change jobs as compared to their young counterparts. Reitz, Anderson and Hill (2010) state that older employees are more likely to remain employed in their current organisation as compared to younger employees. In a recent survey by Takawira (2012), young employees emerged to be more likely to take risks at the beginning of their careers and not willing to stay with one organisation for long. They are also more likely to accept positions that are below their abilities and expectations at the beginning of their career and move on to better jobs when those jobs become available. The banking sector is used as one of the easiest options to get into the job market; yet after getting the job, individuals leave (Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner, 2000).

4.11 Job embeddedness in the banking sector

Scant evidence is available on job embeddedness in the banking sector, with a study by Harman, Blum, Stefani and Taho (2009) indicating that in countries such as Albania, the banking industry is viewed as one of the best industries to work in and job embeddedness among banking employees has been found to be very high. In addition, Routry and Ghosh (2013) note that retaining talent is a key success factor for a people-oriented business like banking. This sector is witnessing increased competition between domestic players and foreign banks that are expanding their presence in South African markets. Job embeddedness is thus seen as a useful retention construct with its antecedents, such as age, gender, qualification, and community tenure (Routry & Ghosh, 2013). In contrast, Sadlier (2014) indicates that the banking sector is viewed as offering entry-level jobs to youngsters coming straight from university. Younger

employees are more likely to take risks at the beginning of their careers and they are more likely to accept positions that are below their abilities and expectations at the beginning of their career then after gaining experience to better jobs when they become available (Boyd & Fischer, 2012). They use it as a stepping-stone while they search for their actual career job and for that reason job embeddedness among such employees is very low.

In relation to the above, Neininger et al. (2010) note that the majority of employees working in the banking sector are young employees who are neither engaged nor committed due to multiple offers in hand; such employees feel they are in high demand. The success indicators among these young employees include high salaries, managerial roles, and the ability to climb the corporate ladder, which cannot be offered by most of the banks; thus, embedding and retaining such talent has become a challenge in the banking sector (Sadlier, 2014). Meta-analytic research supports the negative age-turnover relationship indicating that the challenge is not only to get the people in, but also to keep them in (Griffeth et al., 2000).

In terms of gender, a recent survey done in the banking sector by Routry and Ghosh (2013), report that males are higher on job embeddedness than females and highly qualified employees are less embedded compared to those without qualifications. Consistent with that, higher levels of education are likely to increase an individual's turnover likelihood, thus decreasing job embeddedness through an increase in available opportunities. In addition, long community tenured employees and older employees were found to be highly embedded in their jobs–more than the younger employees and the less community tenured employees.

4.12 Recent trends in job embeddedness

Why do unhappy employees stay in the organisation?

In general, employees who are unhappy with their jobs are more likely to seek employment elsewhere; surprisingly, some individuals might not be happy but they still stay. They are embedded in their jobs, and employers can use that as leverage to retain workers (Rngl, 2013). Previous research in the area has established that there exist

some factors outside of the job and outside of employees' attitudes about their job that compel some individuals to make a longer-term commitment (Lee, Tyler, Burch & Mitchell, 2014). These factors may include location, home ownership, employment status of the spouse, relationship status, job benefits and perks, community involvement, as well as relationships with co-workers. According to Bollen and Bauldry (2011), off the job factors can be very strong, such that they determine the level of commitment a person has to the organisation and the length of time they will stay with that particular organisation. Even in a poor working environment some employees cannot afford to break their ties, hence they would rather stay. Thus, job embeddedness is common among people who are collectivist in nature (Rngl, 2013).

The Rutgers-Camden scholar says the upside of retaining unhappy employees are lower turnover costs, greater retention of skilled employees who are difficult to replace, and the chance to maintain institutional knowledge for a longer period of time. Although there is a correlation between an employee's happiness and their work performance, it is still quite possible that individuals can be unhappy and still perform superbly at work, thus just because an employee is unhappy at work does not necessarily mean that he/she will perform any worse than a happy employee (Hom, Mitchell, Lee & Griffeth, 2012). Contrarily, scholars warn that unhappy employees are more likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviours, wasting resources, incivility, and even substance abuse, which can be seriously disruptive to the workplace (Ng & Feldman, 2012).

Why employees leave good managers

When an individual fits well in the organisation and has strong links with colleagues and supervisors, it would be expected that such employees would become embedded (Lee et al., 2014). Contrary to that, Nafei (2015) actually discovered that even with a good manager employees still leave. It thus remains unclear why employees leave despite having a good job as well as a high-quality relationship with their managers. Karatepe (2012) provided a comprehensive explanation to the mystery. He indicated that good managers invest in their employees by developing them, then, when the employees become better assets and more competent they become more attractive to the outside job market, thus the organisation might not have the capacity to move those employees

up, but that path may be available in another organisation, hence the happy employee leaves. That also explains why people leave good managers, precisely because good managers invest in and develop their employees (Ng & Feldman, 2012).

4.13 Job embeddedness in the South African context

The South African culture is well known for its collectivism nature. As part of recent research Holmes (2013) examined job embeddedness in the South African context, where collectivism is held in high regard. Findings of the study revealed that despite collectivism in the country, South African employees disregard job embeddedness and group allegiances by pursuing their personal goals, including leaving a job for a new one. This process poses a great challenge to the businesses trying to thrive in a highly competitive global market (Holmes, 2013). In relation to that, research findings on collectivism and the principle of ubuntu suggest that these cultural values naturally embed employees within their environments in a way that employees automatically view themselves as having powerful links with others to the point that they put the group's needs and concerns above their own (Zoogah, Peng & Woldu, 2015). Research also shows that tighter fits increase the likelihood that individuals feel professionally and personally tied to an organisation (Lee et al., 2014). Studies on voluntary turnover suggest that misfits terminate faster than fits (Takawira, 2012). A tight fit indicates a shared sense of similarity and value congruence between individuals, other members, and the organisation. Thus, individuals seek organisations and situations that affirm their self-concepts, attitudes, values, and affinities. As such, it is likely that high levels of interpersonal affect exist between individuals who fit. Individuals who fit tightly usually interact more frequently with others, both formally and socially, in the organisation.

With regards to links, Holmes (2013) clearly outlines that ubuntu and collectivism are longstanding cultural values that already influence the attitudes and behaviours of South Africans, indicating that high collectivism might ameliorate the effect of job embeddedness ties on South African employees' organisational commitment attitudes. Job embeddedness theory is particularly useful in understanding the formation of employees' job attitudes in a South African context. However, scholars note that South African organisations are exposed to dual leadership: Afrocentric and Eurocentric. The

Eurocentric perspective emphasises a strong performance orientation toward employee evaluation, assertiveness, and a positive regard for lines of authority (Booysen, 2001). The Afrocentric perspective typically emphasises relational ties with groups, the adoption of a humane orientation toward employees and high levels of egalitarianism (Booysen, 2001). The Afrocentric approach relates well with links, which is one of the dimensions of job embeddedness (Holmes, 2013). The Afrocentric management perspective is based on the concept of ubuntu, which translates to "I am because we are" or "I am who I am through others" (Zoogah et al., 2015, p. 234). Institutions, resources, and organisational effectiveness in Africa are part of a long-standing African cultural value that is a philosophy of life, which in its most fundamental sense represents personhood, humanity, humaneness, and morality. It is a metaphor, which describe group solidarity; central to the survival of communities with scarce resources, and the fundamental belief is that an individual can only be a person through others (Zoogah et al., 2015).

Basically, ubuntu elucidates the connection, care, solidarity, as well as respect that directs individuals' way of life such that group concerns are afforded greater importance than individual concerns, favouring decisions that are beneficial for the collective good (Zoogah et al., 2015). Given the cultural importance of ubuntu to African culture, Holmes (2013) predicted that the concept of job embeddedness, with its emphasis on the links employees develop with colleagues in their environment, would be relevant in understanding how those individuals form job attitudes. A collective culture value relations more than anything else and would not risk breaking any ties or links already in existence (Zoogah et al., 2015). Based on this logic, it can be argued that, while all employees may value the social connections created by being embedded within an organisation, those employees with a collective culture (Lee et al., 2014) may view embeddedness more favourably. This means that employees who are high on collectivism are likely to place a higher priority on their social connections to members of their organisations and communities, thus they become more embedded in the organisation than those low on collectivism. Therefore, for individuals high on

collectivism the cost of losing organisational ties and connections would be seen as much higher than for individuals low on collectivism (Holmes, 2013).

4.14 Summary

This chapter discussed the second independent variable, which is job embeddedness. The concept was introduced and different definitions from different authors provided. In addition, the theoretical underpinnings leading to dimensions of the concept were discussed as well as the models relating to job embeddedness. The chapter further explained the measurement and application of the concept in the banking sector as well as in the South African context. A comprehensive literature discussion on job embeddedness outcomes was also included with special reference to its relationship with psychological capital. Job embeddedness and its relationship with self-leadership is presented in the next chapter, after introducing self-leadership clearly.

CHAPTER 5
SELF-LEADERSHIP

5.1 Introduction

Leadership and associated styles remain one of the major business discussion topics emphasising mainly vertical influence-related processes of the heavy top-down approach in which subordinates are controlled, influenced and managed by a single individual leader (Dhiman, 2007). Over many decades, this was the prevalent paradigm in the leadership field; however, an emergent approach suggests that leadership is an activity that can be shared or even distributed among members of the organisation (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Specifically, research has shifted its attention from the traditional top-heavy hierarchical systems and is attempting to address the emerging concept of self-leadership, which has thus far received insufficient attention (Houghton & Yoho, 2005).

Self-leadership construct first appeared in a 1983 practitioner-oriented book by Manz (1983) that expanded upon the existing concept of self-management, which can be traced back to Manz and Sims (1980). Three years later, the seminal academic work on self-leadership appeared in the *Academy of Management Review* with an article that laid the basic theoretical foundations of self-leadership and presented the basic leadership strategies available in modern organisations (Manz, 1986). Its foundation was laid on the then popular concept of super leadership, which was a process of leading others to lead themselves, and was actually introduced as an effective means for empowering followers and creating self-leaders (Manz, 1992). Van Zyl, Dalglish, Du Plessis, Pietersen, Ngunjiri and Kablan (2016) state that self-leadership has enjoyed an enduring and expanding popularity evident thorough the number of books and articles in the area.

However, the concept has not been without developmental problems and criticisms (Elloy, 2004). A good example is that the majority of self-leadership research has been

conceptual with relatively few empirical studies examining the concept in organisational settings (Manz & Neck, 2004; Manz & Simms, 2001). In fact, the first empirical study to examine self-leadership in an organisational setting was published in *Administrative Science Quarterly* in 1987 and it examined the role of self-leadership in the context of both empowering leadership as well as self-managing teams (Manz & Simms, 1987). Interestingly enough, recently, Van Zyl et al. (2016) state that the concept of self-leadership has thus far developed much and has enjoyed research popularity both in academic and modern organisations, focusing on skills that individuals possess that can be developed at work. These skills may have a role in contributing to the employee's performance as well as to work engagement (Raabe, Frese & Beehr, 2007). This opens up new lines of thinking about informal leadership in organisations where people are empowered to make decisions concerning their own tasks at work and implement them (Fletcher & Kaüfer, 2003). Self-leadership has therefore risen as a set of control strategies that can be taught to increase its practice and subsequent employee productivity and greater career success for individuals (Murphy & Ensher, 2001).

Furthermore, in the African context, self-leadership has been of great importance and is applied in African organisations, though with difficulty, to enable managers to cope with the challenging circumstances associated with the continent (Van Zyl et al., 2016). This is due to its effective strategies that shape individual thinking and behaviour in a manner that contributes positively to an individual's personal and professional development in the workplace, even in less favourable conditions like in Africa (Van Zyl et al., 2016). As a result, self-leadership has recently expanded, attracted attention and became a common practice in most modern African organisations (Neck & Manz, 2013). This is consistent with what Lovelace, Manz and Alves (2007) had noted, namely that it is through self-leadership that individuals become enabled to lead and direct themselves, as well as to develop the capacity to self-motivate, cope, and generally become more efficient. Similarly, Van Zyl et al. (2016) further indicate that self-leadership addresses high-powered, right brain activity, and lays the foundation for effective self-influence and continuous improvement.

The perspective of Jooste and Roux (2014) supports the above, indicating that self-leadership involves the influence people exert over themselves to achieve the self-motivation and self-direction needed to accomplish desirable organisational outcomes. Moreover, several researches in the area have shown that self-leading individuals are advantageous to organisations, because they are satisfied with their work and their career. They perform better and have higher self-efficacy (Murphy & Ensher, 2001; Jooste & Roux, 2014). Similarly, Konradt, Anreben, and Ellwart (2009) discovered that self-leading people demonstrate high levels of job performance, make suggestions that are more creative and express high levels of self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

Owing to the above merits of the concept, Bryant and Kazan (2012) propose self-leadership as one of the best means to foster active, empowered employees who proactively shape and influence their work environment through creating new standards and effective procedures since they have more positive affect at work and tend to have higher productivity and more fulfilling careers. Consistent with that, self-leading employees have been found to be better adjusted and more confident, which increases their likelihood of success within the organisation. They have increased autonomy, greater job satisfaction (Neck & Manz, 2013) and reduced absenteeism (Murphy & Ensher, 2001). Van Zyl (2013) echoed the same sentiments indicating that empowered employees in difficult situations may adapt by influencing themselves in positive and creative ways, which hold good potential for today's modern dynamic organisations. These individuals possess self-generated personal standards, engage in self-evaluation processes and self-leadership activities and apply rewards and punishment in managing their daily activities successfully (Van Zyl et al., 2016).

This chapter discusses the third independent variable, namely self-leadership. The discussion focuses on different areas that make up the concept, which include the definition, theoretical underpinnings, the strategies, models, and the approaches of developing self-leadership. Focus will also be on measurement and previous research findings in the area including outcomes and benefits of self-leadership in the African context. The relationship between self-leadership and other variables is also discussed.

5.2   Nature and definition of self-leadership

The different definitions of self-leadership provided by several authors seem to be overlapping with other related constructs (Stewart, 2011). It is distinguished from other concepts such as self-control or self-management by allowing the addressing of higher level standards that govern self-influence, more fully incorporating intrinsic motivation, and providing for a wider range of self-influence strategies, such as behavioural, cognitive, and intrinsically motivating (Stewart, 2011). To define the concept it is crucial to understand how it relates to the above-mentioned constructs. Self-leadership improves self-motivation and self-direction needed to behave in desirable ways. This process therefore includes controlling one's own thinking and behaviour. Therefore, self-leadership is just the ability to influence your 'self' to achieve your objectives (Bryant & Kazan, 2012).

The founder of the self-leadership concept, Manz (1986), originally introduced it as a comprehensive self-influence perspective. Self-leadership was initially defined by Manz (2001) as a concept concerned with leading oneself toward performance of naturally motivating tasks as well as managing oneself to do work that must be done, but that is not naturally motivating. In subsequent research by Manz and Neck (2004); Manz and Simms (2002), self-leadership was defined as a philosophy and a systematic set of actions and strategies for leading oneself to higher performance and effectiveness. Thus, self-leadership was labelled as the discovery and maximising of self-potential (Manz & Neck, 2004). Two years earlier Houghton and Neck (2002) noted that it is a process whereby people become aware of their strengths and weaknesses in order to develop their skills and to influence others to achieve what they are capable of attaining, therefore individuals utilise self-direction and self-motivation to behave in ways considered necessary for successful outcomes (Houghton & Neck, 2002).

Later Neck and Houghton (2006) further defined self-leadership as a process through which individuals regulate and control their behaviour, influencing and leading themselves through the use of specific sets of behavioural and cognitive strategies. They further indicate that individuals who use self-leadership strategies enhance their personal effectiveness through behaviour-focused, natural reward and constructive

thought strategies. Hence, self-leadership may be viewed as a means of guiding and leading oneself through the use of specific sets of behavioural and cognitive strategies, as identified by Neck and Houghton (2006). Therefore, the concept of self-leadership refers to the idea that successful people are able to regulate and influence themselves to achieve goals by means of cognitive and behavioural strategies (Houghton & Neck, 2006). It is achieved when an individual leads a preferential rather than a prescriptive lifestyle (Coetzee, 2001). Consistent with that definition, Blanchard (2007) provides a summarised definition of self-leadership, indicating that it is a systematic set of actions and mental strategies, which individuals apply in order to discover and know themselves better. This information could be used to develop themselves and others through self-influence with the aim to maximise their abilities, which will eventually lead to higher performance and effectiveness.

In a series of recent studies, the above definition has been supported, for example Van Zyl (2014) defines self-leadership as both thoughts (cognition) and actions (behaviour) that people use to influence themselves; this clearly relates well with the definition provided by Houghton and Neck (2006). Self-leadership is therefore a self-influence process through which people achieve the self-direction and self-motivation needed to perform (Van Zyl, 2013). Moreover, Van Zyl et al. (2016) summarised the definition, indicating that self-leadership is a set of behavioural actions and mental strategies that individuals apply in order to discover and know themselves better. This includes motivating and disciplining oneself to achieve and maximise abilities, which eventually lead to higher performance and effectiveness as opposed to allowing other people to determine your actions (Van Zyl et al., 2016).

Mahembe and Engelbrecht (2013) also define self-leadership as a self-influence process through which people achieve the self-direction and self-motivation necessary to perform their duties and tasks. From a professional perspective, Bryant and Kazan (2012) conceptualise self-leadership as a condition in which individuals experience a well-developed sense of who they are, what they can do, where they are going, coupled with the ability to influence their communication, emotions, and behaviour on the way to achieving personal goals. Thus, in practice, self-leadership refers to the process of

intentionally influencing your thinking, feeling and behaviours to achieve objectives (Bryant & Kazan, 2012). This implies that self-leaders have a drive for autonomy, can make decisions, and are more creative and persistent, even in the face of adversity. As indicated by Bryant and Kazan (2012), some of the intentional behaviour that characterises the concept of self-leadership includes self-awareness, self-goal setting, self-motivation, positive self-talk, assertive communication and the ability to receive and act on feedback. Therefore, initiating and maintaining self-leadership is a self-development activity and organisations that encourage it reap the benefits of improved performance.

For the purpose of this study the definition by Neck and Houghton (2006) in which self-leadership is defined as a process through which individuals regulate and control their behaviour, influencing and leading themselves through the use of specific sets of behavioural and cognitive strategies, was used because of its theoretical relevance. Recent experts in the area such as Van Zyl et al. (2014), which shows that it is still practically relevant, have also used this definition. Above that, the definition have been used in several studies Bryant & Kazan (2012; Blanchard (2007) and provides a summary of the self-leadership strategies, which is very important for this study (see paragraph 5.3). The definition is also in line with the measuring scale that was used to measure self-leadership. Thus, the definition aligns well with the theory, the model, and the measuring instrument used in this study.

5.3 Theories on self-leadership concepts

Self-leadership theory is conceptually based on the control theory by Carver and Scheier (1981; 1998) and specifies additional sets of cognitive oriented strategies derived from intrinsic motivation theories Deci and Ryan (1985), social cognitive theory Bandura (1991); Diefendorff and Lord (2008), and positive cognitive psychology (Seligman, 1991). The concept can be traced back to the theories of self-influence which emphasised self-navigation as back as 1970 Kanfer (1970), and self-influence behaviours such as self-regulation Houghton and Neck (2002) self-control Thoresen and Mahoney (1974), and self-management (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Therefore, it is proposed that self-leadership is a normative model of self-influence that operates

within the framework of more descriptive and deductive theories such as self-regulation and social cognitive theory (Neck & Houghton, 2006).

Additionally, self-leadership also draws on content theories of motivation and behaviour, which include cognitive evaluation and self-determination theory Deci (1972) to increase both the recognition and implementation of intrinsically rewarding goals and the perception of externally set goals as intrinsically rewarding (Neck & Houghton, 2006). In short, the theory on self-leadership focuses on specific sets of behaviour and cognitive strategies intended to influence individual performance results. Below is a graphical presentation of self-leadership theoretical contexts, strategies as well as predictable outcomes.
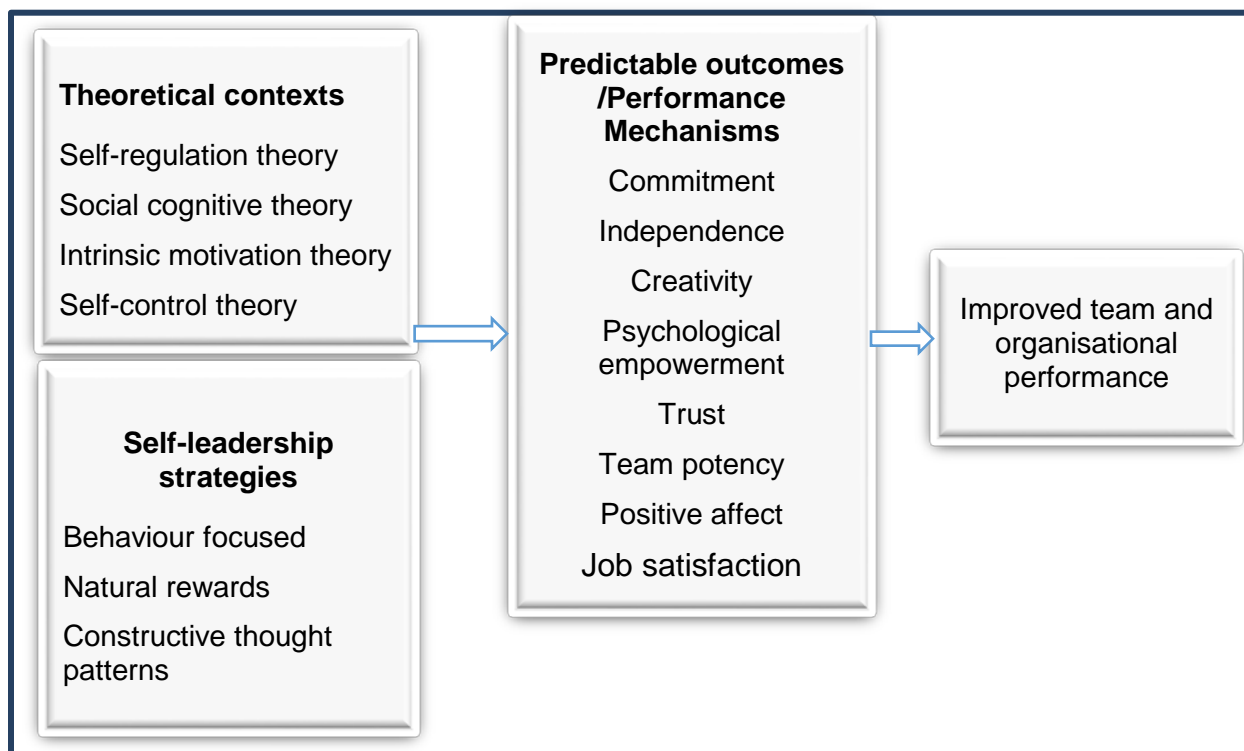
Figure 5.1 Self-leadership theories, strategies and outcomes

(Manz & Neck, 2004)

Figure 5.1 above indicates the different theories that explain the self-leadership concept; these include the self-regulation theory, social cognitive theory, and intrinsic motivation theory. The figure also depicts self-leadership as a broader concept of self-

influence that includes the behaviour-focused strategies, natural reward strategies and constructive thought patterns, which make up a self-leader (Manz & Neck, 2004). It also indicates the positive organisational outcomes which include empowerment and improved performance, creativity, job satisfaction, self-efficacy and psychological empowerment. Below is a brief description of some of the theoretical foundations of self-leadership.

5.3.1 Social cognitive theory

As highlighted above, the theoretical foundation of self-leadership is built upon social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Hence, the concept also operates within the context of Bandura's (1991) social cognitive theory. This theory suggests that human behaviour may be explained by a triadic reciprocal relationship among internal influences, external influences, and behaviour. Thus, the Social Cognitive Theory explains that people and their environment interact continually Satterfield and Davidson (2000) and behavioural consequences serve as sources of information and motivation (Schunk, 2001). Together with the self-regulation theory, this reciprocal deterministic view provides other major conceptual frameworks upon which self-leadership strategies are based. It also explains how self-leaders think and how they behave according to cognitive, motivational, and behavioural strategies (Prussia et al., 1998; Yun et al., 2006). It is therefore clear that the development of self-leadership has been influenced by the work of Bandura in the Social Cognitive Theory, indicating that people are neither driven by inner forces nor automatically shaped and controlled by the environment. Instead, there exists an interaction between internal cognitions and a network of environmental stimuli contributing to the development of individual motivations and behaviours (Bandura, 1991). As a result of self-monitoring the interaction of both internal and external stimuli, this regulatory activity is a key self-influencing action on which the cognitive strategies of self-leadership are premised (Bandura, 2011).

Like the self-regulation theory, the social cognitive theory suggests that the basic structure of the self-regulatory system is made up of processes that involve self-monitoring, self-judgments, as well as self-reactions (Houghton & Neck, 2002). The basic assumption of the social cognitive theory is that individuals have control over

setting their own performance standards (Bandura, 2011). Thus, making a basis on their past performance experiences, individuals can set performance goals in such a manner as to create discrepancy. This production of discrepancy mobilises and induces efforts to subsequently reduce discrepancy. When discrepancies are eliminated, higher standards are set and the process begins again (Bandura, 2011).

5.3.2 Self-regulation theory

As indicated above, self-leadership strategies operate within the larger theoretical framework of the self-regulation theory, which is a broad descriptive view of human behaviour that seeks to explain how behaviour happens (Neck & Houghton, 2006). This viewpoint, however, stipulates that self-regulatory processes do not always operate smoothly nor do they always lead to successful performance outcomes or goal attainments (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Thus, although people are natural self-regulators in that goal-directedness is inherent in the life process, individuals are not innately effective self-regulators (Manz & Sims, 2002). Although self-regulation theory specifies the existence as well as the likelihood of dysfunctions in individual self-regulation, it prescribes few strategies for increasing self-regulatory effectiveness (Guzzo, 1998).

Contrary to that, self-leadership, operating within self-regulation's broad theoretical framework for understanding behaviour actually prescribes specific behavioural and cognitive strategies designed to enhance individual self-regulatory effectiveness (Anderson & Prussia, 1997). Most of these self-leadership strategies are founded upon other established theories of motivation and self-influence, leading some theorists to question the extent to which self-leadership is a unique and distinguishable construct with respect to its relatedness to motivational and personality constructs. In addition, some theorists have also suggested that self-leadership is a mere repackaging of individual differences that were already explained by the existing personality constructs such as conscientiousness (Neck & Houghton, 2006).

However, when critics suggest that self-leadership overlaps with other classic theories of motivation, it is a failure to understand that self-leadership is a normative model that is prescriptive and emphasizes how something should be done rather than a descriptive

or deductive theory that seek to explain the basic operation of various phenomena (Manz & Neck, 2004).

5.3.3 Theory of self-leadership

Drawing from the above discussion of the well-established theoretical foundations, it is clear that whereas the self-regulation theory discussed above tries to explain why people behave the way they do and acknowledges possible dysfunctions in self-regulation, the self-leadership theory specifies behavioural and cognitive strategies that people may use to enhance their self-regulatory effectiveness (Breevaart et al., 2016). As a broader construct, Manz and Neck (2008) describe three strategies to self-leadership, which include behaviour-focused approaches, natural reward approaches, and constructive thought pattern approaches, indicating that self-leadership encompasses a set of three complementary cognitive and behavioural strategies, which impact subsequent outcomes. Behaviour-focused strategies help facilitate behaviour management. Natural reward strategies help individuals shape perceptions and build enjoyable aspects into activities, while constructive thought strategies create positive ways of thinking (Neck & Houghton, 2006). These self-leadership strategies are designed in such a way that they support effective individual self-regulation through increased self-focus, accurate feedback perceptions, appropriate goals as well as higher levels of self-efficacy (Neck & Houghton, 2006). In summary, self-leadership strategies aim at increasing the effectiveness of individual self-regulation (Manz & Neck, 2004). This study used this perspective as the appropriate theoretical framework, because it is in line with the definition provided in paragraph 5.2 and it clearly outlines the strategies used in the development of self-leadership that will form part of the measurement scale described in paragraph 5.9. This theory has also been successfully used in recent books and articles on the topic (Van Zyl, 2016; Mahembe et al., 2013; Van Zyl., 2014). Below is a graphic presentation of the self-leadership theory outlining the different strategies.

Figure 5.2 below presents the three strategies of self-leadership and their components. As highlighted above, these strategies include behaviour focused strategies, which

include self-observation, self-cueing, self-goal setting, the constructive thought pattern, and the natural reward strategies. These strategies are explained in detail below.
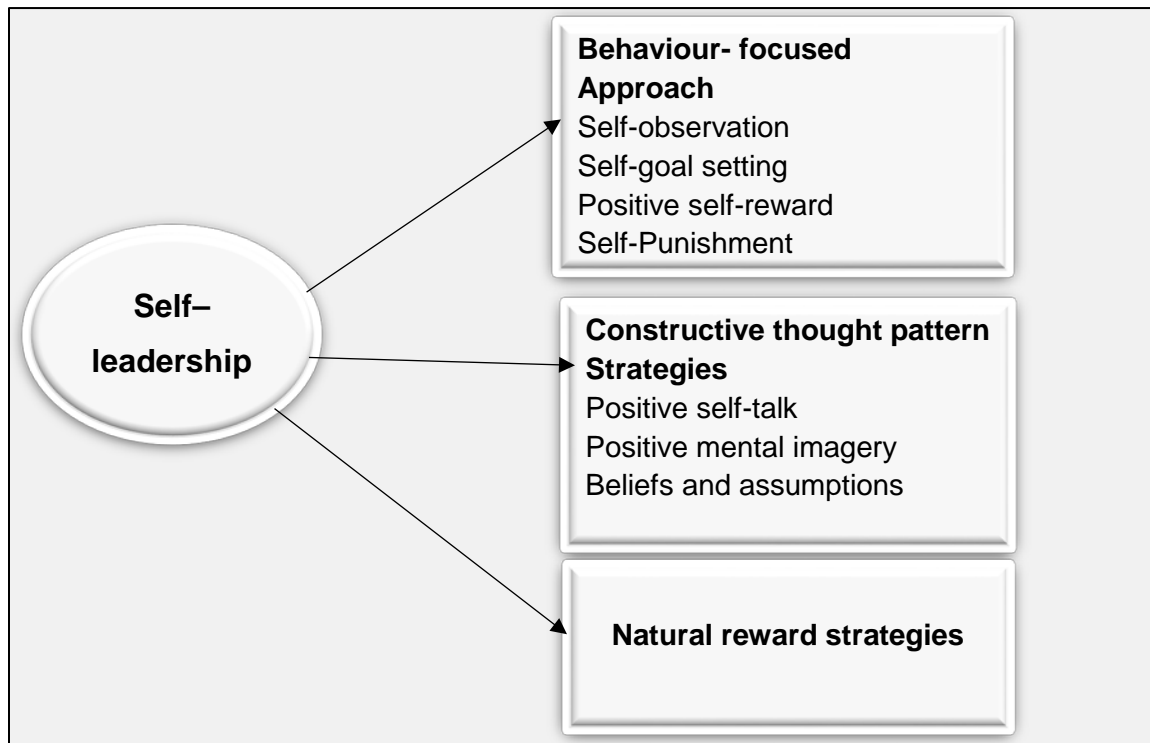
Figure 5.2 Self-leadership strategies

(Manz & Neck, 2004)

5.3.3.1 Behaviour-focused approaches

Behaviour-focused strategies refer to self-imposed strategies used to manage self in performing difficult, unattractive, but necessary tasks (Neck & Manz, 2013). According to Van Zyl et al. (2016), these strategies are particularly useful in managing behaviour related to the accomplishment of necessary but unpleasant tasks. They include self-observation, self-goal setting, self-reward, self-correcting feedback, and practice (Van Zyl, 2013). These strategies are responsible for heightening self-awareness and facilitating personal behavioural management (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Behavioural strategies focus specifically on the management of those behaviours related to necessary but unpleasant tasks directed towards enhancing self-consciousness as well as the management of essential, sometimes unpleasant, behaviours (Neck & Manz,

2013). Thus, behavioural strategies are concerned about encouraging the positive, desirable behaviours that lead to successful outcomes, while suppressing the negative, undesirable behaviours that lead to unsuccessful outcomes (Neck & Houghton, 2006). The following five strategies belong to the behaviour-focused strategies: self-goal setting, self-observation, self-reward, self-punishment and self-cueing (Houghton & Neck, 2002).

Self-observation

One of the most important approaches under the behaviour-focused approach is self-observation. This approach involves obtaining information on when, why, and under what conditions we make use of certain behaviours (Neck & Manz, 1992). Self-observing individuals are aware of why and when they show certain behaviours. It enables them to identify specific behaviours that need to be changed, enhanced or terminated for the sake of success (Manz & Neck, 2004). Self-observation entails increasing one's awareness of one's motivation for specific behaviours. This type of awareness is an essential first step toward behaviour modification and increased performance (Neck & Manz, 2013). When individuals possess accurate information regarding their current behaviour and performance, it becomes easier for them to effectively set behaviour-altering goals to improve themselves (Neck & Manz, 2013).

Self-goal setting

Another very crucial approach of the behaviour-focused strategy is self-goal setting. This strategy includes long-term life achievements and daily goals that influence a person's behaviour (Nouri & Godwin, 2003). Self-goal setting contributes to goal achievement and performance when goals are specific, challenging, and attainable (Locke & Latham, 1990). The process of setting challenging goals guides and motivates an individual to accomplish tasks that he or she would have set (Locke & Lathman, 1990). Moreover, self-goal setting is based on the goal setting theory, which suggests that setting challenging and specific goals can significantly increase individual performance levels (Nouri & Godwin, 2003). The process of setting and monitoring these goals leads naturally to the strategies of self-reward and self-cueing.

Positive self-reward

The third behavioural strategy is positive self-reward. It refers to the rewarding of oneself physically and mentally (Neck & Houghton, 2006). When compared to self-criticism, self-reward, whether real or abstract, as well as positive self-corrective feedback, have proved to positively affect employee motivation (Neck & Manz, 2013). Self-reward can aid significantly in motivating the individual to accomplish set goals (Neck & Manz, 2013) and can range from something small or intangible such as mentally congratulating oneself for an important accomplishment or something large and concrete like a special gift for oneself after successful completion of a demanding project (Neck & Houghton, 2006).

Self-punishment

Self-punishment is defined as the opposite of self-rewarding (Neck & Manz, 1992). However, Neck and Manz (2013) discourage heavy self-punishment as it may lead to impaired motivation and creativity. This approach therefore can be described best through self-reward. Self-reward and self-punishment are incentive modifications in which desirable behaviours are reinforced, while undesirable behaviours have aversive consequences such as being tough on oneself when one does not perform well (Neck & Manz, 2013).

Self-cueing

Self-cueing refers to using reminders that help focusing on what individuals need to accomplish, enabling employees to adjust their behaviour to improve performance (Houghton & Neck, 2002). Fostering those desired behaviours prior to their actual execution would enable an employee to avoid mistakes and correct them as they occur (Manz, 1992; Manz & Neck, 1999). It involves introducing positive environmental cues such as to-do lists and sticky notes and removing negative environmental cues that can serve as potential distractions such as a television and unproductive friends (Neck & Manz, 2013). A few examples of the external cues that can be used by individuals to help in keeping attention and effort focused goal attainment include lists, notes, screensavers, and motivational posters. Also, Neck and Manz (2013)'s self-leadership

model suggests that a person uses cues and constant practice to achieve a high level of self-leadership strategies which eventually increases their performance.

5.3.3.1.1 Constructive thought pattern strategies

The second self-leadership strategy is constructive thought pattern, which is defined by Neck and Houghton (2006) as the construction and maintenance of functional thinking patterns. Norris (2008) notes that it refers to how one thinks about motivation that creates positive ways of thinking. Constructive thought pattern strategies involve creating and maintaining functional patterns of positive habitual ways of thinking and destroying the negative destructive self-talk, replacing it with optimistic self-talk (Manz & Neck, 2004). This strategy can change thinking patterns and can positively impact outcome expectations (Boss & Sims, 2008). It involves the examination and alteration of self-dialogue, beliefs and assumptions, mental imagery and thinking patterns (Norris, 2008). These strategies are designed to facilitate the formation of positive and productive thought patterns and to create habitual ways of thinking that can constructively affect performance (Neck & Manz, 2013).

