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Towards predicting employee turnover using a relational perspective: Adapting mixed-methods from marital research

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), for its genuine devotion to the creation of value for all humanity.

This devotion, along with the profound wisdom guiding SGI's operation, has enabled me not only to complete this journey, but to create endless value from it along the way, for myself, for those who were involved, and for all of humanity, in ways I may never know of.

May this thesis serve as another building-block in the eternal endeavour to *kosen-rufu*, which means 'world peace through individual happiness'.

Acknowledgments

The journey to complete a thesis can be anything between heaven and hell. Mine was amazingly close to heaven, and the main person to thank for that is my primary supervisor, Helen Hasan. Helen is a phenomenal supervisor, and the best way to illustrate her qualities is by recalling the cradle of science – alchemy. Back in the day, alchemist believed that gold is the purest form of matter, and that anything can be turned into gold, by combining it with one magical object – the philosophers' stone. Alchemists spent decades seeking this stone, and although their efforts eventually led to the modern science of Chemistry, they never found it.

I, however, was fortunate enough to be supervised by philosophers' stone of research. Helen's magical ability to turn anything in front of her into research "gold" never stops amazing me. Conversations with her always end with five main realisations:

1. I've done a good job so far
2. I know what to do next
3. I can do it
4. It will be beneficial
5. I'm gonna go and do it right now!

This ability to encourage, guide, and motivate is at the crux of her success as a research supervisor. I will forever be grateful for being exposed to such ability, and will endlessly aspire to reach it.

I am deeply grateful to both of my other supervisors, Andrew Sense and Cecile Paris, for all of their hard work, useful feedback, and valuable advice. Andrew's tireless ability to gain the endorsement of strong-minded listeners (like me) and his dedicated attention to detail, despite overwhelming duties, have been not only beneficial for my work, but also a source of great envy. This thesis and the publications completed along with it would have been of far inferior quality without Andrew's help.

I am also deeply thankful to Cecile's willingness to take me on board, considering how little we knew of each other, and for supporting and enabling so much of what I wanted to do during my candidature. One of the most meaningful experiences of my life, which involved a peace gathering of Israeli and Palestinian families in the West Bank, was only made possible because of Cecile's support to go to a conference in the area. That conference also provided me with encouraging and motivating feedback from scholars all over the world, propelling me forward to complete this thesis.

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Many academics say that a PhD is a lot like a baby, and having it alongside with my own babies was certainly a challenge. I will never thank Barbara Pietruszewski enough, for not only caring for my kids, but truly and genuinely being a part of the parental team. I know that Barbara has always had my girls' best interest on her mind, and I am very grateful that I have had her support along this journey. I feel that although my girls did not spend a lot of time with me, because of my work on my PhD, they did not miss out. They, in fact, benefited from the care and the nurturing of Barbara, who will forever be part of my family. I simply cannot imagine us without her.

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along it. Neither of my parents is wealthy, but they both always put me ahead of their own economic situation. They have given us generously for years, and never put pressure on me in terms of my progress. I hope that in time, I can support my children as well as they have supported me.

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I am also very grateful to both of my step-daughters, Ashley and Morgyn, for tolerating my self-involved endeavour, and for supporting me in their way. They, too, showed me consistently that the academic path is not the only valuable path of life, and helped me learn to balance my life, so that it is richer, fuller, and more enjoyable. Both of them always inspire me by showing me that there is more than just one walk of life, and prove to me that a PhD is not the centre of the universe. Oddly, that makes it easier to keep going.

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Abstract

Although workforce changes can have beneficial aspects, organisations with high turnover are significantly outperformed by rivals. Indeed, employee turnover can have adverse effects on both the employing organisation and the leaving employees. The extensive literature on turnover has identified many factors leading to unwanted employee turnover, however existing methods of predicting *if* and *when* turnover will occur rarely offer accuracy greater than 50%.

This study addresses the problem of employee turnover, by following an emerging direction in turnover research: that of viewing employment as a relationship between the employee and the organisation. Thus, theoretically, turnover is conceptualised as a breakdown in that relationship. Taking this theoretical direction invites the researcher to apply knowledge and methods used for predicting the breakdown of relationship types which are different to the employment. In particular,marital researchers have been able to diagnose the quality of a relationship between a married couple and predict not only *if* a couple will separate and divorce, but also *when* this separation will take place (i.e., within 7 or 14 years), with an astounding accuracy of over 90%.

The theoretical foundation for this research is social exchange theory (SET), which underlies employment as well as marital relationships, and the theory of marital affect balance, which enables the prediction of the future of marital relationships. This study develops and applies a suitable variant of the mixed-methods pertaining to the marital affect balance theory, to the employment setting. The study examines how well these methods help predict employee propensity for turnover, and other aspects of the employee's relationship with the organisation. The study involves 46 participants of two different professions (nurses and lawyers) from two different organisations. The study collects qualitative data, in the form of employees' stories about their organisations, aimingto diagnose the relationship between the

participants' and their organisations. The qualitative data are then processed, based on methods for predicting divorce, and produces two types of indicators: quantitative ratios and qualitative relational processes. These indicators are compared with survey data of job and workplace attitudes collected one year later from these study participants, and turnover behaviour identified two years later.

The study found that the methods used here predicted, to an extent, the future quality and status of the employee-organisation relationship. The interview-based ratios correlated with several relational constructs measured one year after the interview, which indicated the quality of the employee-organisation relationship. In addition, several qualitative relational processes were also significantly associated with turnover behaviour and the future quality of the employee-organisation relationship.

These results are meaningful to contribution to social exchange theory, and particularly, to the affect theory of social exchange, as the results indicate that employees have a relationship with their organisation, and that this relationship is similar in many ways to interpersonal relationships. A major similarity is the inferred existence of a mental image that a person forms of their relationship partner – be it a person or an organisation. This mental image of the partner can be tapped into by identifying indirect indicators, which also help predict the future of the relationship. The results also indicate that sustaining the quality and stability of this relationship requires a balance of positive to negative affect in these indicators. In the employment turnover field, this outcome reinforces the need for organisations' social support of their employees, as well as highlights the role of affective experiences and their impact on this mental image.

By taking a relational perspective on turnover, and adapting methods from marital research, this study also makes a significant methodological contribution to the studies of employee

turnover, to studies of relationships, and to the field of mixed methods. The implications of the outcomes of this study for industry practitioners concern the capability to diagnose the quality of employee-organisation relationships, detect employees' propensity to turnover, and identify actions for increasing employee retention, based on affective experiences.

Key words: employee-organisation relationship, employee turnover, mixed methods, mental images

Publications

Alony, I 2014. Attribution theory: untangling the relationship between management and workers. In HASAN, H. (ed.) *Being Practical with Theory: A Window into Business Research*. Wollongong, Australia: THEORI, pp.58-60.

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GLOSSARY

AFFECT

An overarching and superordinate category for all valence states of all affective experiences, such as emotions, attitudes, and moods.

AFFECT RATIO

A ratio calculated between the duration of positive affect and negative affect expressed in an interview (see formula and example in Section 4.3).

AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT (AC)

An employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organisation.

ATTRIBUTION, (or CAUSAL ATTIRUBTION)

An explanation constructed in an observer's mind for an observed behaviour.

ATTRIBUTION RATIO

A ratio calculated between the duration of enhancing and distressing attribution expressed in an interview (see formula and example in Section 4.3).

BURNOUT (BURN)

A combination of low energy (exhaustion) and low identification (cynicism); whereas work engagement is characterised by the opposite: a combination of high energy (vigour) and high identification (dedication).

CONTINUOUS COMMITMENT (CC)

Commitment based on the costs that employees associate with leaving the organisation.

DISTRESSING ATTRIBUTION

Attribution which indicates a negative view of the relationship partner. For example, attributing the hurtful behaviour of the partner to their enduring characteristics.

EMOTION

A response to a stimulus which begins with an appraisal of its personal significance, and results in a temporary subjective experienceof affective, physiological, and/or behavioural nature.

ENGAGEMENT

See "Work engagement".

ENHANCING ATTRIBUTION

Attribution which indicates a positive view of the relationship partner. For example, attributing the hurtful behaviour of the partner to external causes.

INTENTION TO QUIT (INT)

Intentions to leave the organisation within 12 months.

MARITAL AFFECT BALANCE THEORY

A theory of marital stability and quality (in terms of happiness and satisfaction) based on a balance of positive and negative affect. This theory posits that marital stability and quality rely on a balance of positive and negative affect experienced in the relationship. This balance is regulated by marital interactions and partners' behaviours.

MENTAL IMAGE

A view one partner constructs of another based on their interactions in the relationship and observations of their partner.

NEARLY SIGNIFICANT CORRELATION

Correlations with a confidence level of over 90%. This means that there is a 90% chance that the correlation did not occur by chance, but because the two constructs are related.

NORMATIVE COMMITMENT (NC)

Employees' feelings of obligation to remain with the organisation.

OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION (OJS)

An affective-laden construct which reflects the favourableness of job conditions.

PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT (POS)

The global beliefs developed by employees concerning the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cared about their wellbeing.

RELATIONSHIP QUALITY

The levels of happiness with, satisfaction, commitment, and intentions to remain in a relationship.

RQ

Research question.

SIGNIFICANT CORRELATION

Correlations with a confidence level of over 95%. This means that there is a 95% chance that the correlation did not occur by chance, but because the two constructs are related.

SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY (SET)

A theory underlying human relationships. Emphasises the importance of social exchange for the successful sustainability of relationships, and posits that, mainly in employment setting, social exchange has potential to generate high quality relationships through interdependent interactions. SET is also a theory commonly underlying marital relationships.

WE-NESS RATIO

A ratio calculated between the duration of expressions of unity and identification with one's partner (e.g., "we are good at this"), and expressions of individualism and separateness from one's partner (e.g., "I personally am good at this"), expressed in an interview (see formula and example in Section 4.3)

WORK ENGAGEMENT (ENGA)

Reflects an individual's involvement and satisfaction with, as well as enthusiasm for work, and a persistent, positive affective-motivational state of fulfilment.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Employee turnover can have adverse effects on both the employing organisation and the employees who leave(Holtom et al. 2008). The extensive literature on turnover has identified many factors leading to unwanted employee turnover, and this literature also reports that existing methods of predicting turnover have limited success (Holtom et al. 2008; Steel & Lounsbury 2009). This limited predictive capability indicates deficiencies in underlying theories of employee turnover(Holtom et al. 2008), which signals an opportunity for research(Alony, Hasan & Sense 2014b).

Responding to this opportunity, this study explores a novel approach to employment and turnover. It approaches the problem of employee turnover by viewing employment as a relationship between the employee and their organisation, and turnover as a breakdown in this relationship, leading to a separation between the parties. Thus, a major purpose of this study is to examine the usefulness and practicality of this relationship perspective to employee turnover. The study, therefore, is not confirmatory in nature, but opens up directions of inquiry for future research along its approach. Its contributions offer methodological advances of examining turnover, theoretical outcomes from such methodological advances, and practical implications resulting from them.

In pursuit of this approach, a method for diagnosing marital relationships, which has also been shown to successfully predict divorce (Gottman 2014b), was adapted and applied to diagnosing and predicting the future of the employee-organisation relationships in two case organisations. Furthermore, although not often used in turnover research (Alony, Hasan & Sense 2014a), and consistent with the marital relationship diagnosis method, this study adopts a mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis. The study is designed to apply qualitative methods of identifying indicators which are associated with the quality of the

relationship and quantitative methods that compare tendencies towards turnover behaviour over a period of time after the diagnosis. The motivation, purpose, aims, and design of this study are summarised in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 **Summary of motivations, purpose, aim, and study design**	
Motivations	
(i)	Address the adverse effects of employee turnover on organisations and employees who leave,
(ii)	Advance the understanding of employment as a relationship, and
(iii)	Demonstrate a novel method of diagnosis of that relationship that may be used to improve it.
Purpose	
To examine the usefulness and practicality of a relationship perspective to employee turnover research and practice, by engaging a marital diagnosis method, adapted to suit the employment setting. .	
Specific Aims	
(i)	Examine the utility, benefits, and drawbacks of methods used in marital research for diagnosing employee-organisation relationships
(ii)	Determine whether an adapted marital diagnosis method helps predict the future of employee-organisation relationships
Design	
A longitudinal mixed-method approach is adopted to investigate the quality of the employee-organisation relationship in two case organisations, in a longitudinal study. A qualitative approach is used to collect data, which are then converted into indicators that differentiate between employees who have a better relationship with the organisation from those who have a worse one The value of these indicators is compared with quantitative data which are collected to determine potential turnover behaviour at subsequent time intervals	

The findings resulting from this study make important contributions to theory, methodology, and practice. The findings contribute to theories of employment and employee turnover, as well as human relationships. These contributions also offer methodological advances, which are based on the benefits of the methods used in this study. Finally, this research makes a contribution to practitioners, by providing tools that management could use to diagnose

potential problems and so put in place programs to improve the relationships of employees and their organisations, and hence to reduce employee turnover.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, a general background to the research topic, which is employee turnover, is provided. Then, the deficiencies in extant turnover literature, mainly concerning its prediction, are highlighted. The gap in knowledge in turnover literature is then identified, followed by the identification of this study's research questions. A delineation of the scope of this researchis presented thereafter. The chapter concludes with a description of the structure of this thesis.

1.1. Background – the adverse effects of employee turnover

Regardless of the state of a nation's economy and other environmental drivers, employee turnover has been, and will remain, a problem of great concern to organisations (Mowday 1984; Weisberg & Kirschenbaum 1991; Lee & Rwigema 2005; Holtom et al. 2008; Steel & Lounsbury 2009; Hom et al. 2012). This problem is associated with significant disruptions to optimum organisational function, as well as major costs (Wöcke & Heymann 2012). While reports of downsizing frequently make news headlines, it is voluntary turnover which entails larger concerns and problems for organisations (Yanadori & Kato 2007; Reiche 2009). Despite some beneficial aspects of employee turnover (Siebert & Zubanov 2009; Yurchisin & Park 2010), organisations with high turnover are significantly outperformed by rivals (Hatch & Dyer 2004), in terms of business efficiency (Morrow & McElroy 2007), service quality (Hausknecht, Trevor & Howard 2009), productivity (Kacmar et al. 2006; Siebert & Zubanov 2009), economic performance (Glebbeek & Bax 2004) and workforce performance (Shaw, Gupta & Delery 2005). Employee turnover impedes organisational learning, and causes the loss of social capital, which, unlike explicit knowledge, cannot be easily backed up (Shaw et al. 2005). Even when downsizing is initiated by the organisation, it can lead to voluntary

turnover, which reduces the efforts directed towards organisational improvements (Trevor & Nyberg 2008). These adverse consequences of turnover have drawn persistent attention to the phenomenon for over half a century.

In addition to the impact of turnover on organisational function, it also involves major costs (Vaiman 2008). These costs are hard to estimate, as they include multiple facets, both direct, such as costs of recruitment, selection, temporary staffing and training, and indirect, such as potential loss of valuable knowledge, skills, and organisational memory – which remain a critical issue for contemporary organisations (Griffeth & Hom 2001). Tangible economic costs associated with turnover have been estimated to range from US$10,000 per employee (for about half the positions in the US) to over US$100,000 per middle manager (Vaiman 2008), which is a significant expense. Therefore, it can be concluded that voluntary turnover is generally not a desirable phenomenon in organisations.

In addition to the adverse effects of turnover on organisations, it can also present negative impacts on the leaving employee. Finding a new job and adjusting to new situations requires significant energy (Holtom et al. 2008), and the loss of routines and interpersonal connections from the abandoned workplace can be very stressful (Boswell, Boudreau & Tichy 2005). Thus, the topic of turnover is clearly relevant to managers, researchers and individuals(Zedeck & Mosier 1990).

To researchers and practitioners who either examine or directly contend with voluntary employee turnover, it may appear that employee turnover mostly depends on economic conditions, and the availability of other jobs. Evidence does not support this view, however. Rates of unemployment, indicating unavailability of jobs, do not affect the actual turnover of individuals (Carsten & Spector 1987). Furthermore, turnover varies across industries and organisations. For example, through the years 2001-2006 (Holtom et al. 2008), turnover rates

in the accommodation and food industry in the US were as high as 50%, whereas in the education industry they were around 10% (Figure 1.1). Lawyers, for example, have been identified as professionals whose propensity to leave is significantly high compared with other professional (Mazares 2001; Carmeli & Weisberg 2006). The impact of turnover also varies across industries. Voluntary turnover of nurses can be particularly harmful to the units which they left, because their absence, until their positions are filled, increases the pressure on the remaining nurses (McClure & Hinshaw 2002). In addition, nursing turnover is associated with negative impact on general patient outcomes, as well as negative economic impact at the organisational and even a country level (Hayes et al. 2006).

Even across organisations in the same industry, turnover rates vary greatly. This information suggests that while aggregated turnover rates do correlate with aggregated unemployment rates, individual voluntary turnover is driven by more than this aggregated factor.

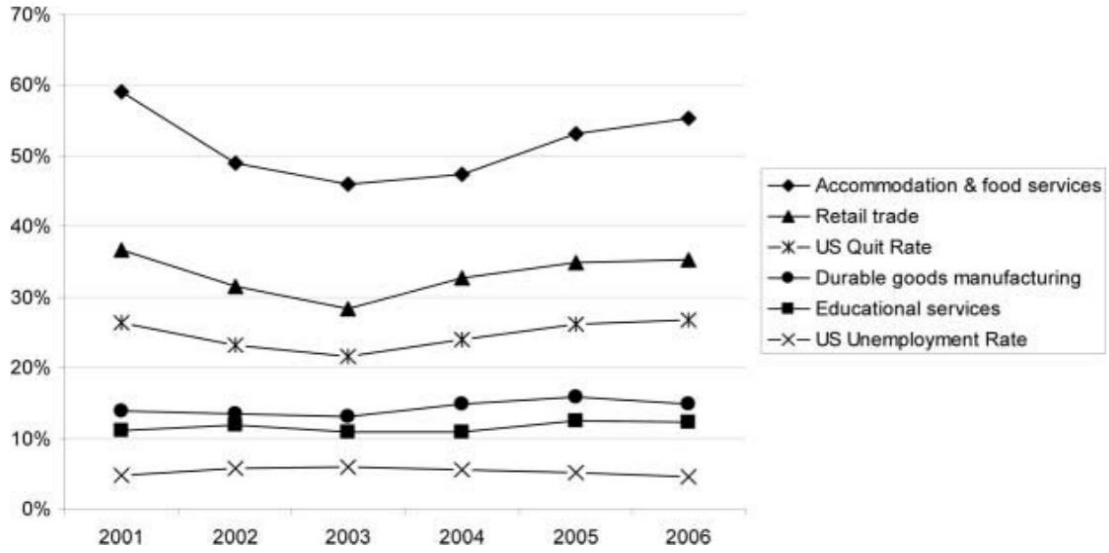

Figure 1.1 - US unemployment and quit rates (2001–2006)

Note: Quit rates are for the private sector only, not seasonally adjusted; Source: (Holtom et al. 2008), based on US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey.

One needs to also acknowledge that turnover can be useful to the organisation, as well as the employee. For example, Siebert and Zubanov (2009) found that too little turnover in retail stores results in lower labour productivity. As for employees,there have long been evidence that leaving a job brings opportunities for beneficial outcomes (Young 1991). Moreover, all turnover is not equal: the turnover of some employees is more preventable than others, and organisations' desire to retain some employees is greater than the desire to retain others. Some leave for reasons which are irrelevant to their employment situation, due to other events in life (Barrick & Zimmerman 2005), and their attitudes are similar to those who stay (Abelson 1987; Hom & Griffeth 1995), suggesting that preventing this turnover may have not been possible. Attractive employees, in terms of ability, performance, and success, are believed to have more opportunities than others, and are thus more likely to leave (Trevor 2001). Therefore employers are more concerned with preventing the turnover of those who are attractive to the organisation, and encouraging the turnover of poor performers, be it among labourers(Shaw et al. 2009) or professionals (Holtom et al. 2008).

Organisations are also concerned with the problem of employee engagement (Saks 2006). Although employees may be physically affiliated with an organisation, they may be emotionally, mentally, or practically disengaged from the organisation's objectives or activities (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004). When this occurs, not only is the employee of low value to the organisation, they also actually have a negative effect on the performance and productivity of their peers (Saks 2006). Retaining an employee in itself, as well as maintaining their level of engagement in their work, is therefore also of great interest to an organisation.

1.2. A deficiency in turnover literature –prediction capability

Because of the importance of employee turnover to organisations and employees, the phenomenon has been extensively researched for decades (Hom, Griffeth & Sellaro 1984; Mowday 1984; Hom & Griffeth 1995; Steel 2002; Maertz & Griffeth 2004; Holtom et al. 2008; Steel & Lounsbury 2009). Despite this extensive research, however, there is a deficiency in underlying theories of voluntary turnover and the desired ability to help predict employee turnover remains limited. Addressing this deficiency enhances the understanding of voluntary turnover, not only in terms ofpredicting their separation from the organisation, but also in terms of understanding the processes that contribute to this separation. In addition, understanding the effect of such processes on employee-related outcomes, typically indicated by their job and workplace attitudes, can further guide organisations towards improving these outcomes.

In addition, by predicting turnover, organisations can instigate changes which will prevent voluntary turnover, and minimise its associated impact. Predictive tools are therefore of great value to organisations (Mano-Negrin & Kirschenbaum 1999; Benson 2006; Dysvik & Kuvaas 2010; Brunetto et al. 2012). Companies which are able to better predict turnover with a high level of certainty are able to leverage contingencies through the timely employment of replacement staff (Dess & Jason 2001), by cross-training of other staff (Knox & Walsh 2005; Fang 2009), by establishing knowledge sharing processes (Jacobs & Roodt 2011), and by introducing changes to the organisation to increase retention (Mowday 1984). Conversely, the ability to predict a specific employee's turnover can have ethical implications. Organisations could make decisions related to matters such as promotion, training, or remuneration, based on turnover likelihood. The legitimacy and ethics of such

decision criteria would require a deeper investigation, which is beyond the scope of this work.

Despite the many years of prolific research into employee turnover, and recent research into employee engagement, knowledge of these constructs is not sufficient for accurate prediction of employee turnover. Although scholars generally agree on the various factors that lead to voluntary turnover(Maertz & Griffeth 2004; Allen et al. 2007), their current ability to predict such turnover is far from impressive. Voluminous research describes the factors that push employees to voluntarily leave organisations (e.g. job dissatisfaction), factors that pull employees away from organisations (e.g., alternative job opportunities), and the processes by which individuals make turnover decisions (Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner 2000). However, the ability to explain and predict individual voluntary turnover decisions remains limited. Most prediction methods rely on self-reported answers and offer modest accuracy. For example, meta-analyses of over 70 different turnover studies found that attitudes typically only explain around 5% of turnover variance (Hom & Griffeth 1995; Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner 2000; Allen et al. 2007). This means that some employees who are satisfied with their jobs separate from their employing organisations, while many who are dissatisfied stay. Similarly, in these meta-analyses, intentions to quit rarely explained more than 15%, which means that even the majority of employees who report intending to quit their jobs do not actually do so (Hom & Griffeth 1995; Griffeth, Hom et al. 2000; Allen, Renn et al. 2007). Generally, success at predicting employee turnover revolves around 25% (Steel & Lounsbury 2009). These limitations of existing prediction methods indicate that no overarching theory offers a satisfactory explanation and description of voluntary turnover. This body of knowledge thus offers modest benefits, if any, to organisations.

1.3. A knowledge gap in the turnover literature – a relational view of employment

After decades of research, a vast number of factors which lead to employee turnover have been identified, and can be divided into the following categories: organisational, individual, and recently – the emergent relational category, which focuses on the employees' relationships. Despite a growing number of evidence of the relational perspective to employee retention, it rarelyviews turnover as a breakdown in the relationship between the employee and the organisation. This gap leads to the general research question of this study:

General Research Question

What are the benefits of viewing turnover as a breakdown in a relationship between the employee and the organisation?

This relational view of employment is supported by three main issues identified in literature. One is the importance of relationships. Interpersonal relationships, as well as relationships with institutions, have been identified as promising factors for increasing employee retention (Mitchell et al. 2001; Lee et al. 2004; Sias et al. 2004; Sacco & Schmitt 2005). This is consistent with the view of social exchange theory (SET), which highlights the importance of social interactions for building mutual, loyal, and trusting relationships between employees and members of their organisation (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005). These relationships, in turn, benefit the organisation and the employee, as a result of sustaining the relationships, and their quality (Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002).

The second issue identified in a review of turnover literature is the role that 'affect' (that is, emotions, attitudes, and moods) plays in sustaining the employee-organisation relationship, and its quality. A review of process models of turnover identified affective

mechanisms, namely, *job attitudes* and *morale*, being an important part of turnover decisions(Steel & Lounsbury 2009). A decision to leave is initiated when job attitudes (particularly job satisfaction and organisational commitment) and/or employee morale are low (Mowday, Porter & Steers 1982; Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner 2000). This isconsistent with studies of turnover based on the affective theory of social exchange (Lawler 2001), indicating that affect is a relevant issue when studying turnover.

Finally, turnover studies bring forth the importance of employees' perceptions of their organisations, and their effect on turnover (Colquitt et al. 2001; Clarke 2007; Kuvaas 2008; Guchait & Cho 2010). The mere practices of an organisation are only as effective at increasing employee retention as the perceptions in which they result. This importance is brought forth in studies of employee turnover taking an organisational perspective, showing that the implementation of organisational practices is as important as the perception, if not more so. This matter is discussed in detail in Section 2.1.2.

As a result of this evidence, this study takes the view that employment is a relationship between the employee and the organisation. The next chapter will further examine the two phenomena (employment and interpersonal relationships), and will identify several parallels between the two. These parallels serve to justify the treatment of employment as an interpersonal relationship.

Among interpersonal relationships, a great deal of attention has been devoted to the understanding of, and particularly to the prediction of the dissolution of, marital relationships. Both phenomena (employment and marriage) share a common theoretical foundation – social exchange theory (SET) (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005; Rodrigues, Hall & Fincham 2006). This theory highlights the role of social interactions over time in building mutual trusting and loyal relationships. The role of affect as the sustaining force of the marital relationship is

evident (Gottman 1994c; Gottman 2014b), and its importance has been demonstrated in organisational studies based on affective events theory (AET), which showed how affect experienced at work affects work outcomes such as productivity and satisfaction(Weiss & Cropanzano 1996; Ashkanasy 2002). Other similarities in the breakdown in marital relationships and employment concern the barriers to such breakdown(Bentein et al. 2005; Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2005; Rodrigues, Hall & Fincham 2006; Campbell & Wright 2010), and similarities in patterns over time (Boswell, Boudreau & Tichy 2005; Regan 2011). That is, in both relationships, various forms of commitment and constraints (such as social expectations) function as barriers to one's decision to leave, and in both relationship types, similar patterns have been identified of satisfaction over time. These points are discussed in more depth in Section 2.3.2.

There are, of course, many differences between the two phenomena. However, a detailed comparison between these relationships is not relevant to the motivation for this study, which is to enhance the understanding of employee turnover.

In having outlined the similarities between marital and employee-organisation relationships, it is valuable to now examine how marital relationships are diagnosed, and how their breakdowns are predicted. The next section turns to the diagnosis of marital relationships.

1.4. Research questions: how to diagnose relationships

By using storytelling methods and by analysing affective elements present in these stories, marital researchers have been able to diagnose the quality of a relationship of married couples and predict not only *if* a couple will separate and divorce, but also *when* this separation will take place (i.e., within 7 or 14 years)[1], with an astounding accuracy of over 90% (Gottman &Notarius 2000; Gottman & Notarius 2002). The methods are predicated on the view that a

[1] Prediction of divorce ranged from three to 14 years. It was possible, however, to differentiate those who divorced earlier (i.e., within 7 years) from those whose divorce took longer (i.e., between 7 and 14 years).

spouse constructs a mental image of their partner, which simultaneously guides their actions towards, and their interpretation of the actions of, the partner (Bradbury & Fincham 1987; Bradbury & Fincham 1990). This work has resulted in a theory of marital affect balance (Gottman 2014b), which identifies quantitative and qualitative elements in the marital relationship for diagnosing its quality, and to predicting its breakdown (Gottman 1993; Gottman et al. 1998b). Sustaining marital relationships and their quality relies on a balance of positive and negative affect experienced in the relationship (Gottman 1993; Gottman 2014b). The quantitative ratio between positive and negative affect has successfully predicted the future of marital relationships, where a lower ratio predicted divorce and dissatisfaction, and higher ratio predicted the sustainability of the marriage and satisfaction of the couple.

This quantitative balance is regulated by marital interactions and partners' behaviours. That is, partners' behaviours result in either positive or negative affect, which accumulates over time. However, research discovered that not all negative affect has the same effect on the quality of marriage (Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992; Buehlman, Carrere & Siler 2005; Gottman 2014b). Some of these behaviours, and the relational processes which they lead to, have been identified as particularly harmful to the relationship. Those behaviours, and the relational processes resulting from them, have successfully predicted if and when a couple will divorce, thus serving as qualitative predictors of divorce. These processes are discussed in more detail in Section 2.5.

A preliminary examination has shown that similar processes and displays of affect exist when employees are asked to discuss their organisation(Alony, Hasan & Sense 2014b). Following this initial investigation, this thesis examines if such quantitative and qualitative indicators, which have successfully predicted divorce, are beneficial for predicting employee voluntary turnover, and the future of the employee-organisation relationship. This results in the first

research question of this study, and two sub-research questions derived from it. All research questions are summarised in Table 1.2.

> ***RQ1****: How useful are methods for diagnosing marital relationships in diagnosing employee-organisation relationships?*
>
> ***RQ1a****: How do interview-based ratios compare with the future of participants' relationships with their organisation?*
>
> ***RQ1b****: How do the qualitative relational processes displayed by participants compare with the future of their relationship with their organisation?*

The findings resulting from addressing RQ1 contribute to employment literature. This leads onto the second research question:

> ***RQ2****: How do the products of the diagnosis of employee-organisation relationships compare with relevant employment literature?*

The final research question addresses the differences identified in results from this research of employment and results in marital research.

> ***RQ3****: How* do results of this study compare with results in marital research*?*

Table 1.2 Summary of research questions	
General Research Question	**What are the benefits of viewing turnover as a breakdown in a relationship between the employee and the organisation?**
Research Question 1	How useful are methods for diagnosing marital relationships in diagnosing employee-organisation relationships?
RQ 1a	How do interview-based ratios compare with the future of participants' relationships with their organisation?
RQ 1b	How do the qualitative relational processes displayed by participants compare with the future of their relationship with their organisation?
Research Question 2	How do the products of the diagnosis of employee-organisation relationships compare with relevant employment literature?
Research Question 3	How do results of this study compare with results in marital research?

1.5. Research design

This study uses a mixed-methods, longitudinal, between-subject design. It collects qualitative data, based on methods used in marital research, for the purpose of diagnosing the relationship between the participants and their organisations. The qualitative data are then processed, based on methods used in predicting divorce, and produces two types of indicators: quantitative and qualitative.

One year later, quantitative survey data are collected, based on turnover literature, which evaluates the participants' relationship with their organisation one year after it was diagnosed. In addition, turnover behaviour is recorded two years after the diagnosis.

The indicators which resulted from the diagnosis are then compared with quantitative survey scores of participants' job and workplace attitudes collected one year later, and turnover behaviour identified within two years. In addition to the indicators of the future of the relationship between the employee and the organisation, this study also examines differences between participants based on the following demographic attributes - employment tenure, position, and gender. Difference in employment tenure was examined because of the expected duration necessary for developing a consistent mental image of the organisation. Position differences (managerial or non-managerial) were examined because of expected differences in expressions of views about the organisation, and gender differences were examined because of potential differences in expressions of affect (Lutz 1996).

1.6. Scope delineation

Turnover is a complex topic, which despite decades of research, has many unresolved questions(Holtom et al. 2008; Steel & Lounsbury 2009). It is therefore beneficial, for the purpose of clarity, to identify and clearly delineate the scope of this study. This scope is

limited by the exploratory nature of the research, the time-frame it involves, and the type of research subjects it seeks.

This study is exploratory, as opposed to confirmatory. Although it involves quantitative elements, greater attention is devoted to the collection, coding, and analysis of qualitative research. In addition, the quantitative elements of this study are used to explore the concepts of employee-organisation relationships, rather than determine or confirm their predictiveness of such relationships. This issue is discussed in more detail in Section 3.1.4.

The exploration of indicators of employee turnover in this study extends to a limited time-frame. This study seeks indicators which identify turnover within two years, and not beyond that. This delineation of the scope is driven by the practical need of practitioners to identify turnover within a timeframe which is useful. This matter is further discussed in Section 3.3.3.

In terms of research subjects, as discussed in the introduction in Section 1.1, all turnover is not equal. Some groups' turnover involves specific conditions not transferrable to other groups, such as senior executives and managers, employees on foreign assignments, and returning expatriates(Holtom et al. 2008). These groups are not considered in this study. Furthermore, this study does not focus on early turnover, that is, of employees who only have recently joined their organisation (in this study, less than one year). Instead, it examines employees who have had time to develop a relationship with the organisation. This matter is discussed in detail in Section 3.3.2. Furthermore, the study only examines turnover of legal and nursing professionals, therefore its findings may not be generalizable to untrained employees, or trade professionals. Nonetheless, there is a reasonable expectation that the results would be rather similar for other professionals, such as IT graduates, social works, or engineers.

The scope of this study is also limited in terms of what aspects of the employee-organisation relationship it includes. As discussed in detail in Section 3.5, this study includes several constructs the scores of these indicate the quality of this relationship;not all constructs identified in literature can be included.

1.7. Thesis structure

This thesis is structured as follows. The next chapter examines literature relevant to this study. It begins by examining turnover literature, continues by examining literature on interpersonal relationships, and devotes special attention to marital relationships. The chapter then concludes with a conceptual view of and practical guidelines for diagnosing the employee-organisation relationship.

Then, Chapter 3 addresses the methodology used in this study. The chapter describes the research design: a mixed-methods, longitudinal, between-subjects design. It then provides a description of the process of diagnosing the employee-organisation relationship, using an interview-based method which is adapted from marital research. The chapter then describes how the quality of the employee-organisation relationship is evaluated after a period of time using surveys. The chapter also describes the plan for analysing the results produced by the methods deployed.

Following the methodology, Chapter 4 describes the technical and practical aspects of the data collection and coding of the qualitative interview data. The chapter also demonstrates the practical aspects of the conversion of the qualitative data to a quantitative form.

Then, Chapter 5 presents the results of this study. The chapter begins by presenting the descriptive statistics of the quantitative variables used in this study, both dependent and independent. It then describes the correlations resulting from comparing the independent quantitative variables, which resulted from converting qualitative interview data, and

dependent variables, which resulted from survey scores. The chapter then compares qualitative results, in the form of relational processes, to the quantitative results obtained by the surveys.

The next chapter, Chapter 6, interprets the result presented in Chapter 5, and explains how they address the research questions. It also identifies the contribution made by the findings to theoretical, practical, and methodological knowledge.

Finally, the thesis concludes with Chapter 7, which highlights the main points contributed by this thesis to research, practice, and methodological knowledge. The chapter also describes the limitations of this study, and suggests further research based on these limitations, and on the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW: EMPLOYEE TURNOVER AND RELEVANT THEORIES

Chapter 1 positioned the research presented in this thesis in the fields of employment and organisational studies, addressing the specific topic of employee turnover. Granted, there are recognised benefits for people changing employment (Siebert & Zubanov 2009; Yurchisin & Park 2010). However, this thesis is motivated by the adverse effects of employee turnover on organisations and the employees who leave, which are therefore undesirable (Holtom et al. 2008).

Researchers have mainly focused on *voluntary* turnover, perceiving it to be the form less controllable by organisations, and thus of greater interest to practitioners than organisation-initiated layoffs (Holtom et al. 2008). Voluntary turnover is associated with the uncontrollable loss of talent, knowledge, and other resources, which eventually result in a negative impact on organisational performance (Shaw, Gupta & Delery 2005; Ulrich & Smallwood 2005). This thesis therefore focuses on *voluntary* turnover, and refers to it with the term 'turnover', unless otherwise explicitly specified.

Despite ample research efforts to predict turnover, the ability to do so is far from satisfactory for researchers and practitioners (Maertz & Griffeth 2004; Holtom et al. 2008; Steel & Lounsbury 2009). This weakness of turnover literature is the gap motivating this study to enhance the understanding of employee turnover. The studyaims to determine whether marital methods predict the future of employee-organisation relationships. For this aim, the study establishes a conceptual view of employment as a relationship between the employee and the organisation, and a view of turnover as a breakdown in this

relationship.Based on this conceptual view of turnover, this study draws on literature on other forms of relationships, namely, interpersonal relationships, and particularly, on literature concerning marital relationships, because of the value it can offer in terms of predicting the breakdown of relationships (Gottman & Notarius 2002; Gottman 2014b).

A general conceptual and structural view of this chapter in terms of the literature fields and theories it covers, and the gap it addresses, is illustrated in Figure 2.1. Section 2.1 reviews extant literature on turnover, with the aim of understanding the phenomenon, the factors which affect it, the processes it undergoes, and current knowledge in this field. The section presents multiple evidence that employment can be viewed as a relationship between employees and their organisation, and that turnover can be viewed as a breakdown in this relationship. Based on three recent reviews of this topic conducted by prominent field experts (that is, Holtom et al. 2008; Steel & Lounsbury 2009; Hom et al. 2012), as well as recent findings identified in literature, the review identifies three main issues which are relevant to employee turnover: relationships, affect, and perceptions.