Empirical research across a variety of disciplines, ranging from sports and clinical psychology to education, provides strong support for the role of constructive thought patterns such as positive self-talk, and constructive mental imagery, and portrays them as effective means of improving individual performance (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Self-leadership through this strategy allows individuals to transform their dysfunctional thoughts into functional ones through a self-assessment process that would enable the substitution of non-rational beliefs with more rational ones (Neck & Manz, 2013). A constructive thought pattern is sometimes known as thought self-leadership and it involves the use and maintenance of constructive thoughts through specific mental strategies that include the use of (a) positive self-talk, (b) mental imagery, as well as the (c) evaluation of dysfunctional beliefs and assumptions (Neck & Manz, 2013). These three strategies are discussed in detail below:

a) *Positive self-talk*

Self-talk refers to covert internal dialogues. Positive self-talk is the opposite of negative self-talk that may result in negative emotional states and ineffective cognitive processes (Norris, 2008). Self-talk was originally defined as what we say to ourselves rather secretly that may facilitate self-influence and direct self-efficacy (Prussia et, al., 1998). Using positive self-talk, employees maintain a constant self-dialogue to influence positive emotional states and cognition. Based upon what employees covertly tell themselves, they can encourage more optimistic self-dialogue and suppress negative or pessimistic self-talk (Houghton & Jinkerson, 2007). By increasing one's awareness of the content of internal dialogue, an individual may be able to reduce or eliminate irrational and pessimistic self-dialogues while facilitating more optimistic ones.

The positive self-talk strategies influence employees' ability to self-lead through strategic cognitive thought patterns that regulate individual goal focus and goal motivation. Since these thought patterns tend to be reflective of habitual thinking (Houghton, Neck & Manz, 2003), an individual's repeated chain of thoughts may impact the extent to which they develop constructive thought processes within the workplace. Therefore, it can be argued that employees who engage in increasing levels of positive self-talk can influence their positive thought patterns and be more apt to self-leadership roles (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Above that, individuals may alter their negative self-talk into a more positive type of self-talk, for example, into more generally positive thoughts and behaviours; even during times of change and difficulty the positive talkers may still see hope (Houghton et al., 2003).

b) *Positive mental imagery*

Another strategy used in constructive thought patterns is mental imagery or visualising successful performance in advance of actual performance (Neck & Manz, 1992). It refers to the process of visualising or mentally practicing successful performance ahead of time (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Mental imagery is a process by which individuals can symbolically make and experience virtual

behaviours, which are similar to real ones. People who engage in positive mental imagery are more likely to engage in successful performance of the actual task than are those individuals who visualise negative imagery. Similarly, positive mental imagery impacts an individual's ability to self-lead by enhancing their constructive thought patterns through the creation and symbolic experiencing of imagined goal achievement (Manz & Neck, 1999). Employees picture themselves experiencing the desired results of a specific behavioural process before actually engaging in the process or before actually performing the necessary tasks for goal attainment (Houghton et al., 2003). It includes the reduction of discrepancies between current and desired states (Neck & Houghton, 2006), and such purposeful focus on a desired state allows the employee to better monitor, compare, and regulate current and desired states.

Research shows that mental imagery of positive moves and performance enhances the likelihood that an individual will perform more successfully (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Individuals who use mental imagery are able to experience the outcomes of their behaviour before their appearance in real life and thus strengthen their behaviour. Seligman (1991) argues that individuals tend to develop either optimistic or pessimistic thoughts. When a problem occurs, the optimist views it as a challenge and strives to solve it, while the pessimist believes that such a problem will endure and be disruptive or create conflict (Neck & Houghton, 2006). The increased use of imagination facilitates a more desirable outcome, therefore mental imagery leads to more diverse inputs, and seeing problems as opportunities rather than obstacles, which helps to increase the persistence necessary for implementing creative ideas (Neck & Manz, 2010).

c) *Recognising and replacing negative beliefs and assumptions*

Finally, recognising and replacing negative beliefs and assumptions is also very important. It is based on the idea that dysfunctional beliefs and assumptions have the potential to lead to habitual dysfunctional thinking processes, depression, unhappiness, and personal ineffectiveness (Neck & Manz, 2010). Self-leading individuals promote positive thought processes by eliminating the

negative beliefs and assumptions associated with dysfunctional thought processes and replacing them with positive beliefs and assumptions (Neck & Manz, 1992). Norris (2008) indicates that if one reduces the destructive thought patterns which adversely affect employee emotional and behavioural states, the employee's constructive and positive thought process capabilities are automatically and inherently increased. This is the ability that self-leading individuals possess and help them to monitor and regulate their thought patterns (Neck & Manz, 2013). Thought patterns are integrative and repetitive; therefore, individuals can adapt constructive or destructive thought patterns, which affect their emotional and behavioural state and reactions (Gagné & Deci, 2005). A good example is that individuals may alter their thought patterns to focus on potentially available opportunities in times of difficulties, rather than thinking about the difficulties as obstacles.

The nature of an individual's thought pattern affects his or her behaviours and outcomes and consequently affect job performance (Neck & Manz, 1992). The more positive the thoughts and beliefs are, the more efficient an individual can be and the more negative the thoughts and beliefs are, the more dysfunctional the thought process becomes. Examples of dysfunctional thinking processes include thinking that if performance is not perfect, it is viewed as a complete failure; secondly, the *mental filter,* which refers to individuals dwelling on a single negative detail while ignoring positive information; and finally disqualifying the positive, when individuals dismiss positive outcomes as irrelevant or atypical (Manz & Neck, 2004). Through identifying and changing these types of distorted and irrational beliefs and assumptions, individuals may be able to minimise dysfunctional thought processes and improve their cognitive effectiveness (Neck & Houghton, 2006).

5.3.3.1.2 Natural reward strategies

The last self-leadership strategy is the natural reward strategies that assist individuals to build pleasant and enjoyable features into their job activities so that the tasks themselves become naturally rewarding and enjoyable (Manz & Neck, 2004). These

strategies increase intrinsic motivation, self-determination, and feelings of competence (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Neck & Houghton, 2006). According to Neck and Manz (2013), natural rewards are defined as positive reinforcement of a result that is automatically built into the activity. There are two types of rewards explained in the natural reward system; these include rewards for tasks and rewards for thinking styles (Manz & Neck, 2004). Rewards for tasks refer to the conscious decision that individuals make to participate in a task for the natural reward and rewards for thinking styles are the actual focusing of thought on the natural reward (Neck & Houghton, 2006). The natural reward strategies exist to create situations in which employees find their task or activity inherently pleasurable and are therefore motivated simply because they enjoy what they are doing (Neck & Manz, 2013).

These strategies are aimed at creating situations in which a person is motivated or rewarded by inherently enjoyable aspects of the task or activity (Manz & Neck, 2004). They centre on more enjoyable aspects of an activity and are applied by focusing individual thoughts on the intrinsic rewards of the activity or the incentives built into specific tasks (Norris, 2008). This dimension has one sub-scale: focus thoughts on natural rewards–individuals being rewarded by the task itself. The conceptual foundations of natural rewards are laid on the intrinsic motivation theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In this theory there are two types of natural reward strategies: the first one involves building more pleasurable aspects into a given task so that the activity itself becomes inherently rewarding (Manz & Sims, 2001; Neck & Manz, 2013). The second strategy involves a changing of perceptions by focusing attention away from the less enjoyable aspects of a task and directing or refocusing attention on the task's naturally rewarding aspects (Manz & Sims, 2001; Neck & Manz, 2013). According to Neck and Houghton (2006), these two natural reward strategies are designed to help generate feelings of self-efficacy and self-determination, which in turn lead to improved performance in work-related behaviours.

Individuals can purposely focus thinking on the natural rewards that are part of task performance and thereby cognitively experience intrinsic motivation without necessarily altering the physical nature of tasks (Houghton et al., 2003; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Thus,

by embedding tasks with natural rewards, individuals experience greater perceptions of control over their work. The importance of intrinsic rewards has been emphasised in writings on personal initiative and proactive personality revealing that action-oriented, persistent, self-starting individuals tend to initiate and adapt work situations to foster and motivate their own higher performance (Frese & Frey, 2001).

5.4 Models of self-leadership

In support of the above described theory of self-leadership strategies, self-leadership can also be explained in terms of the comprehensive model proposed by Manz and Neck (2004) which indicates that the key strategies of self-leadership influence and complement one another.
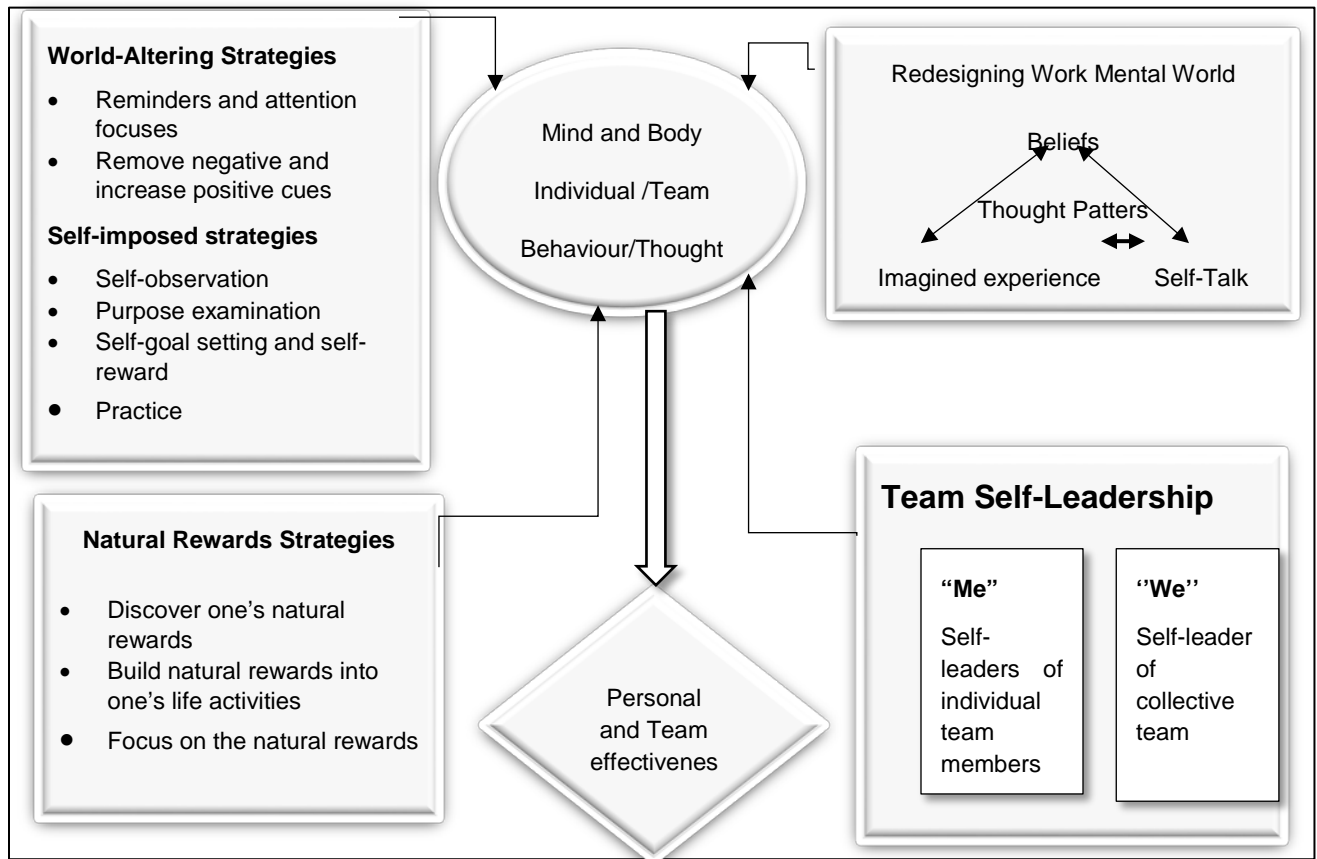
Figure 5.3 Comprehensive self-leadership model

(Manz & Neck, 2004).

5.4.1 Comprehensive self-leadership model

As indicated in Figure 5.3 above, the mind and body at the centre illustrate the ultimate focus of the concept of self-leadership. As discussed above, the primary concern of self-leadership is one's behaviour, thoughts and how this affects an individual's personal effectiveness. The above diagram illustrates self-leadership strategies and how they impact on individual's personal and team effectiveness. The model clearly outlines the reciprocal influence between the person's psychological world and the corresponding thoughts and behaviour. Manz and Neck (2004) provide a comprehensive systematic approach to self-leadership in its totality. For the purpose of this study, this model was used, because it is in line with the definition (see paragraph 5.2) and theory adapted for this study (paragraph 5.3.3), and it aligns very well with the self-leadership questionnaire adapted for this study (see paragraph 5.9).

5.4.2 A meso-level model of self-leadership dynamics
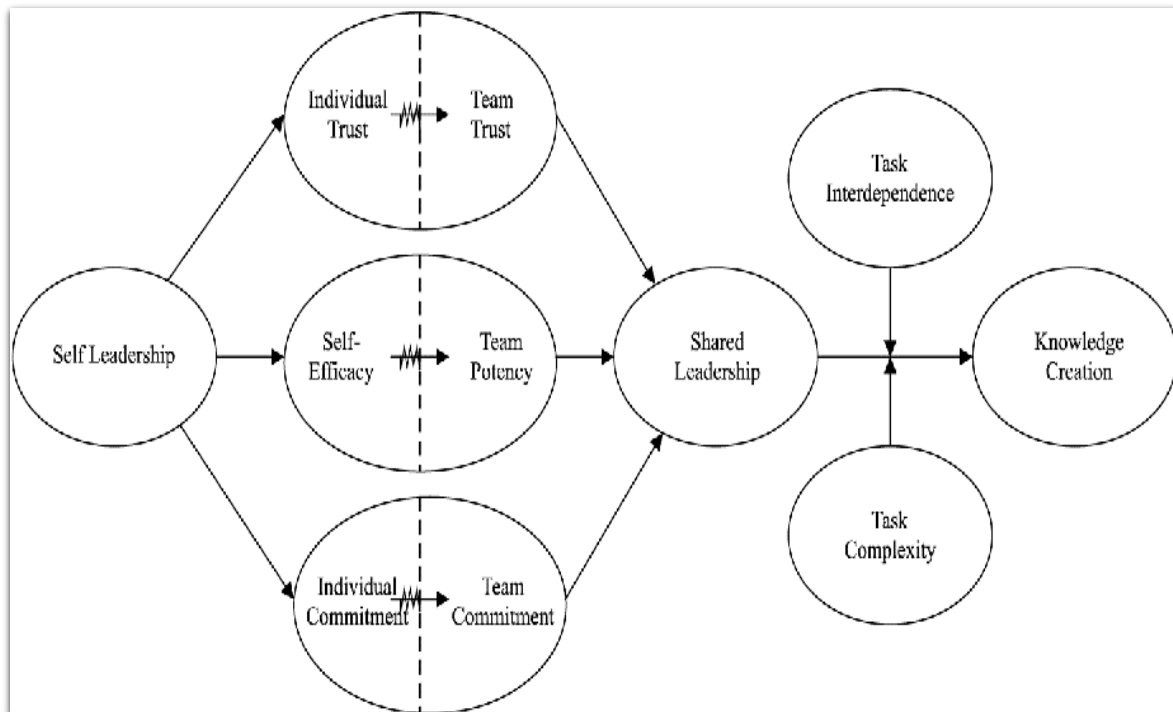
Figure 5.4 Meso-level model of self-leadership

(Bligh, Pearce & Kohles, 2006).

Another model used to understand self-leadership is the meso-level model proposed by (Bligh, Pearce & Kohles, 2006). This model, as indicated in Figure 5.4 above, is based on the idea that, there is an increased emphasis on team-based knowledge work as well as work that involves significant investment of intellect by professionals. Thus, organisations are forced to expand on the traditional models of leadership to include more complex models that accommodate self-leadership and shared leadership. This model focuses on the relationship between self-leadership and shared leadership in the process of completing a certain task (Bligh et al., 2006).

5.5 Consequences of self-leadership

A close assessment of the concept of self-leadership clearly indicates a variety of personal benefits associated with the concept, which include sense of achievement, increased happiness, decreased stress, better relationships, and resilience (Vogel & Feldman, 2009). In addition, there are also organisational benefits associated with self-leadership that include having an engaged and empowered work-force, improved goal setting and results, faster and better decision making, more creativity, innovation, and collaborative teams (Neck & Manz, 2013).

As indicated in Figure 5.5 below, self-leadership literature has suggested a number of predictable outcomes associated with the application of self-leadership strategies (Carmeli, Meitar & Weisberg, 2006). As shown on the diagram, the most discovered outcomes include commitment, independence, creativity, trust, potency, positive affect, job satisfaction, psychological empowerment, and self-efficacy (Neck & Manz, 2013). These outcomes may serve as the mechanisms that affect individual, group and organisational performance (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Therefore, practicing self-leadership strategies may contribute to a number of predictable outcomes and ultimately lead to enhanced performance (Van Zyl et al., 2016).
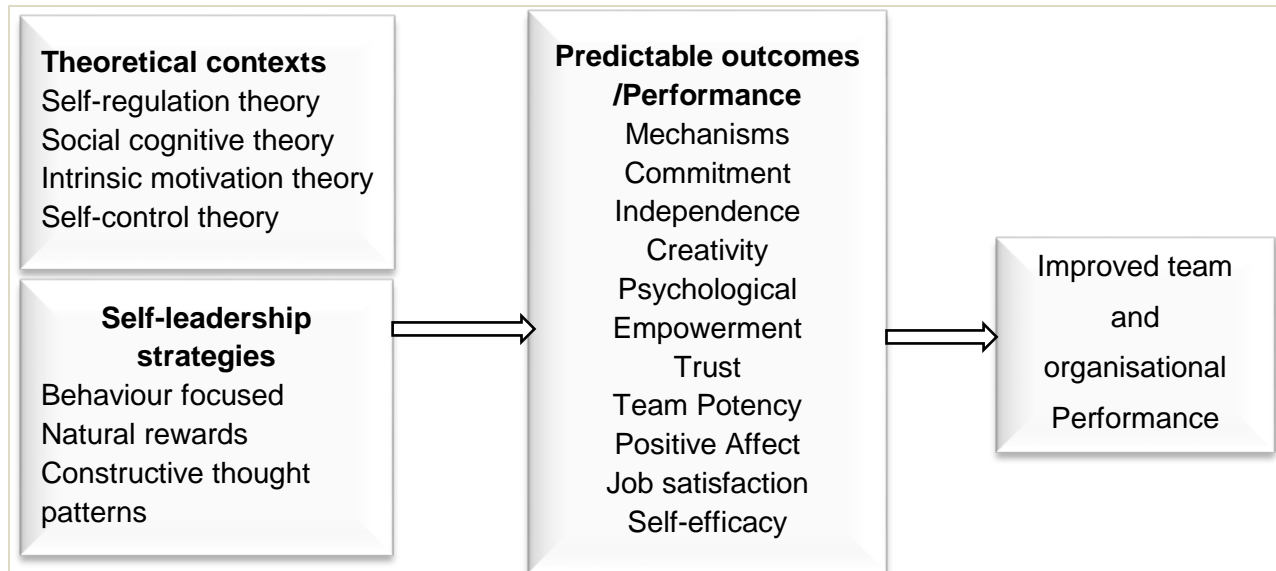
Figure 5.5 Self-leadership predictable outcomes

(Neck & Houghton, 2006).

In addition to the above, positive relationships between self-leadership and proactive performance have also been demonstrated, including self- and supervisor-rated innovative behaviours Carmeli et al. (2006), work role innovation Curral and Marques-Quinteiro (2009), and organisational initiative taking. Further, Van Zyl (2009) indicates that some of the outcomes of self-leadership include psychological empowerment, follower commitment, independent behaviour, creativity as well as organisational innovation. Similarly, Houghton and Neck (2002) as cited by Van Zyl (2009), echoed the same sentiments, pointing out that trust, positive effect, team potency job satisfaction, and self-efficiency are important outcomes of self-leadership. Grobler, Warnich, Carrel and Elbert (2006) also state that the application of self-leadership to daily work tasks can assist individuals to work against self-neglect, fear, and anxiety, thus helping managers to lead in a more preferred way towards the success of the organisation at large.

5.6 Factors affecting self-leadership

Self-leadership is one of several terms that represent self-influence, but it indicates an expanded view of self-control that includes both behavioural and cognitive perspectives

of how individuals influence themselves (Jooste & Roux, 2014). Thus, it is broadly defined as both thoughts and actions that people use to influence themselves, and implies that people look within themselves for sources of motivation and control (Brayant & Kazan, 2012). Self-leadership behaviour can be thought of as being influenced by both a latent trait–need for autonomy–and the leadership context in which an individual works. With that in mind, in 2006, Neck (2006) identified a number of factors that may influence self-leadership. Among them are individual differences pointing out that the way people respond to opportunities for enhanced self-leadership differ according to personality (Neck, 2006). Social context can influence subsequent individual behavioural change and lead to self-leadership. In addition, other very important factors that influence self-leadership include having an empowering leader as a supervisor, control and influence over own job, need for autonomy, external context, and follower as a contingency element (Neck, 2006).

a) *Individual differences*

According to the individual difference belief, some people want to be self-leaders; others do not want to be (Yukl, 2002). For that reason, managers should not expect all employees to self-lead or to be zealous about self-leadership. However, it should be noted that, while this view may represent conventional wisdom, little empirical research has supported this belief (Neck, 2006). Thus, from a more rigorous theoretical viewpoint, some employees are more comfortable as followers and do not expect to be leaders in the near future. However, other employees are not satisfied with being followers forever, and allowing them to exercise self-leadership is one way of empowering them. Therefore, individual behaviour, including self-leadership, can be a reflection of one's personality, traits, or preference structure.

b) *Empowering leadership*

Another factor that influences self-leadership as indicated by Neck (2006), is the presence of an empowering leader. There are several reasons leaders might engage in empowering behaviours toward followers, which include that leaders are limited in terms of time, energy, knowledge, and scope of their

authority and some followers might be more highly motivated if given greater decision authority (Neck, 2006). In addition, followers often have first-hand information and solutions to issues associated with their jobs than the leaders; hence, through self-leadership strategies such followers can provide more constructive solutions to problems (Breevaart et al., 2016). Van Zyl (2014) notes that by empowering followers, leaders enlist the aid of many to cope with uncertainty beyond their own limits, thus followers have flexibility to engage their own ability more fully to help the organisation enhance competitiveness. The well-known rich man Bill Gates advocates the value of empowerment, noting that "In the new organisation the worker is no longer a cog … but is an intelligent part of the overall process." (Gates, 1999, p. 289). In short, when an individual follower has an empowering leader, that individual's chances of developing and using self-leadership strategies are high.

c) *Need for autonomy*

According to Neck (2006), need for autonomy is a follower's desire or predisposition to be independent and relatively free of external control. It is a trait, predisposition, or an individual difference variable that refers to a personal need or eagerness to express one's own initiative in doing one's job. Need for autonomy influences self-leadership in that individuals high in need for autonomy make use of cognitive and behavioural control strategies to succeed (Hsu, Wang, Chen & Dahlgaard-Park, 2014). However, it should be noted that need for autonomy is different from self-leadership, in that need for autonomy is a latent trait, a "personality" variable, while self-leadership is behaviour or an actual manifestation of self-control (Yukl, 2002). It seems sensible that not every employee desires self-control to the same extent of self-leading. Some might desire it more than others. Some employees have a higher need for autonomy and some have a low need for autonomy. Thus, a leader's empowering influence on followers is likely to be stronger when the follower's need for autonomy is high (Yukl, 2002).

d) Control and influence over own job

Modern employees increasingly view their jobs as a means of personal fulfilment, not just a pay check; thus they look forward to being empowered (Yukl, 2002). Beyond business benefits, leaders must consider the changing expectations of the work force and work towards making the environment more empowering by releasing control (Neck, 2006). Employees are increasingly expecting control and influence over their own jobs and over the decisions that are related to their own jobs. Such expectation requires that leaders interact with followers in ways that are different from traditional leadership allowing the followers to exercise self-leadership strategies (Neck, 2006). With reference to that, several terms have been coined to articulate employee self-control, and among those are self-regulation, self-management, self-leadership, and participation. Among those self-leadership has become more popular, because it is associated with a range of specific self-control behaviours required in the workplace.

e) Follower as a contingency element

According to Yukl (2002), self-leadership is also influenced by making the follower a contingency element. Contingency theory explains how leader behaviour typically varies from one situation to another indicating that in leadership, general principles may not provide sufficient guidance to be meaningful and that situational elements may be useful (Yukl, 2002). One example of a contingency investigation found empowering leadership to be effective for less structured problems and directive leadership to be effective for more structured problems (Hsu et al., 2014). In the circumstances under which managers would use delegation and consultation, results indicated that delegation was used when subordinates were perceived to have high competence and longer tenure with the manager (Alves et al., 2006). Thus, contingency is based on some attribute of the follower; meaning that there is an interaction between some individual trait of the follower and the empowering behaviour of the leader.

f) *External contexts*

The external context can also influence one's self-leadership behaviour (Yukl, 2002). As highlighted above, empowering leadership is a form of leader behaviour that is primarily intended to enhance follower self-leadership. In this case, leadership is viewed as an important external vehicle to provide support through which an individual exercises self-leadership (Neck, 2006). Since leaders can influence the work climate within which followers perform their tasks, they are external forces that either encourage or diminish the development of self-leadership in individuals. Empowering leadership is more likely to have an effect on follower self-leadership when followers desire to be empowered (Yukl, 2002). On the other hand, directive leaders' power stems primarily from formal position power in the organisation and is more likely to hold and exercise power over followers. The directive leader sizes up the situation, dictates and commands, and expects compliance from the subordinates that is generally contrary to the philosophy of empowerment. Hence, by directing the behaviour of others, followers' self-leadership would be diminished (Yukl, 2002). Empowering leadership is an external factor that enhances follower's self-leadership, yet directive leadership is a command and control form of leadership that diminishes self-leadership among followers with a high need for autonomy.

5.7 Self-leadership in the banking sector

Very few studies have been published on self-leadership in the banking sector. However, recently Kor (2016) investigated the mediating effects of self-leadership on perceived entrepreneurial orientation and innovative work behaviour in the banking sector. The findings indicate that in general, low-level banking sector employees such as tellers report low levels of self-leadership, yet those in managerial positions report high levels of self-leadership. In addition, participants who displayed innovative work behaviour also reported high levels of self-leadership. The implications for practitioners in the banking sector are to facilitate innovative work behaviour as a way to achieve self-leadership. In addition, Gomes, Curral, Caetano and Quinteiro (2015) note that

within the banks, self-leadership strategies vary between individuals and that they all should be fostered in order to promote individual innovation. From the above it is therefore clear that research in the area of self-leadership in the banking sector has generally focused on self-leadership and innovative behaviour. Little is known on the effect of self-leadership on work engagement in the banking sector, hence the current study seeks to understand how self-leadership of banking sector employees affect their level of work engagement and ultimately their performance.

5.8 Developing self-leadership

Given the positive outcomes of self-leadership described above in paragraph 5.5, it is clear that the concept is crucial and can be developed for the benefit of several organisations. Previous work in the area has implied that self-leadership competencies can hardly be developed through formal education, which involves theoretical input (Neck & Manz, 2004). However, self-leadership can be learnt and Kolb (1984) notes that learning is a process of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. Experiential learning refers to a holistic, adaptive process, which comprises of integrated human functioning such as thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving (Kolb, 1984). Learning involves transactions between the person and the environment and can be seen as a lifelong process of creating knowledge. It is an active, self-directed process that can be applied in everyday life (Kolb, 1984). Following this idea, self-leadership development can use the principles of physical experience and awareness along with intellectual reflection to strengthen several self-leadership competencies. These competencies are seen as a combination of skills, cognitions, and behaviours, used to become a capable self-leader (Houghton, Dawley & DiLiello, 2012). The process of developing those competencies is understood as a lifelong learning process of doing and reflecting.

In addition, Tat and Zeitel-Bank (2013) present a learning method that integrates the self-leadership strategies, including behaviour focused, natural reward and constructive thought strategies. To explain this learning method, Tat and Zeitel-Bank (2013) note that there are stages that are followed during the learning process. The first stage is the *concrete experience* where individuals start with concrete physical experience,

practicing special physical exercises, aimed at developing self-leadership competencies, such as concentration, self-awareness, self-discipline, creating positive thought patterns, flexibility and balance, empathy, communication, as well as relaxation. This stage focuses strongly on experiencing (Tat & Zeitel-Bank, 2013).

The next stage is *reflective observation:* at this stage, individuals observe themselves and others, from a helicopter perspective and then reflect on behaviours and thoughts. This process enables them to analyse and assess existing thought patterns and behaviours due to possible causes, including internal and external factors. It is during this stage that individuals put emphasis on *reflecting* (Tat & Zeitel-Bank, 2013). Based on the previous behavioural and thought assessment due to desirability or undesirability, at the stage of *thinking* individuals might create new patterns of thoughts and behaviours by shaping perceptions as well as adopting behaviours, including rewards. The stage that follows is *active experimentation* where individuals test their abstract concepts as designed in the former stage and in new situations might react according to new thought patterns (Tat & Zeitel-Bank, 2013). This stage focuses mainly on acting. Individuals run through cycles several times and get in touch with all stages in a recursive process corresponding to their individual characteristics, the subject matter and the situation.

In summary, individuals are more likely to develop self-leadership competencies when they go through a real experience on a physical level over a certain period of time. Specifically, Tat and Zeitel-Bank (2013) assert that people are able to develop selected self-leadership competencies through physical experience and awareness along with intellectual reflection. Based on the above, an innovative approach to develop as well as to strengthen self-leadership competencies for sustainable success has been designed. In short, developing self-leadership starts from the mind; thus, self-leadership's cognitive strategies place particular importance on a person's ability to establish and maintain constructive thought patterns (Kotze, 2017). Just as individuals develop both functional and dysfunctional behavioural habits, they also develop functional and dysfunctional patterns of thinking through encouraging good thoughts and discouraging bad ones. These mind-sets then influence individual perceptions, the way they process

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information, and the choices they make in an almost automatic way and that is how self-leadership can be developed (Neck & Barnard, 1996).

5.9 Self-leadership and psychological capital

Scant evidence is available on the relationship between self-leadership and PsyCap; however, identifying relationships among their sub dimensions may provide some light on how the two are related. To begin with, psychological empowerment is one of the commonly expected outcomes of self-leadership (Houghton & Yoho, 2005).There are a variety of personal benefits associated with self-leadership, including sense of achievement, increased happiness, increased efficacy, decreased stress, better relationships, as well as resilience (Bryant & Kazan, 2012). Self-efficacy and resilience are dimensions of PsyCap and are outcomes of self-leadership therefore a relationship exists between self-leadership and PsyCap dimensions.

In addition, Van Zyl et al. (2016) state that middle level leaders give rise to a higher level of psychological functioning: for example they handle stress better and are more optimistic, resilient, and effective. In a similar vein, a growing body of evidence has revealed a positive link between self-leadership and work outcomes, indicating that individuals who possess good self-leadership qualities know how to achieve high levels of self-direction and self-motivation (Houghton et al., 2003). These individuals learn to lead themselves through constructive thought patterns; even during adversity, they become more resilient. Hence, they are able to tackle a problem and suggest solutions more effectively (Bryant & Kazan, 2012). In addition, self-leading individuals are advantageous to organisations, because they are satisfied with their work and their career; they perform better and have higher self-efficacy (Murphy & Ensher, 2001).

Another PsyCap dimension, hope, can be enhanced by focusing on goal design acceptance and commitment which is related to the self-leadership aspect of self-goal setting and through developing alternate pathways and overcoming obstacles related to self-reward and self-punishment (Luthans, Avey & Patera, 2008). Optimism has also been shown to be amenable to development through a three-step process, which includes leniency for the past, related to self-punishment; appreciation for the present,

related to self-reward; and opportunity seeing the future (Avey, Luthans & Jensens, 2009). An employee with a clear understanding of his or her work-related matters has a more realistic explanatory style that attributes positive events to personal, permanent, and pervasive causes, which are related to self-determination and natural reward strategies (Luthans et al., 2007).

In summary, considerab*l*e research in the area has been conducted showing a great deal of positive relationships between self-leadership and desirable work outcomes Mansor, Darus and Dali (2013) with self-efficacy as perhaps the most commonly mentioned self-leadership outcome variable. According to Neck and Manz (2013), empirical support for self-efficacy has been shown as a primary mechanism through which self-leadership affects employee performance. Based on this, it can be concluded that a positive relationship exists between self-leadership and dimensions of PsyCap.

5.10 Self-leadership and job embeddedness

Although the concept of self-leadership has expanded recently, little is known about its relationship with job embeddedness. However, Manz and Neck (2004) indicate that effective self-leadership is not found on narcissistic or blindly independent employee behaviours with total disregard to the work group or organisation. Self-leadership emphasises how individuals rely on links in the organisations (Manz & Neck, 2004). It involves a coordinated effort between the employee and the work group as a whole and strengthens the relationships within the organisation. Based on the person-environment approach of Kristof (1996) the degree to which an individual's characteristics interact within his or her environment determines how long that individual will stay with the organisation. Self-leadership strategies may be viewed as a person's characteristics when engaging a work environment, therefore if a person has the tendency to engage in self-leadership behaviours, then the task complexity and the level of enjoyment may be higher as compared to one who is not self-leading (Kristof, 1996). Such an individual would stay with the organisation (Vogel & Feldman, 2009).

According to Hoffman and Woehr (2006), a higher degree of fit in the workplace predicts positive employee production. An individual's person-organisation fit and engagement in

self-leadership strategies may determine his or her level of organisation production. Therefore, there is a link between self-leadership and job embeddedness as sub-components of organisational fit.

However, contrary to the above, Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman and Johnson (2005) argue that since self-leading individuals would logically be expected to be guided by internal rather than external standards, it thus seems possible that self-leading individuals may be less committed to organisations and more likely to leave if the organisation does not have the same goals as the individual. This indicates a possible negative relationship between self-leadership and job embeddedness. Moreover, people who work for longer periods in their current job, are likely to develop skills that are relevant and specific to the domain, thereby tackling problems in a more focused and relevant way and eventually becoming more marketable, professionally attractive, and more vulnerable to leave the organisation (Kristof et al., 2005).

However, contrary to that, employees with high self-leadership skills will exhibit better performance, even if times are difficult, because they know how to navigate and manage themselves in a relatively wide variety of circumstances and can stay even longer with the organisation despite any organisational challenges (Vogel & Feldman, 2009). An effective self-leadership perspective would encourage individuals to find their own personal identity and mode of contribution as part of establishing a group or organisation that produces synergistic performance and make it difficult for such individuals to part with the organisation, thus embed them in their jobs (Hoffman & Woehr, 2006). Therefore, if effective self-leadership involves achieving equilibrium between focusing on the cohesiveness of a work group and focusing on the value and identity of each individual employee, the concept equally explains the dimension of fit and link in job embeddedness (Hoffman & Woehr, 2006). Lastly, Frayne and Geringer (2000) indicate that activities that are naturally rewarding can increase competence and give individuals a feeling of self-control and purpose, which consequently create an enjoyable work environment and pleasurable job where individuals fit well and possess strong links, thereby increasing performance and staying longer in the organisation.

5.11 Self-leadership measures

The discussion above has unpacked the concept of self-leadership, including the theories, models and how they relate to other variables. The concept has greatly enjoyed an enduring popularity among academics and business practitioners due to its strong intuitive appeal and applied nature (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Nevertheless, it has been subject to two major criticisms involving conceptual distinctiveness as well as measurement issues (Manz & Neck, 2004).This might be attributed to lack of extensive empirical research, which was generally blamed on a lack of measuring instruments. Fortunately, literature on the concept has identified four self-leadership scales so far.

To begin with, Cox (1993) designed a 34-question instrument to measure self-leadership. Anderson and Prussia (1997) followed that, they developed and published the self-leadership questionnaire (SLQ), which is a 50-item instrument but which had lower reliability. The scale was based largely on self-leadership assessment prototypes created by (Manz & Sims, 1991). It represented an excellent preliminary effort in self-leadership scale development; however, this instrument was plagued by a number of psychometric problems and required further refinement. Out of interest, Houghton and Neck (2002) researched these two assessment scales (SLQ) and Cox's (1993) questionnaire and noted a few flaws in the structural validity. As a result of these findings Houghton and Neck (2002) created their own assessment scale built on the previous two scales and named it the revised self-leadership questionnaire (RSLQ). The creation of the RSLQ involved eliminating and rewriting the ambiguous items from the SLQ as well as integrating additional items from a previously unpublished self-leadership assessment instrument (Cox, 1993). The RSLQ has been presented and has shown a greater degree of reliability and construct validity as compared to the earlier SLQ (Manz & Neck, 2004).

Preliminary applications of this instrument indicate that the RSLQ may prove to be an effective self-leadership measure with positive potential for facilitating additional empirical self-leadership research. In fact, the RSLQ has demonstrated reasonably good reliability and validity across a number of empirical studies for example (Curral & Marques-Quinteiro 2009; Houghton, Bonham, Houghton & Jinkerson, 2007). In addition,

the RSLQ has been translated into at least six foreign languages and the translated versions of the scale have generally shown good reliabilities and validities together with stable factor structures that further confirm the original findings of Houghton and Neck (2002) and support a significant degree of cross-cultural validity for the self-leadership construct.

In addition, the scale possesses relatively strong psychometric properties and the research findings of the past several years have been very encouraging and to date appear to confirm the RSLQ as an effective measure of self-leadership. However, the instrument suffers from its lengthy considerations. It is clear that the full RSLQ, which includes 35 items, can become a challenging issue when self-leadership is being examined along with other variables of interest, such as the present study, since overall survey length can quickly become unwieldy, leading to rater fatigue, inaccuracy, and missing survey data. Some researchers have simply chosen to shorten the scale themselves (Andressen & Konradt, 2007; Curral & Marques-Quinteiro, 2009). Recently Houghton, Dawley and DiLiello (2012) published the abbreviated self-leadership questionnaire (ASLQ), used to measure global self-leadership in situations similar to those defined in this particular study. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the ASLQ developed and validated for use as a general assessment of self-leadership by Houghton et al. (2012) was used. Additional items to measure natural rewards and self-cueing were adopted from the RSLQ.

This instrument was chosen following Houghton et al. (2012) recommendation that the ASLQ will be useful for researchers who wish to measure self-leadership as one variable of interest in the context of a larger model and who therefore find it impractical to use the full 35-item RSLQ. Therefore, it suits the study since self-leadership was examined along with other variables. In addition, the scale is appropriate and is in line with the definition in paragraph 5.2, the theory in paragraph 5.3.3, and the model in paragraph 5.4.1.

5.12 Recent trends in self-leadership

Literature on self-leadership, is predominantly old, except a few studies which addressed the construct in general without integrating it with other constructs. Just like PsyCap, self-leadership strategies have also gained popularity as possible personal resources that can be used by organisations to boost work engagement (Kotze, 2017). More recent studies have investigated the role of PsyCap, self-leadership, and mindfulness in work engagement (Leroy, Anseel, Dimitrova & Sels, 2013). The results suggest that both self-leadership strategies and mindfulness are relevant personal resources within the workplace, crucial to sustain work engagement. Empirical evidence of a statistically significant positive relationship between self-leadership and work engagement is emerging. Even though studies indicate a relationship between self-leadership and work engagement Kotze (2017); Shaoping et al. (2015) the researcher could not find any research addressing the direct relationship between self-leadership and PsyCap. However, the sub-dimensions of self-leadership interact well with psychological capacities. According to Ugurluoglu, Saygili, Ozer and Santas (2013), self-observation helps people to become aware of why, how, and when they display certain behaviour and so avoid unproductive behaviour, which facilitate positivity.

Research in the area has also viewed psychological empowerment as another commonly predicted outcome of self-leadership. Indeed, self-leadership has often been proclaimed as a primary mechanism for facilitating empowerment (Lim, 2015; Shaoping, Huachun & Yongheng, 2015; Tabaziba, 2015). For example, Breevaart, Bakker and Demerouti (2014) state that daily self-management (comprising five strategies: self-goal setting, self-reward, self-punishment, self-observation, and self-cueing) was positively related to employees' resourcefulness and increased their daily work engagement. Self-leadership enables employees to motivate themselves, achieve required standards, and optimise their work environment. Since self-leadership entails self-observation Ugurluoglu et al. (2013), it should also enable employees to create alternative pathways (inspired by hope) in order to achieve goals. When constructive thought processes and positive self-talk are implemented, higher psychological functioning (greater optimism

and higher levels of resilience) is expected (Wu et al., 2012; Ugurluoglu et al., 2013). Therefore, the personal resources of self-leadership influence PsyCap positively.

5.13 Summary

The chapter presented literature on self-leadership. The discussion focused on defining and providing related theories addressing the self-leadership concept. A comprehensive discussion of the self-leadership strategies (constructive thought patterns, behavioural strategies and natural rewards) was provided. An explanation of how self-leadership relates to PsyCap and job embeddedness was also provided. The chapter closed with an outline of how the construct is measured, providing the different scales available. The following chapter focuses on integrating the four variables under investigation.

CHAPTER 6
INTEGRATION OF CONSTRUCTS

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapters focused on presenting literature on psychological capital, self-leadership and job embeddedness. This section provides an overview of the literature related to the interaction between the sub-dimensions of the constructs as well as the indirect relationships between them. The chapter begins with a discussion on the relationship between PsyCap dimensions and work engagement, towards the end, the indirect relationships are presented and a model based on the literature reviewed is constructed. The conceptual model is tested in Chapter 8.

6.2 Relationships between sub-dimensions of constructs

6.2.1 PsyCap sub-components and work engagement dimensions

Chapter 2 clearly outlined that psychological capital and work engagement are related; the presence of the positive attributes that make life worth living can lead us to goodness and excellence (Seligman, 2012). Though the two constructs share some similarities, PsyCap is based on what we feel, while engagement is about the concept of flow–finding ourselves merged with the object of our involvement and of our focused concentration; losing ourselves in the moment (Seligman, 2012). As highlighted earlier, PsyCap is made up of four psychological capacities (hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy), while work engagement is made up of vigour, dedication, and absorption. Recent research has proved that the sub-components of PsyCap and the dimensions of work engagement are related. An applicable example is found in Simons and Buitendach (2013) who state that personal resources, such as self-efficacy and optimism, had a positive relationship with work engagement dimensions of vigour and dedication. In addition, PsyCap dimensions of self-efficacy, hope, and optimism were found as significant contributors in explaining variances in work engagement over time (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Similarly, engaged employees possess personal resources such as self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience, which are all dimensions of PsyCap and

self-esteem that help them control the impact on their environment successfully (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Luthans et al., 2008).

Sweetman and Luthans (2010) conceptualised the relationship between PsyCap and work engagement as being a reciprocal one; specifically, they theorise components of engagement such as vigour as relating to efficacy in motivating the effort, hope in providing the willpower and developing alternative pathways to achievement, and optimism in expecting future success. Resilience theorises the continued pursuit of goals and dedication to the efficacy related to involvement in one's work (Bakker, 2017), as well as optimism in attributions of significance, pride, and resilience, continuing in the face of challenging obstacles and adversity. Also, absorption is seen to relate mostly to efficacy, optimism, and resilience (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010). Therefore, the dimensions of the two concepts interact a great deal.

Moreover, Sweetman and Luthans (2010) regard efficacy and resilience as contributing to all three dimensions of work engagement; optimism to dedication and absorption, and hope to vigour and dedication. Bakker et al. (2007) theorise that the relationship between specifically self-efficacy and employee well-being may also be reciprocal. Xanthopoulou et al. (2007) illustrated that personal resources, such as self-efficacy, organisational-based self-esteem, and optimism partially mediated between job resources and work engagement. Even though much is known on the relationship between work engagement and PsyCap, Avey, Luthans and Mhatre (2008); Avey et al. (2011), and Sweetman and Luthans (2010), have called for more research into the antecedents of PsyCap to advance understanding on the interaction between PsyCap dimensions and work engagement components.

Yavas et al. (2013) state that high levels of hope leads to frequent positive moods and positive goal directed outlooks, which result in dedication. Similarly, Karatepe (2014) indicates that employees high in hope dedicatedly and energetically work toward their goal and task achievement until they succeed; therefore, hope leads to physical and emotional engagement. Another recent study by Kotze notes that hopeful employees experience high levels of engagement in their work since they have more goal-orientated strategies and are more motivated to achieve their goals (Kotze, 2017). In

turn, these employees perform well in service delivery and complaint-handling processes. Youssef and Luthans (2007) maintain that though PsyCap and work engagement relationships have been supported empirically in various organisational contexts and more research should be done in the area since the constructs seem to offer more than what practitioners imagine.

6.2.2 Job embeddedness components and work engagement dimensions.

Chapter 2 proved that both work engagement and job embeddedness belong to the positive psychology family and the two constructs are related. As previously mentioned, job embeddedness is made up of three factors, namely organisational links, sacrifice, and fit. Takawira (2014) points out that links, fit, and sacrifice to organisation correlated significantly and positively with the work engagement sub-dimensions. Fit and links to organisation both had a significant correlation of medium practical effect size with the sub components of work engagement, such as vigour, dedication, and absorption. In addition, the subcomponent of job embeddedness sacrifice to an organisation was stated to possess a significant correlation of medium practical effect on vigour, dedication, and a moderate significant correlation with absorption (Takawira, 2014). In general, the results of Takawira (2014) indicate a significant relationship between the participants' job embeddedness and work engagement.

In addition, the JD-R model clearly indicates that among the job resources available to employees, social support networks are the most well-known types of work characteristics that are functional in achieving work goals (Bakker, Demerouti & Euwema, 2005). These social networks are the organisational links in job embeddedness. They are characterised as formal or informal social ties to people in an organisation, and can be considered as job resources that foster work engagement (Widianto et al., 2012). These social support networks seen as links are instrumental in buffering the negative effects of job demands on work strain and are critical in reducing the effects of work overload on employees (Bakker et al., 2005).

An applicable example of such a scenario is a supportive and helpful supervisor who can be viewed as both a link and a job resource, because managers can be key

resources for information advice (see paragraph 2.5.1) and support to complete challenging assignments, providing emotional support, as well as serving as a role model to the employees (Bakker & Bal, 2010). As an employee develops an increasing number of formal and informal connections to other people within the organisation, their social support network is enlarged and viewed as job resources that can boost energy (vigour) at work (Widianto et al., 2012).

In terms of organisational fit, the job embeddedness theory stipulates that perceived fit between one's knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) and the requirements of the job will result in organisational fit (Mitchell et al., 2001). Again, the level of perceived match between an individual's personal values, career goals, as well as aspirations and that of the organisation's culture and direction all predict organisational fit. Those employees who perceive congruence between their own values and goals and those of the organisations are said to perceive high organisational fit (Mitchell et al., 2001). When employees perform work that is highly tied to their KSAs and personal values, they experience positive feelings that make them feel useful and realise their efforts are worthwhile and they get absorbed; thus, they achieve engagement (Bakker & Bal, 2010).

Previous literature on value congruence has noted that when an organisation expects a set of behaviours from employees that are closely tied or congruent with how employees prefer to see themselves, employees are likely to fully invest their physical, psychological, and emotional effort into the set of duties that make up their jobs, and eventually become more dedicated (Kristof, 1996). In a similar vein, Maslach and Leiter (1997) argue that fit between the characteristics of an individual and the environment of the job, known as person-job congruity, is related to work engagement, hence the greater the congruity between the job and the person, the greater the likelihood of work engagement.

The job embeddedness aspect of sacrifice entails the loss that an employee will suffer as a result of leaving the organisation (Mitchell et al., 2001). Employees who have many social relationships at work, or who holds seniority over other co-workers, values particular benefits, or has advancement opportunities may experience a high level of

perceived sacrifice if he or she were to leave the organisation (Mitchell et al., 2001). Incorporating this to the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), these aspects of the job may also be viewed as job resources because they are aspects of a job that are valued and motivating for employees. Therefore, employees may be reluctant to give up their colleagues, advancement opportunities, perks and benefits, and consequently decide to stay with the organisation.

This assertion is also supported by the conservation of resources theory (COR theory) of Hobfoll (1989), who posits that individuals seek to obtain, retain, and protect resources that they personally value. In this scenario, employees may be motivated to protect and maintain social resources, including developed relationships with colleagues, as well as personal resources such as valued benefits, and perks one may have attained like seniority and status within a job. Thus, to prevent the loss of these valued resources, individuals invest personal resources to protect the loss of tangible external resources (Hobfoll & Shirom, 2000). With reference to the above discussion, it can be concluded that job embeddedness and its components have a positive effect on work engagement dimensions.

6.2.3 Self-leadership strategies and Work engagement sub-components

The relationship between self-leadership strategies and work engagement dimensions is clearly explained by (Neck & Houghton, 2006). At the heart of self-leadership is the feeling of self-control and self-determination and from the literature it is clearly outlined that employees become more engaged in their work on the days that they have more control over how and when to perform their work (Breevaart et al., 2014; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). It is therefore likely that employees become more vigorous, dedicated, and immersed in their work in the weeks or days that they use more self-leadership strategies (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Several recent researches indicate that feelings of control and self-determination are requisites for employees to make changes in their job and consequently become more engaged in their work (Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli & Hetland, 2012; Tims, Bakker & Derks, 2013).

In a recent survey by Shaoping, Huachun and Yongheng (2015), results indicate the existence of significant correlations between all the strategies of self-leadership and the dimensions of work engagement for school headmasters. The study further indicates that a clear job objective, emphasis on the value of the job itself, and neglecting the disappointing side of the job, only thinking about its positive meaning, increase the self-leadership ability of employees and finally improve their work engagement as well. In addition, Shaoping et al. (2015) indicate that self-goal setting (a strategy of self-leadership) has the closest relation to work engagement with a prominent linear relation. Consistent with that, in a recent study by Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti and Derks (2016), it was discovered that employee self-leadership strategies contribute to employee work engagement and job performance. Using multilevel structural equation modelling Breevaart et al. (2016) mention that employees were more engaged in their work and received higher performance ratings from their leader on days they use more self-leadership strategies. In another recent study by Gomes, Curral and Caetano (2015), results reveal work engagement as a single dimension construct that has a mediating effect on the relationship between self-leadership and individual innovation.

However, not all dimensions of work engagement are related to self-leadership strategies. A good example is presented by Breevaart et al. (2016) who state that there is no relationship between self-reward and concentration (absorption is a dimension of work engagement). Inversely, using a sample of 72 maternity nurses, Breevaart, Bakker and Demerouti (2014) found that employees were highly engaged in their work on the days that they monitored their own behaviour (behaviour-focused strategies), worked with self-set goals, and used reminders to help them focus on what they wanted to achieve (self-cueing). Tim et al. (2013) note that employees may sometimes use more or less self-leadership strategies, for example when workload is high or when employees have a conflict with one of their colleagues. Thus, even though formal leaders are best suited to motivate and guide their employees, self-leadership training motivates them and maximises their chances of having an engaged and well-performing workforce (Tims et al., 2013).

6.2.4 Sub-components of job embeddedness and dimensions of PsyCap

As highlighted in Chapter 4, job embeddedness and PsyCap are total constructs without considering their indicators have their roots in positive psychology; hence, their sub-components interact (Sun et al., 2012). A good example is relating resilience to job embeddedness. Research indicates that when employees experience negative events in the workplace, individuals with high levels of PsyCap are more likely to adapt positively and bounce back from those events, thus preventing the escalation and development of intentions to quit (Luthans et al., 2006). Research also indicates that resilient individuals are better equipped to deal with the stressors in a constantly changing workplace environment, as they are open to new experiences, are flexible to changing demands, and show more emotional stability when faced with adversity (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Resilience development efforts are similarly grounded in the realistic assessments and creation of coping strategies. When a setback occurs, once an individual develops the coping strategy he or she can stay with the organisation for longer (Coomber & Barriball, 2007). Resilience is also the key factor in determining how individuals respond in stressful environments (Youssef & Luthans, 2007).

In addition, a recent study by Nafei (2015) reveals the existence of a positive significant statistical correlation between PsyCap dimensions of hope, resilience, and optimism with job embeddedness. In addition, self-efficacy, as an independent construct, was also found to be significantly related to job embeddedness (Nafe, 2015). Rego, Sousa, Marques and Cunha (2012) indicate that the availability of a higher level of PsyCap improves the quality of the relationship that links employees and their supervisors, leading to the improvement of job embeddedness and reduction of negative reactions in the work environment. Moreover, Avey et al. (2008) note that improving the individual accumulated psychological state will influence their retention intention since PsyCap is the original internal motivation for employees to stay in the organisation.

Employees with higher PsyCap are more adaptive to their jobs, have more harmonious relationships with their colleagues, and have more friends and deeper links in the organisation, hence they are more likely to stay in the organisation (Sun et al., 2011). Therefore psychological capital influences job embeddedness through organisational

links. PsyCap produces a positive evaluation and recognition of the organisation, and in turn, employees become more willing to stay in their current organisation. In summary, it concluded that PsyCap increases the job embeddedness of employees. This implies that employees with positively oriented psychology have higher self-affirmation and cognitive tendency, which enable them to feel happy and comfortable in their organisations (Sun et al., 2012). In short, Slade (2010) notes that both PsyCap and job embeddedness demonstrate how an individual's positive state has impacts their cognition and behaviour and eventually affecting performance positively.

6.3 Indirect relationships among variables and inter-relationships between sub-dimensions

Reflecting on the literature in the previous chapters, self-leadership aims at the enhancement of personal effectiveness through individual-level strategies that include constructive thought patterns, behaviour-focused strategies, and natural rewards (Houghton & Neck, 2002; Neck & Houghton, 2006). Applying effective self-leadership strategies produces performance improvement, higher levels of mental performance, job satisfaction, and expectations of success (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Additionally, an assessment of the concept of self-leadership indicates resilience and self-efficacy (positive emotions) as some of the outcomes of self-leadership (Vogel & Feldman, 2009). In recent research by Breevaart et al. (2016), results suggest self-leadership as the starting point towards achieving an engaged workforce. Further, it indicates that training employees on how to use different self-leadership strategies provides them with tools necessary to become more positive and eventually engaged in their work (Breevaart et al., 2016). Thus, with self-leadership strategies in place, an initial foundation for positive organisation is constructed. In turn, Sun et al. (2012) portrayed positivity as a virtue built on sustained and determined acts of self-responsibility that require a sense of self-efficacy and internal locus of control to succeed. It all starts with eliminating destructive thoughts and negative self-talk by replacing them with more positive internal dialogues (Ram, 2016). A discussion of how self-leadership through PsyCap influences work engagement follows next.

6.3.1 Self-leadership strategies through PsyCap dimensions lead to work engagement

6.3.1.1 Self-leadership through self-efficacy to work engagement

The application of self-leadership strategies may result in a number of predictable outcome mechanisms, which include self-efficacy, commitment, independence, creativity, innovation, trust, team potency, positive affect, and psychological empowerment (Ram, 2016). These outcome variables, in turn, may lead to higher levels of individual, team as well as organisational performance (Hsu et al., 2014). In a summarised list of self-leadership outcomes provided by Neck and Houghton (2006), self-efficacy (PsyCap dimension) appeared at the top as one of the major predictable outcomes of self-leadership. Above that, self-leadership has an effect on self-efficacy through mastery of experiences, thus, confidence is enabled by encouraging the positive desirable behaviours that lead to successful outcomes (behaviour focused) (Avey et al., 2009). The self-leadership strategy (constructive thought patterns) has been found to increase positive effect, optimism, and self-efficacy (Van Zyl et al., 2016).

Consistently, the meso-level model of self-leadership Bligh et al. (2006) indicates that self-leadership, as a single dimensional construct through self-efficacy, leads to knowledge creation. Previous studies by Neck and Manz (1996) and Prussia et al. (1998) also provide significant evidence in support of self-efficacy as the primary mechanism through which self-leadership affects dedication and performance. Moreover, in a regression model that tested the effect of self-efficacy on cognitive engagement results indicated focused effort has a significant impact on cognitive engagement (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010). Tracing it back, it is clear that self-leadership, along with self-efficacy and goal setting, is part of an iterative process of self-regulation in the positive behaviour change process that lead to an engaged workforce (Bandura, 2004). Nevertheless, this is yet another area that could benefit from additional empirical investigation.

6.3.1.2 Constructive thought patterns through self-efficacy to work engagement

Yakin and Erdil (2012) noted that from the perspective of social cognitive theory, goal-oriented behaviour (part of behavioural strategies in self-leadership) is affected by self-efficacy (PsyCap dimension), and outcome expectations. Thus, self-efficacy is a critical predictor of adjustment and the degree to which employees use affective behavioural strategies (self-leadership dimension) (Manz & Neck, 2004). According to self-efficacy theory, individuals judge their ability to successfully cope with new challenges. This aspect relates to constructive thought patterns in self-leadership theory, thus, through constructive thought patterns, individuals develop domain-specific self-efficacy beliefs (Raghuram et al., 2003). The self-efficacy perceptions in turn provide the foundation for human motivation and personal accomplishment, which lead to emotional and physical engagement (Yakin & Erdil, 2012). Consistent with that, Hsu et al. (2014) note that focused effort (self-efficacy) has been found to be related to emotional engagement; therefore, confidence and focused effort (self-efficacy dimensions) have been found to be associated with physical engagement. This implies that individuals high in efficacy are likely to be generally satisfied with their jobs when they feel competent to perform their work-tasks or attain their work goals (Lent et al., 2011). Based on the above discussion, it can be proposed that constructive thought patterns facilitate the development of individual self-efficacy, which then leads to emotional and physical engagement (dedication, vigour).

6.3.1.3 Behavioural strategies through self-efficacy to vigour

Self-efficacy and behavioural strategies are both concerned with the setting of goals and putting in effort to attain such goals (Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017). These two are both based on the goal setting theory (Yakin & Erdil, 2012). Self-efficacy influences what courses of action individuals choose to pursue, what goals they set for themselves and their commitment to them, and how much effort they put into various endeavours. Behavioural strategies include self-observation, self-goal setting, self-reward, and self-punishment (Van Zyl, 2016). These strategies identify specific behaviours that need to be changed, enhanced or terminated for the sake of success, which is an essential first step towards behaviour modification (Manz & Neck, 2004). These behaviour-focused

strategies can be achieved through the nurturing of self-efficacy, thus individuals identify targets and set goals, which improve employees' capabilities to analyse and attain goals by means of professional skills (Bligh et al., 2006).

This process strengthens employees' sense of task control and goal commitment. Thus, through behavioural strategies, it becomes easier for individuals to effectively set behaviour-altering goals to achieve self-efficacy and improve themselves (Neck & Manz, 2013). In turn, self-efficacy as a motivational construct influences individual goals, reactions, efforts, coping strategies, and levels of persistence (vigour). Thus, individuals with high self-efficacy ('I can do it') have more confidence in their abilities to perform more challenging tasks and apply more effort to accomplish those tasks (physical engagement) (Yakin & Erdil, 2012). Even when setbacks occur, these individuals tend to recover quickly and maintain the commitment to their goals. From this, it is apparent that self-efficacy levels influence the mobilisation of internal resources, which in turn leads to physical engagement. A statistically significant and direct relationship was discovered between self-efficacy and work engagement and significant positive correlation between optimism and work engagement (Davids, 2011). Therefore, it can be proposed that behavioural strategies enable the development and nurturing of self-efficacy, which in turn leads to physical engagement.

In addition, self-efficacious individuals hold stronger beliefs in their ability to successfully perform tasks, set more challenging goals for themselves, invest more, persist longer, and are better in dealing with failing experiences, compared to those with low self-efficacy (Heuven et al., 2006). When nurturing self-efficacy, individuals should be allowed to experience and share success, allow employees to exchange experiences with one another, and enable them to discover and observe how people with similar backgrounds rise to success. This aspect relates well with self-observation–a dimension under behavioural strategies (Neck & Manz, 2013). Individuals with high self-efficacy gain more confidence, leading to more effort, perseverance, and even higher levels of energy. Accordingly, a virtuous circle is created, for example success creates more confidence and more success creates more energy (Yakin & Erdil, 2012). In times of frustration over unattained goals, failure or embarrassment caused by misconduct,

positive and constructive psychological defence mechanisms can be used to assist with overcoming adversity, maintaining psychological stability, and regaining self-esteem and confidence (Bakker, 2010). Norris (2008) indicates that individuals who possess attributes such as autonomy and self-efficacy are more likely to practice self-leadership strategies. Thus, with the self-leadership strategies in place, individuals stay focused even in those days and weeks when they do not frequently interact with their leaders.

6.3.1.4 Behavioural strategy through hope to work engagement

One of the sub-dimensions of behavioural strategies is self-goal setting, according to (Masten & Reed, 2002). When developing hope, the first step is to set attainable, measurable, specific, and challenging goals. Thus, through goal setting hope is created. Similarly, Guangyi and Shanshan (2016) note that setting of attainable goals creates hope among individuals. When individuals desire to make a change or accomplish an outcome they will be more successful if they attend to a number of variables that are key to goal setting, including setting difficult but attainable goals, and setting explicit and precise goals. This leads to hope or creates determination (commitment) to achieve the goal, and builds positive beliefs that one has the capacity to achieve the goal which eventually leads to dedication (Curran & Reivich, 2011).

Goal setting is one of the proposed methods to train for employee hope (O'Donohue, Martin & Torugsa, 2015). This involves employees being requested to define reasonable but challenging work objectives in order to fully mobilise their internal work motivation. This process of mobilising internal work motivation entails increasing awareness of one's motivation for specific behaviours (self-observation). As indicated by Neck and Manz (2013), this makes it easier for employees to effectively set behaviour-altering goals to improve themselves. Among the organisational benefits of self-leadership, as noted by Neck and Manz (2013), is improvement of goal setting, which results in hopeful employees.

Recent research indicates that individuals who are hopeful tend to show willingness and have the means to achieve their set goals (O'Donohue et al., 2015). When their goal plans are blocked, hopeful individuals creatively generate alternative options to gain

solutions. Thus, hope develops from the successful interactive exchange between agency and pathways to gain a positive motivational state Avey et al. (2010) that drives perseverance and redirects goals (Hsu et al., 2014). The aspect of agency relates well with self-goal setting, because it involves determination and self-driven forces in attaining goals through pathways of cognitive abilities and strategies aspiring certain outcomes (Avey et al., 2010). Thus, someone with an increased level of agency thinking will be motivated to draw up strategies, applying pathways alternatives to plan ambitions. People with high levels of hope are open-minded and persevere in seeking alternative strategies to achieve success (Hsu et al., 2014). A study by Karatepe (2014) states that hopeful employees pursue strategies to reach their goals by feeling energetic and enthusiastic and being happily immersed in their work. When such employees encounter difficulties that impede them to reach their goals, they take advantage of alternative paths to achieve their goals. Yavas et al. (2013) note that such individuals are highly engaged in their work and high levels of hope lead to frequent positive moods as well as positive goal directed outlooks.

Furthermore, employees high in hope dedicatedly and energetically work toward their goal and task achievement until they succeed (Karatepe, 2014). Based on the above, it can be proposed that that behavioural strategies (self-goal setting) through hope lead to physical and emotional engagement. This implies that the internal process begins with goal setting, then hope assists with the determination that goals can be achieved, and the conviction that the pathways will lead to these goals. Hope acts as a resource that provides vigour and energy to work; therefore, from self-leadership (goal setting) to PsyCap (hope), then to work engagement (vigour and absorption).

6.3.1.5 Constructive thought patterns through hope to work engagement

Systematic observation of one's own thoughts and behaviour has been suggested as one possible self-leadership strategy designed to increase self-awareness and subsequently strengthen the self-lead behaviour of goal-setting and goal attainment (Norris, 2008). Pathways in hope reflect a person's ability to produce cognitive routes that lead towards desired goals (Snyder, 2002). This can be facilitated by the construction and maintenance of functional thinking patterns (Norris, 2008). Hopeful

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individuals have the capacity to produce many plans and create positive ways of thinking to accomplish goals (Boss & Sims, 2008). Individuals recognise and replace negative, dysfunctional beliefs and assumptions; thus, pathway thinking leads employees to contemplate alternative strategies when considering how to achieve goals and to pursue alternative strategies when one proves difficult. Pathways and agency help people achieve their goals by providing both the 'will' and the 'way' to do so (Snyder, 2002). Accordingly, identifying and changing distorted and irrational beliefs and assumptions minimise dysfunctional thought processes, improve cognitive effectiveness, and create hope (Neck & Houghton, 2006).

Eventually individuals with greater hope conceive a wide range of strategies to reach their goals and proactively develop alternative plans in case the original one does not work (Snyder, 2000). Thus, hopeful individuals have access to a wide range of resources and according to the job demands-resources model (paragraph 2.3), the more the resources, the higher the levels of engagement. High hopers explore alternate routes and apply their determination to those routes, and are more likely to achieve success and are propelled onward by their confidence in the future (Boss & Sims, 2008). Inversely, for low-hope individuals, pathway thinking is much more gruelling because the primary path is not well articulated and alternative paths are not proactively established. Thus, low-hope individuals are more likely to disengage from their goals and their negative emotions and ruminations will prevent them from goal pursuits (Snyder, 2000). From the above discussion, it is clear that the nature of an individual thought pattern affects his or her behaviours, and hope consequently affects work engagement.

This can be further explained by examining self-talk, a constructive thought pattern sub-dimension. Self-talk is defined as what individuals covertly tell themselves (Neck & Manz, 2013) and involves mental self-evaluations and reactions. Self-talk patterns involve negative or pessimistic self-talk that hopeful individuals can suppress or eliminate and replace with more optimistic self-dialogues (Seligman, 1991). In addition, constructive thought patterns also entail mental imagery which is the symbolic and covert cognitive creation of an experience or task prior to actual overt physical muscular

movement (Neck & Manz, 2013). Employees who visualise successful performance of an activity in advance of actual performance are more likely to have hopeful experiences and experience high levels of energy; thus, they perform successfully when faced with the actual task (Breevaart et al., 2016). Based on the above discussion, it can be proposed that constructive thought patterns through hope lead to work engagement.

6.3.1.6 *Constructive thought patterns through optimism to work engagement*

Constructive thoughts patterns and optimism possess considerable similarity and overlap in theoretical conceptualisations and operational definitions (Rams, 2015). However, since these constructs have emerged in distinct research domains, they are usually not equated with one another and have rarely been considered together. Subsequent path analyses indicated that constructive thinking mediated the impact of optimism on anxiety or positive states of mind (Karatepe, 2014). Implications for constructive thinking and optimism as independent constructs relevant to adjustment and their potential importance for future research and clinical applications have been adequately discussed by Park, Moore, Turner and Adler (1997) indicating that constructive thought patterns can actually be regarded as learned optimism.

Among the three methods of fostering employee optimism is cultivating a spirit that enables optimism by learning to feel grateful for and satisfied with positive aspects of the current life (Cao, 2012). This can be achieved through recognising and replacing negative dysfunctional beliefs and assumptions with positive beliefs and assumptions (positive self-talk and positive mental imagery) (Neck & Manz, 2010). Individuals, who possess these positive expectancies, continue to put forth effort even in the face of increasing adversity; thus, optimists make internal, stable, and global causal attributions of positive events and external, unstable, and specific attributions of negative events (Seligman, 1998). Should a negative outcome occur, optimists remain motivated towards success because they conclude the failure was not due to something inherent in them (external) but was instead something unique in that situation (specific), and a second attempt will likely not result in failure again so optimists continue to move forward (Cao, 2012).

Simply being optimistic is not enough. Individuals still need to set goals and have plans to reach those goals. Thus, when optimism is combined with constructive thought patterns and hope, it is not just an unchecked daydream but is translated into goals with practical steps to achievement (Cao, 2012). When confronting a challenge, optimists, through the use of constructive thinking, remain positive, confident, and persistent, even if progress is difficult and slow (Guangyi & Shanshan, 2016). They quickly recognise and replace negative beliefs and assumptions that bind an individual to failure. When such negative beliefs are replaced, individuals become optimistic (positive thinkers) (Guangyi & Shanshan, 2016). Thus, they adopt constructive thoughts, which positively affect emotional and behavioural states and reactions.

In addition, through identifying and changing distorted and irrational beliefs and assumptions, individuals will be able to minimise dysfunctional thought processes, improve their cognitive effectiveness (Neck & Houghton, 2006), and eventually become optimistic. In turn, Salminen, Mäkikangas and Feldt (2014) note that optimism is strongly correlated to dedication and moderately correlated to absorption. Therefore, enhancing employees' optimism through constructive thought patterns lead to emotional and physical engagement. Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman and Combs (2006) also note that optimism is a resource that helps employees to preserve their engagement even in the face of low job resources. Thus, self-leadership through optimism helps employees to preserve their engagement. Overall, based on the above, it can be concluded that self-leadership strategies influence psychological capacities, which in turn lead to work engagement.

6.4   PsyCap through job embeddedness to work engagement

As discussed above, PsyCap and job embeddedness belong to the positive psychology family, influence each other, and together contribute to better performance (Crossley et al., 2007). In the broaden-and-build theory, Fredrickson proposes that positive emotions broaden individual's momentary thought-action repertoires, widening the array of thoughts and actions that come to mind (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005). This situation increases personal resources such as those included in PsyCap (Malinowski & Lim, 2015). Such positive emotions prompt individuals to discard automatic behavioural

scripts and to pursue novel and creative thoughts and actions, which result in the increase of social, psychological, and physical resources (Fredrickson, 2004). The increase in available personal resources allows individuals to foster friendships, develop skills, and recover energy as needed in an effort to further progress in goal pursuit (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Optimists with positive emotions are more open to new experiences and more likely to find novel solutions to problems.

Moreover, these positive emotions can undo the effect of negative emotions so that positive emotions serve as buffering mechanisms that facilitate resilient bouncing back in times of crises (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Thus, people who embody high levels of overall PsyCap can access more of its resources manifested through their cognitions, motivation, behaviour, and social relationships and in turn increase the links and fit which eventually translate into high levels of engagement (Sun et al., 2012). Based on that, it can be suggested that self-efficacy and optimism through links and fit lead to work engagement. Similarly, available evidence indicates a positive relationship between PsyCap and positive effect Avey et al. (2008); Salanova et al. (2011) and between positive effect and work engagement (Sonnentag et al., 2008).

6.4.1 Self-efficacy to links effect on work engagement

According to Sun et al. (2012), positive psychological elements such as self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, and hope are all related to job embeddedness, which means that employees with positively oriented psychology have higher self-affirmation and cognitive tendency, which helps them feel happy and comfortable in the organisation. Regarding self-efficacy, research indicates that academic, social, and self-regulatory self-efficacy encourages pro-social behaviour, and thus helps prevent moral disengagement. Pro-social behaviour is highly related to links in job embeddedness (Sun et al., 2012). More recently, Nafei (2015) suggested that social self-efficacy can be operationalised in terms of cognitive (confidence in knowing what to do in social situations) and behavioural (confidence in performing in social situations) social self-efficacy.