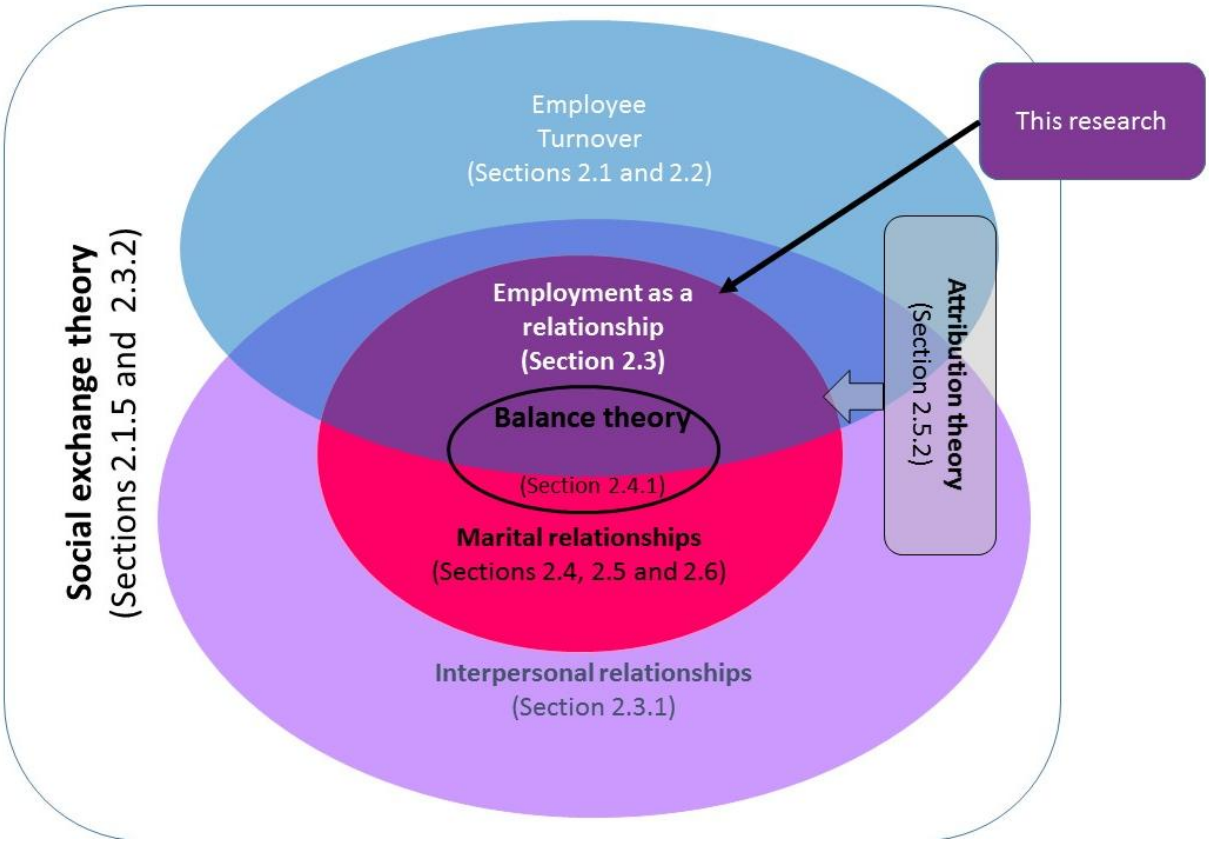

Figure 2.1 - A conceptual view of Chapter 2 (fields, theories, and knowledge gap)

The weaknesses of turnover research field are then described in Section 2.2. Section 2.2 also discusses the poor ability of current turnover theories to predict turnover, and potential reasons for this deficiency. The discussion in this section highlights an opportunity to address this weakness by conceptualising employment as a relationship between the employee and the organisation.

Led by this conceptualisation of employment as a relationship, in Section 2.3 the chapter examines characteristics which relationships, interpersonal relationships, and more specifically, marriage, have in common with employment. The motivation to establish these similarities of marriage and employment is the astounding success achieved by marital researchers in predicting the breakdown of marriage. Section 2.3.2 articulates a common underlying theoretical foundation of the two phenomena, marriage and employment, in the

form of social exchange theory (SET) and the importance of affect. In addition, the section identifies practical similarities empirically identified in the trajectory of both relationship types over time.

Drawing on of marital researchers'success at diagnosing relationships and predicting their breakdown requires an understanding of the theory underlying this ability to predict, that is, an understanding of the theory of marital affect balance. This theory, the approaches used to predict divorce, and criticisms, are covered next in Section 2.4. Section 2.5 then describes the qualitative indicators identified as predictors of divorce, along with another important theory for explaining and predicting human behaviour, particularly in the field of relationships – attribution theory (Section 2.5.2). This theory is described, and its relevance to the diagnosis of relationships is explained.

After both theories underlying diagnosis of relationships (marital affect balance theory and attribution theory) are explained, criticisms of divorce prediction research based on these theories are presented in Section 2.6. Chapter 2 concludes by highlighting the key aspects it covered, which guide this research.

2.1 Main perspectives in turnover studies

Recently, prominent turnover experts have published reviews of the turnover field from different perspectives. Holtom et al. (2008) published a general review of all literature since the 1980's, and trends identified. Steel and Lounsbury (2009) published a review of turnover process models, and Hom et al. (2012) published a review of turnover identifying conceptual problems with the construct. These reviews cover most of the extant turnover literature and provide a comprehensive view of the phenomenon. This section integrates current turnover literature with these reviews to examine this issue in depth. The outline of this section and its main components are illustrated in Figure 2.2.

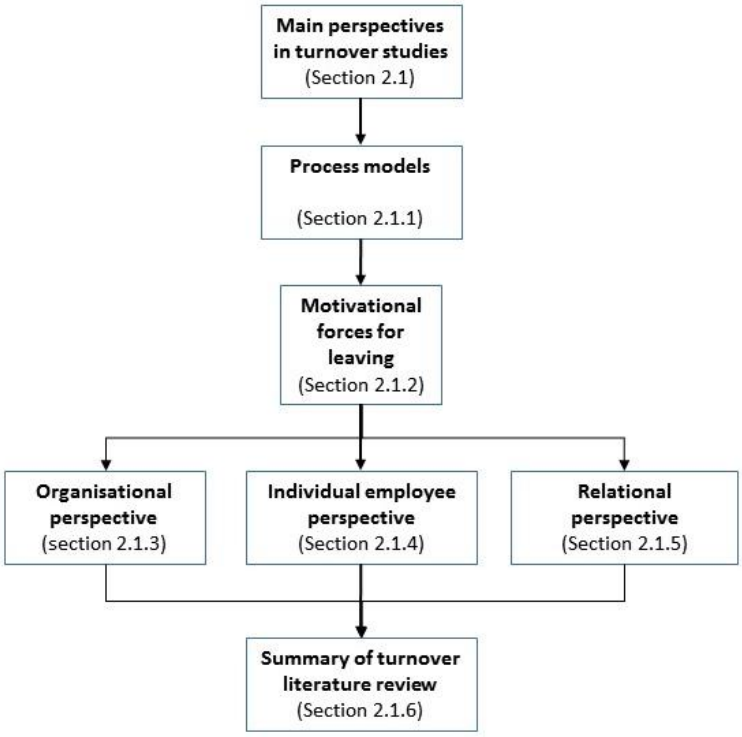

Figure 2.2– Turnover literature review outline

Besides the *sustainability* of the relationship between the employee and the organisation (i.e., if the employee stays or leaves), the *quality* of the employee-organisation relationship, in terms of employees' willingness or reluctance to stay, has been considered as well in studies of voluntary employee turnover (Hom et al. 2012). These two aspects of the employee-organisation relationship, sustainability and quality, are of importance to both relationship parties, since reluctant employment may be as negative for both parties as a separation, if not more so (Ostroff 1992). For example, an employee who stays reluctantly may engage in withdrawal behaviours such as tardiness, absenteeism, and retirement (Hulin 1991), which effect their performance and their colleagues.

Two basic factors have been the foundation of the understanding of voluntary employee turnover: the affect-laden desirability of people's current work (or their job satisfaction) as

the underlying force for staying, and the perceived alternatives, or ease of leaving, as the factor driving separation from the organisation (March & Simon 1958). Affect, expectedly, plays an obvious role in turnover, and this role was recognised from the early model of turnover (Holtom et al. 2008).

The definitions of affect vary among researchers (see for example Kleinginna Jr & Kleinginna 1981; Russell & Barrett 1999; Cowie & Cornelius 2003). However, affective science has increasingly moved towards a standardised nomenclature (Rottenberg & Gross 2003). In this nomenclature, *affect* is defined as an overarching and superordinate category for all valence states (Scherer 1984). This category includes all affective experiences, such as emotions, attitudes, and moods (Russell & Barrett 1999; Rottenberg & Gross 2003). This inclusive definition of affect suits the exploratory nature of this study, and is therefore the one used throughout this thesis.*Emotion* in this thesis refers to the temporary subjective experience resulting from a person's appraisal of a stimulus, often accompanied by physiological and behavioural response (Mauss & Robinson 2009).

Building on the early model of employee turnover developed more than half a century ago (March & Simon 1958), research on employee turnover has resulted in a much deeper and broader understanding of this complex issue (Holtom et al. 2008). The rest of this section provides a comprehensive review of this understanding. First, Section 2.1.1 reviews prominent models describing the processes of employee turnover. The forces which lead employees to consider leaving, and to actually leave their organisations are reviewed next, in Section 2.1.2. Recently, a comprehensive framework for motivational forces for turnover has been developed, which integrates most known factors which influence turnover(see Maertz & Griffeth 2004). This framework summarises the mechanisms which mediate factors prompting employees to leave, and their process of leaving.

Following a review of the forces which mediate factors causing turnover, the factors prompting turnover are reviewed. Many antecedents of turnover and factors which influence the underlying forces for turnover have been identified. These factors and antecedents can be grouped into three main categories: organisational, individual, and in recent years, a trend acknowledging the importance of relational aspects for the employee-organisation relationship quality and sustainability has emerged. These factors and antecedents are presented in Sections 2.1.3, 2.1.4 and 2.1.5, respectively.

Finally, Section 2.1 concludes with a summary in Section 2.1.6, which highlights the important aspects identified in this review. These aspects, which are consistently referred to throughout this thesis, are the importance of relationships, affect, and employee perceptions.

2.1.1. Process models

The process of employee turnover has been studied since the 1950s (Steel & Lounsbury 2009) and has resulted in various models. One of the most recent and prominent models is the unfolding model of turnover (Mitchell & Lee 2001), which describes five different paths of employee turnover. Three of these paths are preceded by an unexpected event, or "shock", (Mitchell & Lee 2001, p. 200), whereas the fourth and fifth paths are "affect-initiated", driven by employee dissatisfaction. Some paths involve a job search in attempt to secure alternative employment, whereas other paths involve no such search, and are a result of an immediate decision to quit.

Empirical testing of the unfolding model of turnover revealed national differences between the commonly studied US-based workforce and UK workers. In a study of US job leavers, most (over 90%) subscribed to the model's decision paths (Holtom et al. 2005), of which, shock-induced paths accounted for about 60% of the cases. In a similar study among UK workers, however, although about 80% of the leavers subscribed to the model's decisions

paths, only about a third of those reported shock-induced decision paths (Morrell et al. 2008). This difference indicates that shocks, or unexpected events, drive about half of the employees' voluntary turnover in the US, but in the UK they drive less than 30% of it. The latter study concluded that the classifications of leavers suggested by the unfolding model of turnover required further refinements and changes.

A study integrating the unfolding model of turnover with job embeddedness (i.e., the extent of connections an employee has as part of their work) reveals the buffering role of these connections (Holtom & Inderrieden 2006). People who stayed in their workplace measured the highest levels of job embeddedness, and shock-induced leavers had the second highest levels. The lowest levels of job embeddedness were measured among other leavers (Holtom & Inderrieden 2006). These results indicate that extensive connections buffer against the effect of shock, and sustain retention, whereas less connections reduce employee reluctance to leave.

Another attempt to integrate turnover process models (*how* people quit) with turnover content models (*why* people quit) highlights the role of negative affect among some leavers (see Maertz & Campion 2004). People who left their jobs without a ready alternative reported higher levels of negative affect than those who left with other decision types (Maertz & Campion 2004), indicating that when negative affect is high enough, it overrides other considerations for remaining in a job. Contradictory indications of the role of affect in turnover emerge. On one hand, negative affect was found to significantly and positively relate to turnover intentions, in a meta-analysis of more than 200 studies (Thoresen et al. 2003). On the other hand, a study of about 200 individuals showed that positive affectivity makes people more likely to change jobs when they encounter dissatisfaction (Shaw 1999). Therefore, the role of positive – or negative – affect in turnover decisions and behaviour is somewhat inconclusive.

Descriptive studies of the process of turnover have resulted in a good understanding of its dynamics. The "honeymoon effect" of a new job was empirically established (Boswell, Boudreau & Tichy 2005), confirming common views that leavers have had lower levels of job satisfaction over their last year of employment, that a new job begins with a short period of greater job satisfaction, and these higher levels are tapered over time. For all employees (not only recently employed), changes in attitudes such as affective and normative commitment, as well as satisfaction and turnover intentions, predicted turnover over time (Bentein et al. 2005; Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2005). Withdrawal behaviours of dissatisfied employees also change and escalate over time. Turnover is often preceded by lateness, then absenteeism (Harrison, Newman & Roth 2006), indicating a cascading process of withdrawal.

Many studies have considered job search as a withdrawal behaviour which precedes voluntary employee turnover (for example, Bretz, Boudreau & Judge 1994; Allen et al. 2007; Holtom et al. 2008). Research shows, however, that the existence of an established employment alternative is not necessarily central to a decision to quit. Job searches, more often than not, are unsuccessful, and do not end with definitive viable employment options(Bretz, Boudreau & Judge 1994). Perceptions of available alternatives develop and change during the process of job search, as this search develops from being exploration-oriented, by becoming a more committed, into a results-oriented search (Steel 2002). Overall, descriptive studies of employee turnover identifiedchanges in perception of the job, workplace, and alternatives over time, which indicate that the relationship dissolution process is dynamic, and perhaps, evolutionary.

A detailed recent review of process turnover studies by Steel and Lounsbury (2009) has concluded that two affective mechanisms are an important part of turnover decisions: *job attitudes* and *morale* (Steel & Lounsbury 2009). These constructs are typically measured using self-reported surveys. Despite their importance, including these constructs in surveys

has not improved turnover prediction accuracy. Potential reasons for this are discussed in Section 2.2. Nonetheless, the importance of affect as an indicator of staff turnover, as well as the importance of affect as a balancing mechanism for staff retention, indicate that there is room to examine the role affective indicators play in predicting staff turnover.

The forces which lead employees to consider leaving and to actually leave their organisations have been recently integrated in a comprehensive framework (see Maertz & Griffeth 2004). This integrated framework summarises the mechanisms which mediate factors prompting employees to leave and their process of leaving. The forces and this framework are discussed next.

2.1.2. Motivational forces for leaving

The original conceptualisation of one's motivation to leave their workplace included two components: (1) the forces driving an employee out of their organisation, today mainly referred to as job dissatisfaction, and (2) the lack of forces tying the employee to their workplace (March & Simon 1958). This conceptualisation has been extended into eight motivational forces involved in the process of voluntary turnover (Maertz & Griffeth 2004): (1) affective, (2) calculative, (3) contractual, (4) behavioural, (5) alternative, (6) normative, (7) moral/ethical, and (8) constituent. Each of these motivational forces are further described in Table 2.1, to provide a broader understanding of the current view of employee motivation to quit. Some of these forces operate by driving the employee to leave the organisation, while others operate as barriers to such separation.

These forces, identified by Maertz & Griffeth (2004) and listed in Table 2.1, are not predictors of employee turnover, but causal mediators between causes for the separation and turnover intentions. One cause for turnover, or a factor leading to turnover, may operate through various motivational forces, as described in the following example: an employee

experiences work-life imbalance also experiences job dissatisfaction. This leads to a negative *affective* reaction towards their job and the organisation. In addition, the imbalance leads the employee to estimate their ability to meet the goal of a work-life balance in the current job/organisation, presenting a *calculative* force for turnover. Finally, if the imbalance means that the employee is unable to address the needs of their own life-partners (i.e., family or friends), this leads to a *normative* force to leave. Thus, one cause may operate through various motivational forces simultaneously. Furthermore, it is proposed that these eight motivational forces capture the operation of all causes for voluntary turnover. Preliminary tests of this model support the mediating role these forces play between antecedents of turnover intentions (such as satisfaction) and these intentions (Maertz Jr, Boyar & Pearson 2012).

Table 2.1
Forces and motivational mechanisms for voluntary staff turnover

Type of force	Motivational mechanism for attachment and withdrawal
Affective forces	• Forces that lead the employee to a negative response towards membership in the organisation.
Calculative forces	• Forces that result from a rational calculation of the probability that employment in the organisation will lead to the attainment of important goals or values. An unfavourable calculation of future value/goal attainment motivates quitting.
Contractual forces	• Forces driven by a perceived obligation to remain in the organisation, or by a perceived breach of a psychological contract with the organisation. (Impeding turnover, not leading to it)
Behavioural forces	• Forces driven by perceived investments in organisational membership previously made. (Impeding turnover, not leading to it)
Alternative forces	• Forces relating to the beliefs about obtaining alternative jobs.
Normative forces	• Forces relating to perceived expectations of others (inside and / or outside the organisation) regarding remaining in the organisation
Moral/ethical forces	• Maintaining consistency between behaviour and values regarding turnover.
Constituent forces	• Attachment to individual groups within the organisation (Impeding turnover, not leading to it)

(Source: Maertz & Griffeth 2004)

Turnover research has identified many factors and predictors which operate through the mediating forces described in this section. These factors are divided into the following three broad categories: organisation, individual, and relational. The next three sections, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, and 2.1.5 examine research conducted on these categories, and furnishes support for a relational view of employment.

2.1.3. Perception of organisational factors

Naturally, organisations who wish to reduce employee turnover examine their own contributions to this phenomenon. Many studies of employee turnover examine various factors that are controlled by the organisation: organisational stressors(de Croon et al. 2004), human resource management (HRM) practices (see Luthans & Peterson 2003; Lam, Chen & Takeuchi 2009; Guchait & Cho 2010; Way et al. 2010), diversity (see Nishii & Mayer 2009), pay growth (see Nyberg 2010), service climate (see Salanova, Agut & Peiro 2005), and many such specific factors(see Shaw et al. 2009). Many of such factors are associated with turnover decisions, or mediate the relationships of others factors which lead to turnover.

However, consistent with a relational view of employment, which conceptualises employment as a relationship between the employee and the organisation, many of these studies acknowledge that the organisational factors in themselves are only as effective as they induce the right *perceptions* among employees (Colquitt et al. 2001; Clarke 2007; Kuvaas 2008; Guchait & Cho 2010). This highlights the role of employee perception in the employee-organisation relationship.

An aggregated view of these perceptions has been studied in the form of the psychological contract, capturing implicit expectations between the employee and the

organisation. This psychological contract, and particularly its breach, have been documented as important causes for employee turnover (Rousseau 1989; Robinson, Kraatz & Rousseau 1994; Shore & Tetrick 1994; Cullinane & Dundon 2006). Although the psychological contract offers a more comprehensive view of the relationship between the employee and the organisation than specific organisational factors, it does not capture all of its aspects: the psychological contract explicitly excludes the effects of the *actual* contract between the employee and the organisation, which is a substantial part of the relationship. Nonetheless, this concept, consistent with other organisational perspective findings, reinforces the importance of examining the employees' perceptions of their organisation.

2.1.4. Individual employee factors

Turnover research has examined many various factors pertaining to the individual employee. Few examples of factors which have been found to predict turnover include cognitive ability (Maltarich, Nyberg & Reilly 2010) and personality traits (Robson, Abraham & Weiner 2010), cultural origin (i.e., individualist or collectivist) (Ramesh & Gelfand 2010), job performance (Nyberg 2010), self-esteem and core self-evaluation (Rich, Lepine & Crawford 2010), and individual job-mobility, that is, their ease of movement from one job to another(Trevor 2001). These examples are summarised in Table 2.2 below.

Consistent with a relational perspective of employment which will be discussed in Section 2.3, however, the influence of many of these variables has been found to be contingent on organisational or relational variables. For example, cognitive ability was found to induce turnover depending on the cognitive demands of the job, as defined by the Occupational Information Network(Maltarich, Nyberg & Reilly 2010). The influence of individual job performance on turnover was found to be moderated by organisational factors such as pay growth (Nyberg 2010). Job embeddedness, a relational construct in itself

(discussed in Section 2.1.3), was found to have an influence on the relationship between the individual's culture and turnover (Ramesh & Gelfand 2010). The influence ofone's change orientation (positive or negative, see Table 2.2) on withdrawal was found contingent on perceived change-related fairness, which is employees' sense that management is trustworthy (Fugate, Prussia & Kinicki 2012) – a relational construct. In addition, , voluntary turnover, as well as layoffs after a merger, were found dependent on individual factors such as age, full-time status, job type (blue- or white-collar), and shock (Iverson & Pullman 2000). There are many more examples, all emphasising that the relationship of an employee with the organisation is influenced, as expected, by both sides: the employee *and* the organisation. This reinforces the emphasis being directed towards the employee-organisation relationship.

Table 2.2
Examples of individual factors leading to employee turnover

Individual factor	Brief description	Source	Additional influence
Cognitive ability	• Knowledge and skills test results	(Maltarich, Nyberg & Reilly 2010)	• Cognitive demands of the job (organisational)
Job performance	• Based on organisational performance evaluations	(Nyberg 2010)	• Pay growth
Cognitive and personality predictors	• Unit-weighted combination of agreeableness, conscientiousness, optimism, and numerical ability	(Robson, Abraham & Weiner 2010)	
Cultural background	• Individualistic versus collectivist	(Ramesh & Gelfand 2010)	• Person-job fit or person-organisation fit
Change orientation	• Change self-efficacy, positive attitudes toward change, and perceived control of changes	(Fugate, Prussia & Kinicki 2012)	• Perceived change-related fairness (distributive, procedural, and interactive).

Source: Developed for this study

2.1.5. Focus – emerging relational perspective

Recently, factors pertaining to the relationships that employees have with their organisations as part of their employment have been the focus of an emergent category of turnover-influencing factors. The importance of interpersonal relationships of the employee as part of their employment have been strongly advocated for, particularly by researchers utilising social exchange theory (SET), which is discussed in more detail in Section 2.3.2. Contrary to the traditional view of employment, which regarded it mainly as a financial transaction, SET theorists, supported by ample empirical evidence, emphasise the importance of social exchange for the successful sustainability of employment (see full review at Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002), due to their potential to generate high quality relationships through interdependent interactions (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005, pp. 874-875). SET theorists agree that social exchange generates obligations based on a series of interactions between the parties (Emerson 1976). Over time, and through these interactions, relationships evolve into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments, which embed the employee in the organisation (Blau 1986).

An exploratory study of narratives of the deterioration of workplace friendships and their influence on turnover decisions found that the quality of interpersonal relationships in the workplace are important for employee retention(Sias et al. 2004). In addition,the importance of the relationships and connections employees have as part of their employment is demonstrated through studies of *job embeddedness*. The embeddedness of an employee in the organisation is one of the most prominent relational factors studied in the context of employee turnover (Mitchell et al. 2001; Lee et al. 2004). This construct includes three dimensions: (1) links, which are connections (formal or informal) between the employee and

institutions or other people, as part of their employment, (2) fit, which is the degree to which these connections are similar to, or fit with, other aspects of the employee's life, and (3) sacrifice, which is the costs to leaving the workplace. Job embeddedness has been split into two sub-dimensions: on-the-job, which focuses on fit with the organisation, connections within the organisation, and organisation-related sacrifice, and off-the-job, which focuses on embeddedness with one's community. Off-the-job embeddedness was found to significantly predict subsequent turnover among bank employees, whereas on-the-job embeddedness, was non-significant (Lee et al. 2004), indicating that one's connections with the community, and not necessarily their work colleagues, plays an important role in their turnover decisions. A comparison between Caucasian and Hispanic US employees revealed that job embeddedness varies in strength across cultural groups, where Hispanic employees typically measured higher levels of embeddedness (Mallol, Holtom & Lee 2007).

Job embeddedness has been successful at predicting turnover intentions and behaviour, within the success range of most turnover prediction models, i.e., below 50%. Building on this concept, network centrality, which measures how many connections one has in the organisation, was also found to predict turnover behaviour, within the same range of success (Mossholder, Settoon & Henagan 2005).

Other relational factors have also been identified, pointing to the importance of employees' relationships as part of their employment for its sustainability. Demographic differences between the employee and their unit was shown to increase the risk of their turnover (Sacco & Schmitt 2005), as well as heterogeneity in tenure (i.e., in how long people have been working the organisation), which led to low group social integration (O'Reilly III, Caldwell & Barnett 1989). The following forms of fit between the employee and their environment have also been shown to affect employee turnover: person-organisation (Kristof 1996b; Hoffman & Woehr 2006), person-job, and person-supervisor (Tak 2010).

The relationship between the employee and their supervisor has naturally been identified to have important consequences for turnover(Tak 2010), where for example perceived supervisor support is significantly related to reduced turnover intentions and behaviour (Maertz et al. 2007). The mechanisms of supervisors' influence on turnover has been examined through various mechanisms: support and relationship, similarity and fit, practicalities (such as promotion), and general perceptions of the organisation's conditions and characteristics, as summarised in Table 2.3. While not all of these mechanisms measured significant effects on employee turnover, the continuing focus on supervisory influences demonstrates the importance of this relationship to employee retention.

Table 2.3 Relational constructs influencing turnover, and their categories			
Construct / component	**Construct Description**	**Source**	**Additional influences**
	Support and relationship		
Perceivedsupervisor support	General views concerning the degree to which supervisors value their contributions and care about their well-being	(Kuvaas & Dysvik 2010b)(Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe 2003)(Maertz et al. 2007)	
Perceived supervisor social support	Perceived availability of support if needed	(De Cuyper et al. 2010)	
Uncivil behaviour	Incivility	(Morse 2005)	Co-workers
Supportive management	supervisory support, organisational support, and work-life balance	(Dupré & Day 2007)	Management
Supervisor-subordinate relationship	Employee satisfaction with the support given by their supervisors	(Brunetto, Farr-Wharton & Shacklock 2010)	
Protégé experience	Experience with mentor (supervisor or not)	(Bozionelos 2009)	
Perceived supervisor support and perceived investment in employee development	Employees' views concerning the degree to which their immediate line manager values their contributions and cares about their well-being, and their assessment of their organisation's long-term and continuous commitment to helping employees learn to identify and obtain new skills and competencies.	(Kuvaas & Dysvik 2010b)	Management, Policy

Table 2.3 (Cont.) Relational constructs influencing turnover, and their categories			
Construct / component	**Construct Description**	**Source**	**Additional influences**
	Similarity and fit		
Perceived person-supervisor fit	Perceived similarities	(Tak 2010)	
Moral congruence	Congruence between employee and leader moral development	(Schminke, Ambrose & Neubaum 2005)	Management
Leader group prototypicality	The extent to which the leader is representative of the collective identity	(Cicero, Pierro & Van Knippenberg 2010)	Work group
	General perceptions of organisational characteristics and conditions		
perceptions of psychological job control	Psychological experiences with control over where, when, and how one works, beliefs that one can choose to separate work–family boundaries	(Kossek, Lautsch & Eaton 2006)	Organisation
Threat appraisal during organisational change	Concerns over potential future losses, partially including relationships with one's supervisor	(Fugate, Prussia & Kinicki 2012)	
Play	Task-related and diversion play	(Mainemelis & Ronson 2006)	
Employee involvement	Practices through which employees can participate in work-related decisions	(Park, Appelbaum & Kruse 2010)	Management
Perceived empowerment, perceived information sharing	Authority to the lowest level of responsibility, and the organisation's facilitation of access to information pertinent to their work	(Kuvaas & Dysvik 2010a)	Policy, management
Organisation receptivity, feedback seeking	To what extent the organisation seeks and is receptive of feedback from the employee	(Holton & Russell 1999)	Organisation, management

Table 2.3 (Cont.) Relational constructs influencing turnover, and their categories			
Construct / component	**Construct Description**	**Source**	**Additional influences**
	Practicalities		
Actual promotion	The actual change in reward distribution in the organisation	(Saporta & Farjoun 2003)	Management
Performance appraisal satisfaction	How satisfied the employee is with how they've been appraised	(Kuvaas 2006)	
Recent managerial promotion	Promotion over the last 11 months	(Lyness & Judiesch 2001)	Management

The effect of other aspects of the employee-organisation relationship on turnover, i.e., leadership and top management, co-workers and work group, HR practices / policy, and the organisation in general, demonstrates the multi-faceted nature of this relationship. Appendix A summarises these elements and demonstrates, however, that there are many and various elements composing the employee-organisation relationship. Thus, a comprehensive study integrating direct measurements of all of them and accounting for all of their influences on one-another is virtually impossible. A study which encapsulates the integrated influence of these aspects is nevertheless beneficial for turnover research.

2.1.6. Summary of turnover literature review

Since the 1950s, the view of voluntary employee turnover has developed significantly. The basic view of turnover driven by dissatisfaction and perceived view of alternatives has extended to include eight motivational forces which drive separation, and has identified hundreds of factors – individual, organisational, and relational – which operate through these forces. A greater understanding of the process of voluntary employee turnover revealed that the perception of alternatives is dynamic and progressive as the separation draws near.

Turnover studies draw attention to three main issues. One is the importance of relationships. A major recent breakthrough in turnover research is the identification of the influence on turnover of relationships that employees are involved in as part of their employment. Interpersonal relationships, as well as relationships with institutions, have been identified as promising factors for increasing employee retention. This is consistent with the view of social exchange theory (SET), which highlights the importance of social interactions for building mutual, loyal, and trusting relationships between employees and members of their organisation. These relationships, in turn, drive many beneficial outcomes resulting from greater relationship quality and sustainability.

The second issue identified in this review is the role which affect plays in the sustainability and quality of the employment. A review of process models of turnover identified two affective mechanisms which are an important part of turnover decisions: *job attitudes* and *morale*. This isconsistent with studies of turnover based on the affective theory of social exchange, indicating that affect is a relevant issue when studying turnover.

Finally, turnover studies bring forth the importance of employees' perceptions of their organisations, and their effect on turnover. The mere practices of an organisation are only as effective at increasing employee retention as the employees' perceptions of them. This importance is brought forth in studies of employee turnover taking an organisational perspective.

Few tools have been successful, despite lengthy and prolific research, in predicting employee turnover with high accuracy. This and other limitations of turnover research are discussed next.

2.2 The weakness and opportunities in turnover prediction

Despite the growing understanding gained in *what* leads to turnover (i.e., factors and antecedents), and *how* turnover occurs, that is, through motivational forces (Maertz & Griffeth 2004) and process models (Steel & Lounsbury 2009), the ability to predict *if* and *when* turnover will occur still remains limited. The ability to predict is of great interest to turnover researchers, as evident from the extensive attention empirical findings receive in reviews (Steel & Lounsbury 2009). Turnover predictions, however, very rarely offer accuracy greater than 50% (Wagner 2010), and intentions, which are often used as proxies for measuring turnover, typically explain at most 25% of the turnover variance (Allen, Weeks & Moffitt 2005; Hom et al. 2012). This deficiency is a major one, considering the interest it generates.

Another notable characteristic of turnover literature is its main reliance on quantitative, survey-based self-reported constructs (Holtom et al. 2008; Steel & Lounsbury 2009). After a detailed review by prominent turnover researchers covering turnover literature from the '80s, '90s, and the new millennium (Holtom et al. 2008), the authors concluded with a call for longitudinal research, which combines qualitative and quantitative methods (Holtom et al. 2008, pp. 258-259). On some rare occasions, methods other than quantitative survey-based self-reported constructs are used. Some examples include: identifying factors and reasons for turnover (or retention) among specific groups, nor previously investigated(Maertz, Stevens & Campion 2003; Hyvönen et al. 2009; Loan-Clarke et al. 2010); uncovering employees' ways of coping when they are retained, while their colleagues are laid off (Brown & Korczynski 2010); and exploring the impact of turnover on the organisation (Ashworth 2006) or on those who have left (Nuttman-Shwartz 2004). Apart from these few examples of drawing on qualitative and interpretive methods, the literature predominantly relies on quantitative survey-based self-reported constructs.

Possible reasons for turnover research deficiencies may be rooted in the predominant use of these self-reported survey-based methods. Research based on self-reporting methods has been associated with two major problems: self-presentation bias (Carrère et al. 2000), and common method variance. Self-presentation bias means that people tend to provide answers that reflect how they would like to be viewed, rather than what they genuinely feel, think, or have done (Schnake 1991). Individuals participating in turnover research have been found more likely to respond by providing socially-desirable answers (Arnold, Feldman & Purbhoo 1985), and indirect questioning has been shown to significantly reduce its effect (Fisher 1993). Although this problem is not unique to turnover research, it is undoubtedly an important one to keep in mind when turnover research findings are examined.

In addition to self-presentation bias, common methods variance is another problem to consider in the context of survey-based research. Common method variance means that using the same method to measure different constructs (for example, antecedents to turnover intentions and turnover intentions) is problematic, as some of the correlation between the measured constructs results from the method used for measurement. Researchers in behavioural science, including psychology and management, have long argued for multi-method studies (see full review at Podsakoff et al. 2003). However, studies of voluntary turnover have been mostly limited to self-reported survey-based methods (see reviews at Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner 2000; Winterton 2004; Steel & Lounsbury 2009). This is a serious problem, because common methods variance has been found to seriously bias results about relationships between constructs – about 25-30% of the time (Doty & Glick 1998).

These problems with self-reported methods are not the definite culprit for the poor accuracy of turnover prediction methods. Nonetheless, they highlight an opportunity to explore this topic with a novel direction of enquiry.

Addressing the gap

The limited success in turnover predictions suggests that it is worthy to examine this problem witha fundamentally different approach. Here then, the field of interpersonal relationships becomes highly relevant. The conceptual view of employment as a relationship is based on the importance of affect and social exchange for the sustainability and quality of employment, as identified in turnover research and discussed in Sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.5, as well as the importance of employees' perceptions of their organisation's practices, discussed in Section 2.1.3. Furthermore, turnover research has also revealed that both parties involved in the employment, i.e., the employee and the organisation, have to be taken into account when turnover is studied, as the sustainability and quality of employment depends on both, as

discussed in Section 2.1.4. If employment is then seen as a relationship between the employee and the organisation, then turnover is seen as a breakdown in this dynamic relationship.

Among studies of breakdowns in interpersonal relationships, one has been studied extensively - marital separation. Over the past few decades, a substantial understanding of the marital separation process has been gained (Gottman & Notarius 2002), and an impressive predictive ability of their dissolution has been developed, reporting success rates of over 80 (Gottman et al. 1998b) and 90 (Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992) percent, over periods of between 3 and 14 years. These impressive prediction success rates indicate that marital researchers have identified and deployed a method of enquiry which surpasses turnover research effectiveness at diagnosing the quality and sustainability of relationships. When considering the modest success of turnover prediction models have had so far, such impressive and consistent prediction accuracy is, at the very least, intriguing.

While marriage and employment are fundamentally different, similarities between the two exist and justify the application of divorce prediction methods to an organisational turnover setting. The next section examines these similarities. First, the conceptual similarities between employment and relationships in general are presented, based on interpersonal relationships literature. Then, theoretical and practical similarities between both relationships – marriage and employment – are discussed.

2.3 Employment, interpersonal, and marital relationships

Establishing the similarities between marital and employee-organisation relationships begins with establishing that employment, like a marriage, is a relationship. For any relationship to exist, three main conditions need to be satisfied (Hinde 1979): (1) intermittent interactions between the parties; (2) a degree of mutuality in the interchanges, i.e., each

party's behaviour takes into account (to some degree) the behaviour of the other party; and (3) continuity between successive interactions. Although employment fundamentally differs from interpersonal relationships, the relationship between an employee and their organisation satisfies all these requirements. However, a deeper examination of the two concepts (interpersonal relationship and employment) is warranted.

2.3.1 What interpersonal relationships provide

At their core, relationships are purposive, which means they serve,and built around,a purpose (Fournier 1998). Interpersonal relationships address several needs of the individuals who engage in them (Duck 2010): belonging and a sense of reliable alliance, reassurance of worth and value, opportunity to help others, personality support(by associating with like-minded partners), opportunities for communication about ourselves, and the provision of assistance and physical support. That is not to say that all relationships fully address each of these needs. It merely says that every relationship addresses, at least to some degree, at least some of these needs. This thesis argues that a person's workplace offers, to a degree that varies from person to person, and workplace to workplace, most, if not all, of these provisions.

Several constructs identified in the field of turnover and retention correspond with the provisions offered by interpersonal relationships, as summarised in Table 2.4. The construct *organisational identification*(Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail 1994) captures the need for belonging and for reassurance of self-worth. The construct *perceived organisational support* captures to what extent the organisation addresses the need for reliance on another (Eisenberger et al. 1986; Allen, Shore & Griffeth 2003). The need for personality support by associating with like-minded partners is captured by person-organisation fit (Kristof 1996b), and the need to help others is captured by interpersonal and organisational citizenship

behaviour (Organ 1988; Podsakoff et al. 2000; Mossholder, Settoon & Henagan 2005). Relationships in the workplace have also been shown to provide opportunities for communication and support (Henderson & Argyle 1985). These similarities of the provisions offered by the workplace and by interpersonal relationships support the notion of employment as a relationship.

Table 2.4
Equivalent provisions of interpersonal relationships and employment

Interpersonal relationship	Employment
• Belonging • Reassurance of self-worth	Organisational identification (Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail 1994)
• Reliable alliance	Perceived organisational support (Eisenberger et al. 1986; Allen, Shore & Griffeth 2003)
• Personality support	Person-organisation fit (Kristof 1996a)
• Help others	Organisational citizenship behaviour (Organ 1988; Podsakoff et al. 2000; Mossholder, Settoon & Henagan 2005)
• Communication • Support	Relationships in the workplace (Henderson & Argyle 1985)

There is also a lesser argument for this relationship between an employee and their workplace. People have been shown to have interpersonal-like relationships with partners that are not necessarily other human beings: pets (Hirschman 1994), God or mortal status (Buber 1946), and even consumer brands (Fournier 1998). In these relationships, despite the asymmetry between the parties involved, the non-human party actively contributes to the relationship dyad. Similarly, this work argues that an organisation is a valid candidate for membership in an interpersonal-like relationship. This view of interpersonal-like relationships with non-human parties, through interactions with various components (both

human and non-human) is further supported by actor-network theory (ANT). ANT views every individual as an expression of an entire network of actors (human and non-human), embedded in the individual's actions (Callon 2001). When an individual interacts with one member of the network, that is, with the actor, the actor in that interaction represents the entire network. In the case of this study, the organisation is seen as the network interacting with the individual through various components (human and non-human). Each component is embedded in the entire organisation, and in that particular interaction, represents the organisation. The accumulated interactions that employee have with these components form the employees' relationship with the organisation.

Among interpersonal relationships, a great deal of attention has been devoted to the understanding of, and particularly to the prediction of the dissolution of, marital relationships (Gottman 1993; Gottman & Notarius 2002; Gottman 2014b). While it is evident that both relationships (marital and employee-organisation) have fundamental practical differences, they obviously share some common characteristics. A detailed comparison between these relationships is not relevant to the motivation for this study, which is to enhance the understanding of employee turnover. One main reason for drawing on the knowledge gained in marital research is its apparent astounding success at predicting divorce, as discussed in the Section *Addressing the gap*. The difference between the high reported success at predicting divorce, and the typically low reported success of predicting turnover begs for a deeper investigation of the methods used by marital researchers and their utility in the employment space. Successful divorce prediction methods rely on observations of relational and affective indicators, whereas turnover prediction typically relies on self-reported surveys. Before marital methods can be examined, however, similarities of both phenomena are discussed further.

2.3.2 Marriage and employment - similarities

The discussion in Section 2.3.1of general and purposive similarities of interpersonal relationships and employment has showed that they serve similar purposes for a person engaging in them. This section identifies further common characteristics shared by marital relationships[2], a subset of interpersonal relationships, and employment. Two main categories of common characteristics are described: a common theoretical foundation, which highlights the role of social exchange and affect, as well as empirical similarities in the form of the course of the relationships over time.

2.3.2.1 *Social exchange theory and affect*

Among theories underlying the understanding of employment, as well as marriage, social exchange theory (SET) has been prominent (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005). Based on SET, theorists have posited that both phenomena are sustained by the attractions of the relationship (affective, calculative, moral / ethical, constituent), the barriers to abandoning it (contractual, behavioural, normative, constituent, moral / ethical), and the presence of potential alternatives (see Levinger 1979; Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner 2000; Rodrigues, Hall & Fincham 2006). Although traditionally these phenomena diverge in their foci, evidence from modern research presented here show that they have a lot in common. Contrary to the traditional view, seeing mainly financial attractions in employment as opposed to the social attraction of a marital relationship, SET theorists (Homans 1958; Thibaut & Kelley 1959; Adams 1965; Emerson 1976; Blau 1986), generally supported by ample empirical evidence (see Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005), emphasise the importance of social exchanges for the successful sustainability of employment, due to their potential to "generate high quality relationships" through these interdependent interactions (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005, p.

[2] Despite the rise in de facto relationships, this study concentrates on knowledge generated in research of marriage, because of its success at predicting breakups. Research on de-facto relationships is beyond the scope of this study.

875). Theorists of SET agree that social exchange generates obligations based on a series of interactions between the parties (Emerson 1976). Over time, and through these interactions, relationships evolve into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments. This development relies on the parties' abiding by certain 'rules' of exchange (Blau 1986; Tsui et al. 1997), which may be either reciprocal, or negotiated (Mitchell, Cropanzano & Quisenberry 2012). When negotiated, the exchange is agreed upon by both parties, in contrast to reciprocal exchanges which are engaged in voluntarily (Molm 2003).

This reciprocity suggests that social exchange relationships are interdependent, which means each party influences the contribution of the other party to the interaction. This interdependence is obvious in marital relationships (Krokoff 1987) and is similar to the findings in employment setting, identified in Section 2.1.4, showing that the effect of individual factors on employee turnover are often contingent on organisational factors.

Furthermore, social exchange interactions are often contingent on the actions of a third party (Blau 1986). In marital setting, the third party involves other family members (children, parents, siblings, etc.), as well as other members of the couples' social network (Spanier, Lewis & Cole 1975). Similarly, in employment setting, interactions between two individuals (e.g., employee and supervisor) are also typically contingent on other parties related to the organisation, as demonstrated by extensive literature on organisational culture (e.g., Deal & Kennedy 1982; Alvesson 2002; Hofstede & Hofstede 2005; Cameron & Quinn 2006; Schein 2010) and group work (Cartwright & Zander 1968; Davis 1969).

This theory highlights the importance of social interactions for sustaining successful employment. As expressed by Blau, one of the main early theorists of SET, "**only** social exchange tends to engender feelings of personal obligations, gratitude, and trust; purely economic exchange as such does not" (Blau 1986, p. 94, emphasis added).

In addition to social exchange, which is intertwined in interpersonal relationships, the role affect plays in turnover has already been pointed out in studies of turnover process models (Section 2.1.1). Furthermore, the importance of affect for the sustainability and quality of employment is demonstrated through the following concepts: the construct *affective commitment*(e.g., Carmeli & Weisberg 2006; Brunetto, Farr-Wharton & Shacklock 2010; and Kuvaas & Dysvik 2010b), affective events theory (AET) (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996; Ashkanasy & Daus 2002), and the affective theory of social exchange (Lawler 2001). Affective commitment is widely usedin many turnover studies, as an indicator of the quality employee's connection to the organisation(e.g., Carmeli & Weisberg 2006; Brunetto, Farr-Wharton & Shacklock 2010; and Kuvaas & Dysvik 2010b). AET has demonstrated how affect experienced at work affects the quality of the employee's relationship with the organisation through work outcomes such as productivity and satisfaction(Weiss & Cropanzano 1996; Ashkanasy & Daus 2002). Finally, the affective theory of social exchange argues that the affect involved in social exchange at work contributes to employee satisfaction and retention (Lawler 2001). Furthermore, there is a continuous increasein the significance of affect as the focus of analysis across many disciplines, as elucidated by the work on affective turn (Kim et al. 2007). These are prominent examples bringing forth the importance of affective experiences at work for the quality and sustainability of employment. The role of affect in the sustainability of a marriage and in its quality has also been reported (Gottman & Notarius 2002; Rodrigues, Hall & Fincham 2006), showing that negative affect in marital interactions is associated with lower levels of satisfaction, and greater chances of breaking up. This role affect plays in sustaining marital relationships is central to the diagnosis of marital relationships and the prediction of divorce, and is therefore elaborated further in Section 2.4.1.

Marital research has also identified influences which are calculative and practical in nature, similar to those influencing the sustainability of employment. Barriers to divorce are similar to the barriers of turnover: practical and financial considerations influence divorce decisions (Campbell & Wright 2010), as well as turnover decisions, as captured by the construct *continuous commitment*. This commitment is based on the costs that employees associate with leaving the organisation. Religious constraints also may restrict the decision to leave a marriage (Rodrigues, Hall & Fincham 2006), similarly to *normative commitment*, which is commitment based on one's feelings of obligation to remain with the organisation.

Social exchange theory highlights the importance of social interactions as the means for building commitment, trust, and loyalty between the parties involved, and this view has been the foundation in both research fields (employment and marriage). Both have captured parallel forms of commitment, thus indicating that the two relationship types share common mechanisms for their sustainability.

2.3.2.2 ***Empirical similarities***

Empirical results pertaining to the practical trajectory of satisfaction levels in both relationships demonstrate a striking similarity. The progression of job satisfaction levels, described in detail in the review of turnover process models in Section 2.1.1 is similar to the progression found in marital satisfaction over time (Argyle 1986). Specifically, job satisfaction levels were found to rise for a short period after employment with a new employer begins, followed by their decrease (Boswell, Boudreau & Tichy 2005).

Marital researchers have also sought to describe the trajectory of marital satisfaction over time. Cross-sectional studies, comparing marital satisfaction levels of couples at different stages of their marriages, have been strongly criticised for not comparing the same couples' satisfaction levels over time (Spanier, Lewis & Cole 1975; Spanier & Lewis 1980),

and are thus not covered here. Tracking the satisfaction levels of the same couples over periods of time, however, in longitudinal studies, and particularly, multiple-wave longitudinal studies, have been strongly advocated for and extensively used in marital research (Karney & Bradbury 1997; Kurdek 1999; Kurdek 2002). A review of multiple studies which tracked couples over different time periods, from four (Karney & Bradbury 1997), eight (Kurdek 2002), ten (Kurdek 1999) up to 15 years (Hirschberger et al. 2009) reveals that satisfaction levels in marriages generally follow a similar trajectory. They begin relatively high for newlyweds (although vary substantially between couples). These satisfaction levels then decline rapidly over a short period, and then steadily decline over a longer period (see full review at Regan 2011).

Two additional points to note have to do with comparisons *between* and *within* couples. When comparing between couples, it was revealed that couples who started with greater satisfaction levels experienced a weaker decline compared with couples' whose initial satisfaction levels were lower (Karney & Bradbury 1997), suggesting that greater initial satisfaction levels buffer against future decline. When comparing satisfaction levels *within* couples, i.e., satisfaction levels of husbands to wives, it was found that the spouses' satisfaction levels were similar through the tracking period (Hirschberger et al. 2009), suggesting that changes in the satisfaction levels of one spouse are closely related to the satisfaction level of the other.

These findings do not mean, however, that marriages necessarily transition from happiness to unhappiness. Most couples investigated remain relatively content. This level of contentment is merely lower than that measured among newlywed couples.

In summary, while couples' satisfaction levels have been tracked for longer periods than employment, they demonstrate a similar trajectory to that of employees' satisfaction

levels and reduce over time. This similarity in empirical observations suggest that not only the two phenomena share a common theoretical foundation, but they share a practical expected trajectory of satisfaction levels over time.

2.3.3 Summary of similarities of employment and marriage

Although not often conceptualised that way, employment is a relationship between the employee and the entire employing organisation. Employment meets all three conditions necessary for a relationship to exist (intermittent, continuous, and mutually-considerate interactions). This section showed that relationships, at their core, serve some purposes, and both relationships – interpersonal relationships and employment – serve similar purposes. The extent to which these purposes are served varies from person to person and organisation to organisation, which is true for interpersonal relationships as well.

Among interpersonal relationships, a great deal of attention has been devoted to the understanding of, and particularly to the prediction of the dissolution of, marital relationships. Examining the conceptual similarities between employment and marriage revealed a common theoretical foundation – social exchange theory (SET). This theory highlights the role of social interactions over time in building a mutual trusting and loyal relationships. The role of affect as the sustaining force of the marital relationship is evident, and its importance has been demonstrated in organisational studies based on affective events theory (AET)) (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996; Ashkanasy & Daus 2002). Other similarities between the breakdown in marital relationships and employment concern the barriers to this breakdown – the various forms of commitment and constraints – and the practical similarities in patterns of satisfaction over time were discussed as well.

Once the argument for the similarities between marital and employee-organisation relationships is established, it seems valuable to examine how marital relationships are

diagnosed, and how their breakdowns are predicted. The focus now turns to the theoretical foundation for diagnosing marital relationships. Following that, the practicalities of the method to be used in this study are described, and critiques of it presented.

2.4 Diagnosing a marriage and predicting divorce

In contrast to the self-reported survey-based methods commonly used for turnover prediction in management research, the breakdowns of marital relationships have been studied using a different approach. By using storytelling methods and by analysing indirect elements of the input which they provide, marital researchers have been able to predict not only *if* a married couple will separate and divorce, but also *when* this separation will take place (i.e., within 7 or 14 years)[3], with an astounding accuracy of over 90% (Gottman & Notarius 2000; Gottman & Notarius 2002). This work has resulted in a theory of marital affect balance(Gottman 2014b), which identifies quantitative and qualitative elements in the marital relationship for diagnosing its quality, and to predict its breakdown (Gottman 1993; Gottman et al. 1998b). This theory is described next.

2.4.1 A theory of marital affect balance

Sustainable marriages take one of three forms (Gottman 2014b). The *validating* couples, who tend to agree, support, and persuade one another (Carrère & Gottman 1999), the *volatile* couples, who engage in intensely emotional fights as well as passionate reconciliation, and the *conflict-avoiding* couples, where disagreements' importance are minimised, and emotional engagement between the spouses is limited.

Sustaining such marital relationships and their quality relies on a balance of positive and negative affect experienced in the relationship (Gottman 1993; Gottman 2014b). This

[3] Prediction of divorce ranged from three to 14 years. It was possible, however, to differentiate those who divorced earlier (i.e., within 7 years) from those whose divorce took longer (i.e., between 7 and 14 years).

balance is regulated by marital interactions and partners' behaviours. In general, greater proportions of positive speaker and listener behaviour (husband or wife), or smaller proportions of negative speaker and listener behaviours, indicate better chances of marital stability and satisfaction (Gottman 2014b). Within certain limits and conditions, negative interactions can be beneficial for the relationship (Gottman & Krokoff 1989). However, beyond a certain proportion of negative affect, discussed in Section 2.4.2.1 (Gottman 1994b), and when involving certain types of negative affect, discussed in Section 2.5.1 (Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992; Gottman et al. 1998a; Carrère et al. 2000), marital stability and/or satisfaction greatly reduce. Similar to employee turnover, which is typically preceded by a sequence of withdrawal behaviours, as described in Section 2.1.1, the breakdown of a marriage typically follows a cascade model of relational processes (see Figure 2.3). These withdrawal behaviours serve as qualitative indicators which have been found to predict the course of marital relationships, and ultimately, divorce. Their predictive role is discussed in more detail in Section 2.5. This section focuses on their role in the process of the relationship breakdown.

Prior to a divorce, and as negative experiences accumulate in a marriage, couples typically engage in relational processes which evolve along a systems-based cascade model: criticism and / or complaints of one spouse lead to the defensiveness of the other, which then leads to contempt towards the defensive spouse. This in turn leads to withdrawal of the defensive spouse (or 'stonewalling') where this partner blocks out the input of the other. This step leads to a separation, and, finally, a divorce (Gottman 2014b). The different relational processes are associated with different stages of the relationship breakdown, as described by the cascade model. This model has resulted from rigorous and extensive testing over a few decades, and involved the work of several researchers in the field (see Gottman 1979b;

Krokoff 1987; Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992; Gottman 1993; Carrère et al. 2000; Gottman et al. 2003).

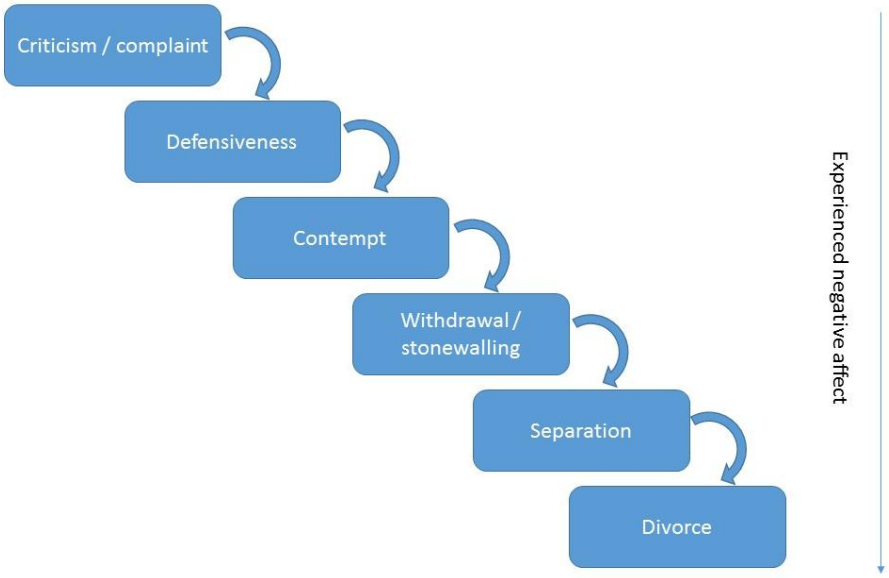

Figure 2.3– A Systems cascade model of marital dissolution

Two fundamental assumptions guide the diagnosis of marital relationships: (1) a necessary balance of emotions (Gottman 1994b) and (2) the constructed nature of human memories (Bradbury & Fincham 1990). The assumptions and their relevance to marital relationships are explained and discussed next.

2.4.1.1 *A balance in emotions and affect*

Gottman was inspired by the need for balance of physiological parameters such as temperature, pH, etc., to sustain living organisms (1994c; 2014b). Marital research by Gottman et al. is based on the proposition that a successful marriage is sustained by a balance between positive and negative emotions (1994c). This is consistent with SET related theories, which have emphasised the importance of attracting forces in a relationship

alternatives (Levinger 1979; Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner 2000; Rodrigues, Hall & Fincham 2006) as described in Section 2.3.2.1.

While the definitions of emotion are many and diverse (and Fridja 1993; see Cowie & Cornelius 2003), for the purpose of diagnosing a marriage, the focus was on the evaluative dimension of emotions (sometimes called 'valence') (Cowie et al. 2000). In this thesis, this evaluative dimension is referred to as 'affect'. Marital research has shown that a high ratio of positive-to-negative affect displayed by couples during their interactions indicated the sustainability of their marriage. Marital research found that during conflict interactions, non-distressed couples, and particularly, couples who remain happily married, displayed a much higher ratio of positive-to-negative affect than did distressed couples (Gottman 1994b; Gottman et al. 1998b; Gottman et al. 2003).

2.4.1.2 ***The constructed nature of human memories (mental image)***

The subjective nature of human recall has been extensively documented in the decision-making literature (Tversky & Kahneman 1974; Kahneman & Tversky 1979; Einhorn & Hogarth 1986; Hogarth 1987; Payne, Bettman & Johnson 1997). This vast body of literature has shown that human memories are typically biased, skewed, and constructed. Similarly, marital diagnostics assumes that partners construct their views of one another and create a *mental image*. This mental image depends on two separate factors: (1) the affect experienced by the couple in present time, and (2) the consistency of the affect experienced in the relationship in the past (Bradbury & Fincham 1990).

(1) **Current experienced affect** – the affect experienced by a spouse biases the way their memory is constructed and retrieved at the time of the experience. For example, a

distressed spouse would more easily retrieve negative memories than positive memories.

(2) **Consistency of affect in past experiences** – consistent experiences of affect bias memories and recall more strongly than inconsistent experienced affect. For example, a spouse which has experienced mostly negative affect in the relationship will have a more integrated negative mental image of their spouse, than a spouse whose experiences in the relationship have been inconsistent.

This bias in perceptions applies not only to the spouse as a person, but to the spouse's behaviour as well. For example, unhappy spouses were found to tend to overlook the positive behaviours of their partners (Weiss 1980). It is possible that such memory construction prevents them from registering such positive behaviours in their memory, or recalling them. How spouses' behaviours are perceived are equally important to the behaviours themselves (Hinde 1979), and therefore, this bias is important to the understanding of relationships. In addition to noticing a behaviour, a spouse's mental image affects the way a behaviour is interpreted. This interpretation has been the central occupation of attribution theory. It is discussed in further detail in Section 2.5.2.

Based on this theoretical foundation, marital researchers have developed methods for diagnosing marital relationships. These methods rely on indirect evidence, rather than self-reported surveys, as described next.

2.4.2 Approaches for diagnosing marital relationships

Two main approaches for diagnosing marital relationships have successfully predicted divorce with over 80% and 90% accuracy. Both approaches rely on indirect elements of the couples' input. The input elicited from couples is not in the form of self-reported surveys,

but in the form of an interaction between them, or a story they tell together. This input is then observed and analysed by the researcher.

Rather than analysing the content of the couples' communication (i.e., the themes discussed and topics raised), it was found that the affect (mostly in the form of emotions, but not exclusively) displayed by the couple (through tone of voice, body language, and communication patterns), or the relational processes which the couples engaged in were predictive of the course of the relationship (Gottman 1993; Carrère et al. 2000; Gottman 2014b). Various approaches differ in the input they seek from the couples, and in the indicators which they found predictive of marital dissolution. These approaches are described in more detail next.

2.4.2.1 ***Interactional approach***

The first approach observes how the couple interacts during conflict. In conflict situations, couples typically express and experience negative emotions. By directly observing multiple facets of couples' interactions during conflict, which include displays of affect (verbal and non-verbal), interactional processes (e.g., conversation, criticism, and withdrawal), and physiological indicators (e.g., heart-rate, perspiration, and body temperature) (Hicks et al. 2004), marital researchers identified two forms of indicators: quantitative and qualitative (Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992; Gottman et al. 1998b; Carrère et al. 2000). The quantitative element is based on the ratio of positive and negative affect displayed by couples during conflict (Gottman 1993). Specifically, divorce and/or unhappy marital relationships have been associated with couples who during conflict, have less than five expressions of positive affect for every expression of negative affect. Unhappy marriage are characterised by low levels of marital satisfaction and happiness, and higher levels of marital distress (Flora & Segrin 2003).

The qualitative element examines relational processes displayed by the couple. Marital researchers identified specific qualitative relational processes which differentiated couples who divorced, couples who remained together unhappily, and couples whose marriage was happy and non-distressed in the future. This aspect is further elaborated on in Section 2.5.

2.4.2.2 ***Perceptual approach***

The second approach examines the couples' perceptions of their past, using storytelling. This approach taps into the emotions which couples display when they describe their past (Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992). Data are collected in the form of stories of the couple's history, by conducting a joint interview, asking them to describe meaningful events from their past together. The couples are also asked to describe their views on what successful and unsuccessful marriages are like, thus identifying their perceptions of what makes a marriage successful. This approach taps into the mental image the spouses have of one another, described in Section 2.4.1.2, which is constructed based on the couples' joint experiences.

In this approach, only qualitative predictors of divorce were identified, and these are described in more detail in Section 2.5. Contrary to the direct observations of the interactional approach, the ratio of affect was not reported as a significant predictor of divorce when this storytelling method was used (Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992; Carrère et al. 2000). This approach is more amenable to organisational settings, as it requires collection of data in a simpler and familiar form of employee interviews, as opposed to observations of simulated conflict. This approach also supports the collection of data describing the employee's relationship with the entire organisation, rather than snapshots of their interaction with specific people.

2.4.2.3 ***Criticisms***

The method described here for diagnosing marriage and the predicting divorce has not gone without criticisms. Although some replication attempts reinforce the success of this method (e.g., Flora & Segrin 2003), some replication attempts have found different results (Kim, Capaldi & Crosby 2007). Two main areas in this method have been criticised: findings' generalisability, and the statistical methods that it employed. The generalisability of the marital affect balance theory(Kim, Capaldi & Crosby 2007) has been criticised due to the sampling method used to develop it (Stanley, Bradbury & Markman 2000). The tool for diagnosing marital relationships was designed based on extreme cases of marital satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Out of a large sample of couples (over 170 couples), three sets of couples were studied to identify relational processes predictive of marital satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and divorce: 20 happiest couples, 20 unhappiest couples, and 17 divorced couples. In reality, however, most of the normally-distributed population is 'in between' – neither very happy nor very unhappy. Since then, questions were raised about the relevance of the findings to couples that did not fall into extreme categories, and therefore, to the results' generalisability (Stanley, Bradbury & Markman 2000). Indeed, the results failed to replicate in a study that examined this generalisability (Kim, Capaldi & Crosby 2007).

Typically, however, Gottman's research is not criticised for the findings based onthe affect ratio, but for the relational processes which were identified as predictive of relationship deterioration or relational happiness. For example, replication studies done by others did not find support for Gottman's conclusion that men's rejection of their partners' influence, men's lack of de-escalation of partners' negative affect, and women's negative start-up of interaction are predictive of relationship deterioration(Babcock et al. 2004; Kim, Capaldi & Crosby 2007). This criticism is valid for marital researchers who seek strict guidance for accurate predictions of marital breakups.

For the purpose of this study, which is exploratory in nature, and seeks theusefulnessof this marital diagnosis approach for turnover research, this criticism is of lesser concern. There is a reasonable expectation that processes will not have an identical predictive effect, if only due to the major differences between marital and employee-organisation relationships. Thus, although the relational processes identified in marital research are a useful starting point for data coding and analysis, the researcher is aware of the need to remain alert for emerging processes in the data, which may have a predictive value as well.

Further criticism was made over the statistical methods employed by Gottman (1993; 1994c), as well as the interpretations of behavioural processes identified by the researchers (Stanley, Bradbury & Markman 2000). Gottman was criticised for inconsistent measuring of relational constructs, and thus, unclear evidence of their predictive power. Some relational processes with a single index, and some with a composite score of indices, and it was not clear if the reliability of both types of constructs was equally reliable. Composite scores tend to be more reliable than single item constructs (Stanley, Bradbury & Markman 2000),and this reliability affects the construct's predictive strength. Gottman was criticised on not fully disclosing relevant reliability information, which would allow the evaluation of the various relational processes' predictive strength (Stanley, Bradbury & Markman 2000).

Although Gottman et al. (2000) used statistical justification for their choice, this research is not concerned with such justification, and does not use composite indices when examining the association of relational processes and future relational quality. Again, because this research is exploratory in nature and focuses on opening directions of enquiry, and not on testing hypotheses, its purpose is not to limit but to discover potential processes which are relevant to the prediction of the quality of employee-organisation relationships.

2.4.3 Summary of theory of marital separation

This section presented the theory and approaches for successfully predicting the breakdown of marital relationships, and divorce. These predictions are based on a theory of marital affect balance, which posits that a successful marriage is sustained by a balance between positive and negative affect experienced by the couple. The theory also describes the trajectory towards divorce as a cascade of the relational processes that precede it. According to this theory, couples move along this trajectory with the accumulation of negative experienced affect.

Diagnosing marital relationships based on the theory of marital affect balance relies on two central elements: (1) a balance between positive and negative affect which is necessary for the sustainability of the marriage, and (2) the constructed nature of human memories. The balance between positive and negative affect (or lack thereof) can be diagnosed through a direct observation of the affect expressed by the spouses during conflict, and by calculating a quantitative ratio of positive-to-negative affect. The constructed nature of human memories enables the diagnosis of marital relationships by tapping into how they describe their past. Because these memories are biased by affect experienced during the interaction with the partner, or affect consistently experienced with the partner, spouses' descriptions of their past reveal these biases.

Two main approaches for diagnosing marital relationships have been described. One involves an observation of conflict between the spouses. The other approach, which is highly amenable for using in an organisational setting, examines stories the couples tell to describe their past together. This approach taps into the mental image which couples construct of one another, based on their joint experiences.

These points are central to the method of diagnosis within marital research, and are at the core of the method developed in this study for examining its benefits in the employment setting. These points inform the development of the method, the coding, the analysis, and the conclusions drawn from this research, as will be discussed in this thesis.

2.5 Qualitative indicators - relational processes in marital research

In addition to the quantitative indicators based on displays of affect and emotions, marital research has identified qualitative indicators of marital distress (Gottman & Krokoff 1989; Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992; Carrère et al. 2000). These qualitative indicators suggest that not all positive emotions and not all negative emotions have the same effect on the quality and sustainability of a marital relationship, which means some negative emotions can be tolerated in successful marriages, and even be instrumental in improving their quality (Gottman & Krokoff 1989). Other emotions, and / or relational processes exhibited by the couples indicate that the relationship is on a path towards breakdown, as described in Section 2.4.1. Both observations of couples' direct interactions and an examination of processes exhibited during storytelling interviews produced lists of processes which were associated with future satisfaction and stability, or with dissatisfaction and / or instability. These processes are described next.

2.5.1 Predictive relational processes

Studies using the storytelling interview method identified several relational processes in the couples' conversation that indicated the mental image of marital spouses of each other and their marital distress or lack thereof. Couples' stories of their past were coded for dimensions presented in Table 2.5, along with the condition of marriage which they predicted (the table's

content is adapted from Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992; Gottman et al. 1998a; Carrère et al. 2000).

Couples who scored low on *fondness* (dimension 1), *we-ness* (dimension 3) or *expansiveness* (dimension 4), or high on *negativity* (dimension 2) or *disappointment* (dimension 7) were quite accurately predicted (that is, 94%) to be divorced within a three-year follow-up. Couples who glorified the struggles in their relationship and demonstrated positive patterns of behaviour (that is, fondness, we-ness and so on) were more likely to remain married. This result shows a clear correlation between how couples viewed their past, and how they ended up in the future.

Among qualitative relational processes, one process in particular has been studied in detail in the context of human relationships – marital, educational, social, etc. The process of attribution – the formation of an opinion about the reasons for an event or observation – has been useful in explaining and predicting human behaviour with regards to their interactions with others(Bradbury & Fincham 1990; Harvey, Harris & Martinko 2008; Martinko, Harvey & Dasborough 2011; Kelley et al. 2013). The next section presents attribution theory and its potential usefulness for diagnosing the employee-organisation relationship.

Table 2.5 Dimensions of relational processes in marital research	
Processes in direct interactions	
1. Criticism	• Stating one's complaints as a defect in one's partner's personality, i.e., giving the partner negative trait attributions (example: "You always talk about yourself. You are so selfish").
2. Defensiveness	• Denial of responsibility for a problem, a counter problem, or whining (a high-pitched fluid fluctuating voice).
3. Contempt	• Associated with repulsion, disgust, and being fed up.
4. Stonewalling and withdrawal	• The listener withdraws from the interaction, shutting down and closing themselves off from the speaker because they are feeling overwhelmed or physiologically flooded. The listener becomes totally unresponsive, making evasive manoeuvres such as tuning out, turning away, acting busy, or engaging in obsessive behaviours.
Processes exhibited during the storytelling interview	
1. Fondness/ Affection towards spouse	The extent to which the couple seemed to be in-love or fond of each other.
2. Negativity towards spouse	The extent to which the spouses display negative affect towards each other during the interview, and how critical partners are towards each other during the interview.
3. We-ness versus Separateness	How much a spouse identifies with being part of a couple, versus emphasising their individuality or independence.
4. Expansiveness versus withdrawal	How expressive and expansive a partner is during the interview.
5. Dealing with conflict	How couples viewed and dealt with marital conflicts.
a. Volatility	Oscillation between intense positive and negative emotions.
b. Chaotic relationships	Feeling they have low control over the turbulence of their married lives.
c. Glorifying the struggle	Feeling like the difficulties in their marriage helped them grow closer together.
6. Marital disappointment and disillusionment	To what degree the couple feels defeated and depressed about their marriage, and have given up on it.
(Adapted from Alony, Hasan & Sense 2014b; Gottman 2014b; The Gottman Institute 2015)	

2.5.2 Attribution theory

People can be seen as 'naïve scientists', trying to make sense of the world around them by actively searching for explanations of the behaviours that they observe, and forming hypotheses as to the causes of those behaviours (Heider 1958; Dasborough & Ashkanasy

2002). The resulting causal attributions determine, in turn, cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses toward the actor (Kelley & Michela 1980). Based on this view, attribution theory has commonly been used for explaining and predicting human behaviour (Kelley & Michela 1980; Gregor 2006; Martinko, Harvey & Douglas 2007; Harvey, Harris & Martinko 2008). Consistent with the concept of a *mental image*, described in Section 2.4.1.2, attribution theory subscribes to the idea that perception is the foundation of human understanding, sense-making and behaviour. This theory claims that people develop explanations for the behaviours of others based on how they perceive the behaviour and the reality surrounding it. This explanation - the attribution - is based on how the observing person perceives a cause for the actor's behaviour. Indeed, reviews of hundreds of empirical and theoretical studies on the attribution process have pointed two major conclusions which are relevant to this study: (1) attributions are pervasive, and (2) they drive subsequent behaviour (Hansen & Kahnweiler 1995). A recent review of attribution literature in organisational science highlights the role of attribution styles, which are stable, trait-like tendencies to make certain types of attributions (Martinko, Harvey & Dasborough 2011). These tendencies have been found to predict behaviours such as managers' evaluation of workers' performance (Martinko, Harvey & Douglas 2007).

The first judgment that people make when they observe a behaviour is whether the behaviour was caused by internal or external reasons: by the actor, or by something outside the actor. A person will be more inclined to make such judgement if the act affects their own welfare. Since events in a work setting have been shown to impact workers' wellbeing and welfare (Wright & Bonett 2007), attribution theory appears relevant for this study.

People commonly attribute performance outcomes to factors of ability, effort, task difficulty and luck (Weiner 1985; Weiner 1986; Graham 1991). These and other attribution factors vary along several underlying dimensions such as locus of causality (internal/external to

attributor), stability, and controllability (Weiner 1986; Russell, McAuley & Tarico 1987; Locke 1991; Silver, Mitchell & Gist 1995; Weiner 2000). These factors and their underlying dimensions are summarised in Table 2.6. In addition, globality (versus specificity) determines if the attribution is consistent across circumstances, or if it is made specific to the particular event regarded (Martinko & Thomson 1998).

Table 2.6
Common attributions and dimensions in attribution theory

Stability	Stable		Unstable	
Controllability	Controllable	Uncontrollable	Controllable	Uncontrollable
Locus of Control	Internal	External	Internal	External
Attribution	Ability	Task Difficulty	Effort	Luck

(Source: Kelley et al., 2013, p. 10)

This study aligns with other attribution studies which examine the causal link between attribution and behaviour. A worker's perception of the behaviour of an actor, and the causes of that behaviour, affects how the worker will, in turn, behave towards that actor (Hansen & Kahnweiler 1995). Originally, attribution theory only dealt with human actors. In management research, it is often used in the interpersonal context of leader-member exchange (Martinko, Harvey & Dasborough 2011). This study extends on this to include non-human actors, such as an organisation.

Attribution has been studied in the context of marital relationships, and findings show that attributions spouses make for events occurring in their marriage are associated with marital satisfaction and relationship quality (Holtzworth-Munroe & Jacobson 1985; Bradbury & Fincham 1990). Marital research has also established that the various dimensions of attribution are not relevant to partners' relationships. In other studies of attributions, typically conducted in a laboratory context, the dimensions of attributions summarised in

Table 2.6 differentiated their consequences(Kelley & Michela 1980; Ashkanasy 2002; Martinko, Harvey & Douglas 2007). However, when it comes to relationships in a naturalistic setting, these dimensions are not discriminating. People's attribution towards their partner differ along two dimensions: relationship *enhancing* attributions, and relationship *distressing* attributions (Bradbury & Fincham 1990). The dimensions commonly used in attribution research (that is, global-specific, internal- external, controllable – uncontrollable, stable-unstable) can assist with inferring couples' enhancing or distressing attributions(Fincham & Bradbury 1992). For example, a spouse attributing negative partner's behaviour to a specific, external, uncontrollable, or unstable reasons shows an enhancing attribution, whereas one who attributes it to a global, internal, controllable, or stable reasons presents a distressing one.

This finding justifies a simplified view of attributions. Rather than categorising participants' attributions along the various dimensions (e.g., internal, external, controllable, stable, etc.), a relational perspective on employment warrants this study to examine the enhancing or distressing aspect of employee's attribution. For example, attributing a harmful action taken by the organisation to external causes is considered enhancing, whereas attributing it to enduring characteristics of the organisation is distressing.

2.5.3 Summary of qualitative indicators in marital research

Besides quantitative indicators, qualitative indicators have also been found to predict marital sustainability and happiness. These qualitative indicators are based on the existence and display of specific relational processes. Several indicative relational processes are listed and described in Table 2.5.

A special category of relational processes, attribution, has been studied in greater detail. Attribution refers to the reasons one partner assigns to behaviours seen in the other. The

nature of the attribution, which means, identifying if the attribution distresses or enhances the relationship, has been shown to be consistent with marital happiness.

Adapting this method for predicting divorce into the prediction of employee turnover, this research examines if quantitative affect ratios and qualitative processes, including attribution, are also predictive of the sustainability and quality of employment.

Contrary to several reports of the success of method for diagnosing marital relationships based on the marital affect balance theory (Carrère et al. 2000; Gottman et al. 2003; Hicks et al. 2004; Gottman 2014b), Several criticisms have been described. The critique of this method is worthwhile taking into account before drawing on it for examining employee turnover. The next section reviews critiques and identifies important points for this study.

2.6 Divorce prediction – Criticisms

The prediction of marital separation and divorce based on displayed affect and relational processes has been critiqued along two major aspects: a theoretical aspect, and a methodological aspect. This chapter only presents theoretical criticisms. The methodological criticisms are covered in detail in the next chapter, along with the methodology pursued in this study.

To examine the nature of the theory of marital affect balance, a typology of theories is used. This typology has been used in modern social sciences, such as business research (Seidel, Rosemann & Becker 2008), business process modelling (Bandara et al. 2006), marketing communication (Ewing 2009), and general social sciences theory (Wallis 2010). This typology, originally developed in the field of information systems (Gregor 2006), divides theories into five main categories: (1) theories for analysing, (2) theories for explaining, (3) theories for predicting, (4) theories for explaining and predicting, and (5) theories for design and action (Gregor 2006). Within this framework, theories from each category have value

and contribute to research in their own way. The way divorce can be predicted was admittedly based on a theory of the third category, a theory of predicting. This type of theory, by definition, aims to predict *what* will be but not *why*; some, and perhaps most, of the mechanisms of the phenomenon remain a 'black box', or as explained by Gregor: "Such theories are able to predict outcomes from a set of explanatory factors, without explaining the underlying causal connections between the dependent and independent variables in any detail" (2006, p. 625).

The method originally aimed, as Gottman admits(1994c), to identify *indicators*, and *notcauses*, of the relationship breakdown. In recent years, however, Gottman's work has matured to suggest a theoretical model which describes the mechanism of marital relationships' breakdown, and the role affect plays in it, as discussed in Section 2.4.1 and illustrated in Figure 2.3. According to this systems-based cascade model, as negative experiences accumulate in a marriage, they drive the spouses down a path of escalating withdrawal, with different relational processes identified as predictors of a divorce being displayed at different stages of the withdrawal (Gottman 2014b). Although this theory is based on methodologically-rigorous findings, it is partially speculative and has not been confirmed (Knapp 2009).

Besides this criticism admitted by Gottman, the theory has been criticised for not integrating attribution theory (Fincham 2001). Although Gottman's work suggests a theoretical link between attribution theory and divorce prediction (Gottman 1993), there is no empirical and quantifiable integration of the two. The inclusion of attribution theory in this research therefore represents an important step for addressing this last weakness.

Another criticism concerns the impact of national and ethnic cultures. Most of the studies involving this theory mainly examined either North-American couples, thus lacking cultural

diversity in subjects, (Caughlin & Vangelisti 2006), or did not examine the differences between ethnic groups (Hicks et al. 2004), and therefore it is unclear if this model is culture-bound, and how different cultural elements may affect it.

2.7 Chapter summary

This chapter reviewed literature pertinent to the problem of employee turnover, and relevant to the view of turnover as a breakdown in the relationship between the employee and the organisation. The chapter examined literature from the field of organisational studies, to gain an understanding of the turnover phenomenon, and from the field of interpersonal relationships, specifically, marital relationships, because of the availability of a theory and approach for successfully predicting their relationship breakdown.