Rego et al. (2012) indicate that the availability of a higher level of efficacy improves the quality of the relationships that links employees and their supervisors thus increasing

resources for employees which eventually results in high levels of engagement. Strong linkages reduce volatility, help limit the cost of turnover to organisations, and help make employee behaviours more predictable (Lee & Yom, 2015). This is typically due to recurrent interaction and fewer opportunities or desires to break these ties. Breaking these links might prove punitive. If individuals are visibly linked to influential others in the organisation, it stands to reason that they will try to keep those links strong as a function of the potential benefits and the concurrent costs of losing those associations. Research suggests that individuals who fit tightly create predictable social environments, which then help ensure behavioural consistency (Gagné & Vansteenkiste, 2013). Thus, the strong social alliances enjoyed by tightly fitting individuals help reduce future uncertainty and boast positive emotions which in turn guarantee dedication.

Slade (2010) also notes that individuals with strong links play a key role by using certain skills to mobilise emotions or social persuasions to make other employees believe that with proper plans and timetables goals can be achieved, thus their confidence in the victory and self-efficacy can be enhanced. In addition, Sun et al. (2012) note that individuals with higher PsyCap adapt very well in their jobs, have more harmonious relationships with their co-workers and have more friends and deeper links in the organisation. In short, PsyCap increases the job embeddedness of employees, which in turn improves their performance and engagement Sun et al. (2012), thus PsyCap through job embeddedness leads to work engagement.

Employees in a positive psychological state are easily linked with and embedded in the organisation and their job, and are easily adaptive to and competent in their post. This in turn leads to high energy and produces a positive evaluation and recognition of the organisation (Sun et al., 2012). Research has actually suggested PsyCap as the original internal motivation for employees to stay in their organisation (Sun et al., 2012). Individuals with high self-efficacy beliefs are less likely to become unemployed and more likely to be satisfied with their jobs (Pinquart et al., 2003). Self-efficacy has also been found to relate positively with resources that facilitate links and fit in job embeddedness, such as mental and emotional competencies, job control and

supervisor social support (Nafe, 2015). In turn, self-efficacy plays a role in predicting positive processes such as work engagement and performance (Yakin & Erdil, 2012). Consistently, Prieto (2016) notes that self-efficacy beliefs predict work engagement and job performance through job and personal resources.

6.5 Self-leadership through job embeddedness effect to work engagement

In the study done by Lee and Yom (2015) findings indicate that job embeddedness and self-leadership are important factors to enhance nurses' job performance. They further note that promoting activities for job embeddedness and self-leadership might be a way to increase the general performance of employees. Very few studies have investigated the relationship between self-leadership and job embeddedness. Lee and Yom (2015) suggest that further studies are necessary to refine and clarify the relationship between the two variables.

6.5.1 Fit through natural rewards to work engagement

Through natural rewards strategies individuals build pleasant and enjoyable features into activities and tasks that become naturally rewarding and enjoyable. These increase intrinsic motivation, self-determination, and feelings of competence (Neck & Manz, 2013). In turn, individuals with intrinsic motivation, self-determination and feelings of competence experience the congruency between what they want to do/can do and what they are actually doing in their jobs, hence fit well in the organisation (Mitchell, 2001). In this case employees are motivated or rewarded by inherently enjoyable aspects of the task or activities they perform and that process creates feelings of competence (fit) and self-determination, which in turn energises performance-enhancing task related behaviours (Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017). When employees use the natural reward strategies to incorporate enjoyable features into their tasks they eventually experience fit in the organisation and well-fitting individuals display high levels of dedication.

The conceptual foundations of behavioural strategies are laid on self-awareness, when individuals' natural rewards are laid on the intrinsic motivation theory of (Deci & Ryan, 1985). This includes building more pleasurable aspects into a given task so that the activity itself becomes inherently rewarding (Manz & Sims, 2001; Neck & Manz, 2013).

It also involves changing perceptions by focusing attention away from the less enjoyable aspects of a task and directing or refocusing attention on the task's naturally rewarding aspects (Manz & Sims, 2001; Neck & Manz, 2013). As noted by Neck and Houghton (2006), these natural reward strategies are designed to help generate feelings of self-efficacy and self-determination, which in turn lead to improved performance in work-related behaviours.

When individuals create those pleasant features in the tasks and activities there will be congruence between what they want to do and what they are actually doing, hence this increase intrinsic motivation, self-determination, and feelings of competence (fit well and eventually get absorbed) (Rams, 2015). An individual can thus, through natural rewards strategies, fit in the organisation through building more pleasurable aspects into given tasks as well as changing perceptions so that the activities involved in the job itself become inherently rewarding. This dimension is applied by focusing individual thoughts on the intrinsic rewards of the activity, or the incentives built into a specific task (Norris, 2008). Activities that are naturally rewarding can increase competence (fit) and give individuals a feeling of self-control and purpose leading to absorption (Rams, 2015). This may buffer the shocks of a job offer since individuals will focus more on the natural rewards of the job than external rewards. Thus, self-leadership (natural rewards) through fit (job embeddedness) influences work engagement. With reference to the above discussion, the proposed model for the direct and indirect relationships between constructs under investigation is presented in Figure 6.1.

6.6 Proposed model for the direct and indirect relationship between all variables and the sub dimensions
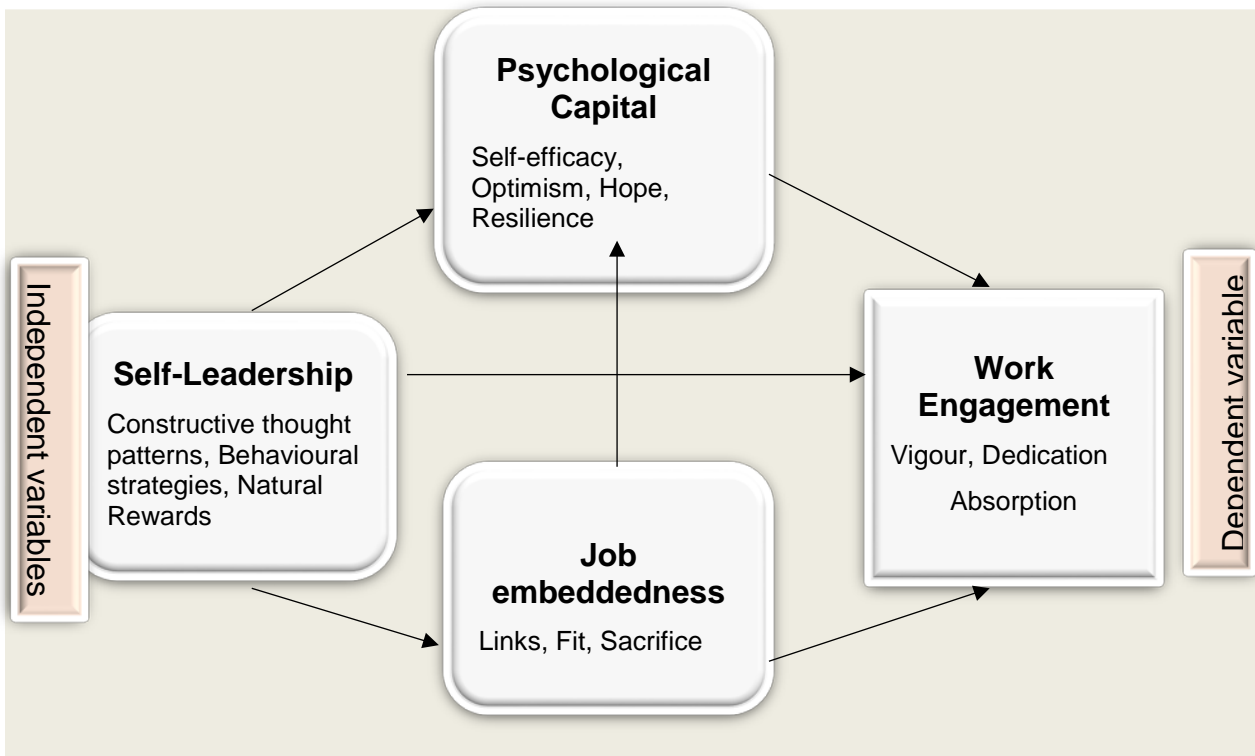
Figure 6.1 Indirect relationships between variables:

(Source: Self-elaboration)

In summary, drawing conclusions from the previous researches, theories and models discussed above, Figure 6.1 is the proposed comprehensive conceptual model for the effect of PsyCap, job embeddedness, and self-leadership on work engagement. The model shows that there are three independent variables and one dependent variable. It indicates the rational link among the variables, some according to literature and some that had been tested and proven in the present study. Some researchers have suggested PsyCap as the original positive internal drive that influences job embeddedness towards work engagement (see paragraph 4.8) (Sun, Zhao, Yang & Fan, 2012; Crossley et al., 2007; Nafei, 2015). However, for the purpose of this study, a close analysis of self-leadership outcomes indicates some PsyCap dimensions (self-efficacy, hope and resilience) as outcomes of self-leadership. Thus, self-responsibility is

at the centre of positivity and is the cardinal virtue necessary for all other virtues to develop. Whatever goals one sets for the future, which would include the realization of an ideal self-narrative, the belief and practice of self-responsibility is essential (Neck & Manz, 2013), meaning it all begins in the mind (constructive thought patterns). Recently Ram (2015) noted that as a way of moving towards the new positive organisation, individuals should first examine their thought patterns, and confront and replace dysfunctional irrational beliefs and assumptions with more constructive thought processes before they can attain positivity.

Self-leadership is therefore considered as an entry point (at the individual level) for organisational analysis, considering that the construct is continuous rather than discrete. Organisations are using it to boost employee empowerment, encourage positivity, and maximise performance (Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017). To the knowledge of the researcher at this stage, theory and research are insufficient to demonstrate the indirect path analyses from self-leadership to job embeddedness or PsyCap to work engagement and all the sub-components of the constructs under investigation. However, the partial description above sheds light on the fact that conceptually the constructs demonstrate both direct and indirect relations, therefore, testing the proposed model provided more light on how PsyCap, job embeddedness and self-leadership, together with their sub-dimensions affect work engagement in the banking sector. Prior research and theory do not provide compelling evidence on the combined effect of PsyCap, job embeddedness, and self-leadership on work engagement, therefore this study is worthwhile.

6.7 Summary

This chapter provided a discussion on the integration of the four constructs (psychological capital, self-leadership, job embeddedness, and work engagement) and their sub-components. The discussion conceptualised how the sub-dimensions of these constructs interact theoretically and how the interaction can possibly result in work engagement. The chapter also indicated the indirect relationship between the variables. Emphasis was placed on the theoretical commonalities of the four constructs under investigation. The chapter closes with a proposed theoretical model based on previous

literature. The model was tested empirically at the end of the study. The following chapter focuses on the methodology, indicating how data was collected and analysed.

CHAPTER 7
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

7.1   Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research methodology, providing a detailed presentation of the research methods that were followed in the process of conducting the research project. This includes the research setting (banking industry in the Free State Province) as well as the study units (employees in selected bank branches in the Free State). A detailed description of the sample is provided, the research instruments used in the study are described as well as the process followed for the actual data collection is reported. In addition, the statistical methods used for data analyses are presented indicating why these methods were deemed appropriate for the study. In summary, the chapter is concerned with documenting the actual research process. The primary focus of the current study was to obtain empirically validated data on the combined effect of psychological capital, self-leadership, and job embeddedness on work engagement, and to develop and test a conceptual model to inform the fostering of work engagement in the banking sector.

7.2   Research design

Research design is defined as a framework that sets out a plan on how the researcher will collect and analyse data to address the problem under investigation. It is concerned with the overall structure of the procedures that are used by the researcher when conducting a research study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This definition suggests that the research design provides a systematic process of conducting research. The research design includes planning, structuring, and implementing the study to maximise the validity of the findings (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). It enables the researcher to have a plan in advance that will enable smooth flow of the process. Below is a flow diagram summarising the steps that were followed to collect data in the current study.

Research Methodology

- Quantitative primary approach
- Cross-sectional survey design
- Descriptive study (focused on describing theoretical relationships between four variables)

Selection of respondents

Sampling Procedure

Non-probability (Convenience Sampling)

Research Instruments

UWES for Work Engagement

PCQ24 for PsyCap

Data Collection

Survey Design

Self-administered questionnaire.

Statistical Methods

- Initial examination of data (descriptive statistics means and standard deviations
- The Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis for (primary objective)
- Inferential statistics Independent T-tests for differences in terms of age (secondary objective)
- To test the proposed model, the variance-based techniques were applied; the partial least squares (PLS) path modeling was used.

Report and interpret research results

Integration of the research findings

Figure 7.1 Flow diagram for the research methodology

Figure 7.1 above summarises the basic aspects of how the current study was completed. A detailed description of the steps involved in the research design is provided below.

Primarily, there exist three distinct approaches that inform data gathering in any study. These include the quantitative, qualitative, and the mixed method approaches. As noted by Hair, Wolfinbarger, Ortinau and Bush (2008), the methodology employed to gather data influences the quality of data that will be collected; hence, when choosing a particular approach it should inform the type of data that one needs to collect and analyse. Against that backdrop, it is possible that any shortcomings in the research methodology can cause the data collected to be questionable or even irrelevant, implying that, it may fail to measure what it is intended to measure and the whole aim of the research will be flawed. In relation to the above problem, Babbie and Mouton (2009) note that to ensure that one obtains reliable and valid information in any study, one should make sure it is imperative to adopt an appropriate research design is adopted and choose suitable tools of data collection and analyses are chosen.

As highlighted above, there are three approaches that researchers can use when conducting research. Traditionally qualitative and quantitative methods were dominantly used (Babbie & Mouton, 2009). Recently, mixed methods research has become increasingly popular, attached to research practice and recognised as the third major research approach (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). Mixed methods research involves a combination of different qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and data analysis in one empirical research project (Johnson et al., 2007). The combination serves the purpose of helping to discover threats for validity arising from the use of qualitative or quantitative research by applying methods from the alternative methodological tradition. The application of both methods ensures good scientific practice, provides a fuller picture and a deeper understanding of the investigated phenomenon by relating complementary findings to each other, which in turn enhance the validity of the research findings. However, Miller and Gatta (2006) noted that attempts to couch mixed methods within some broad notion of pragmatism are not satisfactory. The complexity of the mixed method research makes it difficult to

apply in certain circumstances and researchers still resort to either qualitative or quantitative methods.

The qualitative approach is rooted on in the interpretive social sciences paradigm. Information obtained from qualitative studies is not expressed in numerical form and qualitative studies emphasise reporting stated experiences of the respondents and meanings they attach to themselves, to other people, as well as to the environment (Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). In addition, the qualitative investigations sometimes make use of direct quotations from respondents, arguing that the quotations are revealing (Eysenck, 2004). The data collection methods associated with qualitative studies include participant observation, in-depth interviews and/or focus groups (Mouton, 2009).

Quantitative research employs numerical analysis for the evaluation and measurement of variables and emphasises use of structured questionnaires (Cant, Gerber, Nel & Kotze, 2005). A quantitative research approach refers to a study that collects evidence in the form of numbers in order to answer a given research question (Neuman, 2007). It is important to note that the quantitative approach rests heavily on the positivist paradigm, which depicts the scientific methods of human sciences and adopts a deductive approach to the research process (Mouton, 2001). In research where validation and hypothesis testing are required, Hair et al. (2008) argue that quantitative research will be the best since it enables validation of relationships as well as hypotheses testing. For that reason, the current study used the quantitative research approach.

7.2.1 Survey research

Following Pallant (2007), the empirical aspect of the study uses a cross-sectional survey design to collect quantitative primary data from the respondents by using self-report questionnaires to achieve the objectives of the study. A quantitative research framework was adopted due to its systematic and scientific nature of investigating data and their relationships (Sink, 2007). The survey research method was used since it is more appropriate for descriptive purposes and chiefly used in studies that have individual people as the units of analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2009). Survey research is

defined as a cross-sectional design in relation to which data are collected predominantly by self-completion questionnaires or by structured interviews at a single point in time (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Similarly, Kerlinger and Lee (2000) noted that survey research includes methods such as personal interviews, mail questionnaires, panel interviews and telephone interviews. As indicated by Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (2000), the cross-sectional design entails gathering information through scientifically tested instruments in the form of questionnaires to access the feelings, opinions and thoughts of the respondents. For the purpose of this study, a self-report questionnaire was used to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with four variables, which were then examined to detect patterns of relationships.

Survey research is ideally suited to descriptive and predictive functions and is thus well suited to achieve the aims and objectives of the present study (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 2000). Above that, the survey research, as noted by Babbie and Mouton (2009), is highly economic in the sense that large amounts of data can be gathered using very limited resources. Standardisation of the data collected also represents a crucial strength of the survey research. However, surveys are somewhat artificial and potentially superficial making it difficult to gain a full sense of the social processes in their natural settings (Babbie & Mouton, 2015).

Bryman and Bell (2011) further highlighted the weaknesses of surveys through the four sources of error in survey research, which are; these include sampling error, sampling-related error, data collection error and data processing error. Contrary to that, Bickman and Rog (2009) noted that the risk associated with survey research stems from two types of errors: poor measurement of cases that are surveyed and omission of cases that should be surveyed. These errors are due to the way questions are usually written, characteristics of the respondents and the general presentation of questions. Consistent with Bickman and Rog (2009); Bryman and Bell (2011) identified three sources of errors of non-observation, which include inadequate population coverage resulting from a poor sampling frame, sampling error due to the random sampling process, and non-response. Effort was invested to minimise the above-mentioned errors. The non-response error was minimised through following instructions by Dillman (2014), thus the

researcher had a survey administration plan that listed all the steps taken before administering the survey to entice individuals to respond. These included keeping the sampling method simple (convenience sampling procedure was used). Data was collected directly by the researcher and respondents were given enough time to complete their questionnaires, and short versions of the scales were used to limit response load that could have been imposed by the survey. A series of follow ups were done to ensure respondents return the completed survey. Though it was difficult to minimise sampling error due to the sampling strategy used (convenience sampling), the researcher ensured a big sample size was achieved as one way to minimise sampling error as indicated by Bryman and Bell (2009). To address the problems related to population coverage it was ensured that all potential respondents available at the time of data collection were given the opportunity to respond to the survey as instructed by (Dillman, 2014).

Since the study empirically investigated the relationship between four variables and as highlighted earlier, the data obtained from the survey research used statistical techniques for analysing, thus it is crucial to discuss statistical modelling studies as well.

7.2.2 Statistical modelling studies

Even though available evidence indicates that survey studies provide a broad overview of the phenomenon being studied, it however lacks the ability to evaluate the theoretical models developed through literature reviews (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). This study concluded the literature review with a conceptual framework that requires to be empirically tested. Thus, to fulfil that objective, a statistical modelling study was combined with the survey. In this case, a conceptual model was developed through reviewing previous research studies on the relationships between the variables under investigation. Data collected through the use of survey research was then used to quantitatively validate the conceptual model. In most cases, multivariate statistical analyses are used when evaluating and validating theoretical models. These include stepwise multiple regressions and structural equation modelling, which are discussed in detail under data analysis.

7.3   Study Population

Each study has units of analysis, which are selected from a large population. The population of the study is defined as the total number of all units that have a chance of being included in the sample to be studied depending on the objectives of the study (Hair et al., 2008). To make it more manageable and focused, the population of the study at hand were all employees working in the banking sector in the Free State, South Africa. As much as researchers may need to investigate the whole population, Saunders et al. (2009) noted that in some research situations, it is impossible to collect all the data available due to time pressure, monetary restrictions and access problems of which all were applicable to the present study. Therefore, a sampling strategy was applied to reduce the amount of data, instead of investigating all possible cases or elements. Respondents were recruited through the non-probability convenience sampling procedure and the sample was drawn based on availability, thus there was no element of randomness. Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (2000) defined convenience sampling as the selection of respondents primarily on the basis of their availability and willingness to participate in the study, thus it involves picking a sample from that part of the population that is close to hand and that can be easily accessed and is readily available and convenient (Boxill, Chambers & Wint, 1997). Despite its weaknesses, this sampling technique was deemed appropriate for this study as the data collected was intended for investigating relationships between variables rather than to accurately estimate population parameters (Burns & Burns, 2008; Cozby, 2009). Above that, it was preferred due to its practical benefits of being less time-consuming and more efficient as indicated by Goodwin (2004). Participation was, however, gained from 11 selected retail bank branches in the Free State Province.

7.3.1   Sample of participants

422 self-report questionnaires were distributed to 11 selected retail bank branches in the Free State Province, South Africa. Out of the 422 questionnaires, distributed only 313 questionnaires were returned of which 10 respondents did not complete more than 75 per cent of any of the scales on the questionnaire and their responses were thus omitted from the data as instructed by Pallant (2007). Thus, the present study was left

with only 303 questionnaires, which were usable, obtaining a response rate of 71.8 per cent calculated according to the formula provided by Bryman and Bell (2011). The total number of respondents was thus 303 cases. The characteristics of the sample of respondents who completed the self-report questionnaires are provided in terms of the demographic variables: age, gender, position, education, and ethnicity, which are described in the next chapter.

7.4 Gathering of the data

As highlighted in the previous discussions, the current study used a survey method for gathering data, specifically the cross sectional self-administered questionnaire. This type of collecting data is hailed for its ability to yield a satisfactory range of reliable data (Bless et al., 2014). Before data was gathered, ethical principles and guidelines related to the study were considered, as detailed below.

Ethical considerations

One of the greatest issues in research involving human participants is the aspect of ethics. Ethics refers to a set of moral principles suggested by individuals or groups, and are subsequently widely accepted. They offer rules and behaviour expectations about the most correct conduct towards research and experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, and other researchers (Saunders, Lewis & Thomhill, 2012). Lack of commitment to ethical considerations can adversely affect the credibility of the research, the autonomy of the researchers, as well as the quality of the research or even the rights of the participants. For the current study, ethical clearance was applied for, and granted, from the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. (Reference number UFS-HSD2015/0579). The initial stage of data collection involved providing information about the purpose of the research to the respondents as well as seeking their consent to take part in the study.

Using the ethical clearance granted from the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, the researcher sought permission from the banking sector to conduct the study; after permission was granted, the principal investigator, with the help of a research assistant, was responsible for the distribution and collection of the

questionnaires. In cases where respondents needed assistance the researcher was available to clarify some of the items. With the help of the branch managers, initial rapport was established with the respondents and explanations were provided about the manner in which the data will be used. All the basic steps of the project as well as confidentiality consent were highlighted in the letter of request. The questionnaire contained an anonymity section that emphasised to the respondents that their names were not required in the questionnaire and that individual data will not be communicated to the management or to the organisation at large. Thus, respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and it was made clear that participation is voluntary and withdrawal at any time during the research project was guaranteed.

In summary, the following ethical principles were taken into consideration for the current study: respect and protection of the rights of participants, no harm to participants. Positive contribution towards the welfare of people in the community and finally consent for participation in the research was voluntary. All information and records obtained were considered anonymous and were confidentially treated as instructed by (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). In addition, all the procedures prescribed by the research ethics committee of the institution involved in the study were adhered to. See appendix for consent form and questionnaire.

7.4.1 Measuring instruments

The questionnaire consisted of five sections beginning with a biographical questionnaire developed to gather information regarding the demographic characteristics of the participants. The information gathered on this section included age, gender, ethnicity, educational level, marital status, and job level in the banking sector. The first part of the questionnaire had a covering letter and the informed consent form, which outlined the name of the researcher, affiliation, purpose of the study, as well as the request directed to the respondents to take part in the study. The respondents were requested to complete the entire questionnaire on their own providing their honest opinions. Clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaires were provided on each scale.

The other section of the questionnaire consisted of pre-established scales with evidence in the literature of acceptable reliability and validity. The questionnaire comprised of four scales, measuring PsyCap, self-leadership, job embeddedness, and work engagement. Items were rated on a Likert scale. Reliability testing of the scales was undertaken as some of the scales were developed for use with Western populations. To assess the reliability of the measurement items of all the variables, an internal consistency check was carried out using Cronbach's alpha. Below is a detailed description of the scales that were administered to the respondents as highlighted above. The nature, composition, reliability, validity and rationale for the inclusion of these scales are fully explained.

7.5 Nature and composition of measuring instruments

7.5.1 Work engagement scale

To measure work engagement, the Utrecht work engagement scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) was used. The UWES is a well-recognised self-rated instrument and includes three sub-scales of engagement, namely dedication, vigour, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2013). This scale consists of 17 items, designed on a 7-point frequency scale ranging from 0= Never to 6 = Always. A high score reflects high levels of engagement. Dedication consists of five items that reflect an individual's' feelings of enthusiasm, inspiration, and experiencing challenging work. A typical question for dedication is: 'My job inspires me'. Vigour consists of six items reflecting how individuals' are not easily fatigued and are persistently at work. A typical question for vigour is: 'I am bursting with energy in my work'. The absorption dimension consists of six items reflecting how individuals are totally and happily immersed in their work such that time passes quickly (refer to Table 7.1 below).

Table 7.1 Example of the UWES items

Item No	Item	
1	At my work, I feel bursting with energy	
2	I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose	
3	Time flies when I am working	
6	When I am working , I forget everything else around me	
16	It is difficult to detach myself from my job	

7.5.1.1 Reliability and validity

Literature indicates that the factorial validity, construct equivalence, internal consistency (reliability) and stability of the UWES have been confirmed in a number of international Schaufeli and Bakker (2003); Schaufeli et al. (2002) and also South African studies (Coetzee & De Villiers, 2010; Jackson, 2004). As indicated by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003), the alpha coefficients for the three subscales (vigour, dedication, and absorption) varied between 0.80 and 0.90. Similarly, previous studies reported Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients as follows α= 0.92 for vigour, α= 0.91 for dedication and α= 0.90 for absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).Therefore the scale has sufficient internal consistencies.

7.5.1.2 Rationale for inclusion of measuring instruments

The Utrecht work engagement scale was used for the current study because it matches well with the adopted theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 2 and the definition for engagement (which summarises the three dimensions) provided in paragraph 2.3. In addition, the UWES was used due to its proven high validity, thus the scale has been validated in several countries, including South Africa (Storm & Rothmann, 2003), Spain (Schaufeli et al., 2002), and the Netherlands (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003; Schaufeli et al., 2002). In addition, the confirmatory factor analyses applied to these studies confirmed that the fit of the hypothesised three-factor structure to the data was superior to that of

any other alternative factor structures. For example, in the study by Seppala, Mauno, Feldt and Tolvanen (2008), factor loadings for the UWES were in general high, ranging from 0.61 to 0.99. In addition, this scale is standardised and adopted for a South African sample and literature indicates that it possess satisfactory reliability and validity (De Bruin & Henn, 2013). Therefore, it was the best-suited scale for the current study. However, Kulikowski (2017) recently stated that a better CFA fit for the two-factor UWES over the three-factor one reporting the following goodness-of-fit RMSEA = 0.10; CFI = 0.97; AGFI = 0.92.

7.5.1.3 Psychological capital scale

To measure Psychological Capical the (PCQ-24) scale developed by Luthans, Avolio, Avey, and Norman (2007) was used. This scale comprises of 24 items, having a response format ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree, and the possible score on this scale ranges from 24 to 144. Each of the four sub-dimensions of psychological capital, which include hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy, are represented by six items respectively. High scores on this scale indicate high psychological capital (refer to Table 7.2) below.

Table 7.2 Example of psychological capital scale

Item no	Item	
3	I feel confident contributing to discussions about the company's strategy.	
8	At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my work goals.	
10	Right now, I see myself as being pretty successful at work.	
14	I usually manage difficulties one way or another at work.	
21	I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job.	

7.5.1.4 Reliability and validity

This scale has demonstrated adequate internal consistency and constructs validity in the literature reporting the following alpha reliability coefficients: self-efficacy .84, hope .82, resilience .81, and optimism .70 (Peterson, Luthans, Avolio, Walumba & Zheng, 2011). Overall, the PsyCap questionnaire has alpha reliability in the range of .89– -.91

(Luthans et al., 2007). The PCQ24 scale has demonstrated high reliability and construct validity in earlier studies (Avey et al., 2010; Luthans et al., 2008).

7.5.1.5 Rationale for inclusion of measuring instrument

The PCQ24 scale was used in the current study because it has demonstrated high reliability, adequate internal consistency and construct validity in earlier studies (Avey, Luthans & Youssef, 2010; Luthans, Luthans, Norman, Avolio & Avey, 2008; Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007). In addition, this scale is standardised to South African context research and it is well aligned to the definition and theory adopted for the study, which summarises the four dimensions of PsyCap.

7.5.1.6 Job embeddedness scale (JES)

To assess job embeddedness, the JES developed by Mitchell et al. (2001) was used. The scale is a self-report instrument that includes three major scales of JE dimensions, namely links, fit, and sacrifice. The response scale is scored on a five-point Likert scale, varying between poles of intensity, from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 5 ('strongly agree'). A higher response aggregate indicates higher levels of job embeddedness and a lower response aggregate indicates otherwise. The JES (Mitchell et al., 2001) consists of two dimensions: the organisational and community dimensions. However, in the present study only the organisational dimension was examined, because researchers have found that the organisational dimension better predicts employee engagement than the community dimension (Takawira, 2012; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). The scale was made up of 28 items: organisational fit was represented by 9 items, for example "My co-workers are similar to me", organisational sacrifice by 10 items, for example "I would sacrifice a lot if I leave this job", and organisational links by 9 items, for example "I feel a strong link with my organisation (refer to Table 7.3).

Table 7.3 Example of job embeddedness scale items

Item No	Item	
1	I like members of my work group	
15	I am well compensated for my level of performance	
27	The quality of people who work for this company are good	
28	I feel a strong link with my organisation	

7.5.1.7 Reliability and validity

The job embeddedness scale reports acceptable internal consistency reliabilities as follows: for links = 0.68, fit, = 0.87, and sacrifice = 0.86. (Mitchell et al. 2001b). Similarly, acceptable internal consistency reliability was yielded in a recent South African study done by Takawira (2012) reporting the following alphas: links = 0.79, fit = 0.81 and sacrifice = 0.88. With regards to validity, previous studies have reported a good validity of the JES for example (Burton et al., 2010; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008; Holtom & O'Neill, 2004).

7.5.1.8 Rationale for inclusion of measuring instruments

The JES composite measure was adopted for this study because compared to the global measure, it has the advantage of theoretical richness, and it also covers the components of job embeddedness previously discussed in the theory of job embeddedness. Lee et al. (2004) highlighted that the scale was still preliminary and evolving, therefore in this study focus was on the items used in Mitchell and Lee's studies (2001) that primarily had the strongest face validity in the previous studies, and had the least likelihood of overlap with other constructs. In addition, the JES has been proven reliable and valid in the South African context.

7.5.1.9 Self-leadership scale

The self-leadership construct was measured using items adopted form the revised self-leadership questionnaire (RSLQ) and the entire abbreviated self-leadership

questionnaire (ASLQ). The study could have used the ASLQ only, however, the limitations of this scale indicated by Houghton, Dawley and Diliello (2012) were taken into consideration and some measures were taken to address them based on the advice provided by (Houghton et al., 2012). Some of the issues raised by Houghton et al. (2012) were that the ASLQ does not include the natural reward strategy as well as the self-cueing sub-dimension of behavioural strategies, yet these sub-scales were of great importance in the current study. The natural rewards dimension has been particularly troublesome for self-leadership scale developers, such as Anderson and Prussia (1997) SLQ and the Houghton and Neck (2002) RSLQ. In both scales, it demonstrated the lowest sub-scale reliabilities. It is therefore not surprising that the natural reward items failed to fit well in the context of a brief scale ASLQ. Similarly, self-cueing is a tangential self-leadership strategy that focuses more on altering a person's behavioural environment than on directly altering a person's behaviour (Neck & Manz, 2010). It is therefore understandable that the self-cueing items did not fit well in a brief scale designed to provide an overall measure of self-leadership.

Considering that in the current study, self-leadership was measured as one variable of interest in the context of a larger model, to avoid rater fatigue, it was impractical to use the full 35-item RSLQ that includes the self-reward and self-cueing sub-scales. As a result, the current researcher used the ASLQ. However, because natural rewards and self-cueing items could not be ignored, the scientific advice provided by Houghton et al. (2012) was followed, namely that researchers who are particularly interested in the natural rewards or self-cueing dimensions of self-leadership should use the natural rewards and self-cueing subscales from the RSLQ. Therefore, self-leadership was measured using ASLQ and the natural reward and self-cueing sub-scales were extracted from the RSLQ. The scale consists of 16 items in which respondents were requested to answer items on a five-point Likert scale. A high score represents high self-leadership. Examples of the questions included for example "I work towards specific goals I have set for myself" for behavioural strategies and "I visualise myself successfully performing a task before I do it" for cognitive strategies, and "I seek out

activities in my work that I enjoy doing" for the natural rewards strategy (refer to Table 7.4)

Table 7.4 Example of self-leadership items

Item No	Item	
1	I establish specific goals for my own performance	
10	I purposefully visualise myself overcoming the challenges I face	
15	I seek out activities in my work that I enjoy doing	
8	I use concrete reminders	

7.5.1.10   Reliability and validity

The developers of the ASLQ reported a fairly good reliability estimate for the total scale (α) of 0.73 and the items had factor loadings greater than .73 (Houghton et al., 2012). In addition Nel and Van Zyl (2015) reported the internal consistency with much higher reliability estimate (α = 0.89). Mahembe et al. (2013) also found good reliability at 0.76. From the above, it is clear that the ASLQ has demonstrated reasonably good reliability and validity across a number of empirical studies and has acceptable reliability threshold as established in the literature (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). For the present study, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.89 for behaviour-focused strategies, 0.74 for natural rewards and 0.88 for constructive thought pattern strategies.

7.5.1.11   Rationale for inclusion of measuring instrument

The use of ASLQ in combination with the natural rewards and self-cueing subscales was done following Houghton's et al. (2012) recommendation that ASLQ will be more useful for researchers who wish to measure self-leadership as one variable of interest in the context of a larger model which was the case for the current study. According to Houghton et al. (2007), the RSLQ suffers from its length, considering that it includes 35 items, posing a challenging issue when self-leadership is being examined along with other variables of interest as in the present study. However, subscales for natural

rewards and self-cueing were included for the RSLQ as advised by Houghton et al. (2012), since they were crucial to the current study. This was carefully done to ensure quality of the measure as well as to minimise rater fatigue. As noted by Hair et al. (2008) overall survey length can quickly become unwieldy, inaccurate and lead to much missing survey data.

7.6 Statistical methods

According to Cooper and Schindler (2008), data analysis takes into account the reduction of accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns as well as applying statistical techniques. Babbie and Mouton (2015) note that it involves converting large masses of detailed data that is unmanageable into manageable summaries. This section outlines how a set of information collected from the respondents (raw data) was organised in a meaningful way and presented to reveal or enhance its fundamental properties. Based on the nature of the research questions the study sought to address the data analysis techniques which were quantitative in nature. Statistical analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24, Mplus version 7.4 and SmartPLS 3.2.7.

The initial examination of data was conducted in the form of descriptive statistics, which used the most fundamental techniques; and the construction of frequency distributions or measures of variability such as standard deviation, and mean. Reliability of the instruments was checked using Cronbach's alpha, and the validity was checked through confirmatory factor analysis. The main objective of the study was to determine the effect of psychological capital, self-leadership and job embeddedness on work engagement for banking sector employees. To address this objective and the secondary objectives a range of inferential statistics were applied, which included (step-wise regression analysis and correlations), while the second objective was explored by using independent t-tests which were used to compare work engagement levels for the two major age groups. The theoretical model concluded from the literature was tested using the partial least squares path modelling (PLS). The following section provides detailed explanations of these various statistical methods as they were applied in the current study.

7.6.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics refers to the statistical computations describing either the characteristics of a sample or the relationship among variables in a sample. It merely summarises a set of sample observations (Babbie & Mouton, 2015). Thus Trochim (2006) simply puts it as "what the data displays". Descriptive statistics was therefore used in the current study to describe the data and its basic features by using frequency tables, measures of central tendency, as well as measures of dispersion. All the demographic variables, including age groups, which form part of the survey, are displayed by means of frequency tables, as instructed by (Fowler & Floyd, 2012). In addition, the secondary objective of the study, which was to determine the current state of work engagement, PsyCap, self-leadership, and job embeddedness, was examined through using descriptive statistics.