The review of turnover literature has revealed that, while ample research on this topic exists, the ability to predict its occurrence is lacking. Many factors have been found to influence turnover, which belong to three main categories: organisational, individual, and relational. Factors from each category were reviewed. In addition to these factors, research of the process of employee turnover was examined. The review of the categories of turnover factors and of the turnover process revealed that a relational view of employment is sensible, due to the following similarities:

1. Affect is an important underlying mechanism for turnover processes;
2. Perceptions employees have of their organisations' actions are central to turnover decisions;
3. Mutuality is an important aspect of turnover prediction, as indicated by the typical contingency of individual factors upon organisational factors; and
4. The importance of the relationships employees have as part of their employment is an emerging focus in turnover studies.

Despite ample research on turnover, and despite great efforts to successfully predict it, prediction accuracy rarely exceeded 50%. This low prediction ability offers little, if any, benefits to practitioners.

The chapter identified another characteristic of most turnover literature, and particularly turnover prediction: it almost always relies on self-reported survey-based data. This type of data has been associated with two major problems: self-presentation bias and common methods variance bias. Therefore, this review identified an opportunity to advance turnover research by engaging in predictive enquiry of turnover with a different, and novel, approach. This approach, although still relying on self-reported data, examines covert indicators, which may not be as easy to distort as survey responses.

The chapter then drew attention to a different type of relationship breakdown – the breakdown of marriage in the form of divorce – which researchers have been able to predict with a much greater success: over 80% and over 90% accuracy. The breakdown of these relationships follows a different approach, and does not rely on self-reported survey-based data.

The chapter then established theoretical and practical similarities between the two forms of relationships (i.e., employment and marriage). Both relationships satisfy similar needs for those who engage in them, and both share a common theoretical foundation, in the form of social exchange theory (SET). Evidence that affect plays an important part in both relationships were presented as well. In addition, the conceptual similarities of basic underlying forces involved in the breakdown of these relationships were presented. Both relationships are sustained by their attractiveness, by similar barriers to breakups, and by the presence of attractive alternatives.

With a clear understanding of the value and justification of drawing on marital research for an approach for predicting the breakdown of the employee-organisation relationship, the chapter examined the theory of marital affect balance. This theory posits that a successful marriage is sustained by a balance of experienced positive and negative emotions. This balance is diagnosed through an observation of affect expressed by the couple during conflict.

The theory of marital affect balance lists specific relational processes which indicate how far down the path towards separation the couple is, namely criticism, complaint, defensiveness, contempt, and withdrawal. Couples advance along this path with the accumulation of negative experiences. Therefore, identifying these relational processes contributes to the predictive ability of a relationship breakdown.

The theory of marital affect balance also posits thatover time, emotions experienced by the spouse biastheconstruction and the recall of their memories. The chapter described how distressed couples tend to highlight negative aspects of their past, whereas non-distressed couples tend to highlight the positive aspects. In addition, specific relational processes which occur during recall of the past and predict the course of the relationship have been identified. The chapter described and justified these indicators.

The chapter also presented and discussed the relevance of attribution theory to this study. This theory is concerned with how the behaviour of others is perceived and interpreted. Its relevance to the spouses' perceptions of one another, as well as for its contribution to understanding relational processes, was discussed.

Finally, the theory of marital affect balance and the approaches it has used to diagnose marital relationships and to predict their breakdown has been critiqued. The major criticisms discussed concern its nature (predictive rather than explanatory), and its failure to integrate attribution theory, and the influence of national and ethnic culture. This study explicitly

addresses this criticism, and integrates attribution theory into the theory of marital affect balance, however, cultural ethnicities remain outside its scope.

This chapter has established the conceptual framework for this study by drawing on SET and the marital theory of affect balance. The next chapter details the methodology deployed to address the research questions.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes and justifiesthe methodology for the study of employee turnover, focusing on the ability to predict it. The literature review in the Chapter 2 has shown a major gap in this area of research. Although the extant turnover literature provides a vast number of predictors, their success at predicting employee turnover has rarely exceeded 50% (Wagner 2010), and intentions typically explain at most 25% of the variance (Allen, Weeks & Moffitt 2005; Hom et al. 2012). This major deficiency indicates a gap in the understanding of employment as a relationship between the employee and the organisation. Advancing this understanding provides the motivation for this study, which examines a novel approach to predicting turnover.

This study is designed to examine the benefits of viewing employment as a relationship between the employee and the organisation. The study draws on methods for diagnosing relationships developed in marital research, and examines if these methods are useful for predicting employee turnover. This approach guides the philosophical, methodological, and practical decisions made for this study, which are described and justified in this chapter.

This chapter begins by examining three different paradigms considered for this research problem - functionalist, interpretivist, and pragmatist. The suitability of the pragmatist paradigm for this research is then identified and justified. The design of the research – a longitudinal, mixed-methods, between-subject study – is then described. Once the overall research design is clear, the chapter turns to examine the specific methods used.

Chapter 2 has established the suitability of viewing employment as a relationship between the employee and the organisation, and has identified methods for diagnosing marital relationships. This chapter critiques these methods. After making informed decisions in light of the critique, the methods used in this study are described. The qualitative and quantitative

aspects of the methods are presented, as well as the way their contributions are analysed and integrated. The chapter concludes by summarising and highlighting the main points discussed, which are relevant to the collection of data and their analysis.

3.1 Research paradigms available to business researchers

This research address a problem within the field of employee turnover, which is part of the discipline of business studies. Studies in this discipline can be (and are) conducted based on various research paradigms. A paradigm can be described as "an accepted model or framework" (Kuhn 2009, p. 23), a set of philosophical assumptions underlying the way the world is perceived (Mertens 2005), which serves to direct research efforts, to articulate previously established theories, and to exclude other ways to perceive the world (Feilzer 2010). Thus, an understanding of the philosophical foundation of research is necessary for an appropriate selection of methods for addressing research questions (Creswell & Clark 2011b).

Paradigms differ along several dimensions. Different paradigms focus on different aims, the knowledge in each paradigm is founded on different sources, and they therefore suit different methodologies and purposes (Creswell & Clark 2011b). Each paradigm is typically associated with a different *epistemology*, which is the relationship between the researcher and the research problem (Bryman 2012), and a different *ontology*, which is the way the researcher perceives the nature of reality (Bryman & Bell 2011). The components, or dimensions, of typical philosophical paradigms available to social researchers are summarised in Table 3.1. A description of each paradigm along these dimensions is provided next.

Table 3.1 Typical components of three relevant research paradigms				
	Meaning	Functionalist	Interpretivist	Pragmatist
Focus		Determination	Understanding	Consequences of research
Foundation of knowledge		Reductionism	Multiple participant perspective	Problem-centred
Epistemology	The relationship between the researcher and the research problem	Distant and impartial	Closeness up to immersion, co-creation of knowledge by researcher and respondent	Particular, guided by what produces useful results
Ontology	The nature of reality	Singular reality (there is only one truth, hypothesis rejected or accepted)	Multiple realities (different perspectives of a single event are equally valid and acceptable)	Singular and multiple realities (hypotheses can be test, and multiple perspectives can be provided)
Methodology	The research strategy and design	Deductive (e.g., testing a-priory theory), empirical observation, measurement, and experiments	Inductive (building theory from multiple input sources), social and historical construction	Pluralist, combining (mixing input collected with different tools)
Methods	Techniques or procedures for data collection and analysis	Structured and pre-defined (e.g., survey based on pre-defined variables)	Facilitating emergent constructs (e.g., seeking themes in semi-structured interviews)	Combining structured and pre-defined with facilitation of emergent constructs
(Source: Adapted from Crotty 1998; Feilzer 2010; Creswell & Clark 2011b; Denzin & Lincoln 2011)[4]				

3.1.1. Functionalist paradigm

The functionalist paradigm strives for certainty and clarity typically produced by methods commonly employed in research in the natural sciences. This paradigm, developed from the positivist tradition (Morgan 1980), aims to *determine* reality, typically in terms of cause-and-

[4] The participatory paradigm is excluded from discussion in this thesis because the research at hand is not designed as a participatory intervention within a group or a community.

effect (Creswell & Clark 2011b). When subscribing to this paradigm, the researcher's ontology, or their view of reality, is that there is a singular reality, which exists independently of the researcher (Sachdeva 2009). Based on this ontology, functionalist researchers believe that research elements, such as social constructs, have a concrete, real existence, and that they have "a systematic character oriented to produce an ordered and regulated state of affairs" (Morgan 1980, p. 608). This order and regulation are the ultimate target of the functionalist researcher.

Researchers operating within the functionalist paradigm seek to identify systems of cause-and-effect in the world, by breaking systems down to their basic components, through reductionism (Slife & Williams 1995). These elements, posit such researchers, can be empirically observed and measured (Creswell & Clark 2011b). The measurement and observation of these elements relies on the researcher, which has to be impartial, objective, and removed from the problem, to objectively identify or uncover this reality (Sachdeva 2009; Bryman & Bell 2011). Reality is therefore uncovered through the rigour and techniques of the scientific method, usually quantitative ones (Morgan 1980). Typically, this paradigm is suited for the testing, verification, and refinement of theory (Slife & Williams 1995; Creswell & Clark 2011b).

The vast majority of turnover studies seem to be conducted within this paradigm, as they are typically concerned with measuring constructs, which are then organised in models of turnover prediction (Holtom et al. 2008; Steel & Lounsbury 2009; Hom et al. 2012). Apart from some rare examples (for example, Maertz, Stevens & Campion 2003; Nuttman-Shwartz 2004; Ashworth 2006; Hyvönen et al. 2009; Brown & Korczynski 2010; Loan-Clarke et al. 2010), turnover research is predicated on a view that the employee's propensity to turnover objectively exists, and can be identified using objective tools.

Despite the comfort of concrete resultsof research conducted within this paradigm, it has been questioned whether it is appropriate to view humans and issues related to their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours in the same way one would view molecules or atoms (Bryman & Bell 2011; Bryman 2012). The reductionism typically involved in the functionalist approach fails to encompass the human complexity and dynamism (Schutz 1967), and may therefore exclude elements which are pertinent to their operation. Even a paradigm similar to the functionalist, called *realism*, which accepts that some mechanisms may not be observable (Bhaskar 2013), is limited. The main limitations of the functionalist paradigm and those similar to it are mainly due to their expectation to identify one singular reality, and to their employment of rigid methods, which focus on narrow and specific elements, failing to discover or adjust to unexpected issues. This paradigm cannot, therefore, underlie research which examines novel research approaches.

3.1.2. Interpretivist paradigm

Often seen as the contrasting opposite to the functionalist paradigm (Burrell & Morgan 1979), the interpretivist paradigm aims to *understand*, rather than *determine*, phenomena (Bryman 2012). This understanding is based on knowledge obtained from multiple perspectives, to form social and historical construction (Creswell & Clark 2011b). This construction of theory 'from the bottom up' epistemologically relies on the researcher's interpretations, resulting from the researcher's closeness to the research subject, up to complete immersion (Sanders 1982). Ontologically, reality in this paradigm is viewed not as a singular instance, but as "a product of the subjective and inter-subjective experience of individuals" (Morgan 1980, p. 608). This view produces multiple realities, each of which is equally valid.

This paradigm has a clear appeal to the study of relational phenomena, because of its acceptance of subjective realities, its concern with understanding the *meaning* of a person's actions from their point of view (Sanders 1982), as it is perceived by them. In particular, research within this paradigm focuses on meaningful social actions which individuals engage in, as the foundation of their understanding of, and reaction to, the world around them (Blumer 1986), thus making it suitable for the examination of behaviours and perceptions of relationship partners.

This research paradigm is typically associated with research problems of exploratory nature, when the field of research is not yet developed or familiar, and is therefore suitable for theory development, rather than theory testing (Bryman 2012). More often than not (but not always) the interpretivist paradigm is associated with qualitative research methods, such as interviews, focus groups, and narratives (Bryman & Bell 2011).

Despite its appeal to the research of human subjects, this paradigm's respect for differences between people, and its attention to individual differences, mean that tools within it are not suitable for predicting human behaviour. Tools within this paradigm do not offer systematic investigations of cause-and-effect, does not produce measurable prediction results, and thus, it is insufficient for advancing knowledge with respect to the prediction of employee turnover.

3.1.3. Pragmatist paradigm

Questioning the traditional rigid dichotomy between paradigms, epistemologies, and ontologies, a third methodological movement has emerged in recent years (Feilzer 2010; Teddlie & Tashakkori 2010; Cameron 2011; Creswell & Clark 2011b). Traditionally, as summarised in Table 3.1, exploratory research questions were matched with an interpretive paradigm, interpretivist epistemology, constructivist ontology, and qualitative research

methods, which allowed multiple perspectives and emerging constructs (Bryman & Bell 2011; Bryman 2012). Confirmatory research was usually matched with a functionalist paradigm, positivist or critical realist epistemology, objectivist ontology, and quantitative research methods, which confirmed the effects of constructs on measurable outcomes(Bryman & Bell 2011; Bryman 2012). This way, paradigms served to direct research efforts, to articulate previously established theories, and to exclude other ways to perceive the world (Feilzer 2010). In this sense, however, paradigms can become prescriptive, and dictate the use and the exclusion of research methods (Feilzer 2010). Such restrictions can be harmful to research by constraining creativity, curiosity, and even the discovery of social phenomena (Kuhn 2009).

In response to these risks, the efforts of a methodological movement supporting mixed-methods research (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2010a) have developed a third approach, while addressing paradigmatic, epistemological, and ontological challenges (Cameron 2011). This approach calls for the convergence of qualitative and quantitative methods, highlighting the common striving of traditionally contrasted epistemologies and ontologies towards "the truth" (Dewey 1958, p. 26).

This third approach draws on pragmatism, a bridge between a philosophical paradigm and practical methods (Cameron 2011), which openly rejects the "false dichotomy between the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms[,] and advocate[s] for the efficient use of both approaches" (Cameron 2011, p. 100). Pragmatism "sidesteps the contentious issues of truth and reality, accepts, philosophically, that there are singular and multiple realities that are open to empirical inquiry[,] and orients itself toward solving practical problems in the [']real world[']'' (Feilzer 2010, p. 8). Within this paradigm, the researcher's focus is on the *consequences* of their research, and how these consequences create value and benefit society (Creswell & Clark 2011b). Knowledge, in this paradigm, is problem-centred: it is based on

what aids the researcher address the research problem. Thus, when taking a pragmatist approach, the researcher keeps in mind that the perceptions of truth and reality are the means, not the end (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2010b).

For a pragmatist researcher, however, the end is the benefit of solving problems. Pragmatists advocate for an "antirepresentational view of the world" (Feilzer 2010, p. 8), which provides *useful* descriptions of the world, even if they do not describe reality accurately. Although the definitions of what is useful can vary greatly, when a clear utility is identified, like in the case of this study, a pragmatist paradigm is clearly beneficial.

There are obvious contradictions when engaging in research methods from the major two opposing paradigms, as evident in Table 3.1. For example, the functionalist paradigm posits a single and external reality, while the interpretivist paradigm believes in multiple and equally valid realities, which vary according to the individual engaging in them. Researchers employing mixed-methods research (MMR) used various stances to reconcile such contradictions between the two traditional paradigms. One paradigmatic stance, the dialectic stance (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2010), justifies this methodology of combining methods from both paradigms by accepting that all paradigms offer benefits to researchers, and multiple paradigms in a single study contributes to a better understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Employing this stance compels the researcher to think dialectically, treat important paradigm differences respectfully, and intentionally use both paradigmatic systems together (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2010, p. 15). This stance supports discovery of "enhanced, reframed, or new understandings" (Greene 2007, p. 69), which is what this research seeks.

3.1.4. The paradigm in this study

The research problem addressed in this study is exploring a novel approach to predicting employee turnover, based on marital research. Employee turnover is a phenomenon which

has been studied extensively (as described in Chapter 2), and therefore an extensive body of knowledge regarding this phenomenon exists. Within this extensive body of knowledge, however, there is little prior research which examines this phenomenon while viewing it as a relationship between the employee and the organisation. With these conditions, each of the three traditional paradigms have advantages and disadvantages, as summarised in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2
Advantages and disadvantages of three research paradigms for this study

Paradigm	Advantages	Disadvantages
Functionalist	Can provide measurable, and objectively-comparable prediction results	Not suitable for exploration of new research approach: Inflexible Narrow focus on specific factors
Interpretivist	Suitable for exploration of new research approach: Flexible Broad view of the phenomenon	Does not support measurable, and objectively-comparable prediction results
Pragmatist	Can provide measurable prediction results Suitable for exploration of new research approach: Enables flexibility Allows a broad view of the phenomenon	Complex to use (particularly for novice and researchers) Emergent

Source: Developed for this study

The interpretivist paradigm offers several benefits to this study. It is suitable for its exploratory nature, as it allows for a broad view of the phenomenon and for flexible enquiry of issues involved in it. Indeed, in afew recent cases of exploration of turnover issues, this paradigm was employed, for example, when there was a need to identify factors and reasons for turnover (or retention) among specific groups (Maertz, Stevens & Campion 2003; Hyvönen et al. 2009; Loan-Clarke et al. 2010), to uncover employees' ways of coping when they are retained (Brown & Korczynski 2010), and to explore the impact of turnover on the organisation (Ashworth 2006) or those who have left (Nuttman-Shwartz 2004). However, the

disadvantage of this paradigm for the research problem addressed here concerns the aim of this study – to determine whether marital methods can predict the future of employee-organisation relationships. The interpretivist paradigm, in contrast, is not fully oriented towards providing measurable and objectively-comparable predictive results. In itself, then, this paradigm is insufficient for this research.

In contrast, the functionalist paradigm's strength is to provide measurable outcomes, which can be objectively compared. Although this study could benefit from subscribing to this paradigm, the functionalist paradigm requires strict reductionism of constructs, which is not suitable when striving to explore phenomena in a new way. Although this study draws on methods from one well-researched field (marriage) to be applied in another well-researched field (turnover), this application is too novel for a prescriptive, impartial and removed, and deterministic view of the world. The socially-constructed nature of relationships, the value of perceptions, and the need for the researcher's interpretation of these aspects does not support the prescriptions of the functionalist paradigm. Thus, despite the benefits of this paradigm for this research, it cannot be fully adopted.

In comparison with both paradigms, the pragmatist paradigm offers greater flexibility in the selection of perspective and methods employed for addressing the research questions. It enables the researcher to draw on methods which support the need to gain measurable and objectively-comparable predictive results from the functionalist paradigm, but also permits the broad view of the phenomena studied and the flexibility of enquiry of its issues, as commonly done within the interpretivist paradigm. The pragmatist paradigm therefore combines the benefits from both traditional paradigms.

Once the suitability of the pragmatist paradigm for this study was established as the philosophical foundation for this study, a mixed-methods approach to data collection and

analysis was chosen, consistent with this paradigm. The next section (Section 3.2) justifies this choice, briefly examines various mixed-methods designs, and the limitations of this approach are presented. The design of this study is described in Section 3.3.

3.2 Mixed-methods approach

This study draws on a mixed-methods approach developed in marital research to diagnose the employee-organisation relationship. Justification for drawing on mixed-methods for evaluation purpose is provided here. Following the justification, Section 3.2.1 describes the four categories of mixed-methods research designs, and justifies the specific design (multistrand integrated design) selected for this study. The limitations, which are particularly due to the complexity of this design, are then discussed and addressed in Section 3.2.2.

Undertaking a mixed-methods approach in this research is justified on two grounds. One concerns the type of the research problem addressed in this study, and has been discussed in Section 3.1.4. The other is the pertinence of this approach for the success of the prediction of breakdowns in relationships. Compared with turnover studies, marital research has had considerably greater success at predicting the breakdown of relationships (80-90% versus 50%), as discussed in Chapter 2. Another difference between the two fields is the type of methods used for prediction. While turnover research predominantly relies on quantitative methods (see Holtom et al. 2008; Steel & Lounsbury 2009), marital research draws on a mixed-methods approach (Gottman 1994c). This mixed-methods approach resulted in a breakthrough in the successful prediction of divorce (Gottman & Notarius 2002), and thus suggests that it is at the heart of its usefulness. This is therefore an important aspect to draw on from the original approach to divorce prediction.

Various forms of research design are available when drawing on multiple methods. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2006) provide a typology of four categories, covering possible designs of

multiple methods research. The next section describes the mixed-methods research (MMR) typology selected for this study.

3.2.1 Designs of mixed-methods research

The design of an appropriate MMR involves many decisions, primarily with regards to the strands of data (single or multiple) to use in the research (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2006). Mixed-methods may have multiple strands of data (qualitative and quantitative), or a single strand of data[5]. This study, however, examines the more complex case of multiple data strands. It collects data both in qualitative and quantitative forms, notated as QUAL and QUAN, respectively, in the MMR field (Creswell 2010). This notation is used in this thesis as well.

When the data themselves result from multiple strands (i.e., QUAN and QUAL), Teddlieand Tashakkori(2006) offer a typology of four categories of research design: (1) concurrent, (2) sequential, (3) conversion, and (4) fully integrated. The fourth category hosts the most complex mixed-methods designs, which integrate elements from all other three categories. These categories are described Table 3.3.

Addressing the aim of this research, this study uses the ambitious approach of fully-integrated design. It thus combines all other three categories of mixed-methods research. The elements of this design are described briefly here, illustrated in Figure 3.1, and explained in detail below.

[5] If the single strand gets converted to another form (for example, collecting qualitative data and converting it into quantitative form), the design is still considered a mixed-methods research approach.

Table 3.3 Categories of mixed-methods research designs		
Category	**Description**	**Sources**
Concurrent	Data strands are collected simultaneously, relatively independently of each other.	(Morse 1991; Creswell & Clark 2011a)
Sequential	The collection of one data strand follows the collection of another data strand.	(Morse 1991; Creswell & Clark 2011a)
Conversion	Transforming one data type into another. Can be done by quantitising QUAL data, which can then be analysed using quantitative methods.	(Teddlie & Tashakkori 2006)
Fully integrated (**This study**)	Combining the three categories above. Collecting multiple data strands as independently as possible, converting data into other forms, and comparing data strands collected sequentially.	(Teddlie & Tashakkori 2006)

The study begins with a *concurrent* phase (at T1), where two strands of data are collected simultaneously: qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. The quantitative data strand is used to complement the understanding gained in the qualitative interview of the way the participants perceive and view their relationship with the organisation. The interviews collect participants' stories about their organisations (described in more detail in Section 3.4), and the surveys measure their job and workplace attitudes (full description in Section 3.5).

The qualitative data are *converted* into quantitative form, as part of the diagnosis. This conversion process calculates ratios (for example, positive-to-negative affect ratio) based on the qualitative interviews collected in T1. This conversion is described in more detail in Section 3.4.2. The practicalities of this conversion process are covered in detail in Chapter 4, Section 4.3. In addition, this study categorised qualitative data based on relational processes identified in participants' stories, as described in Section 3.4.1.

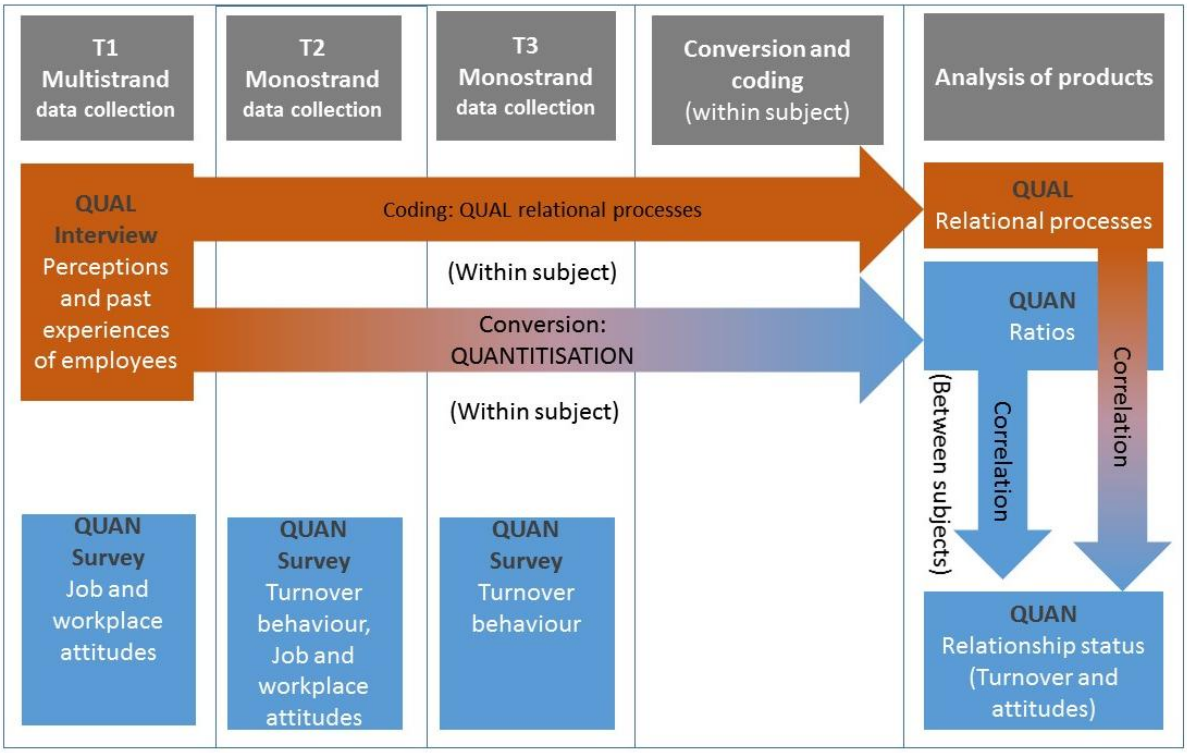

Figure 3.1- Research design for the study at hand – illustration

To examine if there was a correlation between the ratios and the quality of the employee-organisation relationship in the future, the study requires a *sequential* perspective. This is achieved by another measurement of job and workplace attitudes one year after the interview (at T2), and by examining turnover behaviour another year after that (At T3). This sequential aspect is described in more detail in Section 3.3.3.

The analysis of the data collected in this study is described in Section 3.6; however for the purpose of clarity, it is described briefly here. The analysis of the data compared participants' employee-organisation relationship at T2 and turnover behaviour by T3 with the products of diagnosis performed at T1. This comparison sought correlations between the indicators resulting from the diagnosis performed at T1 (i.e., quantitative ratios and qualitative relational processes identified) with the status of the employee-organisation relationship evaluated at T2 and T3. The design of this study is summarised in Figure 3.1.

3.2.2 Limitations - research complexity

Drawing on mixed-methods offers richness and breadth of outcomes (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2006) and is thus attractive for this research problem. However, mixed-methods in general, and particularly, ones with either a concurrent or a fully-integrated design, are challenging for a single and / or a novice researcher (Shulha & Wilson 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori 2006), for several reasons:

•Expertise in different approaches is required. A single / novice researcher is unlikely to be proficient in both approaches.

•Difficulty in simultaneously analysing two different data strands (QUAL and QUAN), and difficulty to integrate the results into meaningful findings.

•If data is discrepant, a single and / or novice researcher may not be able to interpret, resolve, or make meta-inferences of these inconsistencies.

Due to these risks, prominent MMR researchers (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2006) have strongly recommended that mixed-methods research using concurrent and / or integrated design be conducted by a team of researchers, where each individual researcher has expertise in either qualitative or quantitative methods. Because such team effort is not possible when a doctoral study is conducted, this study does not presume to analyse the results of each data strand (QUAL and QUANT) with the same rigour expected in a thesis of a single method. This decision affects this study's sample size (discussed in Section 3.3.2), the extent of coding performed on the qualitative data (discussed in Section 3.4), and the statistical methods used for analysis (discussed in Section 3.6).

3.3 Research design

The research design involved a pilot study which examined the viability of diagnosing employee-organisation relationships with marital-based methods. This pilot study is described in Section 3.3.1. Then, consistent with the aim of this study presented in Chapter 1, the research treated individual employees as its unit of analysis, selecting participants from two suitable organisations. This aspect of the research design (i.e., the selection of suitable organisations) is discussed in Section 3.3.2.

Befitting the pragmatist paradigm, the research was designed using a mixed-methods approach with a longitudinal element (within subject), and a comparative element, comparing diagnoses and relationship qualities between individual employees (between subject). As such, the data collection was conducted in three phases (T1, T2 and T3), which are described in Section 3.3.3. This description is followed by an explanation and justification for each element in this design. The practicalities of the data collection, including sampling strategies and procedures, however, are described in detail in the next chapter, in Section 4.1.

3.3.1 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted to examine the viability of this research(Alony, Hasan & Sense 2014b). The study examined an interview instrument which was developed based on the interview questions used in marital setting (Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992) (see detailed description in Section 3.4), and compared participants' responses to the questions to the relational processes identified in marital research.

These interview questions were used to interview seven academic staff members in an academic institution. As this research draws on the principles of storytelling, participants were instructed to discuss freely topics that they thought were relevant. The interviews were voice recorded and were analysed directly as sound-recordings using NVivo 9. Coding the

interviews was done by identifying themes that were consistent with indicators of relationship quality in marital research. The analysis revealed that participants' responses included many, if not all, relational processes identified in marital research. It also revealed a need to include two more questions: about the organisation's strengths, and weaknesses.

3.3.2 Research subjects selected

Sampling individuals aimed to include individuals with various propensity to leave the organisation. This way, the indicators could be compared between those who have left with those who remained, similar to the comparison of married and divorced couples (Gottman et al. 1998b; Gottman 2014b). Therefore, study drew on individuals from different organisational units, which have different turnover history: some units with low turnover history, therefore likely to include employees with low turnover propensity, units with a history of high turnover, therefore likely to include employees with high turnover propensity, and units with a mixed history, aiming to capture employees in between. To avoid the risk of only including the stable individuals of each unit, a wide range of tenure was included in this study as well, as turnover propensity also varies along employee tenure (McClure & Hinshaw 2002). Naturally, however, there was no guarantee that there would be an equal representation of leaving and remaining employees in the sample.

In addition to a historical likelihood of turnover, two other sampling issues were considered: profession and position level. With regards to professions, Section 1.1 has highlighted two professions with a particular appeal to examine their turnover. The first is the nursing profession. As explained in Section 1.1, voluntary turnover of nurses can be particularly harmful to the units which they left, because their absence, until their positions are filled, increases the pressure on the remaining nurses (McClure & Hinshaw 2002). In addition, nursing turnover is associated with negative impact on general patient outcomes (Hayes et al.

2006), as well as negative economic impact at the organisational and even a country level (Hayes et al. 2006).

The motivation to examine turnover can also come from the propensity to leave identified in a particular group. Lawyers (including barristers and solicitors) have been identified as professionals whose propensity to leave is significantly high compared with other professional (Mazares 2001; Carmeli & Weisberg 2006). For example, a survey of Australian lawyers revealed that about 50% of the respondents have changed at least one workplace within 5 years (Urbis 2013). Therefore, examining indicators of turnover among lawyers offers pertinent insight into this issue. Thus, examining lawyers and nurses in a study of turnover is beneficial to both their industries and turnover researchers.

In addition to turnover propensity, a difference in costs has been identified between the turnover of employees and turnover of managers (Vaiman 2008), where the cost of the turnover of a manager has been estimated as up to tenfold that of an employee (Vaiman 2008). Therefore, it is of value to include managers in the sample.

3.3.3 Data collection phases - timeline

To examine a method's predictive ability, it is appropriate to include a time dimension so that the research has a longitudinal component. Thus, the research design should compare data collected in at least two phases, which means, at least in two separate times. In this study, data were collected at three main phases, as illustrated in Figure 3.1. In the first phase, at T1, two data strands were collected. A qualitative data strand was collected for diagnosing the participants' employee-organisation relationship. This diagnostic process used the interview-based mixed-methods research tools from marital research described in Chapter 2. The interview questions and the plan for coding the resulting data are described in Section 3.4,

and the practicalities of the interviews (i.e., protocol, duration, etc.) are described in detail in Section 4.1.3.

In addition to the interviews, a quantitative data strand was collected. Survey data were also collected at T1, which was used to assist in complementing the understanding of the employee-organisation relationship at the time of the interview. This data was also used to provide a longitudinal perspective of the relationship, by examining changes in the relationship between T1 and T2.

Following this, at T2, the employee-organisation relationship was evaluated using a survey, which included items based on extant turnover literature. This phase involved the collection of one data strand (quantitative). The survey design selected for this study is explained in detail in Section 3.5, and the practicalities of its collection and processing are described in Section 4.4.

In the final phase of data collection, at T3, turnover behaviour data were collected, which provides another quantitative data strand. The practicalities of the collection of this data are described in Section 4.1 as well.

The inter-related decisionsof the number of data collection phases in the study, and the time gaps between them, are typical in longitudinal research (Ployhart & Vandenberg 2010). These decisions pose a particular challenge for a doctoral research project, and were guided by the principles of pragmatism, which emphasise the importance of research to produce results beneficial for those interested in it. Data collection points in this study had to balance three contradicting demands: one is the demand for data resulting in meaningful results, which means a sufficient number of data collection phases needs to be chosen. A second demand is for an amount of data which a single researcher can manage by themselves within

the duration of a doctoral candidature, and finally, the intervals must fit within the duration of a doctoral candidature and allow sufficient time to analyse the results.

This third demand for compliance with a constrained time-frame means that the data has to be collected at an early enough stage of the candidature, to allow for sufficient time for analysis. However, data collection must be based on a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the research literature, to enable the selection and adaptation of appropriate instruments, and can thus not be conducted too early in the candidature.

In addition to the usual balance that doctoral candidate are required to make with these sort of decisions, this study of employee-organisation relationships requires a gap between data collection phases which allows for visible longitudinal developments in the relationship between participants and their organisation. With these opposing demands in mind, the intervals between data collection points and the number of the data collection points are described and justified next.

3.3.3.1 ***Intervals between data collection phases***

The decision on the interval between the diagnosis of the employee-organisation relationship quality and the evaluation of the subsequent quality of this relationship was informed by the times gaps used in turnover research and in marital research. In marital research, the time gap used between diagnosis and measurement of relationship status was between 3 and 14 years (Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992; Gottman 1994c; Gottman et al. 1998a). Most turnover studies, in contrast, use shorter gaps, of 6 to 24 months (Allen et al. 2007), which are long enough to allow a turnover decision to eventuate on one hand, and to provide useful planning input for managers on the other hand.

For practical reasons[6], this study applied a one year (12 months) time gap between the diagnosis of the relationship at T1 and the measurement of its subsequent quality, at T2. This one year falls within the range typically used in turnover research and also allows for sufficient time to complete all candidature duties.

3.3.3.2 *Number of data collection phases*

In addition to the evaluation of the quality of the employee-organisation relationship, and turnover behaviour at T2, 12 months after the diagnosis was performed at T1, another data collection round examined only the employees' turnover behaviour. This data collection round was conducted at T3, 24 months after the initial diagnosis (T1), and 12 months after the first subsequent evaluation at T2. These data collection points are illustrated in Figure 3.1. The data collection in T3 was limited to turnover behaviour because of practical limitations (mainly researcher and employee time-constraints, as well as availability problems in the data collection sites).

As noted above, this mixed-methods study involves two main forms of data collection: an interview, collecting qualitative data, and a survey, collecting quantitative data. Both methods are described next.

3.4 Qualitative method - Interview data

The primary method used in this study is drawn from marital research, to diagnose the employee-organisation relationship. This method is based on interviews which elicitparticipants' stories. This storytelling approach for diagnosing marital relationships is

[6] The researcher went on maternity leave half way into her candidature, and used the one year of leave as the time gap between diagnosis and measurement of subsequent relationship quality.

particularly amenable for organisational settings, as discussed in Section 2.4.2. Following this approach, (Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992), interviews were designed to generate participants' stories of their relationship with their organisation. Such stories were stimulated with a list of leading questions, summarised in Table 3.4. The questions in this study were based on the questions used in marital setting byBuehlmanet al.(1992). After adapting them into orgaisational setting (e.g. changing "What do you remember from most from the time you were dating" into "How were your first days in this organisation? What do you remember most?"). In addition, the pilot study described in Section 3.3.1 revealed a need to add two more questions, about the organisation's strengths and weaknesses. To avoid common methods variance (Podsakoff et al. 2003), temporal separation between responses to the added questions and the two previous questions (characteristics of a good and a bad workplace), was needed. This separation was created by adding a 'break' question, querying the goals of the worker, based on Hyvönen et al. (2009), who showed that managers' goals are related to future engagement and burnout. Specifically, managers whose goals focused on their own well-being and aspirations to change jobs were related to high burnout low work engagement, whereas managers whose goals were to successfully perform in their organisation had lower burnout and higher work engagement. Analysing responses to this question was outside the scope of this study.

The approach for diagnosing relationships, as described in Section 2.4.2.2, ask both relationship parties to recount meaningful events from their joint past. The stories of the partners are then coded and analysed based on the theory of marital affect balance described in Section 2.4.1. This approach can be used in an organisational setting, because a single partner (that is, the employees) is sufficient for generating meaningful stories about the relationship. Its analysis provides insights into the perception of one partner (the employee) of the other partner (the organisation) and the relationship.

Table 3.4 Interview questions for generating participants' stories	
Beginning of the relationship	Can you tell me how you started working here? How was your joining process?
Early days of the relationship	How were your first days? What do you remember most?
Good recent experience	Can you tell me of something good that happened to you here recently?
Bad recent experience	Most employees I talk to say work goes up and down. Would you agree? Can you tell me of something not so good that happened here recently?
Characteristics of a good workplace	How would you describe a good [ward]/[firm] to work in?
Characteristics of a bad workplace	How would you describe a bad [ward]/[firm] to work in?
Break	What are your goals in doing this job?
Strengths of the organisation	What would you say are the strengths of this [ward] / [firm]?
Weaknesses of the organisation	What would you say are the weaknesses?
Source: developed for this research based on (Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992) and (Hyvönen et al. 2009)	

When coding the interview data, it is not the content of the stories that is examined, but rather relational processes, narratives, and affect. The coding includes quantitative and qualitative aspects. The quantitative aspect involves comparing the portions of distressing expressions with portions of enhancing expressions (for example, positive affect and negative affect expressed by the relationship party). Such expressions are coded, and then a ratio between them is calculated. The qualitative aspect examines the relational processes expressed during the interview. Some processes were found to be associated with satisfaction and stability in the future of the relationship, while others were found to predict breakdown and / or dissatisfaction. A detailed description of the coding (both of quantitative and qualitative aspects) is provided in Section 4.2.