7.6.2 Confirmatory factor analysis

To conduct confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) the current study made use of the Mplus version 7.4. CFA refers to a set of statistical techniques used in the research process to test or confirm specific hypotheses or theories concerning the structure underlying a set of variables (Pallant, 2010). Thus, CFA is used to verify the factor structure of a set of observed variables. CFA allows the researcher to test the hypothesis that a relationship between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs does exist (Suhr, 2011). Therefore, the researcher uses knowledge of the theory, as well as empirical research, or both, to postulate the relationship pattern a priori and then tests the hypothesis statistically.

In the current study, CFA was used as a way of testing how well measured variables represent a small number of constructs as indicated by Hair et al. (2006). It was also applied to provide statistical evidence of whether each of the identified variables is adequately defined in terms of the common variance among the indicators in a measurement model, as instructed by (MacKenzie, Podsakoff & Jarvis, 2005). Thus, the study used CFA to confirm the factor structure of psychological capital, job embeddedness, self-leadership, and work engagement in order to provide a

confirmatory test of the measurement theory of these variables. A measurement model was specified, and then an assessment of the validity of each of the measurement models was carried out by using a combination of the evaluative criteria for goodness-of-fit statistics. The following indices were used in order to assess model fit to the data: the comparative fit index (CFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) as indicated by (Byrne, 2010).

7.6.2.1 Goodness-of-fit statistics (GoF)

The evaluative process for CFA focuses on two major aspects: firstly, the goodness-of-fit of the model as a whole and secondly, the goodness-of-fit of individual parameter estimates (Byrne, 2010). The goodness-of-fit (GoF) is a global criterion developed by Amato, Vinzi and Tenenhaus (2010), and it represents a compromise between the quality of the measurement model and the quality of the structural model. It specifies how well a specific model reproduces the observed covariance matrix among the indicator items. There is a wide array of fit indices from which to choose; however, typically only one or two needs to be reported along with other fit-related indicators. Thus, though several goodness-of-fit statistics may be used when determining the validity of the measurement models, researchers have argued in support of overall model fit on the basis of only one criterion. The current study used the following goodness-of-fit statistics provided by Byrne (2010), which include the comparative fit index (CFI), the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA).

i)   Comparative fit index (CFI),

The comparative fit index compares the model of interest with some alternative, such as the null or independence model, thus CFI compares the fit of a target model to the fit of an independent model, in which the variables are assumed to be uncorrelated (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). CFI assumes that all latent variables are uncorrelated and compares the sample covariance matrix with the null model (Hooper, Coughlam & Mullen, 2008). Fit in this case refers to the difference between the observed and predicted covariance matrices, as represented by the chi-square index. Values that approach 1 indicate acceptable fit, meaning the CFI values of 0.9 and higher indicate

satisfactory fit between the postulated model and the empirical data (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

ii) *Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)*

RMSEA is concerned with explaining how well the model fits the population, not just the sample used for estimation (Kaniskan & McCoach 2014). MacCallum, Browne and Sugawara (1996) have proposed that RMSEA values 0.01, 0.05, and 0.08 indicate excellent, good and mediocre fit respectively. This implies that lower RMSEA values indicate a better fit. However, others have suggested 0.10 as the cut-off for poor fitting models. Thus, RMSEA values below 0.10 and 0.06 are interpreted to reflect acceptable and good model fit (Byrne, 2010).

iii) *Standardised root mean square residual (SRMR)*

The SRMR is an absolute measure of fit, which is defined as the standardised difference between the observed correlation and the predicted correlation (Kenny, 2015). It refers to the standardised square root of the mean of the squared residuals. Lower SRMR values represent better fit and higher values represent worse fit (Hair et al., 2010). Since the SRMR is an absolute measure of fit, a value of zero indicates a perfect fit and a value less than 0.08 is generally considered a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Byrne (2010) notes a decade later that SRMR indices of less than 0.10 and less than 0.08 respectively indicate acceptable and good model fit, respectively.

In summary, dominant literature point out that the indicators of a well-fitting model would be evidenced from a (CFI) value that is equal to or greater than 0.90 as indicated by Browne and Cudek (1993), the SRMR value of less than 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), and a RMSEA value of less than 0.05 (Browne & Cudek, 1993). However, SRMR and RMSEA indices of less than 0.10 are acceptable (Byrne, 2010). In the current study, to evaluate each measurement model, these indices were considered collectively (CFI, RMSEA, SRMR), taking into account cut-offs for acceptable and good model fits as suggested in previous literature (Byrne, 2010).

7.6.2.2 Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics refers to the statistical methods that enable one to make inferences or generalisations about a large group on the basis of data taken from a subset of that group (Walsh & Ollenburger, 2001). It also helps to establish relationships among variables and draw conclusions from them. From the family of inferential statistics, this study used the Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis for the main objective as well as the correlations, independent samples t-test to evaluate the secondary objective (work engagement levels with regards to age), and confirmatory factor analysis for validation of scales.

7.6.2.3 Correlations

Correlation analysis is used to describe the strength as well as the direction of the linear relationship between two variables (Pallant, 2013). This approach analyses the relationship between interval/ratio variable and ordinal variables that seeks to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables concerned (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this study, the Pearson product–moment correlation designed for interval level (continuous) variables was used to provide a numerical summary of the direction and strength of the linear relationship between PsyCap, job embeddedness, self-leadership, and work engagement. Thus Pearson product–moment correlation was used to investigate the degree to which the constructs measured by the PsyCap 24, RSLQ, and JES were significantly correlated with work engagement.

Pearson correlation coefficients (r) can range from -1 to +1 (Pallant, 2013). The sign in front indicates whether there is a positive correlation (as one variable increases, so too does the other), or a negative correlation (as one variable increases, the other decreases) (Pallant, 2013). A perfect correlation of 1 or -1 indicates that the value of one variable can be determined by knowing the value of the other variable. A correlation of 0 indicates that there is no relationship between the two variables. When interpreting correlations it is important to consider the following factors: non-linear relationship, outliers, restricted range of scores, correlation versus causality, and statistical versus practical significance (Pallant, 2013; Bryman &Bell, 2011). During the analysis it is also

important to determine the direction and strength of the relationship, calculate the coefficient of determination, and assess the significance level (Pallant, 2013).

When determining the strength of the relationship, it is important to understand that a correlation of 0 means there is no relationship at all, a correlation of 1.0 indicates a perfect positive correlation and -1.0 indicates a perfect negative correlation. Below is an illustration of the guidelines provided by Pallant (2013) on how to interpret the correlation values between 0 and -1.

Table 7.5 Determining the strength of the correlations

Value of r (+/-)	Interpretation
r=.10 to .29	Small
r=.30 to .49	Medium
r=.50 to 1.0	Large
r=0	No relationship

As noted by Pallant (2013), these guidelines apply both for positive and negative sign out, but the negative sign refers only to the direction of the relationship not the strength thereof. Thus the strength of a correlation r=.4 and r=-.4 is the same but the direction is different. A large correlation means there is a strong relationship, a small correlations means there is a weak relationship.

7.6.2.4 Stepwise multiple regression analysis

Multiple regression is a family of techniques that can be used to explore the relationship between one continuous dependant variable and a number of independent variables (Pallant, 2013). Though multiple regression is based on correlations, it allows a more sophisticated exploration of the interrelationship among a set of variables. Multiple regression is used to indicate how well a set of variables are able to predict a particular outcome. For example, in this study the researcher explored how well a set of variables (PsyCap, job embeddedness, and self-leadership) were able to predict work

engagement in the banking sector, thus multiple regression provided the information about the model as a whole, indicating the relative contribution of each of the variables that make up a model. As indicated by Pallant (2013), some of the questions related to this study that was addressed by multiple regression included:

1. How well a set of variables were able to predict a particular outcome
2. How much of the variance in the dependent variable could be explained by the independent variables.
3. Which variable in a set of independent variables was the best predictor of the dependent variable?
4. Whether a particular predictor variable was still able to predict an outcome when the effects of another variable are were controlled for.
5. It provides an indication of the relative contribution of each independent variable allowing determining the statistical significance of the results, in terms of both the model itself and the individual independent variables.

The three main types of multiple regression analyses include standard or simultaneous, hierarchical or sequential, and stepwise regression analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). For the purpose of this study, stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to determine the effect of PsyCap, job embeddedness, and self-leadership on work engagement. According to Pallant (2010), the stepwise linear regression analysis method that regress multiple variables while simultaneously removing those that are not important. It essentially does multiple regression a number of times, at each time removing the weakest correlated variable; thus at the end you are left with the variables that explain the distribution best (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In this study a regression model was built from a set of candidate predictor variables (sub-dimensions of PsyCap, job embeddedness, and self-leadership) by entering and removing predictors in a stepwise manner into the model until there was no justifiable reason to enter or remove any more variables.

According to Yasar, Bilgili and Simsek (2012), stepwise multiple regression analysis is widely used for expressing the dependence of a response variable on several independent variables. The determination of subset models is based on adding or

deleting the variables with the greatest influence on the residual sum of squares (Yasar et al., 2012). Stepwise regression is actually a forward selection process that rechecks the importance of all previously included variables at each step; if the partial sums of squares for any previously included variables do not meet a minimum criterion to stay in the model, then the selection procedure changes to backward elimination and variables are dropped one at a time until all remaining variables meet the minimum criterion (Yasar et al., 2012). The stepwise regression analysis was suitable for this study because it serves as a robust tool for the selection of the best subset models, meaning the best combination of independent variables. Thus it produces a model summary indicating the contribution of each independent variable in predicting the dependent variable, thereby addressing research question 1 fully.

7.6.2.5 *Independent t-tests*

For the secondary objective, which is concerned with the differences in levels of work engagement with regards to age groups, the independent t-tests were used. The t-tests are used when one is comparing mean scores on some continuous variable for two different groups of respondents (Pallant, 2010). For the current study, even though there were four age categories, due to the small number of respondents from the other two groups, only two age groups could be meaningfully compared statistically. The independent t-test informs whether there is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores for the two groups (Pallant, 2013) (whether generation X and generation Y differ significantly in terms of their levels of work engagement). If the p-value is equal or less than .05, it means that there is a significant difference in the mean scores on the dependent variable for each of the two groups. If the value is above .05, there is no significant difference between the two groups (Pallant, 2010).

7.6.3 Statistical modelling

As highlighted earlier, statistical modelling techniques were used to test the proposed theoretical model in the study.

7.6.3.1 Structural equation modelling (SEM)

Structural equation modelling (SEM) is a general term used to describe a large number of statistical models used to evaluate the validity of substantive theories with empirical data (Fall, 2007). It represents an extension of general linear modelling (GLM) procedures, such as the ANOVA and multiple regression analysis. It can be used to study the relationships among latent constructs that are indicated by multiple measures. Henseler, Ringle and Sinkovics (2009) note that SEM has recently become very popular in validating instruments and testing linkages between constructs. The two families of SEM include the covariance-based techniques represented by LISREL, and the variance-based techniques in which partial least squares (PLS) path modelling is the most prominent representative (Henseler et al., 2009). For exploratory work in behavioural research fields, Lowry and Kotzé (2014) advise that the PLS should be selected as it could provide distinctive theoretical insights. Therefore, in the current study the proposed model was tested using the variance-based structural equation-modelling program SmartPLS (Ringle, Wende & Becker, 2015). In the current study the PLS path modelling was used as a simultaneous analysis to check if the hypothesised relationships at the theoretical level are empirically acceptable, and also to check how well the measures relate to each construct. The PLS path modelling was deemed appropriate since it is suitable for prediction-oriented research and is recommended when testing and validating exploratory models Lowry et al. (2014), which is the case in the current study.

7.6.3.2 Partial least squares path modelling (PLS)

PLS is a family of alternating least squares algorithms, which extend principal component and canonical correlation analysis (Henserler et al., 2009). It was designed by Wold (1985) for the analysis of high dimensional data in a low-structure environment and to date it has undergone various extensions and modifications. The nature of the PLS path model is defined by two sets of linear equations: the inner model and the outer model. The inner model specifies the relationships between unobserved or latent variables, whereas the outer model specifies the relationships between a latent variable and its observed or manifest indicators (Henseler et al., 2009). The objective of PLS is

to provide an explanation of the relationships and predictions of the criterion variables of the model (Henserler et al., 2009). It can estimate every complex model with a number of latent and manifest variables and it has less stringent assumptions about the distribution of variables and error terms. Henseler et al. (2009) provide the two-step process guidelines for assessing the measurement model with regard to reliability and validity as indicated in Figure 7.2.

According to Yasar, Bilgili and Simsek (2012), stepwise multiple regression analysis is widely used for expressing the dependence of a response variable on several independent variables. The determination of subset models is based on adding or deleting the variables with the greatest influence on the residual sum of squares (Yasar et al., 2012). Stepwise regression is actually a forward selection process that rechecks the importance of all previously included variables at each step; if the partial sums of squares for any previously included variables do not meet a minimum criterion to stay in the model, then the selection procedure changes to backward elimination and variables are dropped one at a time until all remaining variables meet the minimum criterion (Yasar et al., 2012). The stepwise regression analysis was suitable for this study because it serves as a robust tool for the selection of the best subset models, meaning the best combination of independent variables. Thus it produces a model summary indicating the contribution of each independent variable in predicting the dependent variable, thereby addressing research question 1 fully.

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Outer model assessment
- Reliability and validity of reflective constructs
- Validity of formative constructs

Inner model assessment
- Variance explanation of endogenous constructs
- Effect sizes
- Predictive relevance
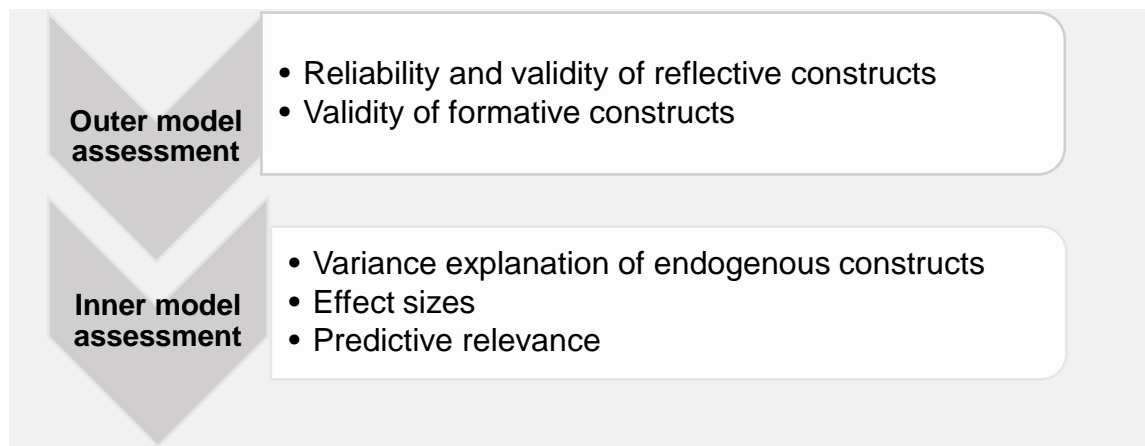
Figure 7.1 Two-step process of PLS path model assessment

(Source: Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009).

7.6.3.5.1 Assessing the outer model

Chin (2010) advises that when reporting PLS analysis one should make use of the two-stage approach. In this approach, the outer model is assessed first, and then the inner model is assessed afterwards. Focus on the outcome from the scaling or outer model comes first, then the structural or inner model is examined. The outer model is the relationship between the indicators to its latent construct (Henseler et al., 2009). In PLS composite reliability takes into account that indicators have different loading and can be interpreted as Cronbach's alpha. An internal consistency reliability value above 0.7 in

early stages of research and values above 0.8 or 0.9 in more advanced stages of research are regarded as satisfactory (Albers, 2009). Each indicator should be assessed since reliability of indicators varies. Henseler et al. (2009) noted that latent variables should explain a substantial part of each indicator's variance (usually at least 50 per cent) thus the absolute correlations between a construct and each of its manifest variables should be higher than 0.7 ($\approx \sqrt{0.5}$). The reliability checks in the model assessment end with a recommendation to eliminate reflective indicators from measurement models if their standardised loadings are smaller than 0.4 (Henseler et al., 2009).

To assess validity, PLS focuses on assessing the convergent validity and the discriminant validity. The convergent validity signifies that a set of indicators represent one and the same underlying construct demonstrated by their uni-dimesionality and average variance extracted (AVE) that are used as the criterion for convergent validity (Gorz, Liehr-Gobbers & Krafft, 2009). Discriminant validity refers to the fact that two conceptually different concepts should exhibit sufficient difference. The AVE of each variable should be greater than the latent variable's highest squared correlation with any other latent variable (Henseler et al., 2009). Reliable and valid outer model estimations permit an evaluation of the inner path model estimates (Henseler et al., 2009).

In summary, to assess the outer model in the current study, construct validity was tested by assessing the measurement model for convergent and discriminant validity. The convergent validity was assessed by considering the outer loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability, and Cronbach's α. As instructed by Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010), to demonstrate convergent validity, the standardised loadings (outer loadings) in the measurement model was checked if it was above the cut-off which is 0.70. All item loadings were retained because they had statistically significant loadings. The AVE was checked to determine if it was 0.50 or higher; then the composite reliability value and Cronbach's α value of each latent variable were all above 0.70 which is the cut-off. Detailed results for the outer model are provided in Chapter 8.

7.6.3.5.2 Assessing the inner model

The criterion for the assessment of the inner model is the coefficient of determination (R^2) of the endogenous latent variables. According to Chin (1998) R^2 values can be described in three ways: the substantial, the moderate and the weak, as indicated on the guideline Table 7.6 below.

Table 7.6 Interpreting the coefficient of determination(R^2)

R^2	
0.67	Substantial
0.33	Moderate
0.19	Weak

(Source: Chin, 1998)

Substantial results exhibit good representation. However, Henseler et al. (2009) noted that if certain inner path model structures explain an endogenous latent variable by only a few exogenous latent variables, moderate R^2 may also be acceptable. However, if the endogenous latent variable relies on several exogenous latent variables the R^2 value should exhibit a substantial level. Lower results raise doubts regarding the theoretical underpinnings and demonstrate that the model is incapable to explain the endogenous latent variable.

The inner model is also assessed through the estimated values of path coefficients in the structural model, which are evaluated in terms of sign, magnitude, and significance (Henseler et al., 2009). Standardised inner path model coefficients decline with an increased number of indirect relationships, especially when mediating latent variables have a suppressor effect on the direct path; this may lead direct relationships to become insignificant after including additional indirect relationships (Henseler et al., 2009). In such an event, the total effect should remain constant and sizeable so as to provide more reasonable grounds for conclusions on their inner path model.

7.7 Summary

In summary, a carefully chosen research design assisted to alleviate confusion and to gather reliable and valid data for the current research. This study used a non-experimental survey in a quantitative study constructed to determine the effect of PsyCap, job embeddedness, and self-leadership on work engagement. This chapter explained the methodology that was used by the researcher to answer the research question as well as to test the hypotheses and to address the objectives. The chapter also provided a detailed description of the research design, population of the study and the description of the sample. The chapter also reported how data was collected, including a description of the instruments that were used to collect data for each variable. The chapter closed with a description of the statistical analysis techniques employed in the presentation and reporting of data gathered for the study. The chapter concluded with a discussion on the ethical guidelines that the researcher considered during the research process.

CHAPTER 8

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter described the methodology that was followed to execute the research process. This chapter focuses on reporting, presenting the research results, and discussing the significance of the findings. The section begins by reporting the results from descriptive statistics outlining the demographic characteristics of the sample involved in the study. These results are summarised as frequency distributions in a table that caters for all the demographic variables. The levels of work engagement, psychological capital, job embeddedness and self-leadership are also discussed under descriptive statistics using the mean scores for each variable.

The initial examination of the data involved ensured that all cases formed part of the analyses. The extent of missing values was analysed and very few missing values were noted. There was also no obvious pattern. The plausibility of the values was identified by evaluating the minimum and maximum values as well as mean and standard deviation values as instructed by Davis, Pecar, Santana and Burke (2014). An investigation of the internal consistency reliability of all four scales was undertaken by means of Cronbach's alpha and the confirmatory factor analysis. Once the structure of the instruments was investigated, the prediction of work engagement by PsyCap, self-leadership, and job embeddedness was investigated.

The chapter starts by reporting the results for descriptive statistics. The results for the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) are also presented together with reliability estimates for the scales used. The following section then presents the results for the inferential statistics starting with the correlations, then stepwise regression analysis for the primary objective and lastly the t-tests for the secondary objective. Towards the end of the results discussion, statistical modelling results are discussed using the partial least squares (PLS) path modelling. The model is assessed and interpretations are made. Findings of the current study are then discussed in relation to the findings of the

previous studies. The chapter closes with a discussion of the empirical testing of the proposed theoretical model.

8.2 Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics present the frequency distribution of the biographical information of the participants, reliability estimates for each of the instruments, and the mean scores for each variable under investigation.

Table 8.1 Demographic characteristics of the sample (n = 303)

Demographic Variables	Labels	Frequency	Per cent %
Gender	Male	119	39.3%
	Female	178	58.7%
Age	19-25 Years	60	19.9%
	26-30 Years	93	30.7%
	31-40 Years	87	28.8%
	41-50 Years	47	15.6%
	Above 50 Years	15	5.0%
Ethnicity	Africans	173	57.3%
	White	45	14.9%
	Coloured	53	17.5%
	Indian	30	9.9%
Educational Level	Matric	37	12.3%
	Diploma	125	41.4%
	Degree	109	36.1%
	Post Grad	27	8.9%
Current job level	Executive	9	3.0%
	Senior level	68	22.5%
	Middle level	92	30.5%
	Operational level	131	43.4%

Table 8.1 above presents a summary of the demographic characteristics of the sample. The respondents' age range extended from 19-25 years of age, which was category 1,

to above 50 years of age, which was category 5, with most of the respondents falling into the category of 26-30 years of age (30.7%), followed by category 4 (31-40 years of age) constituting 28.8%. This implies that most of the employees in the banking sector range between 26-40 years of age, which is the active population. Concerning gender it is clear that the majority of the participants are female (178 individuals constituting 58.7%) and 119 are male (39.3%). The banking sector is therefore dominated by females.

The sample consisted of employees of various ethnicities: White (14, 9%), Coloured (17.5%), Indian (9.9%), with the largest proportion Africans, who constituted (57.1%). The fact that the majority of the respondents are Africans might be due to the affirmative action laws, which are advocating for the employment of previously disadvantaged groups. This also implies that most Africans are moderately engaged since they constitute the majority of respondense. The educational level shows that the majority of employees have a diploma qualification (41.4%), followed by those with a degree (36.1%). Very few individuals had a postgraduate qualification and 12.2% had only matric. Lastly, the current job levels consisted of four categories, of which the operational level had the majority respondents constituting 43.4% of the participants, followed by middle level managers at (30.4%) with the lowest number the executive managers who constituted only 3% of the respondents. Unfortunately, some of the biographical variables (gender, ethnicity, educational level and job level) do not add up to the 303 respondents due to some respondents not completing the questions.

8.3   Psychometric properties of the constructs

The reliability estimates for each of the instruments that were used in the study are presented below. Table 8.2 presents the reliability estimates of work engagement.

Table 8.2 Reliability estimates for the work engagement scale (UWES)

Construct	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
UWES		
Vigour	6	0.855
Dedication	5	0.865
Absorption	6	0.881

Table 8.2 displays the Cronbach's alpha of the three dimensions associated with work engagement. The range indicated on the table shows α = 0.865 for dedication to α = 0.881 for absorption which can be explained as a good level of reliability. This is in line with Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) who indicate that an internal consistency reliability above 0.7 is regarded as satisfactory whereas values below 0.6 indicates a lack of reliability.

8.3.1   Reliability estimates for psychological capital

Table 8.3 Reliability estimates for psychological capital

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
PSYCAP 24		
Self-efficacy	6	0.910
Hope	6	0.889
Resilience	6	0.810
Optimism	6	0.772

Table 8.3 displays the Cronbach's alpha of the four dimensions associated with PsyCap. The range indicated in the table is α = 0.772 for optimism which is satisfactory, α = 0.810 for resilience which is good reliability, α = 0.889 for hope which is also good reliability and α = 0.910 for self-efficacy which is excellent level of reliability.

8.3.2 Reliability estimates for self-leadership

Table 8.4 Reliability Estimates for self-leadership

Construct	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
SLQ		
Behavioural strategies	8	0.897
Constructive thought pattern strategies	6	0.886
Natural rewards	2	0.739

Table 8.4 displays the Cronbach's alpha of the three strategies of self-leadership. The range indicated on the table is from α = 0.737 for natural rewards strategies which is satisfactory, α = 0.886 for cognitive strategies which is a good reliability, and α = 0.897 for behavioural strategies which is also a good reliability. Therefore, the instrument was reliable.

8.3.3 Reliability estimates for job embeddedness

Table 8.5 Reliability estimates for job embeddedness

Construct	Number Of Items	Cronbach's alpha
JES		
Organisational sacrifice	10	0.904
Organisational links	9	0.890
Organisational fit	9	0.862

Table 8.5 displays the Cronbach's alpha of the three dimensions of job embeddedness. The range indicated on the table is from α = 0.862 for organisational fit, which is a good reliability, α = 0.890 for organisational links, which is also a good reliability, α = 0.904 for organisational sacrifice, which is excellent reliability. Therefore, the instrument was reliable.

8.3.4 Goodness-of-fit results

Table 8.6 Goodness-of-fit statistics

	PsyCap	JE	SLQ	WE
S-B χ^2	545.336	1449.718	395.592	423.455
Df	246	347	101	116
RMSEA	0.063	0.102	0.098	0.094
	(0.056 ; 0.07)	(0.097 ; 0.108	(0.088; 0.108)	(0.084; 0.103)
CFI	0.918	0.753	0.900	0.880
SRMR	0.051	0.086	0.054	0.054

Results in Table 8.6 are presented for each measuring instrument below:

8.3.4.1 Psychometric properties of PsyCap

Reliability of the scale

The reliability estimates for PsyCap of this current study was α = 0.910 for efficacy, α = 0.889 for hope, α = 0.810 for resilience and α = 0.772 for optimism. The developers of this standard scale, Luthans et al. (2007), report approximately similar reliability estimates for these four constructs, with self-efficacy α = 0.94, then hope at α = 0.82, resilience reported slightly higher than in the current study with α = 0.90 and for optimism also slightly higher than in the current study α = 0.83. Overall, in the previous studies the PsyCap questionnaire reported an alpha reliability in the range of 0.89 to 0.92 (Luthans et al., 2007). The reliability estimates for this current study relate very well with Peterson, Luthans, Avolio, Walumba & Zheng (2011), who reported the following reliability estimates: self-efficacy α = 0.84, hope α = 0.82, resilience α =0.81, and optimism α =0.70.

Goodness-of-fit results for PsyCap scale

The table above presents the goodness-of-fit results for PsyCap. The current study reported comparative fit index (CFI = 0.92) which is acceptable for a fitting model.

Previous studies, for example Luthans et al. (2007), reported a slightly higher but similar value for CFI, namely 0.93, hence higher than that reported in the current study. They however reported a lower value for root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) at 0.046 while the current study reported RMSEA = 0.063, which is acceptable as noted by Hair et al. (2010), who state that the RMSEA values below 0.10 are indicative of acceptable fit, with values below 0.05 suggesting a very good fit. The current study found a similar value associated with standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) (0.051) which is completely similar to the (0.051) reported by (Luthans et al., 2008). With reference to the reliability, estimates and the goodness-of-fit statistics reported in Table 8.6, it can be concluded that the PsyCap scale used in this study is reliable and valid. However, the scale leaves some room for improvement considering that the CFI values were just acceptable and the RMSEA marginally missed the 0.05 cut-off indicative of very good fit, as indicated by (Browne & Cudeck, 1983).

8.3.4.2 Psychometric properties of work engagement (UWES)

Reliability of the scale

For the work engagement scale the reliability estimates were as follows: the vigour dimension was α = 0.855, the dedication dimension was α = 0.865, and for the absorption it was α = 0.881; therefore, the scale had sufficient internal consistencies. However, previous studies reported slightly higher and excellent reliabilities compared to the current study with the following reliability coefficients: α = 0.92 for vigour, α = 0.91 for dedication and α = 0.90 for absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Goodness-of-fit results for work engagement scale

The current study found inadequate goodness-of-fit when looking at the CFI (0.880); however, the value associated with RMSEA (0.094) is indicative of acceptable fit with an acceptable goodness-of-fit as well when looking at the SRMR (0.054). Previous studies, for example Rothmann and Storm (2003), and Sekoere (2015) found slightly higher results for the CFI (0.91) and Rothmann and Storm (2003) found slightly better results with the RMSEA (0.09) compared to the current study, which found the RMSEA as 0.094. Deducing from above, though the UWES-17 was found to be highly reliable for

the sample used for this study, results indicate that the scale still leaves room for improvement considering that the CFI was slightly below the well-fitting model. De Bruin, Hill, Henn and Muller (2013) have recently discovered that the UWES should actually be treated as a uni-dimensional construct, consisting of a single factor.

8.3.4.3 Psychometric properties of self-leadership (ASLQ)

Reliability of the scale

The reliability estimates for the self-leadership scale of the current study was $\alpha = 0.897$ for behavioural strategies, $\alpha = 0.886$ for cognitive strategies and $\alpha = 0.739$ for natural rewards. These reliability estimates are similar to those in the previous studies. Houghton, Dawley and Diliello (2012) reported the coefficient alpha for the abbreviated self-leadership questionnaire was 0.73, which they highlighted as being above the acceptable reliability threshold established by (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Goodness-of-fit results for self-leadership scale

In terms of the goodness-of-fit results, the current study reported CFI = 0.900, which is acceptable; however, Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) reported a fairly higher comparative fit index (CFI = .99). They also reported the RMSEA = 0.02 and the current study reported RMSEA = 0.098, which is indicative of acceptable fit. For the SRMR Houghton et al. (2012) reported SRMR = 0.051 and fairly similar, the current study reported SRMR = 0.054, which is a value less than 0.8 which Hu and Bentler (1999) regard as an indicator of a good model fit. Given both estimates of reliability and the goodness-of-fit statistics (as reported in Table 8.6), it is clear that the model fit is acceptable even though the root mean square error of approximation is high and slightly below the cut-off indicative of acceptable fit. Fortunately the SRMR = 0.054 is indicative of a good fit, therefore the scale was valid and reliable but also leaves room for improvement.

8.3.4.4 Psychometric properties of job embeddedness (JES)

Summary of the reliability of the scale

With regards to job embeddedness, the following reliability estimates were reported: organisational fit: α = 0.862, for organisational sacrifice, α = 0.904, for the organisational links α = 0.890. Mitchell et al. (2001), reported fairly similar but slightly lower reliability estimates of the constructs indicating that the scale possesses acceptable internal consistency reliabilities as follows: for links α = 0.68, fit α = 0.87, and sacrifice α = 0.86. Similarly, acceptable internal consistency reliability was yielded in a recent South African study done by Takawira (2015) who reported the following alphas: links α = 0.79, fit α =.81 and sacrifice α =.88.

Goodness-of-fit results for job embeddedness scale

In a previous study by Crossley, Bennett, Jex and Burnfield (2007), the scale demonstrated good fit to the data, with the RMSEA = 0.08, the SRMR = 0.03, and the CFI = 0.98. However, in the current study (as indicated in Table 8.6) the CFI = 0.753 was lower than that obtained by Crossley et al. (2007) and it was slightly lower than the acceptable good fit. In addition, the current study obtained RMSEA = 0.10, which is higher than that obtained by Crossley et al. (2007) (RMSEA = 0.08) and slightly above that obtained by Takawira (2015) (RMSEA = 0.09). The study also obtained SRMR =0.086 which slightly missed the 0.08 cut-off indicative of a good fit as noted by (Hu & Bentler, 1999). However Byrne (2010) suggest 0.10 as the cut-off for poor fitting models, thus SRMR values below 0.10 are interpreted to reflect acceptable model fit (Byrne, 2010). Therefore, the job embeddedness scale reflected high reliability and acceptable model fit but requires some improvements to achieve goodness-of-fit.

From the above discussion, it is clear that most of the scales used in the current study were highly reliable and valid; however, the indicators of a well-fitting model CFI and the RMSEA for the job embeddedness and the self-leadership scales suggest that there is room for improvement in order to achieve a well-fitting model. It should also be noted that, although some of the measures indicates less acceptable fit, as indicated above,

when looking at the outer model results of these measures presented in Table 8.14, later in the chapter, they are deemed as valid and reliable.

To address the research questions and achieve the objectives of the study, the inferential statistics were used. The results are discussed next.

8.4   Inferential statistics

With regard to the inferential statistics, the primary objective or research question 1 was assessed. The correlations and stepwise regression analysis of question 2 was assessed using independent t-tests. Therefore, three sets of inferential statistics were used to address objectives one and two. The following discussion therefore focuses on the results of research question 1.

8.4.1   Results related to primary objective or research question 1

In Chapter 1 the primary research question was outlined as follows: Does psychological capital, job embeddedness, and self-leadership have an effect on work engagement among employees in the banking sector? To address this question the correlations were used for the initial examination of whether a relationship exists between the variables concerned. Step wise regression was then used to evaluate the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variables. The indicators/dimensions of each independent variable were correlated with work engagement and the results are presented below.

Table 8.7 Correlations psychological capital and work engagement

		Work engagement (Total)
Efficacy	Pearson correlation	.728**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	303
Hope	Pearson correlation	.769**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	303
Resilience	Pearson correlation	.658**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	303
Optimism	Pearson correlation	.740**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	303

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

Table 8.7 above indicates that all the dimensions of psychological capital had a statistically significant positive correlation with work engagement. Hope had a statistically significant high correlation (strong relationship) with work engagement; the same applies to optimism and self-efficacy. Resilience had a moderate correlation; thus, there is a substantial relationship between resilience and work engagement.

Table 8.8 Correlation self-leadership and work engagement

		Work engagement (Total)
Behavioural Strategies	Pearson Correlation	.731**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	303
Cognitive Strategies	Pearson Correlation	.656**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	303
Natural Rewards	Pearson Correlation	.576**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	303

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

Table 8.8 above displays the correlations of self-leadership and work engagement. The results show that behavioural strategies has a statistically significant strong correlation with work engagement; the cognitive strategies has a statistically significant but substantial relationship with work engagement and the natural rewards strategies has a moderate correlation implying a substantial relationship with work engagement.

Table 8.9 Correlation job embeddedness and work engagement

		Work engagement (Total)
Organisational fit	Pearson correlation	.560**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	303
Organisational sacrifice	Pearson correlation	.419**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	303
Organisational links	Pearson correlation	.292**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	303

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

From the above (Table 8.9) it is clear that job embeddedness components have statistically significant positive correlations with work engagement. The organisational fit and organisational sacrifice has a moderate correlation with work engagement. The organisational links has a statistically significant low correlation but a definite though small relationship with work engagement. From the above results, it can therefore be concluded that a relationship does exist between psychological capital, self-leadership, job embeddedness, and work engagement. Thus, the initial part of research question 1 has been addressed through the correlations. To completely address the question, results of the stepwise multiple regression analyses are presented below.

Table 8.10 Stepwise multiple regression analysis

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	P Sig.
(Constant)	-2.120	.574		-3.692	.000
1.Hope	.919	.181	.284	5.079	.000
2.Optimism	.787	.200	.205	3.935	.000
3.Self-efficacy	.609	.18	.206	4.125	.000
4.Behavioural strategies	.821	.187	.220	4.394	.000
5.Organisational links	.350	.117	.097	2.999	.003

a. Dependent variable: work engagement (Total)

From Table 8.10 above, it is clear that the five variables from the model explain the variance in work engagement. As indicated in Table 8.10 above, there are five significant predictors of work engagement. These five variables include hope, optimism, self-efficacy, behavioural strategies and organisational links, and they explain 71% of the variance in work engagement. Out of those five variables, hope has the highest contribution to work engagement. It should also be noted that the regression model is statistically significant (F = 145.489; P =0.000). Therefore it can

be concluded that the five variables are all significant predictors of work engagement.