3.4.1 Coding plan - qualitative relational processes

Rather than a traditional thematic analysis, which analyses the *content* of the interviews, this study seeks *relational processes* of affective nature. Expressions of anger, disappointment, forgiveness, hope, etc. are identified and coded. The full list of relational processes previously identified in marital research was described in detail in Table 2.5 in Chapter 2.

One process in particular, *we-ness*, which is described as a qualitative process in marital research, is analysed slightly differently in this study. Rather than merely noting if we-ness or they-ness is used, this study calculates a ratio of we-ness references, as described in Sections 3.4.2.4 and 3.4.2.5. The reason for that is that in marital research, we-ness may only refer to the couple ("we like to go on holidays" as opposed to "I like action movies, but my wife prefers romantic comedies"), in organisational setting we-ness may refer to various groups, such as the organisation, the work unit, the profession, or the role. These aspects are discussed in greater detail in Section 3.4.2.4.

Identifying relational processes is somewhat different in this research, as the processes are only expressed by one relationship partner – the employee – and may therefore be more subtle than processes displayed as part of an interaction.

This study focuses on processes of negative nature, as they are expected to be better predictors of employee turnover. Although positive relational processes were found to predict the sustainability of marriage, and may therefore predict employee retention, this study limits the scope to the prediction of turnover. Nonetheless, future research examining positive relational processes may offer a valuable contribution, as discussed in Section 7.4.

3.4.2 Quantitising qualitative data

Quantitising qualitative data is a form of data conversion used in mixed-methods research, as described in Table 3.3 (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2006). The affect ratio of positive to negative

affect has been tremendously successful at predicting the breakdown of marital relationships (Gottman et al. 1998b; Gottman 2014b), and therefore examining its benefits for studying employee-organisation relationships is intriguing. The raw data for this method are described next, followed by a description of the coding used for diagnosing the relationship. The way the coded data is analysed, based on ratios, is then described.

3.4.2.1 ***Data for coding***

The partners' descriptions of their joint past is the source of raw data for coding. In marital research, the couples' interaction during this joint interview is an important aspect for observation and analysis. It provides meaningful insight into how the partners relate to each other and their communication and interaction patterns (Gottman et al. 1998b; Gottman 2014b). In organisational settings, however, this type of interaction is missing. Because only one relationship partner (the employee) is present at the interview, the data only includes their account of the joint past. However, this account includes references to various components of the organisation (co-workers, job, supervisor, clients, top management, etc.). Most human speech was found to contain at least some affect (Cowie & Cornelius 2003), and therefore participants' references towards their organisation are expected to be affect-laden. This affect is a primary coding subject, as described next.

3.4.2.2 ***Coding affect***

Although people's discussions of emotive topics rarely include expressions of pure and strong emotions, they are not often emotionally-neutral either (Cowie & Cornelius 2003). In addition, even if the presence of emotion in speech is identified, an agreement on what this emotion actually is has proven difficult. In a study of over 150 judges coding naturalistic speech into forced five basic categories of emotions (happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust), general agreement among coders was only reached for about half the samples associated with

negative emotions (Greasley, Sherrard & Waterman 2000). When the categories were expanded, and included a greater diversity of emotions, coders diverged even further.

Addressing this complexity of coding emotions, the coding is collapsed into a single dimension – the evaluation dimension of emotions. Emotions can be depicted along two abstract dimensions: evaluation, ranging from positive to negative, and activation, ranging from active to passive (Figure 3.2). Although marital research has documented the intensity of emotions as well as their evaluation, it was the evaluation dimension that resulted in predictive success of the relationship breakdown(Gottman et al. 1998b; Gottman 2014b). This finding showed that it is not the intensity of experienced emotion, but its frequency, that predicts relationships' stability and quality. This study therefore codes the evaluative dimension of emotions identified in the participants' speech. This dimension is termed 'affect' in this study, because the coding includes not only full-blown emotions, but any indication of positive or negative evaluation of the organisational components.

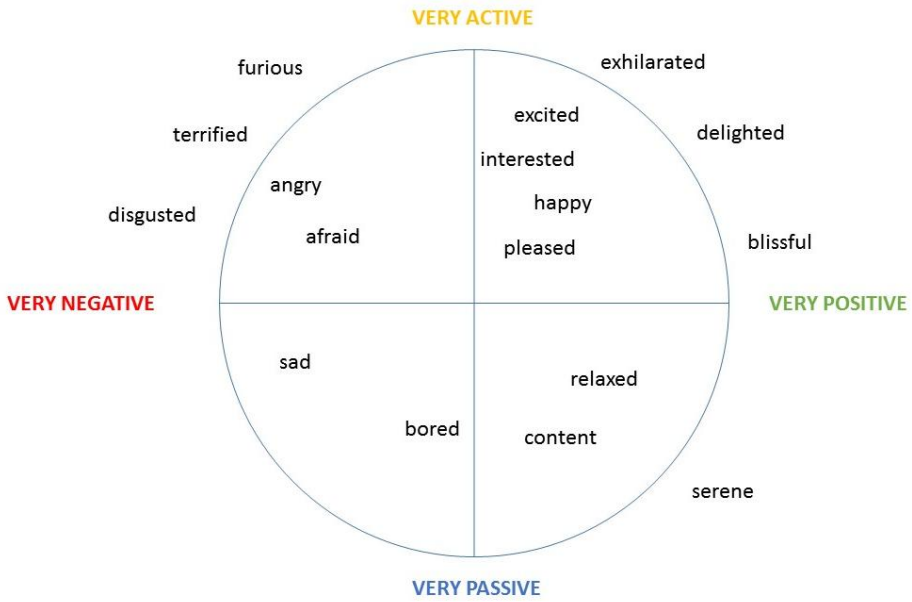

Figure 3.2– Typology of emotions based on two dimensions (evaluation and activation)

(Source: adapted from Cowie et al. 2000).

3.4.2.3 ***Coding attribution***

Attribution, which has been discussed in detail in Section 2.5.2, is the natural process that people engage in as they try to make sense of the world around them(Martinko, Harvey & Dasborough 2011). In this process, people actively search for explanations of the behaviours that they observe, and form hypotheses as to the causes of those behaviours (Heider 1958; Dasborough & Ashkanasy 2002). People make a judgement as per the causes of the behaviour they observe, and attribute that cause based on their perceptions of the actor, the environment, and themselves (Kelley & Michela 1980; Martinko, Harvey & Douglas 2007; Harvey, Harris & Martinko 2008).

Attribution can be identified when the subject provides an explanation for the behaviour of an actor (Kelley et al. 2013). This can be identified either by direct expressions of the participant ("it was done because…"), or by indirect or contextual reference to a reason provided by the participant ("that happens here a lot", "that's what we nurses are like", "mistakes happen. We are all human."). Although attribution can be coded along various dimensions, as previously described in Section 2.5.2, these dimensions are not the focus of this research. Instead, this research focuses on the attributions' indication of the participants' perception of the relationship with the organisation. Therefore, attribution is coded as either *enhancing* or *distressing*. *Enhancing* attributions include highlighting supportive behaviour despite difficulties, and discounting negative impact due to external circumstances. *Distressing* attributions include attributing unkind, selfish, or unflattering motives, discounting positive actions due to external impositions, or discounting reports of positive effects due to their rare occurrence.

3.4.2.4 *Coding we-ness*

In organisational context, various forms of we-ness can be used, based on the form of identification felt by the employee. Employees may identify with the organisation, their unit, their profession, or other sub-groups(Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail 1994; Apker, Ford & Fox 2002; Hogg 2006). In contrast, employees may make references to sub-groups in the organisation as 'them', such as management, subordinates, or other units. The different kinds of we-ness and they-ness will be coded, and grouped according to their context.

3.4.2.5 *Calculating ratios*

Ratios of opposing indicators (positive vs. negative affect, enhancing vs. distressing attribution, for example) are to be calculated using the same formula, in a similar manner to the method used in Gottman (1994b: 120). This calculation divides one portion (positive affect; enhancing attribution;and we-ness) by the sum of both portions (positive and negative affect, enhancing and distressing attribution, and we-ness and they-ness, respectively), resulting in formulas summarised in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 **Formulas for quantitative ratios**
Affect ratio = positive / (positive+ negative)
Attribution ratio = enhancing attribution / (enhancing + distressing)
We-ness ratio = we-ness / (we-ness + they-ness)

Each ratio represents the portion of the construct which indicates a better relationship quality (positive affect, enhancing attribution, or we-ness) within the entire expression of this construct. This ratio is preferable to a ratio between the expressions indicating a batter relationship quality the expressions indicating a worse relationship quality, because itsolves the problem of dividing by zero, in case coding for one of the categories (i.e., negative affect, distressing attribution, or they-ness)is not identified.

3.5 Quantitative method - Survey

To compare the results of the method of this study with current knowledge of the relationship between employees and their workplace, it is necessary to identify how relationships would have been diagnosed based on current turnover literature. For this purpose, it is necessary to use current tools of the traditional turnover literature, which include many constructs. Such constructs, based on the underlying SET, are discussed in Section 3.5.1.

The number of constructs identified through SET studies is very large, and thus it is impossible to survey employees using all them. The decision to include constructs in this study is guided by theoretical reasons, as well as practical reasons, as expected in a pragmatist paradigm. The constructs included in this study, and the reasoning for including them is described in Section 3.5.2. Following the list of included constructs, a list of excluded constructs is provided, along with the reasoning for their exclusion. A future study including these constructs would be valuable, however remains outside the scope of this research.

In addition to the scores of survey constructs, this study also examined variables resulting from manipulations of these constructs. Justifications for including such controversial computed variables are presented, based on three arguments are presented in Section 3.5.3. Section 3.5.4 summarises the quantitative data collection method used in this study.

3.5.1 Constructs in literature

One of the most prominent theories for understanding the relationship between employees and their organisation is social exchange theory (SET), discussed in Section 2.3. The main premise of SET, which is strongly supported by evidence, is that goodwill and helpfulness from parties in the organisation is, in turn, matched by individuals (eg., Rupp & Cropanzano 2002; Fuller et al. 2003; Gould-Williams & Davies 2005; Dulac et al. 2008a). This premise

has been operationalised by defining the antecedents which the organisation provides to the individual, and the consequences to the organisation, provided by employees. Among antecedents, some prominent operationalisations can be identified: perceived organisational support (POS), psychological contract fulfilment, and forms of organisational justice. This study does not focus on the antecedents to social exchange relationships. It focuses on indicators of future consequences. It therefore limits the attention dedicated to antecedents by including perceived organisational support (POS), and leaves the rich and extensive issues of the psychological contract and organisational justice outside the scope of this study.

SET has identified a range of outcomes/consequences of the exchange of societal resources through organisational, team, and supervisor support. These include turnover intentions, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), job performance, job satisfaction, and trust (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005). In addition to these constructs, work engagement has been identified as a consequence. Work engagement is conceptualised, in SET terms, as a form by which the employee reciprocates organisational provision (Kahn 1990; Saks 2006). Unlike employee performance, which is typically measured by an evaluating party, and thus partially depends on them, work engagement means employees "bring themselves more deeply into their role performances" (Saks 2006, p. 603), as a way which is controllable entirely by them, to repay the organisation's provisions of resources.

On the opposite scale of engagement, burnout has been identified as a combination of low energy (exhaustion) and low identification (cynicism) (Schaufeli, Bakker & Van Rhenen 2009). This construct has been recognised as a result of poor reciprocal social exchange between the employee and the organisation, both on an interpersonal and holistic level (Schaufeli, Dierendonck & Gorp 1996).

Both constructs (engagement and burnout) can be further divided into more specific components. The influence of organisational support on each component is outside the scope of this study. Table 3.6 summarises the operationalised consequences which are included in this study.

Table 3.6
Operationalisation of SET: sources and consequences

Sources of support	Consequences
Organisation	Turnover intentions
Team	Job satisfaction
Co-workers	Commitment
Supervisor	Job performance
Suppliers	Trust and Justice
	Engagement / Burnout
	Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB)
	Absenteeism

(Source: Adapted from Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005)

The consequences of support serve as the theoretical foundation for evaluating the quality of the relationship between the employee and the organisation, in addition to turnover behaviour. According to SET framework (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005), these consequences capture desirable outcomes that organisations aim for when they provide employees with support. For example, lower turnover intentions and less burnout, as well as higher job satisfaction, and greater engagement.

3.5.2 Survey constructs

This study selected six major constructs as evaluators of the relationship between the employee and the organisation, based on SET antecedents and consequences: perceived organisational support (POS), overall job satisfaction (OJS), turnover intentions (INT), three-

component commitment, affective, continuous, and normative (AC, CC, and NC), work engagement (ENGA) and burnout (BURN). The constructs and a justification for their inclusion in this study are described next. Table 3.7 describes and justifies constructs which were excluded from this study.

3.5.2.1 ***Perceived organisational support (POS)***

This construct represents the global beliefs developed by employees concerning the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cared about their wellbeing (Eisenberger et al. 1986). It encapsulates the antecedents which the organisation provides to the relationship between the employee and the organisation.

POS was found to be negatively related to withdrawal (Allen, Shore & Griffeth 2003), and to mediate the influence of many other constructs, such as job satisfaction, commitment and mentoring (Baranik, Roling & Eby 2010). It is therefore an important indicator of the employees' perception of the organisation's contribution to their relationship.

This research examines the employee-organisation relationship, where the organisation is the employee's work-unit. Therefore, perceived organisational support was measured at the work-unit level, and not the entire organisation.

3.5.2.2 ***Overall job satisfaction (OJS)***

This affective-laden construct reflects the favourableness of job conditions (Shore & Tetrick 1991). It has a long history of relationship to employee turnover (Porter et al. 1974), and has the appeal of obvious face value; that is, a satisfied employee is expected to be less likely to leave the job and the organisation. This construct is a core mechanism of turnover theory (Steel & Lounsbury 2009).

3.5.2.3 ***Commitment – three components (AC, CC and NC)***

Commitment represents the barriers for leaving the relationship, within SET (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005). The three-component model of commitment (Allen & Meyer 1990) is well accepted in the literature. It has been shown that the different components of commitment lead to a different kind of employment relationship. The *affective* component of organisational commitment (AC) proposed by the model refers to employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organisation. This component typically leads to the most favourable organisation-relevant outcomes (attendance, performance and organisational citizenship behaviour) and employee-relevant outcomes (stress and work-family conflict) (Meyer et al. 2002).

The *continuance* component (CC) refers to commitment based on the costs that employees associate with leaving the organisation. This component may be regarded as a negative form of commitment, as this component has been *negatively* associated with desirable organisation-related and employee-related outcomes (Meyer et al. 2002). However, the continuance component has also been found to reduce turnover behaviour (Payne & Huffman 2005).

Finally, the *normative* component (NC) refers to employees' feelings of obligation to remain with the organisation. This component was found to have a significant negative relationship with turnover in a collectivistic context (Yao & Wang 2006), and a weaker relation in an individualistic context.

3.5.2.4 ***Intention to quit (INT)***

Intentions are conceptualised as an important antecedent to behaviour in many behavioural models, such as the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen 1991) and the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein 1980). Often in turnover research, intentions to quit are more closely related

to other job and organisation attitudes than turnover behaviour itself, and sometimes they are measured, but turnover behaviour is not(Aryee & Chay 2001; Benson 2006; Golden 2007).

Although turnover intentions may not result in actual turnover (as discussed in Section 1.2), there is numerous evidence that high intentions to turnover indicate a poor quality of the employee-organisation relationship, as they have been associated with lower commitment (Benson 2006), lower satisfaction, well-being, and engagement (Brunetto et al. 2012), and lower OCB (Aryee & Chay 2001). This construct is therefore included in this study.

3.5.2.5 ***Work engagement and burnout***

SET also posits that the degree of the employee's engagement with their work (ENGA) is an important indicator of the relationship between the employee and the organisation. Work engagement reflects "the individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work" (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes 2002, p. 269) and a "persistent, positive affective-motivational state of fulfillment" (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter 2001, p. 417). It is expected that a better relationship will be characterised by a greater degree of engagement in the employee's work.

Vigour, dedication, and absorption encompass, respectively, the physical, cognitive, and emotional aspects of work engagement(Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova 2006; Rothmann & Rothmann Jr 2010). High work engagement is characterised by a combination of high energy (vigour) and high identification with the organisation (dedication), and frequent engrossment of the employee in their work (absorption), whereby all of their cognitive and affective resources are dedicated to the performance of their work (Schaufeli et al. 2002). This study seeks a general perspective on employment as a relationship. More specific aspects of indicators in this relationship (such as the specific components of work engagement) are

outside the scope of this study, although they represent an interesting direction for future research, as discussed in Section 7.4.

3.5.2.6 ***Burnout***

Work engagement, discussed above, was also conceptualised as the opposite of burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004; Maslach & Leiter 2008). Schaufeliet al. (2009) characterise burnout as a combination of low energy (exhaustion) and low identification (cynicism). A better relationship with an organisation is expected to be characterised by a low level of burnout.

Similar to work engagement, burnout has also been conceptualised along three dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy (Hyvönen et al. 2010). Exhaustion, which is the core component of employee burnout, refers to the depletion of the employee's emotional and physical resources. Cynicism is a form of withdrawal from the work, by having a negative or distant attitude towards one's work in general, or detachment from work. Reduced professional efficacy represents feelings of ineffectiveness and / or incompetence in regard to both the social and non-social aspects of work-related achievements. Similar to the dimensions of work engagement, however, this exploratory study does <u>not</u> include an examination of these specific dimensions. The role of these specific components represents an interesting direction for future study.

The main limitation associated with the survey constructs selected for this study is their low predictive success of turnover (Allen et al. 2007; Steel & Lounsbury 2009), as discussed in Section 1.2. These constructs have typically only successfully predicted employee turnover in less than 25% of the cases (Hom & Griffeth 1995; Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner 2000). Therefore, they are not expected to provide an accurate prediction of employee turnover in this study.

In addition to the constructs included in this study, SET has identified several consequences of organisational support, which can be seen as indicators of the quality of the employee-organisation relationship. There are also other indicators of the quality of this relationship which have been identified in literature. However, they are left outside the scope of this research. Table 3.7 summarises these constructs and the reasons for excluding them from this study. Including these constructs offer another interesting direction for future research, as discussed in Section 7.4.

Table 3.7 SET based constructs excluded from this study		
Construct	**Sources**	**Reason for exclusion from this study**
Trust	(Holmes 1981; Blau 1986).	Literature is extensive and its inclusion in this study would have exceeded the scope of a doctoral research.
Justice	(Greenberg 1990; Saunders & Thornhill 2003)	Literature is extensive and its inclusion in this study would have exceeded the scope of a doctoral research.
Perceived supervisor support and perceived team support	(Howes et al. 2000; Masterson et al. 2000; Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005)	Constructs predicted source-specific relational outcomes better than general organisational or unit outcomes (that is, team support predicted commitment to the team, supervisor support predicted commitment to the supervisor, etc.).
Job performance	(Rotundo & Sackett 2002)	Access to this information was not possible due to its sensitivity.
Embeddedness	(Holtom & Inderrieden 2006)	Predicts turnover intentions and behaviour within the success range of most turnover prediction models, and not beyond
Absenteeism	(Brooke & Price 1989; Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner 2000; Steel & Lounsbury 2009)	Access to this information was not possible due to its sensitivity.
Psychological contract	(Rousseau 1989; Robinson, Kraatz & Rousseau 1994; Shore & Tetrick 1994; Cullinane & Dundon 2006)	Excludes the effects of the *actual* contract between the employee and the organisation, which is a substantial part of the relationship.
Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB)	(Podsakoff et al. 2000)	Problems with construct measurement. Self-reported OCB may not account for the actual contributions of the employee, and may be subjected to self-presentation bias, as they do not correlate with observer ratings (Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie 2006). Triangulation with the reports of others (colleagues or supervisor) complicates the data collection immensely.
Source: developed for this study		

3.5.3 Computed variables

Three variables, which result from manipulating survey constructs' scores, were used in this study: alarms, joys, and a composite relationship score. The variables, as well as the justifications for using them, are described in this section.

3.5.3.1 ***Alarms and joys***

Every deterioration in the relationship between a participant and their workplace was counted, and the sum of these deteriorations is termed 'alarms' in this research. For example, an increase over one year in the measure *intention to turnover*, or a decrease in the measure *engagement*, was counted as one alarm. Similarly, any improvement in the relationship between the employee and their workplace was termed 'joy' in this research. For example, a 'joy' is an increase at T2 compared with T1 in the measure *perceived organisational support*, or a decrease in the measure *burnout*.

In addition to measuring all deteriorations, another measure was used, summing only changes which were greater than 0.5 in value, termed *joys>0.5* and *alarms>0.5*. The reasoning behind this is that minor fluctuations in attitude measures may not fully capture enduring changes in attitudes (Edwards 2001). Although a longitudinal comparison of survey measures has been controversial in literature (Edwards 2001), arguments for using them are presented here.

3.5.3.2 ***Composite relationship variable (COMP)***

Another variable which was calculated based on the survey measures is the composite relationship variable, COMP. This variable is an average of all survey measures at one time, as described in Table XXX. Therefore, two variables are computed: COMP_T1 and COMP_T2.

Table 3.8
COMP variables: Constructs' average
COMP = (POS + OJS + AC + CC + NC + ENGA – INT – BURN) / 8

Although such a measure would be criticised for the insufficient clarity of its construct definition (Edwards 2001; Klein, Jiang & Cheney 2009), it was seen as beneficial to examine to get an overall indication of the employment relationship situation at the time of the survey, which was beyond the measures of the individual constructs. The insight it provides complements other evidence identified through specific survey measures. Arguments supporting its use are presented next.

3.5.3.3 *Justifying computed variables*

The examination of *joys* and *alarms* was beneficial for identifying trends relevant to the employment relationship, and an examination of COMP provided a useful overall view on the status of the employee-organisation relationship. However, these measures are criticised by traditional statistical literature. Nonetheless, arguments supporting their use are presented. Three types of arguments are made: paradigmatic, empirical, and limiting.

Paradigmatic justification

The paradigm underlying this study, as explained and justified in Section 3.1.4, is the pragmatist paradigm. Within this paradigm, methods' accurate representation of reality is only secondary, if that, to their utility. In other words – if it is beneficial, it is worth doing. Although from a statistician's perspective, such manipulation of survey variables may be fundamentally wrong, from the pragmatist's point of view, if it provides useful insight and understanding of the problem at hand, then such manipulations are worthy.

Empirical justification

The reliability of composite variables, which is composed of all survey variables, was examined with Cronbach-alpha. The test results, ranging from .754 to .998, suggest that the construct is fairly reliable, and therefore, although by definition it is not complete, and its meaning may not be precisely defined, it qualifies, at least statistically. However, no such statistical test was possible for joys and alarms.

Limiting justification

These variables are not used on their own. They are used to complement the insight gained from examining the survey constructs. This thesis does not rely solely on these constructs, but it does use them to gain a broader perspective on the overall results.

3.5.4 Summary – quantitative method

This section described and justified the quantitative survey data used in this study. Based on the theoretical underpinning of SET, the section described the survey constructs which were used in this study. Reasons for excluding constructs were provided as well. In addition, three variables which are based on combinations of survey results were described. The use of these computed variables was justified based on the study's paradigm, empirical results, and the limitations of their role in this thesis.

3.6 Analysis

Consistent with its aims stated in Chapter 1, this study performs a diagnosis of the employee organisation relationship at T1. The results of this diagnosis are compared with the quality of the employee organisation relationship at T2, and turnover behaviour by T3. The variables examined in this study are therefore as follows: the independent variable is the result of the diagnosis of employee-organisation relationship. The variables are summarised in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9 Research variables and data used		
Variable		**Data used**
Indicators of the future quality of employee-organisation relationship at T1	Independent	• Quantitative ratios (Affect, Attribution, we-ness) • Qualitative relational processes
Quality of employee-organisation relationship at T2	Dependent	Job and workplace attitudes: • POS • OJS • INT • AC • CC • NC • ENGA • BURN
Turnover behaviour by T3	Dependent	Left the unit – (Yes / No)

(source: developed for this study)

3.6.1 Dependent variables

The dependent variables in this study, which quantitatively evaluate the employee-organisation relationship, are measured at T2 and T3. All survey constructs described in Section 3.5.2, were measured at T2. These include the following constructs: perceived organisational support (POS), overall job satisfaction (OJS), turnover intentions (INT), three-component commitment (AC, CC and NC), work engagement (ENGA) and burnout (BURN). In addition, variables computed based on these constructs, as described in Section 3.5.3 (that is, COMP, Alarms, and Joys) serve as dependent variables.

Furthermore, turnover behaviour measured at T3 is included as well. This variable only examines whether the employee has left or not. It does not involve the dimension of willingness of leaving, discussed in the beginning of Chapter 2. This dimension would be a beneficial direction for future enquiry.

3.6.2 Independent variables

The independent variables, as described in Section 3.3, result from the diagnosis of the employee organisation relationship. There are two main types of independent variables: quantitative and qualitative. Both types are involved in the analysis. The qualitative independent variables are relational processes identified in participants' interviews, as described in Section 3.4, and as presented in Section 4.2.5. For each relational process, these variables are analysed by examining differences in quantitative data between the groups of participants who displayed them with those who did not, using a t-test. For example, for the process 'anger', a t-test examines if there is a significant difference in the scores of the survey scores (and computed variables) between the group of employees whose interviews included displays of anger, and the group of employees who did not

The quantitative variables (affect, attribution, and we-ness ratios) result from the quantitisation(Teddlie & Tashakkori 2006) of the interview data, as described in Section 3.4.2, and as will be presented in Section 4.3. These variables are analysed by seeking bivariate correlations with the dependent variables, the survey data. These methods of analysis are described next.

3.6.3 Correlations - Bivariate analysis

Quantitative ratios resulting from the diagnosis performed at T1 (i.e., affect, attribution, and we-ness ratios) are correlated using Spearman's Rho which does not assume a normal distribution in the data. The study seeks a correlation coefficient which indicates a correlation between ratios as developed from data collected at T1 and relationship quality indicators as collected at T2.

3.6.4 T-test

Based on qualitative processes and indicators identified in the interview, participants can be divided into categories, which can then be statistically tested for their differences as has been done before in MMR research. For example, in a study of effective teaching practices, Witcher et al. (2003) assigned binary codes (0, 1) to participants based on how they categorised their teachers, and later analysed the differences between categories in terms of demographic difference (gender, age, etc.). In this study, participants are divided into categories based on the relational processes which they display during the diagnosis at T1 (independent), and based on their turnover behaviour identified at T3 (dependent). That is, for each relational process, if a participant displayed it, they are assigned the code '1' for that process, and if the participant did not display it, they are assigned the code '0'. Similarly, participants who have left their organisation by T3 are assigned the value '1', and those who have not are assigned the value '0'.

Differences between groups of participants are then examined using a t-test, as follows (summarised in Table 3.10):

1. For each qualitative relational process or indicator, the quality of the employee-organisation relationship measured at T2 (dependent) are compared between groups of participants which displayed that relational process or indicator (independent) and groups of participants which did not display them.
2. Quantitative ratios calculated based on employee-organisation relationships at T1 (independent) are compared between the group of employees who left by T3 and those who did not.
3. Qualitative relational processes identified during the diagnosis of the employee-organisation relationships at T1 (independent) are compared between the group of employees who left by T3 and those who did not.

Table 3.10 Summary of t-tests design	
Variable used for diving sample into groups	**Variable compared using a t-test**
Independent: For each relational process, was the process identified in the interview? (yes / no)	Dependent: Survey constructs' scores at T2
Dependent: Has the participant left the organisation by T3? (yes / no)	Independent: Quantitative interview-based ratios (T1)
Dependent: Has the participant left the organisation by T3? (yes / no)	Independent: Identified relational processes and indicators at T1
(source: developed for this study)	

These comparisons between groups sought to identify indicators which distinguish groups with better (or worse) employee-organisation relationships one year after, and turnover within two years of the diagnosis of this relationship.

3.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided a philosophical, methodological, and practical foundation for the research. The chapter has described three main research paradigms which were considered for this research: functionalist (based on positivist and critical-realist traditions), the contrasting interpretivist, and the integrating paradigm of pragmatism. The chapter has justified the selection of the pragmatist paradigm, which enables flexible drawing on methods based on the relevance to the research problem.

The chapter then justified drawing on a mixed-methods, on two grounds. One concerns the nature of the problem, which on one hand examines a well-researched phenomenon (turnover), and on the other hand takes an innovative view on it (relationship). The other concerns the success of a mixed-methods approach in predicting separations in marital setting. After justifying a mixed-methods approach, the section described various categories

of mixed-methods research designs (concurrent, sequential, conversion, and fully integrated), highlighting and justifying the fully-integrated and complex design selected for this study. The limitations of this research design were also pointed out, as well as how these limitations affected the design of this study.

The research design was presented next. First, the subjects selected for this study were described. Two different professions (nurses and lawyers) from two different organisations were selected. This selection was justified based on turnover impact and patterns identified in literature. In addition, the inclusion of two organisational levels (employees and managers) is justified based on the financial impact of their turnover.

The next research design element described was the study's longitudinal element. To examine a method's predictive ability, the study includes a time dimension so that the research has a longitudinal component. This longitudinal aspect was described in terms of the number of data collection phases and the time gaps between them. These decisions were justified based on theoretical and practical reasons.

After the research design has been established, the chapter presented the two main methods used in this study. First, the qualitative method of storytelling-based interviews was described. The interview questions used at T1 and the coding plan were briefly presented. Then, the quantitative survey used in T1 and T2 were discussed. The survey was based on SET and extant turnover literature and included sources and consequences of organisational support.

Finally, the plan for analysing of the data was presented. The analysis compared the results from the interview-based diagnosis performed at T1 with survey-based measurements at T2 and T3 using two statistical methods. One examined correlations between the quantitative ratios resulting from the diagnosis of the employee-organisation relationship at T1 and the

evaluation of this relationship based on turnover predictors measured at T2, using Spearman's Rho. The other method, a t-test, compared participants who presented specific qualitative relational processes with those who did not. This test examined if there were significant differences in scores of survey constructs between groups of participants, based on the relational processes they displayed. It also examined if there are significant differences between processes displayed by participants who have left their organisation by T3, and those who did not.

The next chapter provides a description of the data collection sites, the data collection methods, a description of the sample, and practical examples of coding decisions.

CHAPTER 4 DATA COLLECTION AND CODING

This chapter describes the practicalities of the data collection for this study. Unlike the previous chapter, which described the methodology and the design of this study based on its underlying philosophical and theoretical foundation, this chapter describes the practicalities of the methodology and the research strategy. The chapter is organised as follows. Section 4.1 describes the data collection in terms of process, site selection, and sampling. The chapter also describes the practicalities of coding the qualitative data in Section 4.2, and the conversion of these data into quantitative form in Section 4.3. Section 4.4 then describes the practicalities of the quantitative data, including the survey constructs used and how missing data were handled. The methods of analysis, that is, a bivariate correlation and a t-test, are described and justified in Section 4.5. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the main issues pertinent to the data collection and analysis in this study in Section 4.6.

Note: all tables in this chapter are original and were developed for this thesis.

4.1 Data collection

An ethics approval was obtained from the ethics committee of the candidate's university (approval no. HE11/153). Once this approval was obtained, data were collected for this study.

As previously described in Section 3.3.2, for the purpose of differentiating employees who will leave an organisation from those who do not, this study needed participants with various turnover propensities: high, medium, and low. Moreover, the labour-intensive nature of the selected data collection procedure precluded the use of a large sample. Thus, the study had to

draw on a small sample, however one which was most likely to include such varied turnover propensities. The selection of sites is discussed is discussed in Section 4.1.1, and the selection of participants is discussed in Section 4.1.2.

As also explained in Chapter 3, data was collected in two forms – qualitative and quantitative. The collection of qualitative data was guided by the way such data was collected in marital research, and the way the quantitative data was collected was informed by the way such data is collected in turnover research. These procedures of data collection are presented in Section 4.1.3, along with issues pertinent to the collection of data in organisational settings, as opposed to marital ones. Section 4.1.4 summarises the main points of the data collection in this research.

4.1.1 Site selection

As described in Section 3.3.2 in the previous chapter, the sites for this study needed to include professions with high turnover rates, high turnover costs and negative detrimental effects due to turnover. Thus, the study selected sites of two professions: lawyers, and nurses.

Accordingly, two organisations were selected to participate in this study: a law firm (*LawFirm*) and a healthcare provider (*HealthyCare*) in a large metropolitan city in Australia. The organisations differ in terms of size and ownership. While *LawFirm* is a privately owned business of under 100 employees, and departments of under 10 people, *HealthyCare* is a government organisation, of more than 2,000 employees, with departments of more than 50 people.

The legal industry has exceptionally high turnover rates, as discussed in Section 3.3.2. Despite that, *LawFirm* has had exceptionally low turnover rates, below 10% per year (Siebert

& Zubanov 2009). It therefore offers an insight into the achievement of high retention rates. This insight is beneficial as a benchmark to compare with.

Senior managers from both organisations agreed to include their organisations in this study. The advantages for this study of including these organisations are briefly described in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1
Advantages of selected organisations for this study

	LawFirm	**HealthyCare**
Turnover interest	Profession with high turnover rates	Detrimental effects of turnover, affecting: • Patients • Organisation • Country
Turnover propensity	Low turnover history	Multiple units with various turnover histories
Satisfaction levels expected	High satisfaction levels – A benchmark	Various satisfaction levels
Positions	Various positions (managerial and non-managerial)	Various positions (managerial and non-managerial)

The decision to include two organisations was driven the generalisability of the study's results. By including two different organisations, from two different sectors, who employee people from two different professions, the generalisability of this study increases (Yanadori & Kato 2007). The findings are that way no longer limited to a single profession. This inclusion also allows for a comparison across professions, and identification of differences between them, if there are any.

The next section described how participants were sampled.

4.1.2 Sampling

To be eligible to participate in this study of turnover, members of the organisations had to have continuous positions (full or part-time), which means that their employment did not have an expected termination date. They also had to have been employed by their organisation for at least one year. This duration was selected based on advice from managers in the organisations, who suggested that this duration is suitable for a new employee to become, as they described it 'part of the organisation'.

Participants' positions were also considered. As discussed, in Section 3.3.2, the costs of turnover vary between employees and managers. Specifically, much higher costs are associated with turnover of managers compared with that of employees – up to tenfold more (Vaiman 2008). For this reason, the sample included managers, and not only employees, from both organisations.

The sampling procedure used in both organisations is described next. A summary of the information about participants, their units, their positions, gender, and tenure is provided in Table 4.2.

4.1.2.1 ***LawFirm***

In LawFirm, 15 participants were randomly selected from a list of employee provided. Those were subsequently approached. The recruitment process involved sending an information sheet, informing participants about the study (Appendix B). The email was sent from the office's administrator.

Based on their availability and willingness to participate, ultimately 11 participants, both employees and managers, became involved in this study. Typically, refusals to participate were related to workload and difficulty to make the time. Two participants had part-time positions, and the rest were full-time.

4.1.2.2 ***HealthyCare***

A senior manager was consulted with regards to turnover and satisfaction levels in different units in the organisation. The senior manager suggested several units, based on their knowledge of unit turnover rates: ones with high retention levels and presumably high satisfaction levels, ones suffering from frequent turnover and presumably low satisfaction levels, and ones with a mixed history of turnover, and presumably mixed satisfaction levels.

Managers of the units selected for this study were then approached, to gain their agreement to approach their subordinates. These managers were asked to inform their unit members of the study, to ask for volunteers, and to suggest a sample with varying satisfaction levels, from highly satisfied to highly dissatisfied. Based on staff availability and willingness to participate, 35 members were ultimately included in this study: seven members of a low-turnover unit, 17 members of two units with high turnover history, and 11 members of a unit with mixed turnover history. All participants were employed on a full-time basis.

Table 4.2 summarises the information about participants, their units, their positions, gender, and tenure. There are many more females than there are males, consistent with the low representation of males in nursing. In addition, less managers participated in this study than employees due to availability reasons.

Table 4.2 Breakdown of participants' information				
Organisation	**Total**	***Lawfirm***		***HealthyCare***
(No. participants)	46	11		35
Position		**Employees**		**Managers**
(No. participants)		34		12
Gender		**Females**		**Males**
(No. participants)		33		13
Tenure	**Lowest**	**Average**		**Highest**
(Years)	1	7		35
Profession mix	**Clerical**	**Lawyers**		**Nurses**
(No. participants)	4	9		32
Participation	**T1 interview**	**T1 survey**	**T2**	**T3**
No. participant	46	43	45	46
%	100	93.5	97.8	100

After the sample was determined, data were collected. The next section describes the procedures used in this research to collect the data.

4.1.3 Data collection procedure

As explained in Chapter 3, two forms of data were collected in this study: qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative data were collected based on the same way qualitative data was collected in the marital research process(Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992; Buehlman, Carrere & Siler 2005), and the quantitative data were collected based on the way such data are collected in turnover research(for example, see Mitchell et al. 2001; Allen, Shore & Griffeth 2003; Holtom & Inderrieden 2006, to name a few). These procedures are described next.

4.1.3.1 *Qualitative data collection – employment history interview*

In the semi-structured interviews, participants' stories of their organisations were generated based on the questions described in Section 3.4. Interviews' duration was typically around 30 minutes. Following the approach used in marital research (Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992), each participant was interviewed in a quiet room for as long as they took to respond to

the interview questions — up to one hour. Because this research draws on the principles of storytelling (Harben 1993; Hansen & Kahnweiler 1995; Boyce 1996), which rely on participants' natural delivery of their own perceptions of the past, or of people(Hansen & Kahnweiler 1993), as well as participants were instructed to freely discuss the topics that they thought were relevant. The interviews were video- and voice- recorded and the recordings were analysed directly using NVivo 9 (QSR International Pty Ltd 2009), which allows the analysis of data in video or audio form, and does not require transcription.