Table 8.11 Stepwise regression analysis individual variable contribution to R^2

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Contribution to R^2
1	.769[a]	.591	.590	1.73906	0.59
2	.809[b]	.654	.651	1.60303	0.06
3	.826[c]	.682	.679	1.53894	0.03
4	.837[d]	.701	.697	1.49384	0.02
5	.843[e]	.710	.705	1.47420	0.01

a. Predictors: (Constant), Hope

b. Predictors: (Constant), Hope, Optimism

c. Predictors: (Constant), Hope, Optimism, Self-efficacy

d. Predictors: (Constant), Hope, Optimism, Self-efficacy, Behavioural strategy

e. Predictors: (Constant), Hope, Optimism, Self-efficacy, Behavioural strategies, Organisational links

To examine how much of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the regression model, the R^2 values were analyzed to determine the contribution of each of the independent variables towards work engagement. Results revealed that hope made the largest contribution to the variance in work engagement (R^2 = 0.59 which is 59%). This means that hope makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining work engagement, when the variance explained by all other variables in the model is controlled for. The second predictor of work engagement in the model is optimism ($R^2 = 0.65 - 0.59 = 0.06$) therefore, optimism makes a 6% contribution to work engagement in the model. Only a modest 3% of the variance in work engagement is explained by self-efficacy ($R^2 = 0.68 - 0.65 = 0.03$). Behavioural strategies explain only 2% of the work engagement variance. Finally, organisational links made the smallest contribution (R^2 = 0, 01).

In summary, out of the ten indicators of the independent variables only five variables made a significant contribution to the variance in work engagement. Resilience, natural rewards, cognitive strategies, organisational links and organisational sacrifice were found not to be significant contributors to the variance of work engagement. Hope had the highest contribution, explaining 59% of the variance in work engagement, followed by optimism contributing 6%, then self-efficacy 3%, behavioural strategies 2% and organisational links had the lowest contribution of 1% to work engagement. As a result, hypothesis 1 proposed by the current study (Variances in work engagement be statistically explained by psychological capital, self-leadership and job embeddedness) can safely (and partially) be supported.

8.4.2 Relationship between psychological capital and work engagement

Psychological capital dimensions were the first three major predictors of work engagement in the current study. The model indicated that hope, self-efficacy and optimism contribute a great deal to employee levels of engagement. The combined contribution of PsyCap dimensions to the variance of work engagement (R^2 = 0.680) suggests that the components of psychological capital (hope, self- efficacy and optimism) do indeed have an effect on work engagement. This is significantly higher than the results of Ferreira (2016) who reported that psychological capital in general only explained 43% of the variance in work engagement. Almost similar results were reported in a study by Harris (2012) where psychological capital explained a variance of 53% in work engagement amongst automotive dealers in South Africa.

Recently, Joo, Lim and Kim (2016) concluded that employees were highly engaged when they have higher psychological capital. Previous research has confirmed the relationship between work engagement and positive organisational outcomes in general (Bakker, Albrecht & Leiter, 2011). PsyCap in general has been regarded as a psychological resource which aims to increase people's development and performance (Larson, Norman, Huges & Avey, 2013). Below is a discussion on the relationship between individual dimensions of psychological capital and work engagement.

8.4.2.1 Relationship between hope and work engagement

A significant correlation exists between hope and work engagement (r = 0.769; p = 0.000). Results for the current study found that hope (R^2 = 0.590) was the strongest predictor of employees' levels of engagement. Hope, the motivated, determined pursuit of goals and proactively determined pathways to the goals, is proposed to be a psychological antecedent to the vigour component of work engagement (Bakker, 2017). Previous studies indicate that hope is not only a positive contributor to work engagement, but it is actually a requirement based on the fact that lack of hope is mostly associated with burnout and burnout is the flipside or opposite of work engagement (Karatepe, 2014). Hope is contrary to feelings of exhaustion and depletion of energy associated with burnout, which are detrimental to individual performance.

Consistent with the current findings, Yavas et al. (2013) found that hopeful employees pursue strategies to reach their goals by feeling energetic and enthusiastic and being happily immersed in their work. They dedicatedly and energetically work toward their goal and task achievement. When hopeful individuals encounter difficulties that impede them to reach their set goals, they take advantage of alternative paths to achieve the goals; thus, by being hopeful, an employee shows persistent dedication toward achieving set goals. Thus, even though individuals get exposed to complex work tasks, demanding customers and time pressure, they remain engaged as long as they have sufficient psychological resources like hope. Bakker (2017) explained this clearly saying that work engagement peaks when employees are confronted with both positive events and daily interesting job demands; particularly when they simultaneously have access to sufficient job resources they make use of alternative paths to ensure goal achievement (Bakker, 2017). Thus individuals who score high in hope are highly engaged in their work, because they tend to have frequent positive moods and positive goal directed outlooks (Yavas et al., 2013).

From a theoretical perspective, hope is one of the psychological resources on the JD-R model which contributes highly to work engagement. It is regarded as a resource that hopeful individuals use to keep focused towards the achievement of certain goals, thus they become more goal oriented and highly motivated to goal

achievement (Joo et al., 2016). Bakker and Demerouti (2008) similarly note that hopeful individuals are more engaged in their work. In turn these employees perform well in service delivery and complaint-handling processes. Hope is a resource that satisfies psychological needs and assists individual employees to deal with job demands to meet their work targets (Bakker, 2017) and that possibly makes it the largest contributor to work engagement. Inversely, Mache et al. (2014) report contradictory results on the relationship between hope and work engagement, indicating that there exists a negative relationship between hope and the dimensions of work engagement. However, several researchers note that without the component of hope, there is lack of willpower for an individual to accept either new challenges or the willpower to successfully determine pathways to achievement. Without that, it is difficult to achieve engagement (Bakker & Leiter, 2010). Therefore, it can be safely concluded that hope is a significant predictor of work engagement.

The reason why hope was the main contributor and resilience was removed from the model can be explained by the double-loop framework for PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2017). According to this framework, there are two loops: one is a positive success loop and the other is a bounce-back loop (Avey, 2014). In the positive success loop, hope is the first construct; thus, individuals with high amounts of hope possess strong motivation and the ability to generate multiple pathways to accomplishing their goals (Sweetman et al., 2010). They visualise successful performance of an activity in advance of actual performance and experience high levels of energy when faced with the actual task. They devise contingency plans, display perseverance, confidence, and willingness to take action. On the other hand, resilience belongs to the bounce-back loop and only becomes relevant where individuals face adversities and takes people from a devastated state back to a normal psychological state (Kalla, 2016).

8.4.2.2 *Relationship between optimism and work engagement*

As indicated in Chapter 3, optimism is defined as a tendency to believe, expect or hope that things will turn out well, hence optimistic individuals generally have a favourable outlook on life and the future (Dossey, 2006). Optimism is a highly beneficial psychological characteristic linked to good mood, perseverance and achievement (Rothmann, Barkhuizen & Tytherleigh, 2008). In ancient times,

optimism was seen as a global expectation that good things will be plentiful in the future and that bad things will be scarce (Scheier & Carver, 1985).

The current study found that a significant positive correlation exists between optimism and work engagement (r = 0.740; p = 0.000). Results also indicated that optimism (R^2 = 0.06) was the second strongest predictor of employees' levels of work engagement. This is consistent with Mortazavi, Yadzi and Amini (2012) who report that individuals who use their personal psychological resources, such as being optimistic and resilient in their work, were recently found to have high levels of work engagement. The present study noted that the major predictors of work engagement are psychological capacities of hope, optimism and self-efficacy. Simon and Buitendach (2013) also state that the PsyCap construct of optimism displays a significant positive relationship with work engagement, as well as with the sub-dimensions of vigour, dedication and absorption. Personal resources have been recognised as the most important determinants of work engagement together with job resources. Self-efficacy and optimism have mostly been considered as major contributors to the levels of work engagement (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2009). In the South African context Roux (2010) found a significant positive correlation between optimism, self-efficacy, and work engagement, indicating that optimism is sequentially related to self-efficacy and together they predict work engagement.

However, Ferrairi (2016) contradicts the current and previously presented studies showing that optimism is not a reliable predictor of work engagement. Davids (2010) also suggest that only a moderate percentage of the variation in work engagement is explained by the optimism and self-efficacy, hence researchers should not be over-confident with regards to optimism's ability to predict work engagement. Nevertheless, most previous research generally indicates that employees with positive attitudes create their own positive feedback in terms of appreciation, recognition and success; hence they become highly engaged in their work (Bakker et al., 2011).

From a theoretical perspective, the dimensions of PsyCap, including self-efficacy, optimism and self-esteem, were found to be part of the JD-R model as personal resources that predict work engagement very well (Bakker & Leiter, 2010). The

reason why optimism influences engagement was clearly demonstrated in the double-loop framework for PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2017). In the bounce-back loop, individuals with higher PsyCap remain optimistic during setbacks and generate plans to change the situation for the better. They feel efficacious in their own abilities to persevere and their positive emotions enrich their cognition and sustain the supply of positive energy (Luthans et al., 2015). Hope and self-efficacy are functional when focusing on success, such as achieving goals and stimulating personal growth. This positively influences work engagement. However, when the path to achieving goals and development is disrupted, optimism and resilience are required to deal with the setbacks. Higher levels of hope and self-efficacy cannot guarantee perpetuated success, as setbacks always occur (Hsu et al., 2014).

The construct optimism can be capitalised on in domains where hope and self-efficacy have not previously been established, thus employees will be more engaged if they use hope and self-efficacy in the positive success loop first, then, when beset with obstacles use their positive perspective (optimism) in the bounce-back loop to strengthen the belief that they can achieve success. Nafei (2015) notes that optimism becomes more relevant in cases where there is repeated failure or rejection which might act as formidable roadblocks in life, preventing individuals from attaining their goals. Optimism thus redirects individuals from a negatively skewed view of life to a positive view of life (Luthans et al., 2015). These individuals are more engaged because they remain optimistic during setbacks, experience a wide range of positive emotions, maintain a positive perspective and do not make disasters out of setbacks. They actually undo the physiological effects of negative emotions. The fact that optimistic individuals control their emotions, recognise what is within their sphere of influence and what is not, helps them to see and discuss problems as opportunities and provides a solution-orientated perspective (Luthans et al., 2015).

Optimism plays an influential role in keeping the employees focused towards attaining their goals since those who are optimistic expect success even when presented with a challenge. In addition, the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions Fredrickson (2004) provides the lens for understanding how optimism is linked to the work-related outcomes of work engagement. Optimists experience positive outlooks of challenges, thereby broadening their thinking, enabling a

broadened outlook, which in turn helps them to develop more personal resources and build positive attitudes towards work. The capacity of an individual to both broaden and experience positive emotions is important to one's ability to grow, flourish, and potentially enhance work engagement (Fredrickson, 2004). Therefore, it can be safely concluded that optimism explains variance in work engagement levels among banking sector employees.

8.4.2.3 Relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement

A significant positive correlation exists between self-efficacy and work engagement (r = 0.728; p = 0.000). Results for the current study revealed that optimism (R^2 = 0.03) was the third predictor of employees' levels of work engagement. Consistent with that, various studies have examined the role of self-efficacy and optimism in predicting work engagement and discovered that a significant positive correlation exists between self-efficacy and work engagement and that self-efficacy significantly predicts work engagement (De Waal & Pienaar, 2013; Davids, 2011). Self-efficacious employees are able to meet their work goals, and are persistent in the face of difficulties. As a result, engagement occurs through facilitation of goal attainment. Xanthopoulou (2007) examined the role of three personal resources (self-efficacy, organisational-based self-esteem and optimism) in predicting work engagement, and the results showed that personal resources explained 13% of the variance in work engagement.

In a replica study, Xanthopoulou (2010) discovered similar results pointing out that self-efficacy, organisational-based self-esteem, and optimism make a unique contribution to explaining variance in work engagement over time, over and above the impact of job resources. De Waal and Pienaar (2013) suggest a reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement, indicating that employees who are engaged are highly energetic, self-efficacious and exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Employees who are self-efficacious are also highly engaged thus suggesting a two way process.

In the double-loop, framework (Luthans, 2007) self-efficacy is the second construct in the positive success loop and shares the property of perseverance in the bounce-back loop. Hsua et al. (2014) note that individuals high in self-efficacy expend more effort to reach goals, thus efficacy can act as a self-motivating mechanism through

which individuals mobilise emotions, cognitive resources, or courses of action needed to achieve a particular goal. Unless employees believe they can produce the desired effects through their own actions, they have little incentive to persevere in the face of difficulties and if there is no perseverance, success are at risk (Sweetman, Luthans, Avey & Luthans, 2010). In the current study, self-efficacy slightly contributed to work engagement, because the belief in capability experienced by self-efficacious individuals can serve as the foundation of motivation in the face of difficulties (Hsua et al., 2014). Accordingly, in the bounce-back loop, in relation to perseverance, resilience and efficacy reinforce one another, hence efficacy had the least contribution to work engagement compared to the other internal resources, because it falls more in the bounce-back loop.

Among others, self-efficacy, resilience, locus of control, and the abilities to perceive and regulate emotions were also found to be positive predictors of work engagement (Albrecht, 2010; Donaldson & Ko, 2010). Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) also stated the above, indicating that the dimensions of PsyCap, including self-efficacy, optimism and self-esteem, were found to be part of the JD-R model as personal resources that predict work engagement very well. Therefore, it can be safely concluded that self-efficacy has a positive effect on employee engagement in the banking sector.

Why internal resources contributed more than external resources

The results from the study discussed above indicate that hope, optimism, and self-efficacy were the main contributors to work engagement. As noted by Luthans and Youssef (2007), these are internal resources and active coping strategies that individuals use to confront threatening situations and which enable them to do well at work. External resources such as links in job embeddedness also contribute to work engagement but to a lesser extent compared to the internal resources. A possible reason to explain this may be the fact that external resources are conditions such as job characteristics and relationships which tend to develop over time and which individuals may not have direct control over (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerout & Schaufeli, 2009). Internal resources, on the other hand, are intrinsic positive self-evaluations and refer to individuals' perceptive ability to control and impact their environment successfully (Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis & Jackson, 2003). Thus, individuals may use internal resources to activate and conserve positive conditions,

beliefs and affective states, which in turn positively influence psychological and work-related well-being, which translates to emotional engagement (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009).

Research by Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) on the reciprocal relationship between work engagement, job resources (external resources), and internal resources, indicated that work engagement facilitates the mobilisation of external resources. Logically this may imply that internal resources function first to boast work engagement, then in a reciprocal flow work engagement facilitates external resources and back. This is consistent with Hobfoll's (2002) notion that in the absence of threats, people are motivated to create resources, thus with the turbulent banking sector environment, threats are part of the employees' everyday life, thus in the banking industry internal resources (hope, self-efficacy and optimism) become more crucial in sustaining and influencing work engagement than external resources. It is only when individuals are engaged that they become intrinsically motivated to create more job resources and comprehend more resourceful work environments to fulfil their work objectives. When employees have internal resources they easily recognise, activate or create resources. A very good example is that individuals who are self-efficacious, hopeful and optimistic (high levels of internal resources) may perceive and build more resources and create a resourceful work environment as means to face demanding situations, thus internal resources pave the way to external resources. Therefore, it can be argued that external resources such as links become more relevant after individuals have experienced internal resources. In summary, internal resources are more important when enhancing work engagement than external resources, since internal resources are functional in achieving goals and positively influencing psychological and work related well-being, which translate to emotional engagement. In addition, internal resources protect individuals from threats and the associated physiological and psychological costs and stimulate personal growth and development (Luthans & Youssef, 2007).

8.4.2.4 Relationship between self-leadership and work engagement

Relationship between behavioural strategies and work engagement

A significant positive correlation exists between behavioural strategies and work engagement (r = 0.731; p = 0.000). Results for the current study show that

behavioural strategies (R^2 = 0.02) was the fourth predictor of employees' levels of work engagement. In support of that, a recent diary study by Bakker (2017) found use of self-leadership strategies as predictive of work engagement through the job resources of feedback, skill variety and opportunities for growth. Similarly self-leadership is associated with high levels of decision latitude which is also one of the resources the work environment requires for one to be engaged (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). Bakker (2017) identifies self-leadership as one of the bottom up proactive strategies that can be used by organisations to foster work engagement, indicating that self-leadership helps to optimise the work environment in terms of affordable job demands and sufficient job resources. Therefore, self-leadership is linked to work engagement through the mobilisation of job resources (Tims & Bakker, 2010).

For the current study, behavioural strategies stood out as the fourth predictor of work engagement. Bakker (2017) highlights that on days when employees use their behavioural strategies, such as self-observation, self-goal setting and self-cueing, they mobilise more job resources that assist them to be more engaged. In particular, when using self-observation, individuals are aware of why and when they show certain behaviours which lead them to change their behaviour to increase their effectiveness. Another part of the behavioural strategies includes self-goal setting, which entails using specific, challenging and attainable goals in order to improve one's performance. This process, as indicated by Bakker (2017), directly facilitates dedication. Consistent with that, individuals with high goal self-concordance are intrinsically motivated to pursue their self-set goals, and as a result, they trigger higher performance and are highly absorbed in their work (Tuckey, Bakker & Dollard, 2012). Self-cueing also helps individuals to focus on what needs to be accomplished and directly leads to absorption (Tuckey et al., 2012).

Previous literature has uncovered several organisational benefits associated with self-leadership and among that is having an engaged and empowered work-force (Jooste & Roux, 2014). With reference to that, optimal work environments are characterised by high job resources, highly challenging demands and low hindrance. A self-managing individual has the ability to control and successfully manipulate the resources to suit his or her own needs. Therefore, self-leading individuals positively

influence the resourcefulness of the work environment and consequently contribute to work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). In addition, recently Bakker (2017) identified self-leadership and mobilising ego resources as some of the methods that can be used to expand the psychological resources, noting that they help to increase personal resources such as optimism, self-efficacy and self-esteem which eventually transform to work engagement aspects such as dedication and absorption. From the above, it is clear that a relationship exists between self-leadership (behavioural strategies) and work engagement, therefore it can be safely concluded that behavioural strategies have a significant effect on work engagement.

8.4.2.5 Relationship between job embeddedness and work engagement

Organisational links and work engagement

A significant positive but small correlation exists between organisational links and work engagement (r = 0.292; p = 0.000). Results for the current study found that organisational links contribute the least to work engagement in the model (R^2 = 0.01). Based on the JD-R model, daily job resources such as supervisor coaching and team atmosphere (links in job embeddedness) contribute to employees' personal resources which, in turn, contribute to work engagement (Tabaziba, 2015). A wide variety of social relationships, supportive supervisors and colleagues enable employees to buffer the effects of high job demands. These aspects of the job may be viewed as job resources which are valued and motivate employees, according to the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Du Plooy and Roodt (2010) note that in particular, the presence of job resources (links: supervisor and colleagues) make employees repay their organisation through work engagement as indicated in the social exchange theory.

Recent research indicates that as an employee develops an increasing number of formal and informal connections with other people within the organisation, the social support network is viewed as a job resource that boosts motivational processes at work (Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010). Consequently, a larger social support network (increased links) may be a predictor of work engagement (Crossley, Bennett, Jex & Burnfield, 2007). Consistent with that, Widianto et al. (2012) note that as the number of organisational links increases, these links serve as job resources, which promote both work engagement and job embeddedness. Contrary to that, lack of social and

physical resources can lead to disengagement from one's work role and continuing emotional demands could lead to the depletion of emotional resources, leading to disengagement (Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010). When complex work challenges drain the energy and deplete emotional resources, individuals with strong links with their colleagues and supervisors use those links as resources to replenish their energy levels and revive their energy, thereby becoming more engaged (May et, al., 2004).

Though organisational fit had a significant positive relationship with work engagement (r = 0.560; p = 0.000), the current study found that it is not a predictor of work engagement. Contrary to that, research done as far back as 1997 noted that fit between the characteristics of an individual and the environment of the job, known as person-job congruity, is related to work engagement, hence the greater the congruity between the job and the person, the greater the likelihood of work engagement (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). In a similar vein, Bakker (2017) recently recommended that to attract and retain high calibre, engaged and productive employees, organisations need to provide work contexts that offer a good fit between employees' role expectations and their work environment. Bakker (2017) further notes that organisations can increase employee work engagement by selecting individuals who are best suited to the job and fit with the organisational culture.

Finally, according to the JD-R model (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli (2001) social support networks are among the most well-known types of work characteristics that are functional in achieving work goals and are among the work resources available to employees (Bakker, Demerouti & Euwema, 2005). These social support networks are instrumental in buffering the negative effects of job demands on work strain and are critical in reducing the effects of work overload on employees (Bakker et al., 2005). For example, a supportive and helpful supervisor can be viewed as both a link and a key job resource that provides information, advice, support to complete challenging assignments, emotional support, as well as serving as a role model to the employees (Bakker & Bal, 2010). Relating this to the double-loop framework (Luthans, 2007) it explains how internal resources enhance work engagement; strong links can be viewed as a strong support network that assist individuals to bounce back after setbacks, while a strong support network facilitates the process of generating alternative pathways to the prospective goal

through sharing ideas and encouraging each other. In empirical terms, to support the current findings Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008) postulate that a significant positive association exists between work engagement and job embeddedness.

8.5 Results related to research question 2

As stated in Chapter 1, the second research question states: Do differences exist in work engagement levels amongst employees in the banking sector with regards to age? An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the work engagement scores of generation Y and generation X (young employees and middle aged employees were compared; the older employees were represented by a very small sample so for statistically meaningful comparisons only two groups were compared (generation X and generation Y).

Table 8.12 T-tests: differences in work engagement with regards to age

	Age (Recode)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig (p)
Vigour	Gen X (19-30 years)	153	3.9390	.84222	.06809	1.44	0.149
	Gen Y (31-50 years)	134	3.7848	.96402	.08328		
Dedication	Gen X (19-30 years)	153	4.0142	.90855	.07345	1.532	0.127
	Gen Y (31-50 years)	134	3.8414	1.00241	.08660		
Absorption	Gen X (19-30 years)	153	3.8517	.95939	.07756	0.868	0.386
	Gen Y (31-50 years)	134	3.7537	.94695	.08180		
Work engagement (Total)	Gen X (19-30 years)	153	11.8049	2.55569	.20662	1.344	0.180
	Gen Y (31-50 years)	134	11.3799	2.79806	.24172		

T-tests analysis: differences in work engagement with regard to Age

From Table 8.12, it is evident that there are no statistically significant differences in work engagement levels across different age groups. Comparisons were done first on the dimensions of work engagement (vigour, absorption, dedication), then on work engagement as a single variable. The table clearly indicates that there are no

statistical significant differences in scores of vigour for generation X (M = 3.94; SD = 0.84) and for generation Y (M = 3.78; SD = 0.96; t (285) = 1.45; p = 0.15 two-tailed). As this value is above the required cut-off of 0.05 it is concluded that there is no statistical significant difference in the mean vigour for age category 19-30 and the 31-50 category. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 0.15, 95% confidence interval) indicates no significant differences in levels of vigour between generation Y and generation X.

There was no statistical significant difference in scores of dedication for generation X (M = 4.01, SD = 0.91) and for generation Y (M = 3.84; SD = 1.00; t (285) = 1.53; p = 0.13 two-tailed). As this value is above the required cut-off of 0.05 it is concluded that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean dedication for age category 19-30 and the 31-50 category. There is a differences in the means (mean difference =.17, 95% confidence interval). In addition, no statistical significant differences were found in scores of absorption for generation X (M = 3.85, SD = 0.96) and for generation Y (M = 3.75; SD = 0.95; t (285) = 0.868, p = 0.386 two-tailed). Since this value is above the required cut-off of 0.05 it is concluded that there is no statistical significant difference in the mean absorption for age category 19-30 and the 31-50 category. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference =.10, 95% confidence interval) clearly indicate that there was no statistical significant differences in the levels of absorption between the two age groups.

All in all, for the single dimension work engagement, there was no statistical significant difference in scores of work engagement for generation X (M = 11.8; SD = 2.6) and for generation Y (M = 11.4; SD = 2.8; t (285) = 1.344; p = 0.180 two-tailed). As this value is above the required cut-off of 0.05 it is concluded that there is no statistical significant difference in the mean work engagement for age category 19-30 and the 31-50 category. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 0.42, 95% confidence interval) indicates no statistical significant differences in the scores of work engagement between generation Y and generation X.

With reference to the results presented above, the current study indicated that although differences exist with regards to work engagement levels of various age groups, the differences are not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis

which states: There are no statistical significant differences in scores achieved on levels of work engagement with regards to age groups among banking sector employees, was supported. Similarly, in an age comparative study among academics on work engagement, Barkhuizen and Rothmann (2006) indicate that there are no statistical significant differences in the levels of work engagement among academics with regards to age groups. Consistently, Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova (2006) note that though work engagement tends to be slightly higher among older workers with more experience in the job, these differences are very small and relatively statistically insignificant. Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova (2006) also indicate that engagement increases with age, but only to a very limited extent.

Contrary to the results in the current study, popular belief points out that older employees are often associated with diminishing motivation and enthusiasm for work (Billett, Dymock, Johnson & Martin, 2011). Extensive research has shown that common stereotypes relate older workers to decreasing motivation, reduced performance, and even unwillingness to adapt to work-related changes (Bal, Reiss, Rudolph & Baltes, 2011; Billett et al., 2011). Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli (2006) also note that poor subjective health (indicator of functional age) is associated with lower vigour and dedication. Surprisingly, some studies have actually concluded that older workers seem to have higher levels of engagement than younger or middle aged employees (Pitt-Catsouphes & Matz-Costa, 2008). A recent survey on state employee engagement also found that the bottom end generation X (30-44 years old), top-end generation X (45-49 years old) and baby boomers (50 years and above were more engaged than the bottom-end generation Y (18-29 years old). This implies that younger employees are less engaged than their older counterparts. In addition, older workers experience more difficulties in finding new jobs because they suffer from negative stereotyping and age discrimination (Posthuma & Campion, 2009), hence they are more engaged in their present positions since they have fewer alternatives in the labour market.

It is, however, challenging to explain why no significant differences were observed in the levels of engagement between younger and older employees in the banking sector. A plausible explanation can be the nature of work in the banking industry. The banking sector has recently placed heavy work demands and imposed strict

regulations for all employees to uphold at nearly every corner (Bersin, 2015). Both old and young employees operate under very strict regulations and their job activities are strictly monitored, they are both exposed to the same conditions and possibly get access to similar job and personal resources. Smith and Markwick (2009) indicate that differences in levels of work engagement concerning age could be a result of different characteristics of jobs performed by the different age groups that could benefit employees differently, depending on their stage in life. However, Bersin (2015) notes that the banking sector environment does not present such psychological and practical differences regarding work for younger and older employees.

James, Mckechnie and Swanberg (2011) analysed the factors in engagement and age and noted that schedule satisfaction and job clarity have significant influence on employee work engagement regardless of age. Considering that schedule satisfaction and job clarity characterise the nature of work in the banking sector, it can therefore be expected that since both younger and older employees are exposed to the same conditions they also experience the same level of engagement regardless of age.

A close analysis of factors in engagement and age indicate that significant differences in work engagement can be explained by the fact that younger employees prefer task variety and older employees prefer skill variety (Zaniboni, Truxillo & Fraccaroli, 2013). Younger employees view task variety as a way to develop job skills to advance their careers, yet older employees who have already acquired these skills, want to be able to apply their skills (Zaniboni et al., 2013). Considering the nature of work in the banking industry where frontline employees spend extensive time doing the same activities daily (Dale Carnegie Training Institute, 2014), the aspects of both skill variety and task variety may not be of relevance in the banks, hence no significant differences could be expected in the levels of engagement.

Smith and Markwick (2009) further note that when younger employees are the least positive and most disengaged in the workplace, this might be a reflection of low organisational seniority and power. On the other hand, when older employees are disengaged, this may be a sign of preconceived notions that they have already

acquired knowledge and experience and are more selective with their resources (Zabiboni et al., 2013). When levels of engagement are the same across age groups, there is a balance in both challenges and success across different age groups (Zaniboni et al, 2013). In addition, the two age groups are exposed to different challenges; younger employees are still new and developing coping skills as they are just entering the workforce and do not have the necessary experience to deal with the challenges posed by their new jobs (Brewer & Shapard, 2004). Older employees also experience diminishing motivation and enthusiasm for work and reduced abilities (Billett, Dymock, Johnson & Martin, 2011). Though not exposed to the same challenges, each age group goes through some difficulties in the organisation.

8.6 Results for research question 3

The following section presents results for objective three on determining the levels of work engagement, psychological capital, job embeddedness, and self-leadership among employees in the banking sector. The objective was achieved through using descriptive statics, specifically through assessing the minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation for the dimensions of each variable. A further description of the findings is provided below.

Table 8.13 Mean levels of work engagement, PsyCap, self-leadership and job embeddedness

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Vigour	303	.33	6.00	3.8521	.91369
Dedication	303	.00	6.00	3.9335	.97332
Absorption	303	.33	5.83	3.8084	.96402
Self-efficacy	303	1.33	5.83	4.1214	.91798
Hope	303	1.50	6.00	4.2033	.84022
Resilience	303	2.33	5.83	4.0816	.72413
Optimism	303	1.83	5.67	3.9984	.70904
Behavioural strategies	303	1.75	5.00	3.6712	.72918
Cognitive strategies	303	1.67	5.00	3.7081	.73974
Natural rewards	303	1.00	5.00	3.7496	.78444
Organisational fit	303	1.22	5.00	3.5976	.57087
Organisational sacrifice	303	1.20	4.70	3.2507	.65239
Organisational links	303	1.33	5.00	3.3770	.75469

The results from the respondents as indicated in Table 8.13 above clearly shows that absorption at 3.80 and vigour at 3.85 were significantly lower compared to dedication at 3.93. Based on the Likert scale used, the study suggests that the banking sector employees are moderately immersed in their work. On average, the participants somewhat agreed with the items reflecting that their work engagement levels are moderate. This implies that they are sometimes bursting with energy, dedicated and moderately concentrate on their work. In relation to the results obtained in the current study, Marrelli (2011) explains moderately engaged employees as individuals who are at work but not fully engaged. Such employees show up to work to earn a pay check and do just enough work to stay employed.

For psychological capital, the self-efficacy variable's mean score is 4.12, hope 4.20, resilience 4.08 and optimism 3.99. With reference to the Likert scale used, these mean scores show that the respondents are also moderately positive about their work, meaning they are confident in their belief that they can succeed, which makes them remain motivated. Self-leadership had three dimensions. The mean score reported for behavioural strategy is 3.67, for cognitive strategy 3.70 and for natural

rewards 3.74. This, according to the Likert scale used, indicates that the participants generally agree with the items. This is an indicator that they somewhat make use of the self-leadership strategies in order to achieve their self-set goals. For job embeddedness only the organisational links, fit and sacrifice, were taken into consideration. The reported mean score for organisational fit is 3.59, for organisational sacrifice 3.25, and for organisational links 3.37. Based on the mean scores the banking sector employees show that they are moderately embedded in their jobs.

Contrary to Carnegie's (2016) results that indicate engagement levels in the banking sector as very low and continually declining, the current study concluded that work engagement levels in the banking sector are moderate. This can be due to strict regulations, coupled with high client expectations leading to constant stress levels, long working hours, overwhelming demands, and the routine work associated with the banking sector (Dale Carnegie Training Institute, 2014). With the banking industry operating in highly competitive scenarios, Sadlier (2014) notes that having moderately engaged employees is not enough. Pater and Lewis (2012) state that employees who were previously engaged or who are currently moderately engaged, could become disengaged over time if managers do not address workplace issues quickly. Thus, managers within organisations should attend to employees whose levels of engagement are deteriorating to ensure that they do not fall into a disengagement category. In addition, a recent survey done in the financial services sector explains the reason for deteriorating work engagement as being owed to the ever-changing technology that has reshaped the workplaces completely; employees in the banks are struggling with digitalisation, creative technical disruptions, and automation of their work environment (Achievers, 2017).

All in all the results of the current study show that psychological capital levels are slightly higher compared to other variables, self-leadership levels are moderate, and job embeddedness levels are also low to moderate. This complement the stepwise regression model results, where PsyCap dimensions of hope, optimism, and self-efficacy were the main predictors of work engagement and self-leadership behavioural strategies, and job embeddedness links were the weakest predictors. It is therefore clear that the slightly high levels of PsyCap among the respondents

indicate that individuals in the banking industry use internal resources more to enhance work engagement. Unfortunately, to the knowledge of the researcher, relatively no studies have investigated the levels of self-leadership and job embeddedness in the banking sector; hence it was difficult to make comparisons with previous literature. However, literature sheds light on the possible theoretical relationships between the variables under study. The empirical results of the proposed theoretical model are presented in the next paragraph.

8.7 Theoretical model testing

The following results aim at verifying the existence of meaningful relations and effect of psychological capital, self-leadership and job embeddedness on work engagement from an explorative and non-confirmatory view-point. After a comprehensive literature review, a conceptual model on the possible relationships between the four variables under investigation was proposed. The model was then tested using partial least squares path modelling (PLS). In the current study, the model was tested following the systematic application of the two-step process, encompassing (a) the assessment of the outer model, and (b) the assessment of the inner model. The present study started with model assessment, focusing on the measurement models. Latent variable scores were calculated and showed evidence of sufficient reliability and validity after which an evaluation of the inner path model estimates was done. Below are the results from the model, starting with the quality criteria:

Table 8.14 Quality criteria

	Cronbach's alpha	rho_A	Composite reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
ENGAGEMENT	0.949	0.95	0.967	0.907
J_EMB	0.786	0.894	0.87	0.692
PsyCap	0.903	0.906	0.932	0.775
SELF_LEAD	0.87	0.879	0.92	0.794

To compute the internal consistency reliability, the composite reliability developed by Werts et al. (1974) was applied. The composite reliability value will point up from 0-1; the closer it is to 1 the better the items explain the latent construct's variance. The

composite reliability must not be lower than 0.6. For the current study, as indicated in Table 8.14, all the composite reliabilities for the four variables were satisfactory obtaining the following composite reliability scores: work engagement (p_c)= 0.97, job embeddedness (p_c) = 0.87, psychological capital (p_c) = 0.93 and self-leadership (p_c) = 0.92. All the values for the composite reliability were above 0.6 and according to Latan and Ghozali (2012), the cut-off factor loading is the same as the indicator reliability, which the composite reliability's value suggests be reached at ≥ 0.6 for the data's exploratory and ≥ 0.7 for confirmatory features. Therefore, concerning the composite reliability scores the model is well fitting.

To further demonstrate the quality of the model, the outer model was also assessed in terms of the convergent and discriminant validity. The convergent validity was assessed using the criterion Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to Gortz, Lierhr-Gobbers and Krafft (2009), an AVE value of at least 0.5 indicates sufficient convergent validity. As indicated in Table 8.14 above, the following scores were obtained: work engagement (AVE = 0.91) job embeddedness (AVE = 0.69), psychological capital (AVE = 0.78) and for self-leadership (AVE = 0.79). Based on the AVE scores it can be concluded that the current model is well fitting in terms of convergent validity since all the AVE values are above the 0.5 cut-off as instructed by Chin (2010). This means that the latent variables in the model are able to explain more than half of the variance of its indicators on average. The discriminant validity was indicated by the fact that the AVE of each latent variable was higher than the squared correlations with all other latent variables. Although the CFI results in Table 8.6 indicated some of the measures with less than acceptable fit, fortunately the results for the outer model denotes the same measures as valid and reliable. In summary the current model has good composite reliabilities, all above 0.6, all outer loadings are above 0.7, and all the AVE values are above 0.5. Therefore, it can be concluded that the outer model met all the criteria for a good fit.

8.7.1 Assessing the outer model

As highlighted in Chapter 7, the outer model shows the relationship between the indicators and their latent constructs (Hansler et al., 2009). Table 8.15 presents the results obtained.