4.1.3.2 *Quantitative data collection – employee surveys*

As explained in Chapter 3, quantitative data were collected at three phases, T1, T2 and T3. In the first two phases, surveys on job and workplace attitudes were collected. In the last phase, T3, only participants' employment status with regards to their respective unit was collected.

At T1, participants were distributed the survey immediately after their interview. As explained in Chapter 3, this survey was used to complement the understanding of participants gained in the interview, and therefore there is no concern over common variance due to temporal proximity.

At T2, participants were asked to complete the same survey as in T1, at a time of their convenience. At T3, the researcher contacted a representative from each unit and asked about the employment status of each participant.

4.1.4 Data collection - summary

Data were collected for this study in two sites: a government health care organisation (HealthyCare) and a private law firm (LawFirm). The former was a larger organisation, providing access to participants with various levels of propensity to leave. The latter firm

provided a benchmark of an organisation which much higher retention rates than typically seen in their industry.

Data were collected in three time periods, one year apart. A total of 46 participants were involved, and response rates at T2 and T3 were over 90%, as seen in Table 4.2. The data collection procedure was guided by the procedures adapted from marital research(Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992; Buehlman, Carrere & Siler 2005).

Before analysing the data, the qualitative data had to be converted to quantitative form, to produce the ratios described in Chapter 3 (i.e., affect, attribution, and we-ness ratios). The data had to be categorised as well, based on the relational processes described in Chapter 3 and Chapter 2. These processes of coding and categorising are described next.

4.2 Coding

Typically, qualitative data is coded for the purpose of categorising the data and making meaningful connection between categories (Dey 2003). In this study, coding the qualitative data was guided by pre-existing categories identified in marital research (discussed in Section 2.5), but was not limited to them, allowing for new themes to emerge. Marital research has already identified relational processes which indicate the status of the relationship of the couple, as described in Section 2.5. These relational processes served as the starting point for identifying similar processes in employees' accounts. In addition to these processes, however, the researcher noticed the emergence of processes which were not previously described in marital research, but which could be mapped to overarching pre-existing categories. For example, expressions of delineation and reduction ("At the end of the day, it's only an eight hour shift. It's not that long to get over it") were mapped as 'avoidance', a form of 'dealing with conflict'.

Two forms of coding were used in this study – interpretive and pattern coding (Miles & Huberman 1994). *Interpretive coding* involved the researcher's judgement and interpretation of the meaning expressed by the participant. This required reflection on, and consideration of, not only the content of the message, but also its context, its relation to the rest of the participants' messages, and a consideration of other potential responses. Identifying the relational processes went beyond mere content. The following example illustrates how similar stories can be coded differently. Two participants, Isabel and Anna, described a difficult start at their workplace. They both described similar descriptive conditions: being thrown into a disorganised environment, receiving little support and little initial guidance, and struggling through the early days. However, while Anna's description was accompanied by a low and melancholy tone of voice, and withdrawn body language, Isabel's description was lively, energetic, with a bit of irony, and a sense of triumph over these hardships. Anna's description was codified as 'Difficult start', whereas Isabel's description of her early days was coded as 'Glorifying the struggle'. Then, using *pattern coding* (discussed next), each of the two codes was later aggregated along with similar processes identified in other participants into 'Pain', and 'Genuine acceptance of negatives', respectively, both sub-categories of 'Dealing with conflict'.

Coding is typically an iterative process (Richards 2009), where each iteration should have a purpose (Ayres 2007). To analyse the interviews, the primary researcher reviewed the interview voice and video recordings, and coded their content in five major rounds. The first round focused on identifying relational processes; the second round focused on the relational process 'we-ness' (versus separateness); the third round aimed to capture positive and negative affect communicated by the participant; and the last major coding round identified and coded the attributions made by participants to events in their organisation. The fifth round was a *pattern coding* round (Miles & Huberman 1994), aiming to aggregate the

categories identified during first and second rounds into broader categories. However, data were revisited at least two more times, in two separate refinement rounds, during data analysis and write-up. Although data were notre-coded per sè at those stages, revisiting the codes has led to re-coding of less than 10% of the codes. Each round and its focus are described next.

4.2.1 First coding round: relational processes

Relational processes were identified based on an a priori list, as described in 2.5: These included, 1) fondness / affection towards organisation; 2) negativity towards organisation; 3) expansiveness versus withdrawal; 4) dealing with conflict; and 5) disappointment and disillusionment. Several other processes emerged as subcategories of this list, such as blame, dismissal, forgiveness, hope, diversion, proactiveness, delineation and reduction, and entitlement. Processes were identified based on verbal and nonverbal content, similar to the coding procedure described in marital research (Gottman 1979a; Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992; Buehlman, Carrere & Siler 2005; Coan & Gottman 2007). In general, the relational processes observed in this study were less pronounced and dramatic than processes described in marital research, most likely due to the difference in the data collection process: in marital research, data is collected when both relationship partners interact and trigger one another's emotions (Carrère & Gottman 1999; Gottman 2014b), whereas in this study, the interaction with the relationship partner was missing.

These processes were aggregated in the fifth coding round, as will be described in Section 4.2.5. Examples of coding for each relational processes are provided in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Examples of coding in pre-defined categories in first round	
Relational category in marital research	**Example in this study**
Fondness / affection towards the organisation	"[The workplace] had a nice family atmosphere".
Negativity towards organisation	"They go on much longer breaks than the rest of us. And then, when you need help with a patient and they are not there – and that happens every day, several times a day – that is not right".
Withdrawal versus expansiveness	"I spoke up about it and they moved things back to how they should be, and that was it".
Dealing with conflict	"I like challenges. This job was a huge challenge for me to address".
Disappointment and disillusionment	"When I started I thought things here were better, but then I realised that it's all the same. It's no different to where I've just left".

4.2.2 Second coding round– 'we-ness' and separateness

As presented in Table 2.5, in marital research the degree to which spouses referred to themselves as "we" as opposed to highlighting their separateness and individuality was found to significantly differentiate between couples who divorced, and couples who stayed together. Therefore, this research examined if a similar pattern exists in an employment setting – whether participants who highlight their reference to the organisation as "we" as opposed to "they" would be less likely to leave. For this purpose, references to the organisation as "we" were coded, as well as references as "they". The usage of the expressions "we" and "they" to describe the firm in various contexts was coded. Two distinct forms of we-ness were identified and aggregated: using "we" in general, as opposed to using "we" to identify with a specific sub-group (ward, team, profession, role, location). Similarly, two forms of they-ness were identified. One is using "they" in general to refer to the organisation, and the other is a specific "they" to refer to a specific sub-group which they do not belong to – subordinates,

managers or seniors, junior staff, people of a different role, etc. These forms of "we" and "they" are described in the next section.

One participant did not express any form of 'we-ness'. Five participants only used "they" in the context of a subgroup which they do not belong to, three of which were in managerial positions. References to participants' job interviewers, subordinates and clients as 'they' were not used for calculating we-ness ratios, because we-ness was not a feasible references for these sub-groups. References to management decisions by employees were calculated, because they indicate the degree to which participants feel aligned with management, and the degree they feel they have a say in managerial decisions.

General We

When participants referred to the workplace in general and used the words "we", "us", "our", etc., the idea expressed was coded under a 'General we' label. Examples include referring to organisation's strengths (e.g., "we are very good at what we do"), organisation'sweaknesses (e.g., "unfortunately we do not do that very well"), for routine activities (e.g., "we work together, as a team"), and for longitudinal changes (e.g., "we finally got a permanent person in that position").

Subgroup We

Some participants referred to sub-groups which they are part of as "we", but not to their entire organisation or unit. For example, some nurses referred to nurses as "we", or to their type of nurses ('liaison nurses'), clerical staff referred to their clerical roles as 'we', and unit managers referred to their managerial role as 'we' (e.g., "if we have a problem – we will sound it out"). Sometimes the 'we-ness' referred to a local unit as opposed to other parts of the organisation (e.g., "this ward is not a medical ward, but we sometimes get medical patients. If this was a medical ward, we would have the doctors we need here all the time").

General They

When participant referred to elements of their workplace as "they", or highlighted their own individualism at the expense of their work unit, this was coded as a 'General They'. Examples include describing weaknesses in others in their workplace (e.g., "they don't support new staff enough"; "they don't listen to what the top manager has been trying to explain for years and years and years"), problem faced by the workplace ("their funding is not based on sensible criteria"; "they lack equipment which would make it easier to work"), or general references to others in their workplace ("I've felt like – bugger them, they can work short"; "I've tried to explain to them why these things happen"). In addition, 'I' statements which are clearly differentiating the participant from others, or highlight their individuality, were coded as "General they" as well. Examples include "it makes more work for me, which I don't mind. I'm here to work, to do all these things"; "I'm talking about myself, personally – I find that I just come to work to do my work"; "I believe we need higher nurse-to-patient ratio, and I fought that fight very hard with the association"; "I work in our local office as well as our regional branches, so I do get exposed to our entire company"; "I much prefer to work here, than in the big city, despite the higher pay"; "we often hear… well, ***I*** often hear about this problem. And I've looked at different ideas of how to fix it".

Subgroup They

When participants referred to subgroups which they do not belong to as "they", this was coded as 'subgroup they'. Examples include experienced employees referring to junior or new staff, managers referring to their subordinates, employees referring to managers, employees referring to staff from the past, or employees referring to peers in other roles.

4.2.3 Third coding round – positive and negative affect

As discussed in Section 2.4.1.1, a balance between positive and negative affect displayed in an interaction between relationship parties is predictive of the future of the relationship. As discussed in Section 3.4.2.2, affect can be defined as the evaluative dimension of emotions – ranging from positive to negative. The third round focused on coding this affect. Affect was coded when the researcher identified either an emotion towards or an underlying evaluation of the organisation in a participant's message. The value of the affect (i.e., positive or negative) was determined based on verbal content, nonverbal cues, and context of the message, as demonstrated in Table 4.4. Inconclusive segments were marked by the coder, and accounted for less than 3% of the total interview time.

Table 4.4 Examples of coding affect in third round	
Negative	
Direct verbal negativity	"This place had quite a bad reputation. Nothing worked properly, there were not enough doctors, and the doctors they did have were hopeless. The good ones weren't treated very well, so they all left – the place had lots of problems".
Non-verbal cues	Tears, pauses, crossing arms and withdrawing from discussion, angry facial expression.
Sarcastic and critical tone	"The patient has already consented to a blood test, but because you need to take *another* sample, you now have to get *another* consent (rolling eye). Lots of rules".
Context - Describing how it should be	"I think there needs to be more of a support education network for new people who are starting here. They're trying to have more, but it doesn't seem to work out".
Positive	
Direct verbal content	"In my previous workplace, if you went in to do a procedure, everybody would hover over you, and if you made a tiny mistake, everyone would be – ooooooooh!. But here – no one cared. You could just go and learn! I loved it."
Non-verbal cues -	"On my first day, no one was here to really get me started. They knew I was coming, but many were on leave, so it kinda fell between the cracks. The admin sort of grabbed me, showed me around quickly, and then said – here's your office, here are your files…" (raises eyebrows, draws head back, raises arms, smiles). "I thought to myself – gee, that's a tough start! But then, after a day or two, people came back from holidays, and gave me a proper reception".
Context	"It should be a collaborative effort, not each function driving it in different directions. And we do work as a strong team, that's definitely the case".

4.2.4 Fourth coding round – attribution coding

As described in Section 2.5.2, the nature of the attribution was coded as per its effect on the relationship with the organisation. *Enhancing* attributions included instances when the participant provided 'alleviating circumstances' for the organisation's wrong-doing in their view. For example, the participant mentioned the policies in the organisation were out of date, and added that the relevant staff were never given the time or the budget to update them, this was considered an enhancing attribution, because the cause for this problem was not within the unit. Another example of enhancing attribution is when a participant mentioned

staff that is not helpful or not professional, but qualifies this by saying that it is not permanent staff, but the type that moves on away from the unit.

Distressing attributions include 'attributing unkind, selfish, or unflattering motives', discounting positive actions due to external impositions', or 'discounting reports of positive effects due to their rare occurrence'. Attribution was identified either by direct expressions of the participant ("it was done because…"), or by indirect or contextual reference to a reason provided by the participant ("that happens here a lot", "that's what we nurses are like", "mistakes happen. We are all human."). The dimensions listed in Table 2.6 were consulted to identify if the cause is enhancing or distressing by nature. For example, if an unfavourable procedure was used in an organisation, but the participant mentioned that the same procedure is used throughout the industry ("it's like that everywhere"), this was considered an *enhancing* attribution, because the participant discounted the organisations' role in the usage of the procedure. If, in contrast, the participant brought up another organisation that does things differently ("in my previous workplace, you would never do that"), this was considered a *distressing* attribution, because the participant attributes the decision to use this unfavourable procedure to reasons internal to the organisation.

4.2.5 Fifth coding round – aggregation of codes

Every relational process identified in the first coding round (as described in Section 4.2.1) was assigned to a category of processes. Instances identified in each category were aggregated according to their content and context. For example, the category 'negativity towards the organisation' resulted in over 80 codes. Codes which contained similar types of negativity (e.g., 'strong negativity', see below) were aggregated into one process type.

After all aggregations were completed, the aggregated instances were re-examined to validate their aggregation. Some minor adjustments were made (less than 10% of the aggregations).

Details of the aggregations within the pre-defined categories of relational processes are provided in the rest of this section.

Following the aggregations, each category of relational processes was compared with relational processes identified in marital research. Although most processes identified in this study were not identical to processes described in marital research, by interpreting and extrapolating the processes identified in the interview, the processes could be paralleled to processes identified in marital research. The parallel marital relational process is therefore described for categories of relational processes identified in this study, which also predicted the relationship quality one year later. These parallels are relevant to Research Question 3 "*How do employee-organisation relationships compare with marital relationships?*". Accordingly, they are discussed later (in Section 6.2) with respect to their indications of similarities and differences between marital research, and employee-organisation relationships. A summary of these parallels is presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5
Parallel relational processes in employment and marital interviews

Employment	Marriage
• Empathy	• Empathy
• Hope • Positivity in negatives	• Positive speak
• Genuine acceptance	• Glorifying the struggle
• Avoiding negative discussion	• Conflict avoidance
• Anxiety • Pain • Delivery mechanisms negativity	• Negative speak
• Strong negativity • Hostility	• Criticism / contempt
• Disappointment and disillusion • Despair • Delineation and reduction	• Disappointment and disillusion • Withdrawal

4.2.5.1 *Fondness or affection towards partner*

Various forms of fondness or affection were identified in this study, and were aggregated into several various forms, as illustrated in Table 4.6. Participants provided positive views of their workplace in terms of past, present, or future. These positive views concerned various aspects in the organisation, as expected: the direct supervisor, colleagues, clients, subordinates, and the overall organisation. Virtually all participants expressed some degree of positive views of at least some parts of the organisation. The intensity of these positive views ranged from acknowledgment, through appreciation, up to excitement.

Other forms of positive regards for the organisation were expressions of hope for improvement, empathy for those who caused a problem described, and a dynamic mechanism of directing the conversation to a positive testimony when asked about or describing a negative experience.

Table 4.6
Examples of positive views of the organisation

Category	Example
• Past • Present • Future	• "It had a nice family atmosphere". • "They are very supportive of stuff like that". • "We're going through a very needed change, which will hopefully make things better".
• Direct supervisor	• "Our direct manager is very approachable, you can always talk to her".
• Colleagues	• "Some of the staff here advanced their qualifications – and that's good. I'm happy for them." • "I like the staff here, we have a good mix. We get along quite well".
• Clients	• "Our patients are a lovely group to work with. They are usually really sweet."
• Subordinates	• "I'm lucky I have such a good team".
• General organisation	• "It is very family oriented, it gives you that flexibility you need".

4.2.5.2 *Negativity towards partner*

In contrast to positive expressions towards the organisation, there were many forms of negative expressions towards the organisation. All participants expressed some form of negativity towards their organisation. Many of these forms, described next, are similar to forms of negativity identified in marital research. These forms of negativity are summarised in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Forms of negativity towards the organisation	
Justified criticism	
Criticism of processes in the organisation	"Because of the numbers of patients we have to deal with, it is very hard to keep track of what's happening." "We now have to do bedside handover. It is problematic, because you cannot discuss everything freely in front of the patients. You have to maintain privacy, but other patients are there, and they can hear it. "
Criticism of colleagues	"They go on much longer breaks than the rest of us. And then, when you need help with a patient and they are not there – and that happens every day, several times a day – that is not right".
General criticism of work conditions	"Working short-staffed really takes its toll. Things get missed, you get exhausted, we get frustrated with one another – it's not a good thing". "We don't have the equipment to do our job properly. They are simple things to fix".
Criticism of a direct manager	"They know you're finished at 3:30, but they'll set up meetings for 4:30, and expect you to be there." "I was out of my depth then, and I kept asking for help – but the support wasn't there."
Anxiety	
Concern over the effect of external entities	"The media has had a terrible impact on patients and their families, having an idea of what happens on wards and in the hospital. They come here determined to make sure it doesn't happen to their loved ones – and that's fine, but I see nurses walk away crying – and that's not good. They take it that one step too far, to the point that we can't care for patients".
Concern over staffing levels	"If you're short staffed, you're falling behind. And I don't mind 10 minutes behind, but 30-45 minutes, every time – that's a problem. Not because I want to get home, but because all of that stuff should already be prepared for the next shift. That's hard".
Concern over technology dependence	"Last week we lost access to the main state's database. That put a huge amount of pressure. The staff was very very stressed. Because of a fault that we can't do anything about".
Restricted negativity	
Restricting the negativity of the message	Ending the comment with a smile Being apologetic about mentioning it Forgiving the reasons Using formal and non-judgmental language

Table 4.7 (Cont.) Forms of negativity towards the organisation	
Pain	
Grief and sorrow	"It's hard for me to deal with the impact on the family, when someone passes away. ". "I got pretty close with this patient, this 90 year old man, and then he passed away. And then no one lets you know – because you are no-one to them, really. You don't go to the funeral, nothing."
Feeling taken for granted	"They just assume that you will be there at 4:35 to respond to an email, and demand a response by close of business today, even though my shift ends at 3pm. There's this expectation that you'll stay back."
Isolation	"I understand how busy it is on other wards, but I don't think they understand what it's like down here – how overloaded we are".
Frustration	"I found it frustrating – the old-school way of work here, and that the staff here thinks that it's ok". "We still have the odd few who wouldn't move on with the new way of doing things. That frustrates me a little bit. A lot, actually."
Suffering	"I am tracking the clock all day – is it time to go home yet?"
Negativity through delivery mechanisms	
Delay or absence of positives	"Things that have worked well?... ahm… ahm… sorry. No." "I can't think of anything".
Negatives in a positive story	"The initiative has one positive to it, but the way it is implemented is not the best". "I suppose this new role helps, but things still take far too long. So it helps, but, there's still more to change".
Ending a positive story negatively	"Our strength is team work. Sometimes it's lacking, though. Sometimes, it doesn't feel like we are a team at all".
Strong negativity	
Anger and chastising	"I don't think they want people on permanent positions – even though they need them". "This attitude of –I'm just waiting to retire and you won't get anything out of me- irritates me quite a lot".
Demonising	"That manager basically threw [the junior nurse] to the wolves. Scrap meat. That's what she is to them". "Management here – lots of lying, bullying, backstabbing."
Overwhelming	"That's how we work here – our backs against the wall". "We are so pushed here – it's overwhelming. That's the word – overwhelming".
Ridicule	"Changes? They're always trying their little changes (sarcastically) – a poster here, a table there." "The routines haven't changed at all for decades. And they've had different managers during that time. Nothing's changed: 'this is how we've always, this how we'll always do it'. Can't exactly fight that".

Justified criticism

Criticism was identified as a predictor of divorce(Gottman 2014b), but it is unlikely to be a predictor of turnover because all participants in this study, unexceptionally, expressed criticism of their workplace, in one form or another.

Many participants expressed criticism that they elaborated on and why it is was justified (*n*=20). This is usually accompanied by rational explanations and examples for their opinions. This processes was coded as 'justified criticism', differentlyto general criticism of the organisation. Examples of this form include criticism of processes in the organisation, and criticism of colleagues. Most criticism was not directed at a particular cause, but more general criticism of work conditions.

Anxiety

In marital research, expressions of "fear, worry, anxiety, nervous anticipation, or dread" (Coan & Gottman 2007, p. 276) were grouped into one code. Similarly, worries, concerns, and fear expressed by some participants (*n*=8) were grouped into the code 'anxiety'. Concerns were expressed for oneself, colleagues, and the general public. The common theme of the concerns expressed in this process is the concern over something that is far greater, and uncontrollable by the participant. Anxiety subjects identified were media's effects on healthcare, the medical system, developments in society and its effect on public health, dependence of healthcare providers on technology, and the effects of these subjects on healthcare workforce in general, and in the organisation in particular.

Restrictive negativity

Some participants restricted the negativity which they expressed. Such restrictions made the negativity seem weaker. This category emerged from the data, and did not have an equivalent in marital research. Participants restricted negativity in various ways (*n*=30):

affective ways: ending a negative comment with a smile, being apologetic about mentioning it, forgiving the reasons for the negative issue, and by using formal, non-judgmental language.

Pain

Some participants expressed pain experienced with relation to their work (*n*=15). These expressions had various forms: grief and sorrow, feeling unappreciated, feeling isolated from other parts of the organisation, frustration, and suffering during work.

Negativity identified through delivery dynamics

In marital research, as discussed in Section 2.5.1, not only direct expressions were found to predict marital satisfaction and stability, but also the dynamics of the delivery of spouses' messages(Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992; Gottman 1994c; Buehlman, Carrere & Siler 2005). As explained, marriages where spouses were vague when asked to describe what initially attracted them to their partner, or who were withdrawn and did not expand on pleasant experiences that they had together were associated with lower marital satisfaction and stability.

Similarly, this study identified several indicators of negativity in participants' dynamic delivery mechanisms (*n*=19). These delivery mechanisms were evident when participants took a long time to express positives of the organisation or tell a positive story when they were asked to do so, when they delivered positive stories in a negative light, or when they started off telling a positive story, and ended up focusing on the negatives.

Strong negativity

Strong negativity, similar to Gottman's identification of toxic negativity forms such as criticism, contempt, and defensiveness (Gottman 1994c; Gottman 2014b)Forms of strong negativity were identified as negative processes that would not be typically accepted as an

open expression in the work environment (anger and chastising), negativity that transcends professional boundaries (demonising), expressions of feeling overwhelmed (similar to flooding in divorce), negativity expressed with definitive language, helplessness, pessimism, and ridicule – as contempt was identified as a predictor of divorce. About a half of all participants in this study (across both organisations) expressed some form of strong negativity (*n*=21).

4.2.5.3 ***Expansiveness versus withdrawal***

Expansiveness versus withdrawal were found predictive of marital stability and satisfaction, as discussed in Section 2.5.1 (Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992; Gottman 1994c; Buehlman, Carrere & Siler 2005). Similarly, this study identified various forms of withdrawal. One form of withdrawal identified in this study was coded as 'avoiding discussion' (*n*=5) and included avoidance of discussing matters of conflict: providing short and deflecting answers, or refusing to elaborate on the conflict. Other forms identified include a continuous need for prompting throughout the interview (*n*=12).

4.2.5.4 ***Disappointment and disillusionment***

Some participants (*n*=9) expressed disappointment and disillusion. Participants either expressed disappointment in their superiors or a general disappointment in their workplace See table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8
Examples of disappointment and disillusion

Disappointment in management	"They say that they'll consult us before they implement a change, but they don't. They say they'll ask us for feedback, but they don't. When we raise an issue, they just say – oh, you don't like change" "They focus on the wrong things. They don't care about people anymore, just about cutting costs"
General disappointment	"When I started, I thought things here were better, but then I realised that it's all the same. It's no different to where I've just left" "It was supposed to get easier and better with time, but it never really happened for me"

4.2.5.5 ***Dealing with conflict***

Several mechanisms were used by participants when they described difficult events in the organisation, and they do not map perfectly onto the processes identified in marital research. Three main processes are described here: considering the positives, avoiding discussion, and glorifying (or accepting) the struggle, see table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Examples of mechanisms for dealing with conflicts	
Considering the positives	
Appreciating positives	"People here can be racist towards me, but from my point of view, it taught me to be more assertive. I'm a lot more assertive now" "My start here was very hard, but I had fantastic support from my staff"
Balancing against a strength	"It's very hard to work here – but it's not worth moving. I like this place, and if you weigh it all up – pros and cons – it's not worth it" "I'm studying as well as working, and I'm very well supported in that. I don't know that I'd get that kind of support somewhere else" "we were backed into a corner, and that made us come up with alternatives, which in the end worked out not too bad, and we still use them today"
Acknowledging resolution	"We've discussed that with our supervisor and came up with an advocacy process, which means we can now voice our objections in a structured, and acceptable way" "They used to ask me to do things that are outside my role description. Since then, the patient-to-staff ratios have changed here, so that improved things a lot, and the manager also knocked things right on the head, so things like that do not happen again"
Avoid discussion of difficulties?	
Accepting faults No adverse effect	"That should not have happened. But hindsight is always easy" "It's just one of things – at the time you hate them, but later you think – that didn't matter anyway" "I spoke up about it and they moved things back to how they should be, and that was it"
Glorifying and accepting the struggle	
Explicit glorification	"I like challenges. This job was a huge challenge for me to address"
Acceptance through empathy	"The patients don't choose to be here on weekends – they have to be here because they are not well. I'm here to help them"
Hardships as part pf of reality	"That's the way it is in this industry" "That's just life – it's never perfect" "Things like that happen on every ward" "There's always elements of the job you won't like"
Acceptance as part of change in times	"That's the focus now – more on academic education, than on practical experience."
Accepting objective hardships	"That's how it is when you are new to a workplace like this" "We might think that it's the wrong thing to do, but sometimes it works out for the best, and that's wonderful"

Considering the positives

Some participants (*n*=20) identified positive points after describing a conflict or a difficult event in their employment. They either appreciated positive elements in the organisation, balanced the difficulty described against a strength, or pointed out that the difficulty had been resolved.

Avoiding discussion of difficulties

Some participants (*n*=5) described a difficulty or a conflict between them and the organisation, but after the description they made short dismissive statements and withdrew from the topic. Their dismissive statements referred to the absence of adverse effects, or to an acceptable fault.

Glorifying and accepting the struggles

Participants rarely glorified their struggles explicitly. Some (*n*=23), however, expressed a genuine acceptance of difficulties, as part of reality. This acceptance of the hardships is driven from either empathy for those causing the hardship, acceptance that those causes of hardship are unavoidable, acceptance that times have changed, or acceptance that the situation objectively involved hardships.

4.2.6 Coding – summary

This section described the method used for coding the qualitative data, which was the source of independent variables in this study. Five formal rounds of coding were used to code the data. The first round categorised relational processes identified in participants' interviews based on pre-defined categories, which were from marital research. The second round coded, used "we" and "they". The third round coded expressions of positive and negative evaluation of the organisation, and the fourth round coded enhancing and distressing attributions towards the organisation. Finally, the fifth round of coding aggregated expressions and

processes within the pre-defined categories of relational processes used based on marital research.

4.3 Quantitising - converting coded data

After the data were coded for relational processes, affect, attribution, and we-ness, as described in Section 4.2, the qualitative categories were put into quantitative form. Two main forms were used to quantitise qualitative data, as explained in Section 3.3 and summarised in Figure 3.1 – by calculating the duration and ratios of qualitative processes, and by assigning a numeric code to the existence or an absence of a process.

4.3.1 Calculating portions of qualitative indicators

The data was coded using Nvivo 10, which allows for coding of text, audio, or video files. Because of this, the interviews were not transcribed, and their recordings were coded directly (video or audio). The duration of each quantitative coding category was then used to calculate its percentage of the entire coding of affective content. An example is illustrated in Table 4.10. The reason the duration was not coded as a percentage of the entire interview was because some interviews included chats and interruptions which were irrelevant to the discussion on the employee's employment history. A portion of the entire affective references to the organisation is arguably a more relevant and reliable indicator of the participant's mental image.

Attribution was quantitised in a similar way to the quantitisation of affect described here. The only difference is the use of enhancing and distressing attributions (described in Section 4.2.4) instead of positive and negative affect.

Other ways of quantitising were identified in literature. For example, some marital researchers used a fixed-interval sampling of the data (e.g., every 30 seconds), and noted the

affect expressed during that time. The number of positive and negative instances was then added and compared. In addition, in some marital studies, researchers used a scale to code data for the intensity of emotion (Gottman et al. 1998b).

Table 4.10
Quantitising expressions of affect in an interview: Example

	Duration (hh:mm:ss.ms)	**Duration (Seconds)**
Entire interview	00:24:23.6	1463.6
Positive	00:05:57.5	375.5
Negative	00:09:10.5	550.5

This study used the duration of expression for two reasons: one, expansiveness has been identified as an indicator relevant for marital relationships(Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992; Gottman 1994c; Buehlman, Carrere & Siler 2005), suggesting that the duration of discussion of themes would be indicative of the quality of the relationship. That is, a relationship partner who prefers to elaborate on positive aspects of their partner is expected to have a better relationship than one who elaborates on their negative aspects.

The second reason for calculating the ratio in this way is the ability to capture the duration, because of technological advances. This study did not consider intensity of emotions in the calculations of ratios, however specific intense negative emotions, such as anger, demonization, chastising, etc. were captured in the coding of qualitative relational processes, as discussed in Section 4.2.5.2. This form of data conversion differs from the methods documented in marital research (Gottman 1979a; Notarius et al. 1989; Gottman 1994a; Gottman & Notarius 2000; Gottman 2014b). A future study could compare the outcomes resulting from a calculation used in this study, a calculation based on sampling methods, and calculations including the intensity dimension of displayed emotions.

4.3.2 Calculating ratios

Both affect and attribution ratios were calculated directly as illustrated in Table 3.5. Table 4.11 re-illustrates the formulas, for the reader's convenience. Based on the example in Table 4.10 above, the resulting affect ratio is as described in Box 4.1.

Box 4.1 **Example of affect ratio calculation**	
Affect ratio	(375.5) / (375.5+550.5) = 0.6821

The third independent variable, we-ness ratio, is an exploratory ratio, which was not described in marital literature (Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992; Gottman 1994c; Gottman 2014b). Being exploratory, it was calculated in two different forms, based on the different 'we-ness' categories identified. One ratio was calculated between combined the total of all 'we' references and the combined total of all 'they' references. This ratio of total references was termed *Total We-ness*. The other ratio only combined references to general cohorts, and not to specific ones. It was termed *General We-ness*. Table 4.11 summarises the formulas used to calculate all ratios in this study.

As described in Section 4.2.2, different forms of 'we' and 'they' were identified in this study: general ones referring to the organisation in general, and specific ones, referring to sub-groups within the organisation. The Total We-ness ratio is expected to reflect to what extent the participant sees themselves as part of groups, general or specific, within the organisation, whereas the General We-ness ratio represents to what extent the participant sees themselves as part of the organisation in general. Both of these ratios were included in the analysis because it was not clear to what extent each of them would contribute to the understanding of employee turnover and the employee-organisation relationship.

Table 4.11 Formulas for calculating ratios	
Affect ratio	**Attribution ratio**
$\frac{\text{Positive affect}}{\text{Positive affect + Negative affect}}$	$\frac{\text{Enhancing attribution}}{\text{Enhancing attribution + Distressing attribution}}$
Total We-ness ratio	**General We-ness ratio**
$\frac{\text{General We-ness + Sub-group We-ness}}{\text{General We-ness + Sub-group We-ness + General They + sub-group They}}$	$\frac{\text{General We-ness}}{\text{General We-ness + General They}}$

4.3.3 Qualitative processes as independent variables

This study examined the usefulness of qualitative relational processes as indicators of the future of the relationship between the employee and the organisation. This examination was conducted by comparing, for each process, the group of participants who expressed it, and the group of participants who did not. For each process, binary coding wasused in the following way: when a process was identified in a participant's interview, it was assigned the numeric value 1. When the processes was not identified, it was assigned a zero value.

Some attempts were made to identify sub-groups among cohorts ofparticipants who displayed a certain indicator. For example, there was an attempt to divide the group of participants who showed acceptance of the struggle into two groups, based on a clear division in the data: one group of those who showed such acceptance for longer than 20 seconds, and those who showed it for much shorter periods (a few seconds only). However, the groups resulting from this division were not large enough to draw meaningful conclusions. Therefore, throughout

this study, only two groups at a time were compared: a group of participants who expressed a process, and a group who did not. A future study could draw on a larger sample and examine if finer differences make more successful predictions of the future state of the employee-organisation relationship.

Once the numbers were assigned, participants were effectively divided into categories based on these independent variables (qualitative processes). This division enables the analysis of the results using a t-test, as described in Section 4.5.2.

4.4 Quantitative dependent variables

The dependent variables examined in this study, similar to marital research(Carrère et al. 2000; Gottman 2014b), result from quantitative survey scores of the relationship constructs of job and workplace attitudes, as described in Section 3.5. In addition to the constructs that are measured directly via the surveys, this study examines the following computed quantitative variables: the number of deteriorations in attitudes (termed *Alarms*), the number of improvement in attitudes (termed *Joys*), and a composite variable, integrating all quantitative measures, as described in Section 3.5.3.

Survey data were entered into SPSS 20. Constructs were calculated based on medians of answers, rather than means, because medians are less vulnerable to outliers in the data (Bryman 2012).

4.4.1 Survey constructs

The constructs measured in surveys at T1 and T2 are described below. Survey constructs were measured with items ranked by respondents, who indicated their degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements over a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree for POS, OJS, INT, AC, CC, and NC; 0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly

agree for ENGA and BURN, for technical reasons), as often used in turnover research (e.g., Yao & Wang 2006; Guchait & Cho 2010), and allows for greater sensitivity than a 5-point scale. No option for 'unsure' was provided, however respondents were free to not answer a question, or to hand-write comments on the survey's paper.

The internal validity of the survey construct scores was satisfactory, as provided in the constructs' description. The exclusion of responses which had a low Cronbach's alpha did not alter the results, and therefore, all questions were taken into account when medians were calculated.

4.4.1.1 ***Perceived organisational support (POS)***

This construct was measured using eight items which were applicable to a wide range of organisations, and have been found in the past to load highly on the main factor(Eisenberger et al. 1997). Median scores ranged from 1 to 7 at Time 1 (Cronbach alpha = .933), and from 3 to 7 at Time 2 (Cronbach'salpha = .919).

4.4.1.2 ***Overall job satisfaction (OJS)***

This affective-laden construct reflects the favourableness of job conditions (Shore & Tetrick 1991). It has a long history of relationship to employee turnover (Porter et al. 1974), and has the appeal of obvious face value; that is, a satisfied employee is expected to be less likely to leave the job and the organisation.

The items selected for measuring OJS were based on the study by Eisenberger et al. (1997), which have since been tested in other studies (Allen, Shore & Griffeth 2003). Median scores ranged from 1 to 7 at Time 1 (Cronbach's alpha = .828) and from 4 to 7 at Time 2 (Cronbach's alpha = .756).

4.4.1.3 ***Intention to quit (INT)***

Intentions to leave are expected to be an important antecedent to turnover behaviour, as conceptualised in many behavioural models, such as the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen 1991) and the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein 1980). Often in turnover research, intentions to quit are more closely related to other job and organisation attitudes than turnover behaviour itself, and sometimes they are the only ones measured (Aryee & Chay 2001; Benson 2006; Golden 2007).

Only two items were used, similar to the method used by Chau et al. (2009), based on Hom et al.'s (1984) three-item turnover intentions scale. A 12-month reference was made in the statement, because the intention was to collect data within 12 months (or a little more). Median scores ranged from 1 to 7 at Time 1 (Cronbach's alpha = .926) and from 1 to 5 at Time 2 (Cronbach's alpha = .894).

4.4.1.4 ***Commitment***

The three-component model of commitment (Allen & Meyer 1990) is well accepted in the literature. It has been shown that the different components of commitment lead to a different kind of employment relationship. The *affective* component of organisational commitment proposed by the model refers to employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organisation. This component typically leads to the most favourable organisation-relevant outcomes (attendance, performance and organisational citizenship behaviour) and employee-relevant outcomes (stress and work-family conflict) (Meyer et al. 2002).

The *continuance* component refers to commitment based on the costs that employees associate with leaving the organisation. This form of commitment has shown negative association with desirable organisation-related and employee-related outcomes (Meyer et al.

2002), and is therefore considered a negative form of commitment. However, the continuance component has also been found to reduce turnover behaviour (Payne & Huffman 2005). Finally, the *normative* component refers to employees' feelings of obligation to remain with the organisation. This component was found to have a significant negative relationship with turnover in a collectivistic context (e.g., Turkey, China, etc.), and a weaker relation in an individualistic context, typical of western cultures(Yao & Wang 2006).

Commitment was measured using Allen and Meyer's (1990) instrument for measuring the three components of organisational commitment. Median scores ranged as follows: affective commitment (AC) ranged from 1 to 7 at Time 1 (Cronbach's alpha = .882) and from 2.5 to 7 at Time 2 (Cronbach's alpha = .896). Continuous commitment (CC) ranged from 1.5 to 6.5 at Time 1 (Cronbach's alpha = .681) and from 1.5 to 7 at Time 2 (Cronbach's alpha = .744). Normative commitment (NC) ranged from 2 to 7 at Time 1 (Cronbach's alpha = .784) and from 1 to 7 at Time 2 (Cronbach's alpha = .835).

4.4.1.5 ***Work engagement (ENGA) and burnout (BURN)***

Based on the work by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003), a 17-item scale was used. Median scores for work engagement ranged from 1 to 6 at Time 1 (Cronbach's alpha = .886), and from 4 to 6 at Time 2 (Cronbach's alpha = .905).

Maslach's burnout inventory (MBI) (Schaufeli et al. 1986) was used to assess the level of employee burnout. Median scores for burnout ranged from 1 to 6 at Time 1 (Cronbach's alpha = .830), and from 1 to 3.5 at Time 2 (Cronbach's alpha = .791).

4.4.1.6 ***Joys***

As explained in Section 3.5.3, the number of favourable changes in the quality of the employee-organisation relationship, as indicated by scores of survey constructs, was used as the number of joys that appeared in the relationship. The number of favourable changes in

survey scores ranged from 0 to 6 (out of 8 possible constructs), and, when only changes greater than 0.5 score points were considered, the number of changes ranged from 0 to 4. Cronbach's alpha could not be calculated for these items.

4.4.1.7 *Alarms*

As explained in Section 3.5.3, the number of unfavourable changes in the quality of the employee-organisation relationship, as indicated by scores of survey constructs, was used as the number of alarming signs in the relationship between the employee and the organisation. The number of unfavourable changes in survey scores ranged from 0 to 5 (out of 8 possible), and, when only changes greater than 0.5 score points were considered, the number of changes ranged from 0 to 4. Cronbach's alpha could not be calculated for these items.

4.4.1.8 *Composite relationship variable (COMP)*

As explained in Section 3.5.3, a composite variable which is the mean score of all survey constructs was calculated at T1 and T2. The means calculated ranges from 2.44 to 4.94 at T1 (Cronbach's alpha = .754), and from 2.44 to 6.56 at T2 (Cronbach's alpha = .998).

4.4.2 Missing data

One participant missed an entire survey page at T1, thus not measuring INT and AC. These were marked as missing in SPSS, and were excluded from analyses which involved these constructs. Some participants missed an odd question, and the construct's mean was determined in its absence.

Another participant was not available for filling their surveys at T2, as that participant was not reachable during that time (moved to a different unit within the organisation, and had unpredictable shift schedule). This participant later returned to the same unit, one year later

(when queried at T3). This participant is excluded from analyses involving T2, but not the ones involving T3.

4.4.3 Summary of quantitative data processing

Quantitative data collected in this study were based on survey items selected according to the description provided in Section 3.5. This section provided practical details of survey constructs used and justified them. The section also justified the use of medians to calculate the value of each construct, and described how missing items were handled.

4.5 Analysis

As discussed in Chapter 3, two forms of analysis were used in this study. One seeks correlations between dependent and independent variables through bivariate correlations. The other seeks differences in values of dependent variables between groups of employees, based on differences in their independent variables. The practicalities of both analyses are described next.

4.5.1 Bivariate correlations

Correlations between the dependent variables (i.e., affect, attribution, and we-ness ratios) and independent variables (survey constructs and resulting products) were calculated using Spearman's Rho, which does not assume a normal distribution in the data.

Typically in social sciences, correlations are termed 'statistically significant' if their confidence level is 95% or above. In this thesis, however, correlations with a confidence level of 90% or above are presented. When theconfidence level is over 95% it is termed 'significant', and when it is over 90%it is termed 'nearly-significant'.

In addition to statistical significance, high correlation coefficient (Rho) values were considered, even if they were not statistically significant (or nearly significant). Accordingly, they will also be presented in Chapter 5.

These inclusions, which are not commonly made in statistical research, are justified for two reasons. One is the exploratory nature of the study, as explained in Section 1.6. This kind of study aims to open directions of enquiry, rather than eliminate them. The second reason is the sample size. As the sample is small, the statistical significance of the correlation is secondary in importance, and the main focus of this work is on the correlation coefficient, which indicates the effect size (Cohen 1988). Therefore, in this chapter, the level of significance of the results considered for analysis is mentioned as either 'significant' or 'nearly significant'.

4.5.2 T-test

As described in Section 3.6.4, a t-test was used to examine if qualitative relational processes and indicators identified in the interview conducted at T1 were associated with significant differences in the employee-organisation relationship quality at T2, and the relationship's stability by T3. A t-test comparing the equality of means was conducted for each relational process and indicator, as well as for each quantitative ratio. Similar to the significance levels considered when bivariate correlations were examined, when statistical significance was over 90% (that is, a 2-tailed sig of under 0.01), the difference found between two groups' means was considered. Significant and nearly-significant differences found in these comparisons are presented in Chapter 5.

4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter described the details of the data collection, coding, and analysis performed in this study. First, the chapter described the details of data collection in terms of site selection,

sample and procedure. The reasons for selecting the two sites used in this study, that is, the government health organisation *HealthCare* and the private law firm *LawFirm* were explained. The sampling of participants in each organisation and the reasons for that sampling strategy were also discussed. Finally the data collection section explained the procedure used to collect the data in this study.

The chapter then provided details on the processing of the data used in this study. The chapter described and justified two different coding types (interpretive and pattern coding) used in this study. The four interpretive coding rounds were explained: relational processes, we-ness, affect, and attribution coding rounds. The fifth coding round, aggregating previous codes using a pattern coding, was described and illustrated with many specific examples.

The two methods of quantitising data were then described and illustrated. One was based on calculating ratios between coded categories of data; the other on assigning numbers representative of presence or absence of relational processes.

The practicalities and details of processing the quantitative data collected in this study were also discussed and justified. The survey constructs used were presented and justified, as well as the scales, and the scores of reliability resulting from the data collection. The methods for handling missing data were also described.

Finally, the methods used for analysing the processed data were described. Two forms of analysis were used in this study: a bivariate correlation based on Spearman's Rho and a t-test comparing groups of participants based on independent variables.

Building on the methodology (described in Chapter 3) and the methods outlined in this chapter, the next chapter presents the meaningful results obtained in this study.

CHAPTER 5 RESULTS

This chapter presents the main results of this study. As described in Chapters 3 and 4, the study diagnosed the employee-organisation relationship at T1 by conducting an interview with participants. The interviews were processed to result in the following independent variables: quantitative interview-based ratios, and qualitative relational processes. In addition participants were surveyed for job and workplace attitudes at T1 and T2, and for turnover behaviour at T3. These survey data provide this study's dependent variables. This chapter presents the correlations between quantitative variables and compares groups of participants based on qualitative variables, as described in Section 3.6.

Descriptive statistics of dependent and independent variables (that is, ratios as well as survey scores) are presented and discussed in Section 5.1, so that the reader becomes familiar with the variables' range and distribution. The section also presents the range, mean, and standard deviations of the variables, together with correlations between the independent variables.

The correlations between variables, which are used to address RQ1a "*How do interview-based ratios compare with the future of participants' relationships with their organisation?*", are presented in Section 5.2. Next, Section 5.3 presents results pertinent to addressing RQ1b *"How do the qualitative relational processes displayed by participants compare with the future of their relationship with their organisation?*". This section compares, for each qualitative process, groups of employees who displayed that qualitative relational processes with those who did not. The other research questions (RQ2 and RQ3) are addressed in Chapter 6, where the results in Chapter 5 are compared with relevant extant literature.

Finally, the chapter concludes with the integrated findings resulting from the correlations of the various ratios, and from comparisons of groups of participants based on qualitative relational processes.

Note: all tables in this chapter are original, and were developed for this thesis.

5.1. Descriptive statistics of quantitative data

This section presents the variables and the descriptive statistics of the data collected. The quantitative independent variables in this study are based on interview data. These variables result from the conversion of qualitative participant input into quantitative ratios. Four independent variables, which are interview-based ratios, are examined: *affect* ratio, *attribution* ratio, and two *we-ness* ratios. The descriptive statistics of these ratios are covered in Sections 5.1.1 -5.1.3. Section 5.1.4 presents the correlations between all ratios.

5.1.1. Independent variables

As explained in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2, four ratios were calculated based on interview data, and were used as predictors in this study: affect ratio, attribution ratio, and two we-ness ratios (total we-ness, and general we-ness). Table 5.1 below provides the descriptive statistics for these variables.

Table 5.1
Means and standard deviations for independent variables (*n* = 45 participants)

Dimension	Range	M	SD
Affect ratio	0.09 – 3.15	1.11	0.78
Attribution ratio	0.11 – 1.00	0.60	0.22
We-ness ratios			
Total we-ness ratio	0.00 – 0.93	0.58	0.25
General we-ness ratio	0.00 – 1.00	0.65	0.32

5.1.1.1. Interview affect ratio

The distribution of the affect ratio was close to normal, slightly right skewed (also termed 'positively skewed') (Figure 5.1), which means it was more common for participants to have a lower positive-to-negative affect ratio than the other way around. The range of this ratio was between 0.09 and 3.15 (*M*=1.11, *SD* = 0.78).

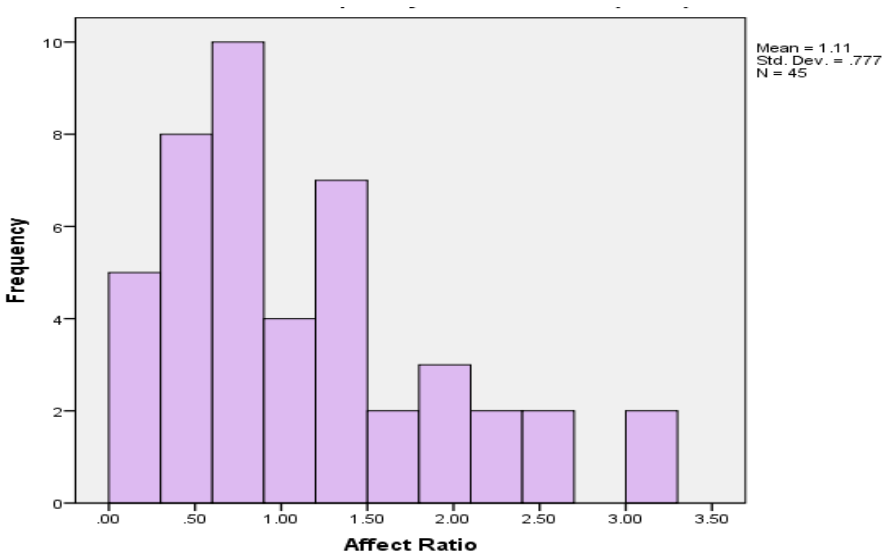

Figure 5.1 – Frequency of affect ratio, positive to negative (*n*=45)

This data indicates that mostly, participants showed a lower ratio of positive affect to negative affect. This means that accounts of people's employment range from relatively more positive and relatively more negative, where most people are fairly less positive (which means that the ration is smaller than 1).

5.1.1.2. Attribution ratio

The attribution ratio distribution presented a pattern similar to a normal distribution, perhaps very slightly left skewed (also termed 'negatively skewed'), as shown in Figure 5.2. The range of this ratio was between 0.11 and 1.00 (*M*= 0.60, *SD* = 0.22).

In contrast to the affect ratio, which indicated that participants' evaluation of their organisation was more negative than positive, the distribution of the attribution ratio indicates that participants tended to express more enhancing attributions than distressing attributions towards their organisation.

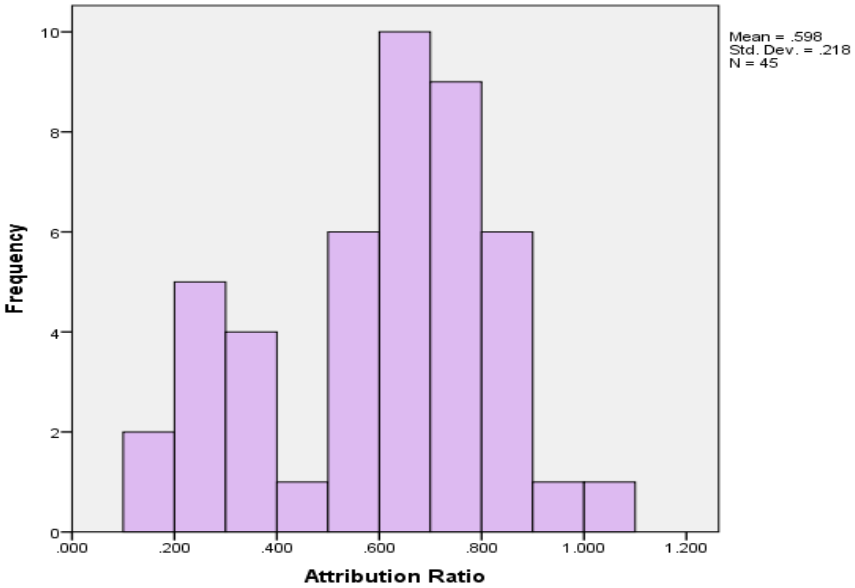

Figure 5.2 – Frequency of attribution ratio, enhancing to distressing (*n*=45)

This finding suggests that participants generally have distressing attributions towards their workplace. That is, most frequently, participants' view of the organisation's actions is not favourable.

5.1.1.3. We-ness ratios

As explained in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2, two we-ness ratios were calculated based on interview data. The distribution of both we-ness ratios was close to normal, slightly left skewed (also termed 'negatively skewed'), (Figures 5.3 and 5.4), which means it was more common for participants to express more we-ness than they did they-ness, both in general and specific formats. The range of the total we-ness ratio was between 0.00 and 0.93 (*M*=0.58,

SD = 0.25). The range of the general we-ness ratio was between 0.00 and 1.00 (*M*=0.65, *SD* = 0.32)

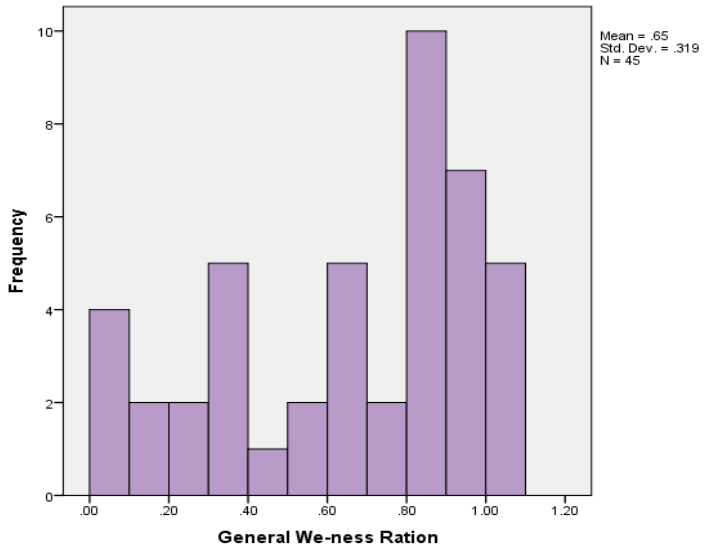

Figure 5.3 – Frequency of General we-ness ratio, we-ness to they-ness (*n*=45)

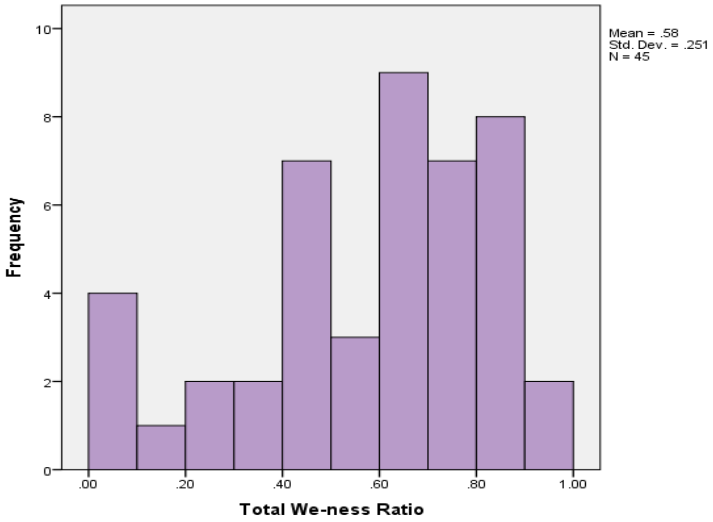

Figure 5.4 – Frequency of Total we-ness ratio, we-ness to they-ness (*n*=45)

5.1.1.4. Correlations between ratios

An examination of the correlations of the four ratios (Table 5.2) shows that the affect and the attribution ratios are strongly and significantly correlated, and the two we-ness ratios are strongly and significantly correlated. However, no correlation was found between any of the we-ness ratios and either the attribution or the affect ratio.

Table 5.2
Correlations between interview-based ratios (*n*=45)

Ratio	Affect		Attribution		Total We-ness	
	S-Rho	*Sig.*	*S-Rho*	*Sig.*	*S-Rho*	*Sig.*
Affect	1.000					
Attribution	.702**	.000	1.000			
Total We-ness	.049	.374	.140	.180	1.000	
General We-ness	.076	.310	.069	.326	.717**	.000

**p<.01; *p<.05

This data suggests that the affect that participants expressed towards their organisation is rather consistent with the attributions that they make towards it, although, based on Section 5.1.1.1 and 5.1.1.2, their attributions tends to be more negative than their affect. Similarly, how much a participant sees themselves as part of the organisation is consistent with how much they see themselves as part of a sub-group in the organisation. However, there is no evidence that the two groups of concepts (affect and attribution versus being part of the organisation) are consistent with one another.

5.1.2. Dependent variables

Two kinds of dependent variables were used in this study, as described in detail in Section 3.5: direct survey variables, resulting from direct survey scores (described in detail in Section 4.4.1), and variables that result from computing the various survey variables. The descriptive statistics of all dependent variables, including their range, mean, and standard deviations, are presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Means and standard deviations for employment variables				
Constructs	**N**	**Range**	**M**	**SD**
Perceived Organisational Support (POS)				
T1	43	1 – 7	4.73	1.52
T2	45	1 – 7	4.76	1.60
Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS)				
T1	43	1 – 7	4.98	1.43
T2	45	1 – 7	5.04	1.37
Intention to Quit (INT)[a]				
T1	42	1 – 7	2.64	1.85
T2	45	1 – 6.5	2.66	1.72
Affective Commitment (AC)				
T1	42	1 – 7	4.46	1.51
T2	45	1 – 7	4.43	1.54
Continuous Commitment (CC)				
T1	43	1 – 7	4.10	1.66
T2	45	1 – 7	4.34	1.57
Normative Commitment (NC)				
T1	43	1 – 7	3.91	1.36
T2	45	1 – 7	3.60	1.53
Work Engagement (ENG)				
T1	43	1 – 7	4.58	1.02
T2	45	2 – 6	4.80	0.99
Burnout (BURN)[b]				
T1	43	1 – 6	2.19	1.03
T2	45	0 – 4	2.16	0.89
Computed variables				
Alarms	43	0 – 5	1.58	1.45
Alarms>0.5	43	0 – 4	1.14	1.20
Joys	43	0 – 6	1.79	1.67
Joys>0.5	43	0 – 4	1.26	1.20
Composite relationship value (COMP)				
T1	42	2.44 – 4.94	4.01	0.60
T2	45	2.44 – 6.56	4.65	0.86

5.1.3. Summary of descriptive statistics

This section presented the descriptive statistics for the study's quantitative dependent and independent variables. The values of all quantitative variables, that is, the independent variables, which were derived interview-based ratios, as well as the dependent variables,

which were either survey constructs or variables based on these constructs, all presented distributions close to normal. Furthermore, the distribution indicates that most participants are not 'extreme' cases, that is, most did not display exceptionally high or low ratios.

5.2. Correlations

Addressing research sub-question 1a "*How do interview-based ratios compare with the future of participants' relationships with their organisation?"* this section presents the correlations between interview-based attitudes (independent variables) and survey-based results (dependent variables). Correlations between dependent and independent variables were measured using Spearman's Rho, which does not require a pattern of normal distribution. The correlations were tested for a one-tailed effect, because one direction of influence was expected. That is, it was expected that an independent variable that indicates a better relationship between the employee and the organisation will be associated with a value that indicates a better relationship between the employee and the organisation in the dependent variable as well. For example, it was expected that a higher interview affect ratio would be associated with a higher value of perceived organisational support, a lower value of intention to quit, a higher number of joys, and a lower number of alarms.

Section 5.2.1 presents the correlations between affect ratio, as well as attribution ratio, and survey-based variables measured at T1 and T2 (summarised in Table 5.4). In addition to the correlations between the dependent and independent variables, there are correlations between the dependent variables. However, because these correlations are outside the scope of this study, they are not presented or discussed here. The correlations between the independent and dependent variables are sufficient to demonstrate the ideas that are core to this thesis.

When examining the correlations between the affect ratio and the survey variables, further insight was gained by segmenting the participants according to their tenure (below six years[7], or over), their position (employee or manager), and gender (male or female). The general correlations are presented in Section 5.2.2, and the segmented correlations are presented individually.

Correlations between the two we-ness ratios and survey-based variables are presented in Section 5.2.3. Finally, Section 5.2.4 summarises the correlation-based results presented in this section.

5.2.1. Correlations of affect and attribution ratios within the entire sample

At T1, the affect ratio significantly and moderately correlated with POS, OJS, INT, AC, ENGA, and BURN. The attribution ratio also significantly and moderately correlated with POS, OJS and AC, and weakly with INT and BURN. At T2, the affect ratio correlated with POS, OJS, INT, AC, and BURN. The correlation at T2 was moderate for POS, OJS, INT, and AC, and weak for BURN. The attribution ratio correlated moderately with POS at T2, and weakly with OJS, INT, and AC.

Among computed variables, the affect and the attribution ratios only significantly correlated with the composite variable, with strong correlations for affect ratio at T1 and T2 (stronger at T1), a strong correlation between the attribution ratio and the composite variable at T1, and a moderate correlation between the attribution ratio and the composite variable at T2.

For the reader's convenience, significant and nearly significant correlations (explained in Section 4.5.1) are highlighted in colour in Tables 5.4 – 5.8. Significant correlations are highlighted in green, and nearly significant correlations are highlighted in yellow.

[7] Six years was the only time point that resulted in significant differences in participants' groups.

Table 5.4 Correlation between interview ratios and survey variables for all participants				
	Affect ratio		**Attribution ratio**	
Construct	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
All participants, T1 (*n*=43)				
POS	.655**	.000	.562**	.000
OJS	.507**	.000	.411**	.003
INT	-.456**	.006	-.324*	.025
AC	.581**	.000	.400**	.005
CC	-.011	.471	.059	.353
NC	.206	.092	.075	.317
ENGA	.310*	.022	.142	.181
BURN	-.333*	.015	-.296*	.027
All participants, T2 (*n*=45)				
	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
POS	.489**	.000	.456**	.001
OJS	.411**	.003	.323*	.015
INT	-.411**	.003	-.324*	.015
AC	.412**	.002	.261*	.041
CC	.127	.204	.160	.147
NC	.103	.251	-.043	.389
ENGA	-.014	.463	-.047	.379
BURN	-.271*	.036	-.193	.102
All participants, Computed variables (*n*=43)				
	Affect ratio		**Attribution ratio**	
	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
Joys	.084	.296	-.187	.115
Joys over 0.5	.079	.308	-.230	.069
Alarms	.159	.154	-.005	.486
Alarms over 0.5	.243	.058	.032	.419
COMP_T1	.641**	.000 (*n*=42)	.497**	.001 (*n*=42)
COMP_T2	.471**	.001	.329*	.014

**$p<.01$; *$p<.05$

5.2.2. Comparing sub-groups within the sample

The sample was split according to the following criteria: tenure period (six years or under), organisational position (employee or manager), and gender (male or female). Some sample splits did not result in insights that were relevant for this study, and are thus not presented here. For example, an examination of the sample split according to the organisation of

employment (LawFirm or HealthyCare) showed that the correlations identified in the different firms were consistent with those identified for the entire sample. Similarly, so did an examination of the sample split according to the field of work (law, nursing, or clerical). The following sections describe and compare the correlations identified in each sub-group.

5.2.2.1. Tenure

When splitting the sample into two tenure groups, one group of participants who have been members of the organisation under six years, and another of participants who have been members of the organisation over six years, striking differences emerge. As the groups are of similar sizes, the comparison provides insights into the differences which emerged in correlations, indicating the role that time plays in forming a mental image of the organisation in the participant's mind, as discussed in Section 6.1.2.1. The most striking insight in this comparison is that most correlations were found among the longer tenured participants, and hardly any correlations were found for the short tenured participants. The correlations are summarised in Table 5.5.

At T1, for long-tenure participants (over six years), the affect ratio significantly (and generally strongly) correlated with POS, OJS, INT, AC, ENGA, and BURN. The attribution ratio correlated significantly and strongly (although generally not as strongly as the affect ratio) with POS, OJS, INT, and AC. A moderate and nearly-significant correlation was also found between the attribution ratio and BURN. For short-tenure participant (members of the organisation six years and under), the only significant correlation identified at T1 was between both ratios and POS. Nearly-significant and moderate correlations were also identified for the affect ratio and OJS, AC and NC.

These findings indicate that participants who have been part of the organisation for six years or over had stories about the organisation which were consistent with their survey responses.

This consistency was much weaker for participants who have been members of the organisation for a shorter time period.

At T2, for long-tenure participants, both ratios significantly (and for the most part, strongly) correlated with POS, OJS, INT, and AC. The affect ratio also moderately, and nearly-significantly correlated with BURN. Among this group, the attribution ratio correlated slightly stronger than the affect ratio with POS and INT – which is opposite to the common trend. For short tenure participants, however, the ratios only significantly correlated with POS at T2.

These findings indicate that long-tenure participants' survey responses remain consistent with their stories about the organisation that they told the year before, as opposed to short-tenure participants. For short-tenure participants, the only constructs that remains consistent with their stories about the organisation is their perceived organisation support.

For computed variables, the only significant correlation identified for the short-tenure group was between the affect ratio and COMP at T1. A nearly-significant and moderate correlation was also found for this group between the attribution ratio and COMP at T1. For the long-tenure participants group, however, COMP both at T1 and T2 correlated significantly with both ratios. In addition, the attribution ratio had a significant, strong, and *negative* correlation with the number of joys identified between T1 and T2 – both overall number and the number of joys greater than 0.5. This finding indicates that an enhancing attribution does not necessarily indicate a better quality of the relationship. This point is discussed further in Section 6.1.1.1.

Table 5.5
Correlation between interview ratios and survey constructs for tenure groups

	Affect ratio		Attribution ratio	
	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
Short tenure, T1 (*n*=19)				
POS	.728**	.000	.628**	.002
OJS	.334	.081	.208	.197
INT	-.272	.130	.014	.478
AC	.340	.077	.164	.252
CC	-.047	.425	-.020	.468
NC	.369	.060	.103	.337
ENGA	.081	.371	-.102	.338
BURN	-.089	.359	-.149	.271
Long tenure, T1 (*n*=24)				
POS	.586**	.001	.482**	.009
OJS	.565**	.002	.505**	.006
INT	-.601**	.001 (*n*=23)	-.572**	.002 (*n*=23)
AC	.615**	.001 (*n*=23)	.459*	.018 (*n*=23)
CC	-.036	.434	.075	.364
NC	-.002	.497	-.031	.442
ENGA	.413*	.023	.255	.115
BURN	-.399*	.027	-.324	.061
Short tenure, T2 (*n*=21)				
POS	.481*	.014	0.429*	.026
OJS	.096	.340	0.115	.310
INT	-.097	.338	-0.025	.457
AC	.037	.437	-0.030	.448
CC	.204	.187	0.097	.338
NC	.049	.417	-0.094	.343
ENGA	-.106	.324	-0.135	.279
BURN	-.076	.371	-0.123	.279
Long tenure, T2 (*n*=24)				
POS	.465*	.011	.521*	.004
OJS	.579**	.002	.414*	.022
INT	-.462*	.012	-.480**	.009
AC	.592**	.001	.397*	.027
CC	.147	.247	.250	.120
NC	.061	.389	-.092	.335
ENGA	.035	.436	.000	.500
BURN	-.302	.076	-.115	.296

**p<.01; *p<.05

Table 5.5 (Cont.) Correlation between interview ratios and survey constructs for tenure groups				
	Affect ratio		**Attribution ratio**	
Short tenure, Computed variables (*n*=19)				
	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
Joys	.181	.230	.170	.243
Joys over 0.5	.155	.264	.126	.304
Alarms	.218	.185	.112	.324
Alarms over 0.5	.222	.181	.152	.267
COMP_T1	.624**	.002 (*n*=19)	.363	.063 (*n*=19)
COMP_T2	.134	.281 (*n*=21)	.031	.448 (*n*=21)
Long tenure, Computed variables (*n* = 24)				
	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
Joys	-.103	.317	-.558**	.002
Joys over 0.5	-.045	.417	-.574**	.002
Alarms	.086	.345	-.082	.352
Alarms over 0.5	.237	.133	-.089	.339
COMP_T1	.647**	.000 (*n*=23)	.576**	.002 (*n*=23)
COMP_T2	.656**	.000	.501**	.006
**$p<.01$; *$p<.05$				

5.2.2.2. Position

When splitting the participants according to their positions, and comparing the correlations found for managers and for employees, there are clear differences. Although the sample size becomes fairly small for managers, the results provide a meaningful indication for these differences.

For employees, at T1, the affect ratio significantly and moderately correlated with POS, OJS, INT, AC, ENGA, and BURN, whereas for managers, a significant correlation was only found for POS. In addition, for managers at T1, non-significant, but moderate, correlations were found for OJS, INT, AC, ENGA, and BURN.

For employees, the attribution ratio significantly correlated with POS, OJS, INT, AC and BURN at T1, presenting a strong correlation for POS and a moderate correlation for the rest. No correlations between the constructs and the attribution ratio were found for managers.

At T2, for employees, the affect ratio significantly and moderately correlated with POS, OJS, INT, and AC, and weakly and non-significantly correlated with BURN. For managers, at T2, no significant correlations between the affect ratio and the survey variables was found. Moderate, however non-significant, correlation was found between the affect ratio and POS, and the rest of the correlations were weak.

Among computed variables, both ratios significantly correlated with the composite relationship variable at T1 and at T2 for employees (with the common trend of the affect ratio displaying a stronger correlation than the attribution ratio), and no other significant correlation identified for other computed variables. For managers, however, both ratios only correlated with the composite relationship variable COMP at T1, and not at T2. In addition, the number of alarms that are greater than 0.5 score points was found to significantly and strongly correlate with the affect ratio (and a moderate, but non-significant correlation was found for the attribution ratio). The results when the sample is split according to position (employee and manager) are summarised in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Correlation between interview ratios and survey constructs for employees and managers				
	Affect ratio		**Attribution ratio**	
	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
Employees, T1 (*n*=32)				
POS	.609**	.000	.538**	.001
OJS	.517**	.001	.378*	.016
INT	-.440*	.007 (*n*=31)	-.307*	.046 (*n*=31)
AC	.577**	.000 (*n*=31)	.357*	.024 (*n*=31)
CC	.114	.267	.207	.128
NC	.138	.226	.037	.421
ENGA	.357*	.022	.194	.144
BURN	-.360*	.021	-.374*	.017
Managers, T1 (*n*=11)				
	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
POS	.692**	.009	.424	.097
OJS	.517	.052	.342	.152
INT	-.426	.095	-.220	.257
AC	.490	.063	.268	.212
CC	-.181	.297	.125	.357
NC	.350	.146	.056	.435
ENGA	.238	.240	-.191	.287
BURN	-.368	.133	.056	.435
Employees, T2 (*n*=33)				
	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
POS	.503**	.001	.482**	.002
OJS	.504**	.001	.358*	.020
INT	-.463**	.003	-.349*	.023
AC	.413**	.008	.242	.087
CC	.103	.284	.195	.139
NC	.154	.196	-.034	.426
ENGA	-.079	.331	-.055	.380
BURN	-.273	.062	-.195	.138
Managers, T2 (*n*=12)				
	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
POS	.398	.100	.160	.310
OJS	.196	.271	.089	.392
INT	-.229	.237	-.160	.310
AC	.230	.236	.018	.478
CC	.185	.282	-.039	.452
NC	-.014	.483	-.042	.448
ENGA	.155	.315	-.367	.120
BURN	-.233	.233	.057	.430

**p<.01; *p<.05

Table 5.6 (Cont.) Correlation between interview ratios and survey constructs for employees and managers				
	Affect ratio		**Attribution ratio**	
Employees, Computed variables (*n*=32)				
	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
Joys	.120	.257	-.139	.224
Joys over 0.5	.117	.262	-.199	.137
Alarms	.100	.292	-.004	.492
Alarms over 0.5	.122	.253	-.025	.446
COMP_T1	.605**	.000 (*n*=31)	.433*	.007 (*n*=31)
COMP_T2	.542**	.001 (*n*=33)	.376*	.016 (*n*=33)
Managers, Computed variables (*n* = 11)				
	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
Joys	.047	.446	-.354	.142
Joys over 0.5	.076	.413	-.359	.139
Alarms	.309	.178	.154	.325
Alarms over 0.5	.612*	.023	.408	.107
COMP_T1	.682*	.010	.264	.217
COMP_T2	.217	.249 (*n*=12)	-.004	.496 (*n*=12)
**$p<.01$; *$p<.05$				

5.2.2.3. Gender

When splitting the participants according to their gender and comparing the correlations for males and females, there are clear differences. Although the sample size becomes fairly small for males, the results provide a meaningful indication for these differences. The correlations are summarised in Table 5.7.

At T1, for both males and females, the affect ratio significantly and strongly correlated with AC. For females at T1, the affect ratio also significantly correlated with POS, and moderately correlated with OJS, INT, and BURN, whereas for males, a significant (and strong) correlation was only found for OJS. A non-significant, but moderate, correlations was also found for POS, at T1 for males.

For the attribution ratio, at T1, a correlation patterns similar to that of the affect ratio was found for females: a strong and significant correlation between the attribution ratio and POS, and moderate and significant correlations with OJS, INT, AC, and BURN. For males,

however, the pattern of correlations of the attribution ratio at T1 was different to that of the affect ratio: it only had nearly-significant, and moderate, correlation with OJS and ENGA. These findings suggest that female's survey responses were mostly consistent with both affect and attribution in their stories about the organisation, whereas for males, this consistency was much weaker. Also, comparing the attribution findings, females affect and attribution appear generally related to the same constructs, whereas for males, the similarity is weaker.

At T2, for females, a significant and moderate correlation between the affect ratio and the following constructs was found: POS, OJS, INT, AC, and BURN. The attribution ratio only significantly correlated with POS at T2 for females, however it also weakly, and nearly-significantly correlated with OJS, INT, AC and BURN. For males at T2, a significant and strong correlation was found between the affect ratio and OJS, and between the attribution ratio and CC and ENGA. Moderate, but non-significant correlationswere also found for males at T2 between the affect ratio and POS, INT and AC, and between the attribution ratio and OJS. These findings show that after one year, females maintain consistency between the affect and attribution in their stories and their survey responses. This consistency is weaker than in T1, and weakens more attribution than for affect. For males, however, it seems that the correlation patterns for affect and for attribution ratios remain different as they were in T1. In addition, it appears that the consistency of male's attributions with their survey responses improves over time.

The only *computed* variables that correlated with the ratios for males or females were COMP, the composite relationship variables. For females, COMP at T1 and T2 correlated with both ratios (affect and attribution), when the affect ratio generally presented a stronger correlation than the attribution ratio, and T1 correlation was stronger than T2. For males, COMP at both times only correlated with the affect ratio (stronger correlation at T1). The attribution ratio

had moderate, but non-significant correlations with COMP at T1, and an *inverse* correlation with joys over 0.5 score points.

Table 5.7
Correlation between interview ratios and survey constructs for males and females

	Affect ratio		Attribution ratio	
	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
Females, T1 (*n*=30)				
POS	.713**	.000	.718**	.000
OJS	.469**	.004	.400*	.014
INT	-.441**	.008 (*n*=29)	-.313*	.049 (*n*=29)
AC	.527**	.002 (*n*=29)	.428*	.010 (*n*=29)
CC	-.100	.300	-.077	.343
NC	.169	.185	.126	.254
ENGA	.268	.076	.014	.471
BURN	-.438**	.008	-.432**	.009
Males, T1 (*n*=13)				
POS	.450	.061	.120	.348
OJS	.547*	.026	.415	.079
INT	-.394	.091	-.394	.091
AC	.590*	.017	.244	.210
CC	.183	.275	.308	.153
NC	.312	.150	.011	.486
ENGA	.387	.096	.466	.054
BURN	-.074	.405	.048	.438
Females, T2 (*n*=32)				
POS	.498**	.002	.526**	.001
OJS	.371*	.018	.290	.054
INT	-.358*	.022	-.260	.075
AC	.361*	.021	.292	.053
CC	.054	.384	.016	.465
NC	.025	.446	-.067	.358
ENGA	-.148	.210	-.200	.136
BURN	-.331*	.032	-.242	.091
Males, T2 (*n*=13)				
POS	.414	.080	.194	.262
OJS	.520*	.034	.410	.082
INT	-.423	.075	-.365	.110
AC	.445	.064	.120	.348
CC	.283	.174	.510*	.038
NC	.284	.174	.155	.307
ENGA	.365	.110	.485*	.046
BURN	-.135	.330	-.059	.424

**p<.01; *p<.05

Table 5.7 (Cont.) Correlation between interview ratios and survey constructs for males and females				
	Affect ratio		**Attribution ratio**	
Females, Computed variables (*n*=30)				
	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
Joys	.073	.351	-.190	.157
Joys over 0.5	.125	.255	-.184	.166
Alarms	.058	.381	.024	.450
Alarms over 0.5	.205	.139	.077	.343
COMP_T1	.582**	.000 (*n*=29)	.505**	.003 (*n*=29)
COMP_T2	.428**	.007 (*n*=32)	.315*	.040 (*n*=32)
Males, Computed variables (*n* = 13)				
	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
Joys	.118	.350	-.290	.168
Joys over 0.5	-.043	.444	-.429	.072
Alarms	.396	.090	-.132	.334
Alarms over 0.5	.347	.123	-.165	.295
COMP_T1	.621*	.012	.396	.090
COMP_T2	.495*	.043	.357	.115
**$p<.01$; *$p<.05$				

5.2.3. Correlations with we-ness ratios

As explained in Sections 3.4.2.4 and 4.2.2, usage of the expressions "we" and "they" to describe the firm in various contexts was coded. The sense of 'we-ness' was expected to relate to POS, NC, and maybe AC, but instead, for the whole group, the only significant correlation found was with CC – a negative correlation. Both we-ness ratios, that is, General and Total We-ness, significantly and negatively correlated with CC at T2, indicating that participants who feel part of a group (either their unit or a sub-group) place a smaller emphasis on the continuous commitment of participants.