Table 8.15 Outer model (Outer loadings) Indicator Reliability

Dimensions	ENGAGEMENT	J_EMB	PsyCap	SELF_LEAD
Absorption	0.948			
Behavioural strategies				0.915
Cognitive strategies				0.91
Dedication	0.954			
Hope			0.901	
Natural rewards				0.847
Optimism			0.896	
Organisational fit		0.909		
Organisational links		0.706		
Organisational sacrifice		0.866		
Resilience			0.851	
Self-efficacy			0.872	
Vigour	0.955			

As indicated in Table 8.15 above, the reliability of each indicator was assessed and all items on the outer model met the condition above through its indicators' reliabilities. The three underlying factors (vigour 0.95, dedication 0.95 and absorption 0.95) appeared in the observed variable work engagement. The inspection-of-fit indices revealed that for the current sample, the three factor-UWES 17 confirms a good fit for the data; these results are consistent with the regression model discussed earlier. The study also supports Seppala et al. (2008) who indicate that the confirmatory factor analyses applied in work engagement studies confirmed that the fit of the hypothesised three-factor structure to most data was superior to that of any other alternative factor structures obtaining factor loadings for the UWES which were in general high, ranging from 0.61 to 0.99. However, contrary to that, Kulikowski (2017) recently found a better CFA fit for the two-factor UWES over the three-factor one reporting the following goodness-of-fit RMSEA = 0.10; CFI = 0.97; AGFI = 0.92. This seems to highlight the need for a further debate on ways to properly define and measure the construct. For the current study, no items were dropped for work engagement since all reliability estimates had an internal

consistency value above 0.7, as instructed by Latan and Ramli (2014). In most cases, researchers dropped some item indicators to obtain model fit (Gefen et al., 2011; Latan & Ghozali, 2012). Researchers postulate that a latent variable should explain a substantial part of each indicator's variance (at least 50%); thus the absolute correlation between the construct and each of its manifest variables should be higher than 0.7.

Table 8.15 further indicated the four underlying factors (hope 0.90, optimism 0.89, self-efficacy 0.87 and resilience 0.85) appearing in the observed variable, psychological capital. The four-factor model PCQ-24 confirmed a good fit for the data; these results are consistent with the goodness-of-fit results indicated earlier. Therefore, there was strong evidence to suggest that the four-factor measurement model of the PCQ-24 produced a very good fit to the current data. This is consistent with Görgens-Ekermans and Herbert (2013) who indicate that the four-factor model fit data significantly better than the one-factor model obtaining the following results: RMSEA = 0.04 , CFI = 0.98, NNFI = 0.98, SRMR = 0.06. The completely standardised factor loadings ranged from 0.53 to 0.82.

The three underlying factors (behavioural strategies 0.91, constructive thought patterns strategies 0.91 and natural rewards 0.85) appeared in the observed variable self-leadership and they all had acceptable estimates of factor loading that exceed 0.70. The results are consistent but slightly higher than what the developers of the ASLQ reported, a reliability estimate for the total scale 0.73 (Houghton et al., 2012). Nel and Van Zyl (2015) also obtained a much higher reliability estimate (α = 0.89).

Finally, on the outer model, the three underlying factors (organisational fit 0.90, organisational links 0.70 and organisational sacrifice 0.87) appeared in the observed variable job embeddedness. The lowest reliability recorded on the outer loadings was for organisational links indicator, which is 0.70 and is above the cut-off for the outer model. This therefore suggests a well-fitting model. Consistent with that, Crossley, Bennett, Jex and Burnfield (2007) note that the scale demonstrated good fit to the data, with the following goodness-of-fit: RMSEA = 0.08, the SRMR = 0.03, and the CFI =0.98. In conclusion, when estimating the indicator's reliability for every construct item, it has been suggested that the cut-off for the outer loading be ≥ 0.6 for research data that are exploratory and ≥ 0.7 for the research data that are

confirmatory (Hulland, 1999; Latan & Ghozali, 2012). Therefore, in terms of factor loadings, Table 8.15 shows that all the reliability estimates were above the cut-off and all the underlying factors appeared in the observable variables.

8.7.2 Testing the measurement model (inner model)

The inner model was assessed using the coefficient of determination R^2 of the endogenous latent variable. In the current study, the endogenous latent variable (work engagement) relied on three exogenous latent variables. The results of the inner model are shown in Table 8.16.

Table 8.16 Path coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
J_EMB -> ENGAGEMENT	0.118	0.12	0.035	3.325	0.001
PsyCap -> ENGAGEMENT	0.621	0.616	0.051	12.173	0.000
PsyCap -> J_EMB	0.353	0.353	0.097	3.648	0.000
SELF_LEAD -> ENGAGEMENT	0.172	0.176	0.056	3.078	0.002
SELF_LEAD -> J_EMB	0.219	0.22	0.093	2.367	0.018
SELF_LEAD -> PsyCap	0.815	0.815	0.021	39.322	0.000

Table 8.17 R Squared

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
ENGAGEMENT	0.703	0.7
J_EMB	0.299	0.294
PsyCap	0.664	0.663

Table 8.16 above illustrates the results for the inner model. The coefficient of determination for the endogenous latent variable (work engagement) as indicated on Table 8.17 is R^2 = 0.703 which is substantial according to (Chin,1998). The coefficient of determination reported above is almost identical to the stepwise regression results which indicated that the exogenous latent variables in the current study explain 71% of the variance in work engagement. Henseler et al. (2009) note that if the endogenous latent variable relies on several exogenous latent variables, then the R^2 value should exhibit at least a substantial level, which was the case for the current study. Therefore, the results support the theoretical underpinnings and demonstrate that the model is capable to explain the endogenous latent variable (work engagement). This implies that the exogenous latent variables explain 70% (0.7) of work engagement in the model. A

latent variable can play both the roles of being predicted and being a predictor. A latent variable, which is never predicted, is called an exogenous variable. In this case self-leadership was never predicted. Job embeddedness was both predicted and a predictor and the coefficient of determination for job embeddedness was R^2 = 0.299, which is moderate. Henseler et al. (2009) note that if certain inner path model structures explain an endogenous latent variable by only a few exogenous variables (which was the case with job embeddedness) moderate R^2 may be acceptable. PsyCap was also both a predictor and was predicted as well at R^2 = 0.664, which is also substantial.

The individual path coefficients of the PLS inner model were interpreted as standardised beta coefficients of ordinary least squares. The following path coefficients are reported: Job embeddedness to work engagement β = 0.118, psychological capital to work engagement β = 0.621, psychological capital to job embeddedness β = 0.353, self-leadership to work engagement β = 0.172, self-leadership to job embeddedness β = 0.219 and the path from self-leadership to psychological capital β = 0.815. As indicated in Table 8.14, none of the paths are non-significant or show signs contrary to the hypothesised direction. The structural paths support the a priori postulated hypothesis and provided a partial empirical validation of the theoretically assumed relationships between the latent variables. Therefore, it can be concluded that all the structural paths supported the a priori formed theoretical hypothesis showing that the hypothesised direction empirically supports the proposed causal relationship. All the structural paths were found to be statistically significant, as indicated in the P values column in Table 8.16.
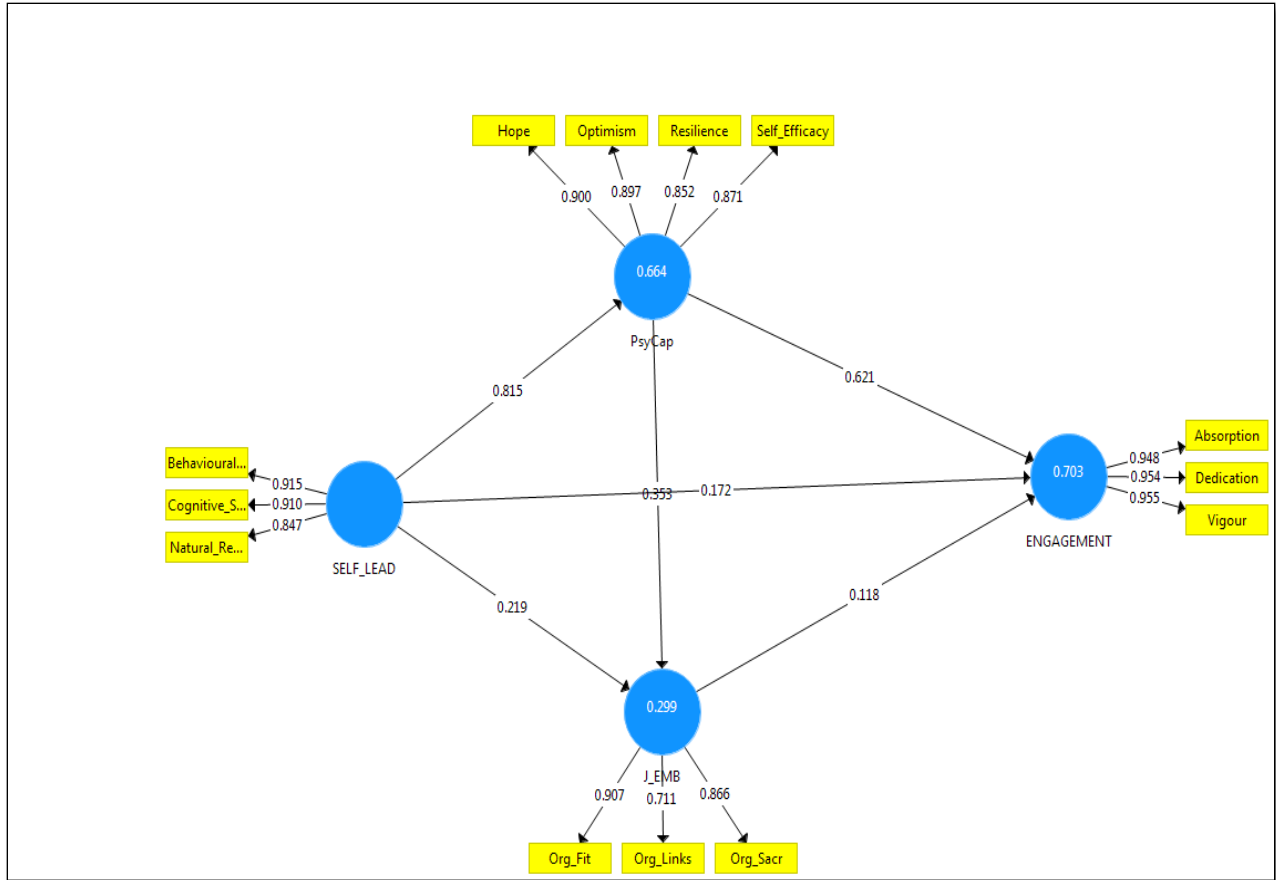
Figure 8.1 Full specification of the path diagram

8.7.3 Discussing the measurement model

As indicated in Figure 8.1 above, the influence of psychological capital, self-leadership, and job embeddedness on work engagement is positive and statistically significant at 0.621; 0.172 and 0.118. It is clear that all the paths in the model make theoretical sense and most of the links are supported in the literature. The initial examination of the model, as indicated earlier, showed that for all constructs, the AVE, the composite reliability, and the Cronbach's alpha indices were above the recommended values. Thus, the measurement model provided sufficient evidence of convergent validity and reliability. The main goal of the PLS path model was to explain the endogenous latent variable's variance and the path coefficients that link the variables under investigation. The key target construct's (work engagement) level of R^2 was high or substantial at level $R^2 = 0.703$. This means that PsyCap, self-leadership and job embeddedness

explain the 0.703 variance in work engagement in the banking sector. No paths were found to be insignificant or show signs contrary to the hypothesized direction; hence all paths support the a priori hypothesis and empirically support the proposed effect on relationships.

8.7.3.1 Discussion of the direct path coefficients

The strongest direct path reported in the model is from PsyCap to work engagement. The model results showed that PsyCap had a statistically significant positive influence on work engagement, with a stronger positive influence than self-leadership and job embeddedness. Thus, the strongest direct path to the endogenous variable reported on the model is from PsyCap to work engagement level ($\beta = 0.621$) which is highly significant. This link is undeniably supported in the literature and makes theoretical sense. The results confirmed the predictive ability of PsyCap on work engagement and this is consistent with the findings of both local and international studies (Tabaziba, 2015, Kotze, 2017; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Herbert, 2011; Luthans et al., 2008; Mills, Fleck & Kozikowski, 2013; Simons & Buitendach, 2013), which indicates that PsyCap has a significant positive influence on work engagement.

Although much research has been done on the relationship between PsyCap and work engagement, the findings have been contradicting. Bakker (2009) suggested a crossover effect between PsyCap and work engagement, putting forward the notion that work-related resources, such as work engagement affect an individual's life to the point where it has an impact on their personal resources and vice versa (Bakker, 2009; De Waal & Pienaar, 2013). Some researchers found that work engagement can facilitate the mobilisation of job and personal resources and that work engagement is actually a strong predictor of PsyCap (De Waal & Pienaar, 2013; Cordery, 2007), while other researchers argue the reverse, indicating that PsyCap is the one that actually influences work engagement (Kotze, 2017; Tabaziba, 2015; Simons & Buitendach, 2013). In the current study, results were consistent with the latter, thus PsyCap had a significant effect on work engagement and had the highest contribution to the work engagement.

Based on Kah's (1990) theory of engagement, individuals with access to physical, emotional, and psychological resources invest their performance of a work role through psychological availability. Kahn's theory therefore implies that employees will be more engaged in workplaces that provide them with physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary for them to perform their work roles. Similarly, May, Gilson and Harter (2004), in their empirical study to test Kahn's (1990) theory, also discovered that a wide range of resources, meaningfulness, safety, and availability were significantly related to work engagement.

Why PsyCap is the highest contributor to work engagement in the model

In the current study, the main plausible reason why PsyCap is the major contributor to work engagement can be attributed to the fact that work engagement is framed on the JD-R model. Within this theory, job demands are seen as contributing to burnout, whilst job resources are seen as contributing to work engagement. Since PsyCap is made up of psychological capacities that work as personal resources and contribute significantly to work engagement, employees high in PsyCap have access to a wide range of resources and view themselves as capable of handling their job demands successfully, since they have accumulated personal resources (Bakker & Demorouti, 2014). These resources are noted as avenues for possible intervention in facilitating employee engagement. In short, employees high in PsyCap use personal resources, such as hope, optimism, and self-efficacy, to assist them in managing and influencing their work environments with more success and as a result, they show higher levels of work engagement and perform better (Tabaziba, 2015).

In line with the above, the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2004) explains the relationship between PsyCap and work engagement well, indicating that positive emotions positively broaden and build one's thought-action repertoires and lead to increased resources and more satisfied lives, which result in high energy levels; hence engagement is achieved. According to this theory, resources build up over time, increasing the individual's overall well-being and leading to more positive emotions that encourage high engagement.

In addition, PsyCap stood out as the highest contributor, because theoretically, just like PsyCap, work engagement has its roots traced from a perspective of positive psychology as it also focuses on human strengths and optimal performance rather than on weaknesses and malfunctioning (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Bakker and Demerouti (2008) note that engagement is regarded as a positive organisational behaviour construct. Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006) also indicate that work engagement stresses the notion of positive attachment and optimal performance in the work environment in terms of well-being, with high levels of energy, involvement and commitment invested in one's work. Work engagement is thus a positive, work-related state of well-being or fulfilment; a positive experience in itself able to facilitate job and personal resources (Coetzee & De Villiers, 2010).

Sweetman and Luthans (2010, p. 57) conceptualise the relationship between PsyCap and work engagement as being "strong and reciprocal". They indicate that vigour relates very strongly to efficacy in motivating individuals' effort. Hope provides the willpower and develops alternative pathways to achievement. Optimism assists in expecting future success and resiliency in the continued pursuit of goals. Dedication impacts efficacy through involvement in one's work, optimism in attributions of significance and pride, hope in dedicated willpower and pathways, and resiliency in continuing in the face of challenging obstacles and adversity. Absorption is seen to relate mostly to efficacy, optimism and resiliency (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010). Bakker et al. (2007) theorise that the relationship between specifically self-efficacy and employee well-being may be reciprocal.

In the conservation of resources theory (COR), the strength of the path between PsyCap and work engagement can also be explained in line with the idea of gain spirals. Sweetman and Luthans (2010) state that initiating and maintaining gain spirals are essential in building an engaged workforce. The upward spirals are sparked by job resources and personal resources, which result in various positive outcomes. In turn, the positive outcomes increase resources and foster high levels of work engagement (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010). Following this logic, work engagement may be increased

by stimulating each link of the spiral, be it resources or positive outcomes. Thus, the fact that PsyCap has both resources and can be a positive outcome, makes the spiral more effective; hence in the current study PsyCap had the highest contribution to the work engagement of employees.

In relation to the above, the results of the regression analysis in the current study indicated that the top three predictors of work engagement are PsyCap dimensions with hope as the largest contributor (R^2 = 0.59) to the variance in work engagement. Similarly, the PLS path model indicates the strongest path to work engagement is through PsyCap. Consistently, a statistically significant and direct relationship was discovered between self-efficacy and work engagement and significant positive correlation between optimism and work engagement (Davids, 2011). In addition, a regression model that tested the effect of self-efficacy on cognitive engagement indicated that focused effort has a significant impact on cognitive engagement (Sweetman and Luthans, 2010) and emotional engagement (Hsu, Wang, Chen & Dalsgaard-Park, 2014). To sum up, the self-efficacy perceptions provide the foundation for human motivation and personal accomplishment, which lead to emotional and physical engagement (Yakin & Erdil, 2012; Lent et al., 2011).

The second direct path reported on the model is from self-leadership to work engagement, with results clearly showing that self-leadership has statistically significant positive influences on work engagement (β= 0.172). The findings that self-leadership has a statistically significant positive influence on work engagement are in line with those of Kotze (2017). The fact that self-leadership has a stronger influence on work engagement than job embeddedness is interesting, since job embeddedness belong to the positive psychology family (Widianto et al., 2012) related more to work engagement than self-leadership.

Consistent with Kotze (2017), the current results suggest that self-leadership strategies are part of the positive emotions and relevant personal resources within the workplace. Considering their effect on PsyCap and its relationship (directly and indirectly) with work engagement, these self-leadership strategies could be used to extend the JD-R model

as an added part of the personal resources. The constructive thought patterns, for example, can increase and strengthen an individual's belief that they have what it takes to succeed and help them to remain hopeful and optimistic in their capabilities (Kotze, 2017). In turn, those individuals who implement self-leadership strategies effectively enhance PsyCap, therefore self-leadership strategies facilitate the development of psychological capacities which in turn lead to work engagement. Optimal work environments are characterised by high job resources, challenging demands and low hindrances. A self-managing individual has the ability to control and successfully manipulate the resources to suit his or her own needs; therefore, self-leading individuals can positively influence the resourcefulness of the work environment and consequently contribute to employees' work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014).

Proposed theoretical construction based on the findings

Current results suggest that self-leadership strategies can be used as building blocks for expanding personal resources. A good example is assisting individuals to identify self-defeating thinking patterns and replacing them with constructive beliefs (constructive thought patterns). This process, according to Kotze (2017), improves individuals' use of job resources. Identifying and changing distorted and irrational beliefs and assumptions minimise dysfunctional thought processes, improve cognitive effectiveness, and create hope (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Systematic observation of one's own thoughts and behaviour has been suggested as one possible self-leadership strategy designed to increase self-awareness and subsequently strengthen the self-lead behaviour of goal setting and goal attainment (Norris, 2008). Further, these strategies help employees to avoid negative thoughts and remain calm and focused in stressful environments (Youssef & Luthans, 2007).

Based on the current findings and the supporting literature highlighted above, enough evidence is available to establish a theory that integrates the self-leadership strategies as interventions aimed at facilitating positive behavioural change, thus expanding personal resources among employees. This may fulfil Manz's (2015) quest to take a 'fresh look' at self-leadership as a positive construct. It is time that the self-leadership

strategies be recognised as an integral part of the personal resources that facilitate positive behaviour and eventually translate to work engagement. This is based on Bandura's (2004) sentiments, which clearly indicate that self-leadership, along with self-efficacy, and goal setting, facilitate the mobilisation of internal resources and form part of an iterative process of self-regulation in the positive behavioural change process that lead to work engagement. It is through self-leadership that construction and maintenance of functional thinking patterns are facilitated (Norris, 2008). It is also through self-leadership strategies that the development of psychological capacities, such as hope, self-efficacy and optimism are facilitated by recognising and replacing negative dysfunctional beliefs and assumptions with positive beliefs (Neck & Manz, 2010). In conclusion, given the above, the study suggests that self-leadership strategies should be recognised as integral parts of the personal resources that facilitate positive behaviour that eventually translates to work engagement.

The weakest but significant path reported in the model is from job embeddedness to work engagement (β = 0.118). The results clearly indicated that job embeddedness has a positive statistically significant influence on work engagement and this is consistent with Takawira (2015). However, it is worth mentioning that in the current study, this path yielded less than expected given the fact that previous literature reported stronger influences between job embeddedness and work engagement. In addition, the two constructs (job embeddedness and work engagement) share some important common characteristics and are both grounded in the positive psychology family (Widianto et al., 2012); hence a strong relationship was expected. In the regression model, only organisational links explained the R^2 = 0.01 variance in work engagement. These results corroborate with previous findings that, as an employee develops an increasing number of formal and informal connections to other people within the organisation, the social support network is viewed as a job resource that boosts motivational processes at work and influences work engagement (Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010).

Surprisingly, organisational fit and sacrifice contributed nothing to the variance of work engagement in the current study. The possible reason why job embeddedness

contributed less to the variance in work engagement in the study is that the dimensions of job embeddedness, such as links and fit, can be viewed as external resources. These external resources are conditions, such as job characteristics, and relationships that tend to develop over time, and which individuals may not have direct control over (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). When observed in combination with internal resources, the external resources' contribution becomes weak, since internal resources are more powerful and intrinsic, hence individuals may use them to activate and conserve positive conditions, which in turn influence psychological and work-related well-being that translates into emotional engagement (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009).

To conclude the direct paths, it is clear that the direct paths reported above mirror the results obtained from the stepwise regression analyses. Again, just like in the stepwise regression analyses, the direct paths that link self-leadership and job embeddedness with work engagement were not as strong as the previous literature suggests (Breevaart et al., 2016). This can possibly be explained by the fact that in PLS path modelling the standardised inner path model coefficients decline with an increased number of indirect relationships, especially when the mediating latent variable has a suppressor effect on the direct path as was the case with PsyCap (Henseler, 2009).

8.7.3.2 Discussing the indirect path coefficients

Self-leadership through PsyCap to job embeddedness then to work engagement (SL-PC-JE-WE)

The ultimate indirect path (flow of the combined effect of PsyCap, self-leadership and job embeddedness on work engagement), which is theoretically proven and statistically significant, reported in the model in Figure 8.1, is from self-leadership through PsyCap to job embeddedness then to work engagement. The first part of the path reported is from self-leadership to PsyCap (β = 0.815) and PsyCap with a coefficient of determination of R^2 = 0.664 is substantial; hence self-leadership explains the 0.664 variance in PsyCap. This implies that self-leadership strongly influences PsyCap, then PsyCap influences job embeddedness and then job embeddedness ultimately

influences work engagement. The results are partially consistent with Kotze (2017) who found that self-leadership is a strong determinant of PsyCap, having a statistically significant positive influence on PsyCap dimensions. Kotze (2017) explained this by indicating that self-leadership can strengthen individuals' belief that they have what it takes to succeed (self-efficacy), and help them remain hopeful, optimistic, and resilient despite adversity. Kotze (2017) further proposes that PsyCap mediates the relationships between self-leadership and work engagement and mindfulness.

In the current study, self-leadership exerted a direct and indirect influence on work engagement via PsyCap and job embeddedness. In theory, the meso-level model of self-leadership by Bligh, Pearce and Kohles (2006), indicates that self-leadership, as a single dimensional construct through self-efficacy, leads to a positive mind-set and to positive behaviour. In a summarised list of self-leadership outcomes provided by Neck and Houghton (2006), self-efficacy appeared at the top as one of the major predictable outcomes of self-leadership. Above that, self-leadership has an effect on self-efficacy through mastery of experiences; thus, confidence is enabled by encouraging the positive desirable behaviours that lead to successful outcomes (behaviour focused) (Avey et al., 2009). This explains the first part of the ultimate path, from self-leadership to PsyCap. The model then takes the route from PsyCap to job embeddedness.

In the second part of the ultimate path, the results of the model reported a statistically significant path from PsyCap to job embeddedness (β = 0.353). This is in line with Sun et al. (2012) who found a statistically significant relationship between self-reported PsyCap and job embeddedness and performance. Theoretically, the two constructs have their roots in positive organisational behaviour and thus both positive psychology and positive retention embody a positive state and are crucial in contemporary organisations. Recently Nafei (2015), in describing the relationship between the two, noted that individuals high in PsyCap are more adaptive to their jobs, have more harmonious relationships with their colleagues and have more friends and deeper organisational links. Thus, PsyCap may be a key factor in predicting job embeddedness through organisational links. Rego et al. (2012) indicate that the dimensions of PsyCap

(hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy) are positively related with JE (fit, links, and sacrifice) and employees with higher PsyCap exhibit less turnover intentions, since they have a large support network in their current organisations (links).

Nafei (2015) notes a direct and exponentially influential relationship between the dimensions of PsyCap and the level of JE among employees. Sun et al. (2012) suggest that PsyCap is the original internal motivation for employees to stay in their jobs. Although a causal link between PsyCap and job embeddedness was established, the relationship between the two still warrants further study. In conclusion, employees with higher PsyCap are more adaptive to their jobs, have more harmonious relationships with their colleagues and have more friends and deeper links in the organisation; hence they are more likely to have access to a wide range of job resources that will then facilitate engagement (Sun et al., 2012). The last part of the path reported in the model is from job embeddedness to work engagement (β = 0.118), which is statistically significant. As mentioned earlier in the discussion in paragraph 8.7.3.1 for the direct relationship between job embeddedness and work engagement, though statistically significant, the path coefficients that link the two constructs (β = 0.118) yielded below expectation. Therefore, the most complex path discovered by the model, as explained above, was from self-leadership through PsyCap to job embeddedness then to work engagement. However, as indicated by the path coefficients, though statistically significant, this path is not the strongest. Therefore, managers and practitioners would wonder why one would use the complex and ultimate path with weaker coefficients to achieve work engagement. Are there no alternative paths available that could possibly guarantee positive results? The study provides a stronger path heavily supported by theory and empirical evidence as discussed below.

Self-leadership through PsyCap to work engagement (SL-PC-WE)

The strongest indirect path to the endogenous latent variable work engagement reported in the model is from the exogenous latent variable (self-leadership) through PsyCap (β = 0.0.815) to work engagement (β = 0.621), which is positive and statistically significant. This path makes theoretical sense and is supported in the previous studies

which indicate that, with self-leadership strategies in place, an initial foundation for positive organisation is constructed (Breevaart et al., 2016). In a recent diarised study, Bakker (2017) notes that self-leadership strategies, such as constructive thought patterns and behavioural strategies, are used to expand the psychological resources and assist with increasing personal resources such as optimism, self-efficacy and self-esteem, which eventually transform to work engagement aspects such as dedication and absorption. Similarly, Kotze (2017) notes that PsyCap explains the influence of self-leadership on work engagement, specifically dedication, and partly explains the relationship between self-leadership and vigour, indicating that self-leadership exerts a direct and indirect influence on vigour via PsyCap.

Sun et al. (2012) portray positivity as a virtue built on sustained and determined acts of self-responsibility that require a sense of self-efficacy and internal locus of control to succeed. This implies that it all begins with the elimination of destructive thoughts and negative self-talk and replacing them with more positive internal dialogues which result in positivity (Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017). Thus individuals effectively set behaviour-altering goals to achieve self-efficacy and improve themselves through self-leadership. In turn, behavioural strategies enable the development and nurturing of self-efficacy and optimism, which in turn leads to physical engagement (Neck & Manz, 2013). Self-efficacy, as a motivational construct, influences individual goals, reactions, efforts of coping strategies, and levels of persistence to achieve physical engagement (vigour).

In line with the results from the stepwise regression analysis, which indicated hope as the major contributor to the variance in work engagement, this path can be explained by the fact that, according to literature, hope is heavily influenced by the behavioural strategies of self-goal setting (Guojuan & Jingzhou, 2013). Recent research discovered that setting of attainable goals creates hope among individuals (Kotze, 2017). When individuals wish to make a change or accomplish an outcome they become more successful when they attend to a number of variables that are key to goal setting, including setting difficult but attainable goals. This leads to hope or creates determination to achieve the goal, and in turn builds positive beliefs that one has the

capacity to achieve the goal, and that eventually leads to dedication (Curran & Reivich, 2011).

In a similar vein, Karatepe (2014) states that goal oriented individuals are hopeful and relentlessly pursue strategies to reach their goals, which eventually make them feel energetic and emotionally attached to tasks; thus, they become happily immersed in their work. On days that these employees encounter difficulties that impede them in reaching their goals, they take advantage of alternative paths to achieve their goals thus using reserves of personal resources. Yavas et al. (2013) note that such individuals are highly engaged in their work, in the sense that high levels of hope leads to frequent positive moods and positive goal directed outlooks. Among the organisational benefits of self-leadership, as noted by Neck and Manz (2013), is improvement of goal setting, which results in hopeful employees. In line with that, individuals with high self-efficacy ('I can do it') have more confidence in their abilities to perform challenging tasks and make more effort to accomplish those tasks (Yakin & Erdil, 2012). It is therefore apparent that high levels of hope and self-efficacy influence the mobilisation of internal resources, which in turn lead to physical engagement (Kotze, 2017).

From the above discussion, it is clear that self-leadership strategies may influence individuals' level of hope and self-efficacy, which is part of an iterative process of self-regulation in the positive behaviour change process that leads to an engaged workforce (Kotze, 2017). The fact that self-leadership has a stronger influence on work engagement through PsyCap as a personal resource (job demands-resources model) is interesting, since PsyCap is currently attracting much attention, while self-leadership antecedents and outcomes have not been researched extensively in recent years (Kotze, 2017). Ideally, more research on the two would actually yield more valuable practical ideas for contemporary organisations. Therefore, the strongest path reported in the model was from self-leadership through PsyCap to work engagement. This path is highly recommended because of its strong path coefficients, which guarantees success when boasting employee engagement. Therefore, rather than using the complex path

discussed previously, managers and practitioners should consider promoting work engagement through self-leadership strategies and psychological capital dimensions.

PsyCap through job embeddedness to work engagement (PC-JE-WE)

The model also presents the second strongest indirect path from PsyCap through job embeddedness ($\beta = 0.353$) to work engagement ($\beta = 0.118$). This path has hardly attracted attention from previous researchers and calls for further research in the area. However, as indicated on the model, though not very strong, the path is statistically significant and positive, hence worth mentioning. The step-wise regression analysis results indicated that a combination of hope, self-efficacy, optimism and organisational links together act as personal resources that can actually boast work engagement, as indicated in the previous studies (Widianto et al., 2012; Bakker & Leiter, 2010). The results suggest that job embeddedness links form part of the relevant job resources within the workplace that can be used to promote an engaged workforce. This lays a foundation for a theory that incorporates the combined effect of psychological capacities and job embeddedness (links, fit, and sacrifice) as building blocks for boasting work engagement. In theory, JE and PsyCap both demonstrate how an individual's positive state impacts his or her cognition and behaviour. Therefore, PsyCap through job embeddedness links and fit influences work engagement. Those links and perceptions of fit are important to reduce the negative impact of burn out and eventually achieve work engagement (Widianto et al., 2012).

As mentioned earlier, theoretically the three constructs (PsyCap, job embeddedness and work engagement) belong to the positive psychology family, thus the combined effect of the dimensions of PsyCap and job embeddedness links and fit yield significant positive results on work engagement. Malinowski and Lim (2015) note that positive emotions prompt individuals to discard automatic behavioural scripts and to pursue novel and creative thoughts and actions, which result in the increase of social, psychological and physical resources. Individuals who embody high levels of overall PsyCap can access more of its resources manifested through their cognitions, motivation, behaviour, and social relationships and in turn increase the links and fit

which eventually translate into high levels of engagement (Sun et al., 2012). Based on that, it can be suggested that self-efficacy and optimism through links and fit lead to work engagement.

The proposed theory to incorporate links and fit in the pool of personal resources, as indicated in the model, is supported by the study done by Rego et al. (2012). In this study, it was found that the availability of a higher level of efficacy improves the quality of the relationships that links employees and their supervisors, thereby increasing resources for employees, which eventually results in high levels of engagement. Self-efficacy has also been found to relate positively to resources that facilitate links and fit in job embeddedness, such as mental and emotional competencies, job control and supervisor social support (Nafe, 2015). In turn, self-efficacy plays a role in predicting positive processes such as work engagement and performance (Yakin & Erdil, 2012). Consistently Prieto (2016) notes that self-efficacy beliefs predict work engagement and job performance through job and personal resources.

Another study also suggests that the strong social alliances (links) enjoyed by tightly fitting individuals (fit) help reduce future uncertainty and boasts positive emotions, which in turn guarantees dedication (Gagné & Vansteenkiste, 2013). Yakin and Erdil (2012) also state that individuals, who have high PsyCap, have strong social ties (links) and fit well within the organisation. This broadens their positive feelings and helps reduce uncertainty and guarantees dedication. Sun et al. (2012) suggest that PsyCap is the original internal motivation for employees to stay in their organisation. Combining PsyCap capacities with job embeddedness factors resembles the accumulation of both job and personal resources. In practice, based on the Conservation of Resource theory (COR), accumulation of different job and personal resources will benefit both individual and organisation through sustained engagement. According to Kroon, Menting and Woerkom (2015) it is time for organisations to accumulate and preserve as many psychological resources as possible to build a reservoir of sustaining resources for times of future need. The obtaining and retaining of job, personal and psychological resources creates for people and organisations a sense that they are capable of

meeting stressful challenges and guarantees continuous engagement (Sender, Arnold & Staffelbach, 2016). It is a critical tenet of the COR theory that individuals accumulate as many resources as they can. Considering that both PsyCap and job embeddedness render a number of personal and psychological resources that can possibly be used by both organisations and individuals to facilitate work engagement and well-being, a theory can be framed to integrate psychological capacities and job embeddedness links as relevant job and personal resources within the workplace that can be used to promote an engaged workforce.

Self-leadership through job embeddedness to work engagement (SL-JE-WE)

The last indirect path reported in the model is from self-leadership through job embeddedness (β = 0.219) to work engagement (β = 0.118). Some links in the model have not been tested in previous researches; however, they yielded statistically significant relationships in the model. The first part of the path from self-leadership directly to job embeddedness (β = 0.219), the path is positive and significant, with a coefficient of determination for job embeddedness (R^2 = 0.299 /0.3) which is moderate and acceptable. This means self-leadership and psychological capital explain a 0.3 variance in job embeddedness. Lee and Yom (2015) found that job embeddedness and self-leadership are important factors to enhance nurses' job performance. Promoting activities for job embeddedness and self-leadership might be a way to increase the general performance of employees (Lee & Yom, 2015). Very few studies have investigated the relationship between self-leadership and job embeddedness, and Lee and Yom (2015) recently suggested that further studies are necessary to refine and clarify the relationship between the two variables. Since relatively few studies have tested this path in the previous literature and since the current study indicates a positive significant influence of self-leadership and job embeddedness on work engagement, the path can be explained on conceptual basis.

Taking into account the results for the regression model discussed previously, behavioural strategies and organisational links were found to be significant predictors of

work engagement. The conceptual foundations of behavioural strategies are based on the literature of self-awareness, enhancing self-consciousness and the management of essential, sometimes unpleasant, behaviours (Neck & Manz, 2013). It encourages the positive, desirable behaviours that lead to successful outcomes, while suppressing the negative, undesirable behaviours (Neck & Houghton, 2006). The suppression of undesirable negative behaviours s self-mastery and leads to harmonious relationships with self and others, thus individuals who use behavioural strategies enjoy harmonious relationships with individuals around them. Based on that, in organisational settings, these individuals can possibly have more meaningful relationships with their colleagues and supervisors (links), thus strong social networks, which translate to more job resources, and in turn work engagement is achieved. Therefore, self-leadership (behavioural strategies) is a key factor in predicting work engagement through job embeddedness (organisational links). In the current study, self-leadership exerted a direct and indirect influence on work engagement via both PsyCap and job embeddedness. Thus, even though the path from self-leadership through job embeddedness to work engagement is statistically significant, based on the strength of the path coefficients, the path from self-leadership through PsyCap to work engagement is recommended, rather than all the other paths discussed above.

To sum up, findings from the theoretical model indicate that self-leadership through eliminating destructive thoughts and negative self-talk and replacing them with more positive internal dialogues produces sustained and determined acts of self-responsibility and in turn creates positivity (PsyCap and job embeddedness) which translates to high levels of work engagement among employees. Thus, the combined effect of PsyCap, self-leadership, and job embeddedness explain a 0.703 variance in work engagement. This directly relates to creating a cohesive workplace culture, extra efforts, better ideas and innovations that an organisation requires to succeed (Devi, 2017). In recent years, and due to uncertain economic conditions, several financial institutions have limited their hiring processes, making employee engagement even more significant (Devi, 2017). As indicated earlier in the literature review, work engagement has a direct effect on both the organisation and individuals; it improves employee performance, lowers

absenteeism, improves moral, increases organisational commitment and is positively related to health and psychological well-being (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). It is crucial for organisations to ensure high levels of work engagement through combining PsyCap dimensions, self-leadership strategies and job embeddedness links as relevant job and personal resources that can be effectively used directly or indirectly to boast employee levels of work engagement in the organisations.

8.8 Summary

Overall, the chapter focused on presenting the results, interpretations and discussion in relation to previous literature. The initial interpretations focused on the reliability of the constructs and the goodness-of-fit statistics associated with each of the four constructs. The results for each research question were presented separately. To determine the significant predictors of work engagement, the interpretations of the stepwise multiple regression analysis were presented. To establish if differences exist in levels of work engagement concerning gender, the independent t-test was presented. To test the proposed model, partial least squares path modelling (PLS) results were presented. The following chapter focuses on conclusions, recommendations, limitations and future research directions based on the findings.

CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

9.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented results and discussions. This chapter focuses on summarising the main findings, drawing conclusions and identifying the limitations of the study. The chapter also provides recommendations for the practical application of the findings and provides directions for future research studies.

9.2 Conclusions

Conclusions are discussed in two sections; the first section focuses on the conclusions based on the literature review followed by the conclusions from the empirical study.

9.2.1 Conclusions regarding the literature review

The literature study was framed around three major objectives. Firstly, literature aimed to critically evaluate and explore the theoretical relationship between four variables to determine whether psychological capital, job embeddedness and self-leadership have a significant effect on work engagement, with special reference to the employees working in the banking sector. The second objective was to determine whether individuals from different age groups differ significantly regarding their work engagement. The third objective was to identify the levels of psychological capital, job embeddedness and self-leadership on work engagement among employees in the banking sector. The literature discussion ended with a proposed conceptual model capturing the theoretical relationships between psychological capital, job embeddedness, self-leadership and work engagement. The model was tested and the results were presented in the previous chapter.

9.2.1.1 The first aim: Conceptualise psychological capital, job embeddedness, self-leadership and work engagement from the literature

The first aim, as mentioned above, was addressed by conducting a literature review in which the conceptual foundations of the four constructs were comprehensively studied. Following the basic premises of the JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014) on the interrelatedness of positive work behaviour and employee well-being the literature concluded that, though several studies have been conducted on employee engagement, more studies are needed to better understand how the concept interacts with other positive organisational concepts, such as psychological capital and job embeddedness. These concepts have sub-dimensions (hope, optimism, self-efficacy and organisational links) which play the role of job, personal and psychological resources. When used in the workplace these resources can boost work engagement.

In the current study, work engagement is viewed as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterised by vigour-related energy, mental resilience and the ability to invest effort in one's work, and persisting even in difficult times (Schaufeli et al., 2002). The definition indicates that work engagement is coupled with dedication, strong involvement in one's work associated with experiences of a sense of significance, passion, inspiration, and pride in the work that one is doing. Absorption relates to being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work, which results in time passing quickly and employees having trouble when disconnecting from work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). From the literature review, it was concluded that the combined job, personal and psychological resources, some of which include the dimensions of PsyCap, job embeddedness and self-leadership strategies, influence work engagement.

For the purpose of this study, the psychological capital concept was approached from the perspective of Luthans et al. (2007). In this approach, PsyCap is viewed as a multi-dimensional construct that is defined as the individual's positive psychological state of development characterised by hope, optimism, resiliency and self-efficacy. In this context, self-efficacy refers to having confidence or the ability to attain a goal by applying the necessary effort to succeed at a given challenging task. Optimism refers to

making a positive attribution about succeeding now and in future. Hope means persevering towards goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to achieve goals in order to succeed. Resiliency is the ability to recover after adversary to achieve success, thus when beset with adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond to attain success. From the literature it was concluded that psychological resource capacities (optimism, hope, resiliency and self-efficacy) do have a positive impact on work-related outcomes, such as work engagement and organisational commitment (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Simon and Buitendach (2013) specifically identified that the PsyCap construct of optimism displays a significant positive relationship with work engagement, as well as with the sub-dimensions of vigour, dedication and absorption.

The present study approached the job embeddedness concept from Mitchell et al.'s (2001b) perspective who view job embeddedness as on-the-job and off-the-job factors associated with individual links, fit, and sacrifice. This definition assumes that the more links, the better fit, and the more sacrifices the more likely that an employee will stay in a job. The literature therefore concluded that if employees are strongly linked in the organisation and fit well, they would have to sacrifice a great deal if they were to leave the organisation; the intent to leave would be lower (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). Mitchell et al. (2001) are of the opinion that if an individual has multiple attachments to an organisation (more links), he or she is unlikely to leave the organisation even though the individual may have an idea of leaving.

Deducing from the available literature, even though job embeddedness comprises two dimensions, namely the organisational and community dimensions, it was concluded that the organisational embeddedness dimension better predicts work engagement than the community dimension (Takawira, 2015; Allen, 2006; Lee et al., 2014). The study therefore focused on the organisational aspect. Previous researchers are convinced of the fact that there is indeed a relationship between job embeddedness and work engagement, considering that the theoretical underpinnings for examining the different dimensions of job embeddedness in relation to work engagement is well explained through the job demands-resources model (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). A good

example is that since organisational links are characterised as formal or informal social ties to people in an organisation, they can be viewed as a type of job resource that foster work engagement (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Self-leadership was approached from the perspective of Neck and Houghton (2006) who define it as a process through which individuals regulate and control their behaviour, influencing and leading them by using specific sets of behavioural and cognitive strategies. As a broader construct, Manz and Neck (2008) describe three strategies to self-leadership, which include behaviour-focused approaches, natural reward approaches, and constructive thought pattern strategies. Behavioural strategies entail identifying ineffective behaviours and replacing them with more effective behaviours through a process of self-observation, self-goal setting, self-reward, self-correcting feedback, and self-cueing (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Natural reward strategies allow individuals to find enjoyment in a given task or activity, leading to increased feelings of competence, self-control, and sense of purpose (Houghton, Dawley & Diliello, 2012). Constructive thought strategies focus on reshaping certain key mental processes in order to facilitate more positive and optimistic thinking patterns and mental processes that can significantly impact individual performance (Neck & Houghton, 2006). These strategies include identifying and eliminating dysfunctional beliefs and assumptions, engaging in positive self-talk, and constructive mental imagery (Breevaart et al., 2016).

From the literature review and in light of a comprehensive overview of the literature on self-leadership, it is concluded that further research is necessary so that a broad agreement on its meaning is conceptualised and operationalised. It was concluded that self-leadership is a conscious and deliberate self-enhancement of personal effectiveness through individual-level strategies that can be applied to produce higher levels of mental performance, and expectations of success (Neck & Houghton, 2006).

9.2.1.2 *The second aim: Determine the theoretical relationships between psychological capital, job embeddedness, self-leadership, and work engagement from the literature.*

The foundation for the conceptual model established between the variables in the current study was informed by the JD-R model of Bakker and Leiter (2010). The model indicates that job resources, such as supervisory coaching, social support (links the job embeddedness sub-component) and personal resources (optimism, hope, self-efficacy) buffer the effects of job demands and lead to high levels of work engagement. Therefore, more resources (both personal and job resources) will lead to higher levels of engagement. This notion was also endorsed by the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2004). Positive emotions such as joy, optimism, contentment and interest broaden an individual's thinking, enabling a more broadened outlook, which in turn helps with the development of personal resources. These resources build up over time, increasing the individual's overall well-being and leading to more positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2004). In turn, these positive emotions positively broaden and build one's thought-action repertoires and lead to increased personal resources and positive attitudes towards work, which in turn lead to high energy levels (vigour). To include all variables involved in the current study, the conceptual framework was then established based on the recent research by Breevaart et al. (2016) in which the results suggest self-leadership as the starting point towards achieving an engaged workforce. Sun et al. (2012) portrayed positivity as a virtue built on sustained and determined acts of self-responsibility that require a sense of self-efficacy and internal locus of control to succeed. This can be achieved through fostering self-leadership strategies. Training employees on how to use different self-leadership strategies (visualising successful performance, self-talk and evaluating beliefs and assumptions, self-observation, self-goal setting and self-reward) provide the tools necessary to become more positive and eventually engaged in their work (Breevaart et al., 2016).

The literature concluded that it all starts with eliminating destructive thoughts and negative self-talk and replacing them with more positive internal dialogues (Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017). Self-leadership, along with self-efficacy and goal setting, is part of an iterative process of self-regulation in the positive behaviour change process that lead to an engaged workforce (Bandura, 2004). Optimal work environments are characterised by high job resources, highly challenging demands and low hindrances. A self-leading individual has the ability to control and successfully manipulate the resources to suit his or her own needs. Therefore, self-leading individuals can positively influence the resourcefulness of the work environment and consequently contribute to their work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). Thus, from the literature, it was concluded that with self-leadership strategies in place, an initial foundation for positive organisation is constructed. Self-leadership lays a foundation of positive thinking. PsyCap dimensions (hope optimism and self-efficacy) together with job embeddedness (links, fit and sacrifice) act as resources that boost work engagement. It was therefore concluded that self-leadership through PsyCap and job embeddedness have a significant effect on work engagement.

9.2.1.3 The third aim: To determine theoretically (based on the review of the literature) if there are significant differences in work engagement with regards to age.

The literature indicated that modern workplaces are now composed of individuals of all ages and these age groups are experiencing different phases in their careers, ranging from entry level employees (young adulthood) to employees that have reached retirement age (older employees) (James et al., 2011). These groups have different preferences when it comes to strategies that may be used to boost their work engagement. Relatively few studies on work engagement have investigated the substantial effect of age on work engagement (James et al., 2011). However, some popular beliefs indicate that older employees are often associated with diminishing energy. Consistent with that, extensive research has shown that common stereotypes relate older workers to decreasing motivation, reduced performance, unwillingness to

adapt to work-related changes, or to learn new things (Bal, Reiss, Rudolph & Baltes, 2011; Billett et al., 2011).

Contrary to that, a study done in a retail setting indicates that older workers displayed much higher levels of engagement compared to their younger equivalents. Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova (2006) also note that work engagement tends to be slightly higher among older workers with more experience in the job, but these differences are small and insignificant. Similarly, in an age comparative study among academics on work engagement, no statistically significant differences were found in the levels of work engagement among academics concerning age groups (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006). Surprisingly, studies have actually concluded that older workers seem to have higher levels of engagement than younger or middle aged employees (Pitt-Catsouphes & Matz-Costa, 2008). Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova (2006) indicate that engagement increases with age but only to a limited extent. Due to contradicting results from different studies, as presented in the literature, it remains unclear whether age groups differ significantly regarding their levels of work engagement; hence this notion was worth further exploration.

9.2.2 Conclusions regarding the empirical study

As highlighted earlier, the study had three objectives. The primary objective examined the effect of psychological capital, self-leadership, and job embeddedness on work engagement. The first secondary objective was to determine whether differences exist in levels of work engagement among employees in the banking sector with regards to age groups. The final objective was to identify the levels of psychological capital, job embeddedness, self-leadership, and work engagement among employees working in the banking sector.

9.2.2.1 *Primary objective*

The primary objective of this study was to determine the effect of psychological capital, job embeddedness, and self-leadership on work engagement, as manifested in a

sample of participants employed in the Free State banking sector using a non-experimental research design. The following research hypothesis was tested:

Null hypothesis: Variances in work engagement scores cannot be statistically explained by psychological capital, job embeddedness, and self-leadership for employees working in the banking sector.

Alternative hypothesis: Variances in work engagement scores can be statistically explained by psychological capital, job embeddedness, and self-leadership for employees working in the banking sector. The following conclusions were drawn:

To examine how much of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the regression model, the R^2 values were analysed to determine the contribution of each of the independent variables towards work engagement. Results revealed that hope made the largest contribution to the variance in work engagement with R^2 = 0.59 which is 59%. The second predictor of work engagement in the model was optimism, which made a 6% contribution to work engagement in the model; a modest 3% of the variance in work engagement was explained by self-efficacy and 2% by behavioural strategies. Finally, organisational links made the smallest contribution (R^2 = 0.01).

The empirical results therefore concluded that in the current study, five variables which predict work engagement (hope, optimism, self-efficacy, behavioural strategies and organisational links) explain 71% of the variance in work engagement. Hope has the highest contribution to work engagement; these results are consistent with Bakker (2017) who notes that hope is proposed to be a psychological antecedent to the vigour component of work engagement. Yavas et al. (2013) also note that individuals who score high in hope are highly engaged in their work, because they tend to have frequent positive moods and positive goal directed outlooks. It was therefore concluded that there are five variables explaining variance in work engagement, and hope makes the strongest unique contribution when the variance explained by all the other variables in the model is controlled for. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis: variances in work engagement scores can be statistically explained by psychological capital, job

embeddedness, and self-leadership for employees working in the banking sector was not rejected but partially accepted.

To empirically test the proposed conceptual model

The proposed model was tested using the partial least squares path modelling (PLS). A two-step process was applied to test the model: the assessment of the outer model and the assessment of the inner model. The results for the outer model indicated that all the composite reliabilities for the four variables were satisfactory obtaining the following composite reliability scores, work engagement (p_c) = 0.97, job embeddedness (p_c) = 0.87, psychological capital (p_c) = 0.93 and self-leadership (p_c) = 0.92. Therefore, with regards to the composite reliability scores it was concluded that the model was well fitting. To further assess the quality of the outer model the convergent and discriminant validity was also assessed. The convergent validity was assessed using the criterion average variance extracted (AVE) and the results indicated that for work engagement (AVE = 0.91, job embeddedness, AVE = 0.69, psychological capital AVE = 0.78) and for self-leadership AVE = 0.79. Based on the AVE scores it was concluded that the model is well fitting in terms of convergent validity.

The inner model was assessed using the coefficient of determination R^2 of the endogenous latent variable. The key target construct (work engagement) level of R^2 was high or substantial at level R^2 = 0.703. This implies that the exogenous latent variables explain 70% (0.7) of work engagement in the model, meaning when combined, PsyCap, self-leadership, and job embeddedness explain the 0.703 variance in work engagement in the banking sector. Consistent with this, when looking at the stepwise multiple regression results, the R^2 was 71%, which is almost identical. It was therefore concluded that PsyCap, job embeddedness, and self-leadership have a positive significant effect on work engagement.

The individual path coefficients of the PLS inner model were interpreted as standardised beta coefficients of ordinary least squares. The following direct path coefficients were reported in order of strength: the strongest path reported in the model was from

psychological capital to work engagement (β = 0.621), self-leadership to work engagement (β = 0.172), and the weakest direct path reported in the model was from job embeddedness to work engagement (β = 0.118). In addition, based on the literature, indirect paths discovered in Chapter 2 were also tested empirically and the following indirect path coefficients were reported: the ultimate path reported in the model was from self-leadership through psychological capital to job embeddedness then to work engagement. The path reported the following path coefficients, from self-leadership through psychological capital (β = 0.815), to job embeddedness (β = 0.353), then to work engagement (β = 0.118). Though this was the ultimate path, as indicated in the model, the coefficients reported on the ultimate paths were not very strong; thus, managers and practitioners may prefer to use the path, which reported the strongest path coefficient.

The strongest indirect path reported in the model was from self-leadership through psychological capital to work engagement. The following path coefficients were reported, from self-leadership to psychological capital (β = 0.815), and then to work engagement (β = 0.621). From the empirical results, it was therefore concluded that the strongest indirect path to the endogenous variable reported on the model was from PsyCap through self-leadership to work engagement level. This path is highly significant and undeniably supported in the literature with researchers indicating that PsyCap has a strong influence on work engagement (Davids, 2011; Simon & Buitendach, 2013). The last indirect structural path reported was from self-leadership through job embeddedness (β = 0.219) to work engagement (β = 0.118). This path was positively and statistically significant. From the above summary, it was concluded that all path coefficients as indicated in Figure 8.1 supported the a priori formed theoretical hypothesis showing that the hypothesised direction empirically supports the proposed causal relationship. All the structural paths were found to be statistically significant.

Based on the results obtained from the partial least squares, it can be concluded that employee level of psychological capital, job embeddedness, and self-leadership significantly and positively contribute to employee levels of work engagement. PsyCap,

job embeddedness, and self-leadership are multi-dimensional constructs made up of sub-components that act as job resources (links, cognitive strategies, behavioural strategies) and psychological/personal resources (optimism, hope and self-efficacy).

9.2.2.2 *Second objective*

The secondary objective of this study was to determine by means of a non-experimental research design whether differences exist in levels of work engagement among employees in the banking sector with regard to age groups. The following research hypotheses were tested:

> Null hypothesis: There are no statistical significant differences in scores achieved on levels of work engagement with regards to age groups among banking sector employees.

> Alternative hypothesis: There are statistical significant differences in scores achieved on levels of work engagement with regards to age groups among banking sector employees. The following conclusions were drawn:

Based on the findings as depicted in Table 8.12, no significant differences were found between the various age groups regarding their levels of work engagement. These findings are in line with Takawira (2015), and Barkhuizen and Rothmann (2006) who did not find differences in work engagement levels of different age groups of participants. However, the findings contradict with a study by Billett et al. (2011) which points out that older employees are often associated with diminishing motivation and enthusiasm for work, hence are less engaged compared to younger employees. The results help to clarify some common stereotypes that relate older workers to decreasing motivation, reduced performance, and even unwillingness to adapt to work-related changes (Bal, Reiss, Rudolph & Baltes, 2011). From the literature review it was concluded that there are differences in levels of engagement concerning age. This study found that no significant differences exist. Therefore, the null hypothesis: There are no statistical significant differences in scores achieved on levels of work engagement with regards to age groups among banking sector employees was therefore not rejected

9.2.2.3 *Third objective*

The third objective of this study was to determine the levels of psychological capital, job embeddedness, self-leadership, and work engagement among employees in the banking sector.

Based on results indicated in Table 8.13 the mean scores for work engagement levels in the banking sector are moderate. Thus, employees are sometimes bursting with energy, dedicated, and moderately concentrate on their work. For psychological capital, the mean scores also indicated that respondents were moderately positive about their work, meaning that they are confident in their belief that they can succeed. Self-leadership reported slightly high mean scores, indicating that respondents in the banking sector largely use the self-leadership strategies. Finally, the reported mean score for job embeddedness shows that employees in the banking sector are moderately embedded in their jobs. Based on the average mean scores for all the variables it can be concluded that work engagement, job embeddedness, self-leadership, and PsyCap levels in the banking sector are moderate. These results contradict with the Dale Carnegie Training Institute's (2016) results that indicated that engagement levels in the banking sector are very low and continually declining.

9.2.3 Conclusions regarding contributions to the field of Industrial Psychology

The findings of the literature review and the empirical study contribute new knowledge to the field of industrial and organisational psychology, with particular focus on informing employee engagement practices in the South African banking sector. The literature review provided new insight into the conceptualisation of the constructs of relevance to the study (psychological capital, self-leadership, job embeddedness, and work engagement), the possible relationships between these constructs, and how the combined effect of these constructs can be used to boost employee work engagement. Concluding from the literature, it is clear that practitioners should consider the theoretical models of PsyCap, self-leadership, job embeddedness, and work engagement when fostering positivity in the field of organisational behaviour. Literature and empirical findings suggest that self-leadership strategies can be used as building

blocks for theoretical creations aimed at expanding personal resources, for example helping individuals to identify self-defeating thinking patterns and replacing them with constructive beliefs. This process improves individuals' use of job resources, assisting employees to avoid negative thoughts and remain calm and focused in stressful environments.

The study also discovered that enough evidence is available to establish a theory that integrate the self-leadership strategies as interventions to facilitate positive behavioural change; thus the field of industrial psychology should take a fresh look at self-leadership as a positive construct. The study advocates for self-leadership strategies to be recognised as integral parts of the personal resources that facilitate positive behaviour that eventually translates to work engagement. Therefore, the current study clearly indicates that self-leadership may form the basis of understanding how individuals identify, develop, and use various resources, both personal and social, to make the best in their work.

Additionally, the theoretical relationship between these variables provided new insight into the importance of these variables for work engagement practices, especially in the banking sector environment. Though previous research has yielded inconsistent results on differences between age groups in relation to work engagement, the current findings provide some evidence to build on the existing findings. Takawira (2015), and Barkhuizen and Rothmann (2006) also state the existence of these non-significant differences.

The empirical findings informed by the JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014) aimed to provide insight into the contribution that job and personal resources have on work engagement among employees in the banking sector. The study provides a theoretical framework that explains how employees can optimise and sustain a positive working life (staying engaged in their work) by using psychological capital resources and self-leadership strategies, and expanding social links. This contributes to the field of organisational behavioural research by answering the call by Belousova and Gailly

(2013) to increase positivity among employees; thus, the empirical findings assist in explaining the effects and processes of work engagement at individual level.

The results also shed light on the process of how employees' self-leadership through PsyCap and job embeddedness foster employee work engagement. Specifically, the study concluded that when individuals engage in self-leadership behaviour, and are hopeful, optimistic, and self-efficacious, they increase their psychological and personal resources, which in turn results in higher and more stable levels of work engagement over time (Gawke, Gorgievski & Bakker, 2017). The findings further indicated that the five variables (hope, optimism, self-efficacy, behavioural strategies, and organisational links) explain 70% variance in work engagement. This contributes to the available knowledge on self-leadership, psychological capital, job embeddedness, and work engagement, and yields interesting implications for advancing the JD-R theory by adding some personal resources from self-leadership, such as behavioural strategies and the job embeddedness component–links that can be used to boost employee levels of engagement. Considering that there is available evidence to provide empirical support for the assumption that employees' personal resources are "relatively malleable and open for development" (Gawke, Gorgievski & Bakker, 2017), organisations seeking to boost work engagement may focus on developing the personal resources of hope, optimism, self-efficacy, behavioural strategies, and organisational links, which contribute more to work engagement.

Conclusions drawn from this empirical study indicate that the interaction between the constructs psychological capital, self-leadership, and job embeddedness experienced by employees influence their level of work engagement in the organisation. The banking sector can therefore focus on developing psychological resources, embed employees, and encourage usage of self-leadership strategies, thereby formulating practices that may boost work engagement. The conclusion is therefore that, when work engagement is grounded in the principles of positive psychology and deeply explored in positive organisational scholarship, it offers a genuine solution to the problems experienced by

the banking sector. The study is important for both theoretical development and managing the quality of working life of employees.

9.3 Limitations

Several limitations in terms of the literature review, methodology, and empirical study were identified. The limitations of this study are discussed in the next section.

9.3.1 Limitations of the literature review

Although much research has been done on work engagement and PsyCap, studies are not conclusive on which variable influences the other, thus one of the limitations encountered was to determine the direction of influence. At some point the literature indicated that the two have a reciprocal relationship. Out of the four variables investigated, the major limitation was paucity of research in the South African context addressing job embeddedness and self-leadership. It was therefore difficult to compare the empirical results obtained on the relationship between job embeddedness and self-leadership with previous literature. In addition, no study has focused specifically on the combined effect of these three variables on work engagement; hence, when the model was tested, it was difficult to compare the hypothesised directions for some of the proposed paths.

Another major limitation was that the literature on job embeddedness only focused on the organisational component. The community component was not included because the organisational component explains work engagement better when viewed in isolation. In addition, based on the JD-R Model and the findings of the current study, the community component of job embeddedness can be viewed as an accumulation of external resources that help employees outside the work context, which were found to have less influence on work engagement. An all-encompassing view of the factors influencing work engagement could not be provided as only three variables (psychological capital, job embeddedness, and self-leadership) were considered. More positive constructs, such as mindfulness and emotional well-being, could expand the pool of personal resources when developing work engagement and informing new

theory development. The last limitation was that the literature on self-leadership was predominantly old, except for a few studies which addressed the construct in general without integrating it with other constructs. The reliability of the instruments in this study was analysed and conclusions drawn from this study indicate that the instruments displayed generally acceptable levels of internal consistency reliability.

9.3.2 Limitations of the empirical study and recommendations for future research

Although effort was applied to try to minimise the limitations of the empirical investigation, the present study has some limitations, which need to be acknowledged. This study used a self-report, cross-sectional survey to gather data on all four measures at one point in time. The self-reporting could cause common method bias and may have produced inflated correlations between the study variables. The cross-sectional method used in the current study makes it difficult to draw conclusions about the causal nature of the relationships among the variables and gives no idea of change that a group might take, as would a longitudinal design. Therefore, future research may consider using a longitudinal design to examine the impact of PsyCap, job embeddedness, and self-leadership on work engagement. However, challenges faced by longitudinal studies should be taken into consideration.

In addition, the study focused only on the banking sector, hence the data consisted only of banking sector employees selected through the convenience sampling procedure. The limitations on the sample restrict generalisation of the findings, thus the results can at best be carefully generalised to the banking industry only. Future research therefore needs to obtain either a multi-sample or a probability sample that is representative of all employees throughout the financial industry to achieve generalizability. Finally, with respect to the job embeddedness and self-leadership scales used in the current study, the root mean square error of approximation for both scales was slightly below the cut-off indicative of acceptable fit. For the JES, the comparative fit index was also lower than the acceptable good fit. However, the overall structure of the scales was good and the internal consistency was good. It was therefore recommended that some

improvements on the scales would be of greater importance. Despite the limitations noted above, the study used sophisticated statistical methods to test the proposed model and provide a new explanation for the effect of PsyCap, job embeddedness, and self-leadership on work engagement. The study also provides new insight on the differences in levels of work engagement concerning age. The study may be used as a basis for understanding the interactions between the variables measured and the differences between age groups to inform the formulation of work engagement practices.

9.4   Recommendations for organisations

The literature review detailed the way PsyCap and job embeddedness are influenced by self-leadership to enhance work engagement. The findings discovered that psychological capital, job embeddedness, and self-leadership have a significant effect on work engagement. Results clearly indicate that employees who are hopeful, self-efficacious, optimistic, embedded, and who experience high levels of self-leadership offer organisations a competitive advantage by being engaged. PsyCap and its psychological capacity of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience are situational based, open to development and change, and can be trained (Luthans, Youssef et al., 2007). Therefore, the study recommended that organisations seeking to boost work engagement can incorporate and develop personal resources, such as hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and job resources, such as organisational links and behavioural strategies as a way to make the workplace more resourceful and buffer the effects of job demands thereby achieving an engaged workforce (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014).

In practical terms, work engagement could be promoted by stimulating the hope and self-efficacy, and optimistic beliefs of employees through mastering experiences, creating positive emotional states by using constructive thought patterns (visualising successful performance and self-talk) and behavioural strategies (self-goal setting, self-reward, self-observation, and self-cueing). This can be done by coaching staff members through assisting them to set achievable goals, which facilitate hope and provide the necessary resources that will help them to accomplish the goals. It is therefore

recommended that organisations improve personal and job resources by mastering experiences or performance attainments, vicarious experiences or modelling, social persuasion, and physiological and psychological arousal (Snyder, 2000).

Based on the findings that hope is the highest predictor of work engagement, it is therefore recommended that when organisations are developing the psychological capacities as a way to boost work engagement, much focus should be on developing the hope component. This can be achieved by setting clear, practical, and challenging goals, which can be decomposed through the stepping method into manageable sub-steps that will mark progress, and create the direct experience; victories of small targets can increase the hope of achieving the ultimate goal (Guangyi & Shanshan, 2016). Employees should be encouraged to have clear cognition of strong motivation, which can reduce the risk of giving up goals when getting in trouble. Organisations should attempt to help employees develop at least one alternative or contingency pathway to their goal with an accompanying action plan (Luthans et al., 2006). Hope is also facilitated by providing supportive resources, such as funding, interaction, and sharing training to help employees overcome impediments and ultimately achieve goals (Tabaziba, 2015). Management could enhance engagement by coaching employees on setting goals, developing career plans, pointing out pitfalls, and giving advice where necessary (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006). Rehearsals and experiential training can strengthen re-goaling insight and skills, leading to the vigour component of work engagement.

The findings of this study show that there are moderate levels of PsyCap, job embeddedness, self-leadership, and work engagement. It is clear from the findings that PsyCap has the greatest contribution towards work engagement and since PsyCap is developable (Li, 2014) it can be intervened and used. To improve the levels of work engagement it is therefore recommended that managers focus firstly on developing psychological capacities. However, Gooty, Gavin, Johnson, Frazier and Snow (2009) suggest that when developing psychological capacities researchers should be cautious of the negative effects of psychological capital, such as being over-confident or overly

hopeful, which may be detrimental to employees who still need guidance. Tabaziba (2015) notes that an organisation that can figure out a means for increasing the presence of PsyCap and thrive at the individual level will generate benefit for the individual employee and improve organisational outcomes. Dahlgaard-Park (2012) also advises that if organisations make efforts to deepen their understanding of the inner needs of employees and incorporate the understanding into the organisational activities that will activate their human resources in terms of muscle, heart, brain, and spiritual dimensions, complete success is guaranteed. Utility analyses indicate that investing in the development of PsyCap can result in very substantial returns (Kalla, 2016). Kotze (2017) notes that if PsyCap plays such a key role in the relationship between personal and job resources and work outcomes, it is important to understand how these personal resources interact to produce work engagement. Since all these constructs are regarded as state-like and open to development, their sequential effect on work engagement may be significant (Malinowski & Lim, 2015).

In addition, it is also recommended that work engagement be promoted by enhancing the person-job fit, matching individual and organisational needs, developing training programmes targeting individual well-being, and self-leadership development that build a positive emotional climate in the workplace.

Based on the results, organisational links was found to be one of the predictors of work engagement. It is therefore important to consider job embeddedness and work engagement in view of the argument that employees have to be embedded before they are engaged (Takawira, 2015). Thus, embedded employees demonstrate increased work engagement. The study therefore recommends that the banking sector may provide supervisor support that gives guidelines, assistance, trust in, and praise for subordinates to help employees have strong links and to build their hope as a way of achieving work engagement. In addition, job resources with a positive impact, such as collegial support, social contact and personal growth may result in higher levels of vigour and dedication amongst employees (Van den Berg et al., 2008). Practical recommendations that can be used by organisations and which include socialisation

tactics, network groups, mentoring career needs for guidance, support, affirmation, and developing a sense of belonging, could actively embed employees in an effort to boost work engagement (Freidman & Holtom, 2002). In conclusion, since PsyCap was the highest contributor, it can be enhanced through task-mastery experiences, positive role modelling, goal setting, contingency planning, and social support activities (Luthans & Youssef 2007; Luthans et al., 2008). Managers responsible for developing employees would do well to incorporate such activities into their employee training and development initiatives.

Finally, based on the results that no significant differences were found in levels of work engagement with regards to age, it is clear from this study that the different ways to increase employee engagement in the banking sector should focus on the average employee, and not on age diversity. However, the aspect of age cannot be completely ignored; therefore, it is recommended that mentoring and coaching could be used to transfer knowledge from older employees to young employees as a way to ensure that both age groups remain productive and engaged in their work. This will also eliminate possible competition between different age groups.

9.5   Directions for future research

In light of the conclusions, limitations, and the recommendations as set out in the previous discussion, this section outlines the direction for future research. Firstly, in the limitation section, it was noted that the use of a cross-sectional design with all measures in the study being self-reports, made it difficult to draw conclusions on the causal nature of the relationships between variables. Therefore, instead of using the cross-sectional design, and though longitudinal studies have their own weaknesses, future research may consider using longitudinal designs to examine the same topic. As indicated earlier, the self-reporting used in the current study may have caused common method bias that may have inflated correlations between the variables. Future research could therefore consider using a two-wave study design as instructed by Conway and Lance (2010), to decrease common method bias. In addition, future studies should aim at combining self-report measures with other indicators of work engagement, PsyCap, self-leadership,

and job embeddedness. Secondly, the current study focused mainly on the banking sector and used a convenience-sampling procedure. This restricted generalisation, thus the findings can only be carefully generalised in the banking industry. Therefore, to get a broader understanding of the interaction between these variables, future research should consider replicating the same study in a different industry. In addition, future research may consider adopting a multi sample or use a probability sampling procedure that is more representative and will enable generalizability.

With reference to the findings, out of the three independent variables, the findings discovered that in the regression model, PsyCap had the highest contribution to work engagement because PsyCap is made up of a number of internal resources that are intrinsic motivators. On that note, future research may focus on further theory development that can be gained by analysing self-leadership strategies (constructive thought patterns, behavioural strategies and natural rewards) as additional internal resources that can be integrated with PsyCap dimensions to maximise intrinsic positive feelings and boost work engagement, as advised by Kotze (2017). In addition, considering that the psychological capacity hope was found to be the highest contributor to work engagement, followed by optimism, and then self-efficacy, future research needs to explore further ways that organisations can use to intervene when boosting realistic hope, optimism, and self-efficacy; thus positively impacting levels of work engagement for continued sustainable growth and performance. Although most of the research had established that PsyCap leads to better performance, work engagement and positive work attitudes, it is still necessary to analyse if better work outcomes lead to improvement in psychological capital as well (Sridevi & Srinivasan, 2012).

As indicated in the limitations discussed above, the current research focused on work engagement at individual level. However, future researchers should consider addressing the interventions on work engagement focusing on both individual level and the organisation at large. It is also crucial that research focuses on the mechanisms through which work engagement leads to favourable outcomes by getting insight in the processes that it initiates or is involved in (Bakker, 2017). This process, according to

Bakker and Demerouti (2008), will not only assist in achieving better performance, but also to increase chances for better career development. Based on Bakker's (2017) study, researchers may also focus on disentangling how different types of resources, such as job resources and personal resources, can develop over time. Engaging in proactive work behaviour might provide a fruitful topic for future research in work engagement.

In short, considering that the current study was cross-sectional and limited to a small sample of the banking sector employees, predominantly in one province, it is recommended that a longitudinal study addressing the same topic be conducted using a probability sampling procedure to confirm the research results and to achieve better generalizability of the findings. This study included only four constructs; future research could include more areas, especially addressing proactive behaviour such as mindfulness, job crafting, and stillness, which would provide valuable insight into positive emotions and how they influence work engagement.

9.6 Summary

This chapter discussed the conclusions drawn from the findings, and the limitations of the current study, focusing on both the literature review and the empirical study. These were considered in order to address those limitations. Recommendations for future research were provided with reference to practical suggestions on improving work engagement in the organisations. The chapter closes with directions for future research. In short, the following empirical research objectives were achieved:

Primary objective: To determine by means of non-experimental research design the effect of psychological capital, job embeddedness, and self-leadership on work engagement as manifested in a sample of participants employed in the Free State banking sector.

Secondary objective: To determine by means of a non-experimental research design whether differences exist in levels of work engagement among employees in the banking sector with regard to age groups.

*Third objective***:** To determine the levels of psychological capital, job embeddedness, and self-leadership among employees in the banking sector.

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