Correlations of we-ness ratios at T1 are only presented here, but not discussed, as they are irrelevant for the research questions of this study of the employee-organisation relationship. The results are presented in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Correlations of we-ness ratios with dependent variables				
	Total we-ness		**General we-ness**	
Construct	Correlation coefficient	Sig.	Correlation coefficient	Sig.
All participants, T2				
CC	-0.273*	0.035	-0.261*	0.041
Employees only (*n*=33), T2				
CC	-0.257	0.074	-.312*	0.039
Joys	-0.402*	0.011	-0.385*	0.015
Joys over 0.5	-0.342*	0.028	-0.313*	0.040
Managers (*n*=13), T2				
Joys	0.154	0.326	0.608*	0.024
Short tenure (*n*=21), T2				
CC	-0.481*	0.014	-.507**	0.01
Long tenure (*n*=24), T2				
INT	-0.558**	0.002	-0.265	0.106
AC	0.533**	0.004	0.19	0.187
BURN	-0.460*	0.012	-0.255	0.115
Joys over 0.5	-0.349*	0.047	-0.130	0.273
Alarms	-0.382*	0.033	-0.203	0.170
Females (*n*=32), T2				
AC	0.072	0.348	-.357*	0.022
CC	-0.008	0.482	-0.285	0.057
NC	-0.412**	0.009	-0.17	0.177
Males (*n*=13), T2				
AC	0.462	0.056	.537*	0.029
NC	0.410	0.082	.486*	0.046
ENGA	0.517*	0.035	0.448	0.062
All participants (*n*=43) ,T1				
INT	-0.317*	0.019	-0.193	0.107
CC	-0.277*	0.036	-0.339*	0.013
NC	-0.281*	0.034	-0.114	0.223
Employees (*n*=32), T1				
INT	-0.327*	0.034	-0.275	0.064
CC	-0.395*	0.013	-0.513**	0.001
NC	-0.340	0.028	-0.089	0.314
Short tenure (*n*=19), T1				
CC	-0.486*	0.018	-0.566**	0.006
Long tenure (*n*=24), T1				
POS	0.381*	0.033	0.135	0.264
INT	-0.523**	0.004	-0.188	0.190
AC	0.444*	0.015	0.189	0.188
BURN	-0.459*	0.012	-0.269	0.102
Females (*n*=30), T1				
CC	-0.417*	0.011	-0.444**	0.007
NC	-0.454**	0.006	-0.259	0.083
Males (*n*=13), T1				
AC	0.506*	0.039	0.562*	0.023

**p<.01; *p<.05

When split according to position, only employees showed a significant and negative correlation between their General we-ness ratio and CC. For employees, we-ness ratios also significantly and negatively correlated with the number of their joys. In contrast, for managers, the total we-ness ratio had a positive significant correlation with the number of joys. When split according to their tenure, (as we-ness may take time to develop), only the significant correlation to CC was maintained for short tenure individuals (under six years). For long tenure participants, however, we-ness ratios significantly correlated with INT, AC, BURN, alarms, and joys over 0.5.

When split according to gender, we-ness ratios were found to significantly correlate with CC, and NC for women, whereas for males, general we-ness significantly predicted AC and NC at T2, and total we-ness significantly correlated with ENGA at T2.

5.2.4. Summary - quantitative results

Correlation results show that the affect ratio and the attribution ratio which were based on interviews conducted at T1 significantly correlated with most relational survey constructs measured at T2. In general, the affect ratio had stronger correlations with more constructs than the attribution ratio. Most correlations were with the constructs POS, OJS, INT, AC, BURN, and COMP, in the expected direction.

When examining sub-groups of the sample, the patterns are the same for employees, females, and employees with tenure of over six years. For employees with shorter tenure, both ratios only significantly (and moderately) correlated with the construct POS. Most correlations with we-ness ratios were evident for long-tenure participants (stronger for total we-ness), indicating that we-ness may take time to form.

5.3. Qualitative processes and the course of the employment relationship

As described in Section 3.6.4, participants were divided into groups based on qualitative relational processes and indicators identified in their interviews. Participants' survey constructs' scores in such groups were compared using a t-test. These comparisons resulted in interesting patterns with relation to the employment relationship. One process, we-ness, was investigated using a ratio, similar to the affect and attribution interview-based ratios. The other relational processes were investigated using t-tests, comparing, for each process, the groups that did and did not display the process examined. The results of this investigation are presented in this section, and summarised in Table 5.25 at the end of this chapter. First, the differences identified with the t-test at T2 are presented, as the predictive ability of the processes is of main interest in this study. Then, differences identified in T1, if any, are shown, as they show association between survey scores and interview-based processes at the time of the interview.

The t-test was conducted for significance within 95% confidence level. However, because of the small sample and the exploratory nature of this study, significance levels indicating up to 90% confidence levels are also mentioned, and termed 'nearly-significant'. Nearly-significant correlations are only presented in this chapter if they appear in addition to significant correlations.

In addition, t-tests provide the significance of differences for cases when an equal variance is assumed (denoted here EVA), and when equal variance is not assumed in the sample (denote here EVNA). In the cases when a significant difference is identified both when equal variance was assumed and when it is was not assumed, none of the terms (EVA or

EVNA)ismentioned. When the difference was found significant only when one of the assumptions was made, that assumption is specified (EVA or EVNA).

5.3.1. Negativity

All participants expressed some sort of negativity towards their organisation. There were many forms of negativity. The following sub-sections describe what types of negativity differentiated which constructs. These results are summarised in Table 5.16.

5.3.1.1. Positivity in negatives

Some participants exhibited positive processes when they were asked to describe negative memories of their employment in the organisation: they struggled identifying weaknesses in the organisation when asked, pointed out that the negative that existed in the past is now changing for the better, or delivered a negative story positively. For these participants (n=15), at T2 the mean measure of OJS was significantly higher, and the mean measure for BURN was significantly lower. In addition, the mean number of alarms was significantly lower than those who did not express such mechanisms (n=30).

This process of positivity in negatives did not significantly differentiate any T1 variables, apart from a nearly significant difference in ENGA. These results are presented in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9
Positivity in negatives - Significant differences in survey scores

			n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig	Variance
T2	OJS	Yes	15	5.67	1.05	0.270	0.030*	EVA
		No	30	4.73	1.42	0.260	0.017*	EVNA
	BURN	Yes	15	1.73	0.923	0.238	0.023*	EVA
		No	30	2.37	0.809	0.148	0.033*	EVNA
T1	ENGA	Yes	15	4.93	0.884	0.228	0.101	EVA
		No	28	4.39	1.066	0.201	0.085	EVNA

**p<.01; *p<.05

These findings suggest that participants who express positivity in their negative references to the organisation are likely to be more satisfied with job and are at a lesser risk of burnout. The findings also suggest that this is not identified with the survey measures at T1.

5.3.1.2. Anxiety

Worries, concerns, and fear were expressed by some participants (*n*=8). At T2, these participants had a significantly lower mean score of OJS, nearly-significantly lower AC and COMP, and nearly-significant higher INT than those who did not exhibit this process (*n*=37). However, those who exhibited this process had a significantly *higher* mean number of joys, and significantly *lower* number of alarms. The mean numbers of joys and alarms over 0.5 displayed the same significant difference.

At T1, participants who expressed such processes also had significantly lower POS, OJS, ENGA, and COMP, as well as higher INT and BURN. These results are presented in Table 5.10.

These findings suggest that participants who expressed anxiety also have survey responses which are consistent with a less favourable relationship with their organisation. This relationship remains less favourable, however, it improves compared with the time of the interview. In other words, it remains non-favourable, but become less so.

Table 5.10 Anxiety - Significant differences in survey scores								
			n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig	Variance
T2	OJS	Yes	8	4.00	1.690	.598	0.016*	EVA
		No	37	5.27	1.205	.198	0.076	EVNA
	AC	Yes	8	3.50	1.432	.235	0.057	EVA
		No	37	4.63	1.752	.620	0.120	EVNA
	INT	Yes	8	3.62	2.402	.849	0.079	EVA
		No	37	2.45	1.499	.246	0.218	EVNA
	COMP	Yes	8	4.12	0.955	0.338	0.059	EVA
		No	37	4.76	0.813	0.134	0.114	EVNA
	Alarms	Yes	7	0.71	0.756	0.286	0.084	EVA
		No	36	1.75	1.500	0.250	0.014*	EVNA
	Alarms > 0.5	Yes	7	0.14	0.378	0.143	0.015*	EVA
		No	36	1.33	1.219	0.203	0.000**	EVNA
	Joys	Yes	7	3.14	2.268	0.857	0.017*	EVA
		No	36	1.53	1.424	0.237	0.113	EVNA
	Joys > 0.5	Yes	7	2.14	1.574	0.595	0.030*	EVA
		No	36	1.08	1.052	0.175	0.131	EVNA
T1	POS	Yes	7	3.43	1.512	0.571	0.011*	EVA
		No	36	4.99	1.406	0.234	0.035*	EVNA
	OJS	Yes	7	3.43	1.718	0.649	0.001**	EVA
		No	36	5.28	1.180	0.197	0.029*	EVNA
	INT	Yes	7	4.43	1.902	0.719	0.004**	EVA
		No	36	2.29	1.642	0.277	0.024*	EVNA
	ENGA	Yes	7	3.29	1.496	0.565	0.000**	EVA
		No	36	4.83	0.697	0.116	0.034*	EVNA
	BURN	Yes	7	3.07	1.693	0.640	0.011*	EVA
		No	36	2.01	0.770	0.128	0.153	EVNA
	COMP	Yes	7	3.66	0.981	0.371	0.001**	EVA
		No	36	4.80	0.718	0.120	0.021*	EVNA
	**p<.01; *p<.05							

5.3.1.3. Pain

Some participants expressed various forms of experienced pain: grief, sorrow, feeling unappreciated, feeling isolated from other parts of the organisation, frustration, and suffering during work (n=15). Participants who exhibited this process had significantly lower mean scores of OJS and AC at T2, than those who did not (n=30).

At T1, significantly lower means of OJS and ENGA, nearly significantly lower mean of AC and nearly significantly higher mean of BURN were identified for participants who expressed pain. These results are presented in Table 5.11.

Table 5.11
Pain - Significant differences in survey scores

			n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig	Variance
T2	OJS	Yes	15	4.33	1.02	0.186	0.012*	EVA
		No	30	5.40	1.7 2	0.444	0.039*	EVNA
	AC	Yes	15	3.70	1.544	0.399	0.022*	EVA
		No	30	4.80	1.418	0.148	0.029*	EVNA
T1	OJS	Yes	15	4.33	1.839	0.475	0.030*	EVA
		No	28	5.32	1.047	0.198	0.070	EVNA
	AC	Yes	15	3.87	1.505	0.389	0.055	EVA
		No	27	4.80	1.436	0.276	0.061	EVNA
	ENGA	Yes	18	4.07	1.387	0.358	0.014*	EVA
		No	28	4.86	0.651	0.123	0.052	EVNA
	BURN	Yes	15	2.57	1.237	0.319	0.076	EVA
		No	28	1.98	0.855	0.162	0.117	EVNA

**$p<.01$; *$p<.05$

These findings suggest that participants who express pain also have survey responses consistent with a less favourable relationship with their organisation, and are less satisfied with their job. However, similar to anxiety, the relationship that these participants have with their organisation slightly improves a year later, as they no longer indicate lower engagement or higher burnout.

5.3.1.4. Indirect negativity mechanisms

Some participants' negativity was evident in the dynamics of their responses to interview questions, and the delivery of their message delivery: they took a long time to express positives of the organisation or tell a positive story, or they started off telling a positive story, and ended up focusing on the negatives. This form of negativity was coded differently to directly expressed negativity such as pain or anxiety. Those participants (n=19) had

significantly lower mean scores of POS, OJS, AC, and COMP and higher mean scores of INT at T2 compared with those who did not express such mechanisms (*n*=26). Furthermore, the presence of these mechanisms results in predictions which are consistent with the overall prediction of the affect ratio, and with stronger significance.

At T1, the same significant differences in mean measures of those who expressed this process (*n*=19) and those who did not (*n*=24) were the same for POS, INT, AC, and COMP. In addition, a nearly significant lower mean score of ENGA was identified for those who expressed negativity through delivery mechanisms, compared with those who did not. These results are presented in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12
Negative delivery - significant differences in survey scores

			n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig	Variance
T2	POS	Yes	19	3.97	1.495	0.343	0.004**	EVA
		No	26	5.33	1.449	0.284	0.004**	EVNA
	OJS	Yes	19	4.47	1.495	0.343	0.015*	EVA
		No	26	5.46	1.131	0.222	0.021*	EVNA
	AC	Yes	19	3.66	1.225	0.281	0.012*	EVA
		No	26	5.00	1.510	0.296	0.010*	EVNA
	INT	Yes	19	3.39	1.400	0.321	0.003**	EVA
		No	26	2.11	1.757	0.344	0.002**	EVNA
	COMP	Yes	19	4.21	0.596	0.137	0.003**	EVA
		No	26	4.97	0.896	0.176	0.001**	EVNA
T1	POS	Yes	19	3.97	1.495	0.343	0.003**	EVA
		No	24	5.33	1.274	0.260	0.003**	EVNA
	INT	Yes	19	3.74	1.939	0.445	0.000**	EVA
		No	23	1.74	1.186	0.247	0.000**	EVNA
	AC	Yes	19	3.68	1.121	0.257	0.001**	EVA
		No	23	5.11	1.507	0.314	0.001**	EVNA
	ENGA	Yes	19	4.26	0.868	0.177	0.071	EVA
		No	24	4.83	1.147	0.263	0.082	EVNA
	COMP	Yes	19	4.13	0.792	0.182	0.001**	EVA
		No	24	4.99	0.732	0.149	0.001**	EVNA

**$p<.01$; *$p<.05$

These findings indicate that participants who express negative delivery mechanisms indicate a less favourable relationship with the organisation at the time of the interview, and this less favourable relationships remains rather steady a year later.

5.3.1.5. Strong negativity

Marital research identified certain forms of negativity as more toxic than others, as discussed in Section 2.5.1: criticism expressed in forms such as demonising and chastising; contempt; defensiveness; and flooding, which is a feeling of being overwhelmed. Therefore, in this study as well, such expressions were coded separately, as 'strong negativity'. These expressions include ridicule, which is a form of contempt, expressions of strong anger and chastising, negativity which transcends professional boundaries (demonising), pessimism and expressions of feeling overwhelmed (similar to flooding), and helplessness (a form of defensiveness and / or flooding).

At T2, participants who expressed forms of strong negativity (n=21) had significantly lower mean scores of POS, OJS, AC, and COMP and a significantly higher score of INT than those who did not (n=24). That group of participants also had a nearly-significant difference in the mean scores of BURN compared with the group who did not express strong negativity.

At T1, the same significant differences were identified between POS, OJS, INT AC, and COMP between those who expressed strong negativity (n=20), and those who did not (n=23). However, no significant difference in BURN was identified. Instead, a significant difference between the means of ENGA measures of those who expressed strong negativity and those who did not express it was identified. These results are presented in Table 5.13.

Table 5.13 Strong negativity - significant differences in survey scores								
			n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig	Variance
T2	POS	Yes	21	3.98	1.662	0.363	0.001**	EVA
		No	24	5.44	1.210	0.247	0.002**	EVNA
	OJS	Yes	21	4.19	1.401	0.306	0.000**	EVA
		No	24	5.79	0.806	0.165	0.000**	EVNA
	INT	Yes	21	3.48	1.920	0.419	0.002**	EVA
		No	24	1.94	1.145	0.234	0.003**	EVNA
	AC	Yes	21	3.59	1.463	0.319	0.000**	EVA
		No	24	5.17	1.204	0.246	0.000**	EVNA
	BURN	Yes	21	2.40	0.752	0.164	0.079	EVA
		No	24	1.94	0.959	0.196	0.074	EVNA
	COMP	Yes	21	4.17	0.783	0.171	0.000**	EVA
		No	24	5.06	0.714	0.146	0.000**	EVNA
T1	POS	Yes	20	4.05	1.468	0.328	0.005**	EVA
		No	23	5.33	1.328	0.277	0.005**	EVNA
	OJS	Yes	20	4.00	1.451	0.324	0.000**	EVA
		No	23	5.83	0.701	0.146	0.000**	EVNA
	INT	Yes	20	3.47	1.943	0.434	0.004**	EVA
		No	22	1.89	1.414	0.301	0.005**	EVNA
	AC	Yes	20	3.65	1.424	0.318	0.000**	EVA
		No	22	5.20	1.192	0.254	0.000**	EVNA
	ENGA	Yes	20	4.10	1.210	0.270	0.003**	EVA
		No	23	5.00	0.603	0.126	0.006**	EVNA
	COMP	Yes	20	4.11	0.797	0.178	0.000**	EVA
		No	23	5.05	0.675	0.141	0.000**	EVNA

**p<.01; *p<.05

These results show that expressions of strong negativity are associated with significantly lower quality of employee-organisation relationship, at the time of the expressions and a year later, along many constructs. This suggests that expressions of strong negativity are an important predictor of the quality of the employee-organisation relationship.

5.3.1.6. Disappointment and disillusion

For those who expressed disappointment in their interview (n=10), significantly lower means scores of POS, OJS, AC, and COMP were measured at T2 compared with those who did not

express it (*n*=35). In addition, nearly-significant higher mean of INT scores was identified for those who expressed disappointment.

At T1, significantly different mean scores of POS, OJS, INT, AC, and COMP were identified between those who expressed disappointment (*n*=10), and those who did not (*n*=33), in addition to nearly significantly lower ENGA means. These results are presented in Table 5.14.

Table 5.14
Disappointment and disillusion - significant differences in survey scores

			n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig	Variance
T2	POS	Yes	10	3.50	1.716	0.543	0.004**	EVA
		No	35	5.11	1.394	0.236	0.018*	EVNA
	OJS	Yes	10	4.05	1.536	0.486	0.008**	EVA
		No	35	5.33	1.200	0.203	0.031*	EVNA
	INT	Yes	10	3.55	1.624	0.513	0.062	EVA
		No	35	2.40	1.684	0.285	0.069	EVNA
	AC	Yes	10	3.35	1.180	0.373	0.010*	EVA
		No	35	4.74	1.497	0.253	0.006**	EVNA
	COMP	Yes	10	4.04	0.651	0.206	0.011*	EVA
		No	35	4.82	0.846	0.143	0.006**	EVNA
T1	POS	Yes	10	3.35	1.700	0.538	0.001**	EVA
		No	33	5.15	1.202	0.209	0.009**	EVNA
	OJS	Yes	10	3.85	1.528	0.483	0.003**	EVA
		No	33	5.32	1.236	0.215	0.016*	EVNA
	INT	Yes	10	4.55	1.641	0.519	0.000**	EVA
		No	32	2.05	1.483	0.262	0.001**	EVNA
	AC	Yes	10	3.35	1.375	0.435	0.006**	EVA
		No	32	4.81	1.396	0.247	0.010*	EVNA
	COMP	Yes	10	3.79	0.847	0.268	0.000**	EVA
		No	33	4.86	0.711	0.124	0.003**	EVNA

**$p<.01$; *$p<.05$

These results show that expressions of disappointment and disillusion are associated with significantly lower quality of employee-organisation relationship, at the time of the expressions and a year later, along many constructs. This suggests that expressions of

disappointment and disillusion are an important predictor of the quality of the employee-organisation relationship.

5.3.1.7. Delineation and reduction

Some participants displayed a withdrawal mechanism in forms of delineating and reducing their role, their involvement in the organisation, and their involvement in their work. This group of mechanisms included:withdrawal from work-related processes, avoiding providing input, repelling issues which are admittedly outside the scope of responsibility and influence of their role, and focusing solely on the task-related aspects of their work. Individuals who displayed these mechanisms (n=8) had a significantly lower mean scores of OJS, and ENGA at T2 compared with those who did not display such mechanisms.

At T1, significantly lower mean scores of OJS and ENGA, significantly higher means scores of INT, significantly lower mean COMP, and nearly-significantly lower scores of AC were measured for those who expressed disappointment (n=8) compared with those who did not (n=35). These results are presented in Table 5.15.

Table 5.15 Delineation and reduction- significant differences in survey scores								
			n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig	Variance
T2	OJS	Yes	8	4.00	1.69031	.59761	0.016*	EVA
		No	37	5.27	1.20528	.19815	0.076	EVNA
	ENGA	Yes	8	4.12	1.246	0.441	0.032*	EVA
		No	37	4.95	0.880	0.145	0.112	EVNA
T1	OJS	Yes	8	4.00	1.690	0.598	0.031*	EVA
		No	35	5.20	1.296	0.219	0.092	EVNA
	INT	Yes	7	3.9286	2.04997	0.775	0.042*	EVA
		No	35	2.3857	1.72391	0.291	0.100	EVNA
	AC	Yes	7	3.57	1.272	0.481	0.087	EVA
		No	35	4.64	1.508	0.255	0.078	EVNA
	ENGA	Yes	8	3.5000	1.51186	.53452	0.000**	EVA
		No	35	4.8286	.70651	.11942	0.043*	EVNA
	COMP	Yes	8	4.04	0.993	0.351	0.036*	EVA
		No	35	4.74	0.791	0.134	0.093	EVNA

**p<.01; *p<.05

These findings suggest that participants who express delineation and reduction also have survey responses consistent with a less favourable relationship with their organisation, and are less satisfied and less engaged with their job. These participants no longer had a significantly less favourable relationship with their organisation a year later; however, their satisfaction and engagement with their work remained lower.

Table 5.16
Summary of correlations of qualitative processes with survey scores at T2

Process	POS	OJS	INT	AC	ENGA	BURN	Joys	Joys > 0.5	Alarms	Alarms > 0.5	COMP
Indicators of a **better** future employment relationship											
Positivity in negatives (*n*=15)		Higher				Lower			Lower		
Indicators of a **worse** future employment relationship											
Anxiety (*n*=8)		Lower	n.s. Higher	n.s. Lower			Higher	Higher	Lower	Lower	Lower
Pain (*n*=15)		Lower		Lower							
Negative delivery mechanisms (*n*=19)	Lower	Lower	Higher	Lower							Lower
Strong negativity (*n*=21)	Lower	Lower	Higher	Lower		n.s. Higher					Lower
Disappointment and disillusion (*n*=10)	Lower	Lower	n.s. Higher	Lower							Lower
Delineation and reduction (*n*=8)		Lower			Lower						

n.s. = nearly significant correlation

5.3.2. Dealing with conflict

All participants described conflicts they have encountered as part of their work. The way participants dealt with these conflicts provided insight into the coping mechanisms they used. A further analysis comparing these coping mechanisms with the dependent variables resulted in patterns identifying which coping mechanisms were constructive to the employment relationship, and which ones were not. The following sections compare participants' mechanisms of dealing with conflict with the dependent variables (i.e., survey results). The outcome of this comparison is consolidated into Table 5.23 at the end of this section.

5.3.2.1. Genuine acceptance

A genuine acceptance of difficulty as part of reality was found to significantly differentiate between lower and higher levels of burnout and the number of alarms at T2. Those who displayed a genuine acceptance of the conflict as part of reality (n= 27) measured higher mean scores of POS and lower mean score of BURN at T2 than those who did not (n = 18), and had a smaller mean number of alarms compared with those who did not. The number of alarms greater than 0.5 was also significantly smaller.

At T1, the difference in mean scores of POS was significant for those who expressed genuine acceptance, and the mean scores of OJS, AC, and CC were nearly significantly different as well for those who expressed genuine acceptance compared with those who did not. These results are presented in Table 5.17.

Table 5.17 Genuine acceptance - significant differences in survey scores								
			n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig	Variance
T2	POS	Yes	27	5.18	1.395	0.268	0.026*	EVA
		No	18	4.11	1.711	0.403	0.034*	EVNA
	BURN	Yes	27	1.89	0.836	0.161	0.012*	EVA
		No	18	2.56	0.838	0.198	0.013*	EVNA
	Alarms	Yes	27	1.00	1.118	0.224	0.001**	EVA
		No	18	2.39	1.501	0.354	0.002**	EVNA
T1	POS	Yes	25	5.14	1.303	0.261	0.037*	EVA
		No	18	4.17	1.654	0.390	0.046*	EVNA
	OJS	Yes	25	5.32	1.135	0.227	0.064	EVA
		No	18	4.50	1.689	0.398	0.085	EVNA
	AC	Yes	24	4.83	1.501	0.306	0.067	EVA
		No	18	3.97	1.419	0.334	0.065	EVNA
	CC	Yes	25	3.72	1.677	0.335	0.072	EVA
		No	18	4.64	1.513	0.357	0.068	EVNA

**$p<.01$; *$p<.05$

The findings show that expressions of genuine acceptance of difficulty as part of reality are associated with lower scores of burnout, and higher perceived organisational support one year later, as well as less deteriorations in the employee-organisation relationship over the one year. These participants also had a commitment to organisation at the time of the interview, and greater satisfaction with their job, but these differences did not remain over the one year.

5.3.2.2. Hope

No significant differences were found between participants who expressed hope (n=11) and those who did not (n=34). For employees, however, the mean of OJS scores was significantly higher, the mean of BURN scores was significantly lower, and of INT scores were nearly-significantly lower for those who expressed hope (n=9), as opposed to those who did not (n= 24), when equal variance between the groups was not assumed. Expressions of hope included reality-based hope, passive hope, hope for self-improvement, or hope for improvements outside of self.

No significant correlation with any constructs was found at T1. A nearly significant difference in mean POS scores was identified for employees, where at T1 those employees who expressed hope (*n*=9) had higher mean scores of POS compared with those who did not (*n*=23). These results are presented in Table 5.18.

Table 5.18
Hope (Employees)- significant differences in survey scores

			n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig	Variance
T2	OJS	Yes	9	5.67	0.866	0.289	0.081	EVA
		No	24	4.73	1.459	0.298	0.033*	EVNA
	BURN	Yes	9	1.83	0.559	0.186	0.087	EVA
		No	24	2.40	0.884	0.180	0.041*	EVNA
	INT	Yes	9	1.94	1.102	0.367	0.149	EVA
		No	24	2.83	1.659	0.339	0.089	EVNA
T1	POS	Yes	9	5.33	1.118	0.373	0.104	EVA
		No	23	4.41	1.482	0.309	0.072	EVNA

**$p<.01$; *$p<.05$

These findings suggest that hope leads to some improved job and workplace attitudes one year after they are expressed, whereas at the time of the expression, these expressions are not clearly associated with a greater perception of organisational support.

5.3.2.3. Avoiding discussion

Avoiding discussion (*n*=7) was found to significantly differentiate OJS and BURN, and nearly significantly INT and Alarms. For employees only, this process also significantly differentiated POS. Those who avoided discussion had significantly higher mean score of OJS, and significantly lower mean score of BURN, compared with those who did not display this process (*n*=38). Those who avoided discussion also had nearly-significantly lower scores of INT, nearly-significantly less alarms, and nearly-significantly higher COMP.

When differences between employees only were examined, employees who avoided discussion (*n*=4) had a higher mean score of POS at T2, compared with employees who did

not (n=29). The same pattern was found when differences between participants with long tenure (over six years) were examined. Such participants who avoided discussion (n=5) had a higher mean score of POS at T2 as well. At T1, participants who avoided discussion (n=7) also has significantly higher scores of OJS, compared with those who did not (n=36). These results are presented in Table 5.19.

Table 5.19
Avoiding discussion - significant differences in survey scores

			n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig	Variance
T2	OJS	Yes	7	6.00	0.816	0.309	0.044*	EVA
		No	38	4.87	1.389	0.225	0.011*	EVNA
	INT	Yes	7	1.929	0.838	0.317	0.228	EVA
		No	38	2.789	1.814	0.294	0.061	EVNA
	BURN	Yes	7	1.50	0.866	0.327	0.032*	EVA
		No	38	2.28	0.852	0.138	0.059	EVNA
	Alarms	Yes	7	0.86	0.900	0.340	0.151	EVA
		No	38	1.72	1.504	0.251	0.060	EVNA
	POS (Employees)	Yes	4	5.87	0.629	0.315	0.101	EVA
		No	29	4.55	1.531	0.284	0.012*	EVNA
T1	OJS	Yes	7	5.86	0.690	0.261	0.076	EVA
		No	36	4.81	1.485	0.247	0.009**	EVNA

**p<.01; *p<.05

These findings suggest that participants, particularly employees, who prefer to avoid discussing in length difficulties which they have encountered with the organisation, are likely to have better scores of job and workplace attitudes one year later. At the time of these expressions (or rather, of this avoidance), such participants were only more satisfied with their job, but had no other aspects of more favourable relationship with their organisation.

5.3.2.4. Despair

Participants who displayed despair (n= 5) had significantly greater intentions to quit at T2 and were nearly significantly less engaged at T2 (ENGA mean score of 4 versus 4.90), than those who did not display despair (n=40). Three other constructs with a nearly-significant

difference were POS, OJS, and COMP at T2, all lower for those who expressed despair (n=5) compared with those who did not (n=40).

At T1, participants' mean scores on two constructs, OJS and ENGA, were significantly lower for those who displayed despair (n=5), compared with those who did not (n=38). These results are presented in Table 5.20.

Table 5.20 Despair - significant differences in survey scores								
			n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig	Variance
T2	POS	Yes	5	3.50	1.768	0.791	0.062	EVA
		No	40	4.91	1.531	0.242	0.151	EVNA
	OJS	Yes	5	4.00	2.121	0.949	0.071	EVA
		No	40	5.17	1.228	0.194	0.287	EVNA
	INT	Yes	5	4.10	2.247	1.005	0.045*	EVA
		No	40	2.47	1.589	0.251	0.184	EVNA
	COMP	Yes	5	3.96	1.368	0.612	0.060	EVA
		No	40	4.73	0.763	0.120	0.281	EVNA
T1	OJS	Yes	5	3.40	1.949	0.872	0.007**	EVA
		No	38	5.18	1.243	0.202	0.110	EVNA
	ENGA	Yes	5	3.60	1.342	0.600	0.021*	EVA
		No	38	4.71	0.927	0.150	0.139	EVNA

**p<.01; *p<.05

5.3.2.5. Empathy

Interestingly, expressed empathy for employees, people in managerial positions, or perpetrators of a problem (n=9) significantly related to a higher mean score (EVA) of INT at T2 compared with those who did not express it (n=35), and nearly-significantly lower AC.

At T1, participants who expressed empathy (n=9) had a higher mean score of INT compared with those who did not express it (n=34).

Table 5.21 Empathy - significant differences in survey scores								
			n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig	Variance
T2	INT	Yes	10	3.80	2.098	0.663	0.015*	EVA
		No	35	2.33	1.475	0.249	0.061	EVNA
	AC	Yes	10	3.65	1.684	0.532	0.067	EVA
		No	35	4.66	1.439	0.243	0.109	EVNA
T1	INT	Yes	9	2.30	1.727	0.301	0.021*	EVA
		No	34	3.89	1.833	0.611	0.038*	EVNA

**p<.01; *p<.05

5.3.2.6. Hostility

At T2, those who expressed hostility towards parties in the organisation (*n*=17) had significantly lower mean scores of POS and OJS, compared with those who did not (*n*=28). They also had nearlysignificantly lower mean scores of AC and COMP, compared with those who did not.

At T1, participants who expressed hostility towards parties in the organisation (*n*=16) had significantly lower mean scores of POS, OJS and AC, compared with those who did not (*n*=27). These participants also had a significantly lower mean value for COMP at T1, compared with those who did not express hostility. These results are presented in Table 5.22.

Table 5.22
Hostility – significant differences in survey scores

			n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig	Variance
T2	POS	Yes	17	3.91	1.59330	0.386	0.005**	EVA
		No	28	5.27	1.39763	0.264	0.007**	EVNA
	OJS	Yes	17	4.53	1.49448	0.362	0.049*	EVA
		No	28	5.36	1.21607	0.230	0.064	EVNA
	AC	Yes	17	3.91	1.58346	0.384	0.076	EVA
		No	28	4.75	1.44338	0.273	0.085	EVNA
	COMP	Yes	17	4.37	0.551	0.134	0.097	EVA
		No	28	4.81	0.979	0.185	0.060	EVNA
T1	POS	Yes	16	3.94	1.692	0.423	0.007**	EVA
		No	27	5.20	1.211	0.233	0.015*	EVNA
	OJS	Yes	16	4.37	1.360	0.340	0.033*	EVA
		No	27	5.33	1.380	0.265	0.034*	EVNA
	AC	Yes	16	3.84	1.589	0.397	0.035*	EVA
		No	27	4.85	1.355	0.266	0.045*	EVNA
	COMP	Yes	16	4.19	0.780	0.195	0.013*	EVA
		No	27	4.86	0.828	0.159	0.013*	EVNA

**$p<.01$; *$p<.05$

These findings suggest that participants who express hostility towards parties in the organisation when they discuss a conflict which they have experienced in it have a less favourable relationship with the organisation at the time of the expression, and one year later.

All processes found relevant for deal with conflict are consolidated into Table 5.23.

Table 5.23
Processes for dealing with conflict with the organisation and their association with future employment relationship quality

Process	POS	OJS	INT	AC	BURN	Alarms	Alarms > 0.5	COMP T2
Indicators of a better future employment relationship								
Genuine acceptance (*n*=27)	Higher				Lower	Lower	Lower	
Avoiding discussion (*n*=7)	Higher (Emp / long tenure)	Higher	n.s. Lower		Lower	n.s. Lower		n.s. Higher
Hope (Employees only, *n*=9)		High	n.s. Lower		Lower			
Indicators of a worse future employment relationship								
Despair (*n*=5)	n.s. Low	n.s. Low	High					n.s. Lower
Empathy (*n*=9)			High	n.s. Lower				
Hostility (*n*=17)	Lower	Lower		n.s. Lower				n.s. Lower

5.3.3. Individuals who turned over

Some indicators of a relationship between the relational processes identified and actual turnover were found, despite the relatively short follow-up time. Six participants had left their respective units[8] by T3 (that is, after a 2 year follow-up), which makes statistical testing difficult.

A t-test comparing those who have left with those who remained in their respective units revealed that those who left did not display the following processes: positives from a negative, considering the positives in a conflict, or avoid discussion. The results are summarised in Table 5.24.

Table 5.24
Processes significantly related to turnover

		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig[9]
Positives from a negative	Left	6	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	Stayed	39	.2564	.442	.0708	.001*
Avoided discussing difficulties	Left	6	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	Stayed	39	.1282	.339	.0542	.023*
Considered positives	Left	6	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	Stayed	39	.487	.506	.0811	.000**

**p<.01; *p<.05

A t-test comparing the quantitative ratios (affect, attribution, and we-ness ratios) between the group of participants who left and those who did not revealed no significant differences.

These findings suggest that participants' actual turnover within 2 years is very unlikely if, when they are asked to describe difficulties they have experienced with the organisation, they either lead the story from its negative content to a positive, bring out the positives related to the organisation, or avoid discussing the difficulty in length.

[8]Notably, some employees left reluctantly, due to personal circumstances.
[9] 2-tailed, equal variance not assumed.

5.3.4. Summary - qualitative results

An analysis comparing survey scores of participants who displayed various qualitative relational processes to those who did not revealed that certain processes were associated with survey scores at T2 which indicated a better quality of their relationship with their organisation, and some were associated with scores indicating that it was worse at T2. This section summarises the processes which were associated with a better relationship quality, and those which were associated with a worse one.

5.3.4.1. Processes associated with a better relationship quality

Survey scores indicating a better relationship quality between the participant and their organisation at T2 were measured for participants who displayed the following relational processes at T1:

- Participants who transitioned to positives from negative stories
- Participants who expressed genuine acceptance of difficulties as part of reality
- Participants, mainly employees, who expressed hope (either action-based, reality-based, or passive)
- Participants who avoided discussing difficult experiences

5.3.4.2. Processes associated with a worse relationship quality

Participants who displayed the following relational processes at T1 had survey scores which significantly indicated a poorer quality of their relationship with their organisation:

- Participants who expressed any form of anxiety (concern, worry and fear)
- Participants who expressed pain in their stories
- Participants whose dynamic delivery mechanisms reflected negativity
- Participants who used strong negative language in their stories

- Participants who expressed disappointment and disillusion
- Participants who expressed delineation and reduction
- Participants who expressed despair when discussing difficulties
- Participants who expressed empathy towards the causers of their difficulty
- Participants who expressed hostility towards elements in the organisation

Participants who did ***not*** display the following relational processes at T1 were significantly more likely to have left their unit by T3:

- Directing a story from negative to a positive
- Considering the positives when discussing difficulties
- Avoiding discussing difficult experiences in length

5.4. Summary – results

This chapter presented the results of this study in the following manner. First, it provided the descriptive statistics of the quantitative data collected, and showed that the survey scores were a slightly different pattern to a normal distribution, which was not strongly skewed. The descriptive statistics also indicated that participants' affect ratio was typically lower than their attribution and we-ness ratios. Correlations between the independent variables, that is, between the quantitative ratios, showed that affect and attribution ratios correlated, as well as the we-ness ratios, however neither we-ness ratio correlated with either affect or attribution ratio.

Then, the chapter presented the results obtained from testing the correlation between dependent and independent variables in this study. The results show that many independent variables which resulted from the qualitative data collected at T1 significantly correlated with dependent variables, which resulted from survey data collected at T2. Specifically, the

results showed that ratios resulting from participants' interviews at T1 significantly correlated with constructs measured at T2, mainly POS, OJS, INT, AC, BURN, and COMP. Correlations were strongest for the affect ratio, then attribution ratio, and weakest for we-ness ratios. Correlations were generally stronger for participants who have been part of the organisation for over six years, employees, and females.

Qualitative relational processes identified in the interviews conducted at T1 were also found to significantly differentiate between participants' measures of dependent variables taken at T2 and T3. Some relational processes were associated with survey scores which indicated a better quality of relationship with the organisation at T2, whereas others were associated with indicators of a worse relationship quality at T2. The following forms of negativity and of dealing with conflict were significantly associated with survey scores indicating a better quality of the employee-organisation relationship at T2: high proportions of we-ness usage, transition from negative to positives stories, genuine acceptance of difficulties, avoiding discussion of difficult experiences, and hope. The following processes were associated with survey scores indicating a worse quality of the employee-organisation relationship at T2: Lower proportion of 'we-ness' in stories, anxiety, pain expressed in stories, negative dynamic delivery mechanisms, strong negative language, disappointment and disillusion, and delineation and reduction. The absence of the following processes was significantly associated with participants who turned over by T3: considering the positives in a difficulty, avoiding the discussion of difficulties, and transitions from negative to positives. The qualitative processes and the outcomes that they were associated with are summarised in Table 5.25.

Table 5.25 **A summary of relational processes and the outcomes they are associated with**	
Processes associated with a **better** relationship quality	Processes associated with a **worse** relationship quality
We-ness	
• High proportion of 'we-ness' versus separateness (long tenure / males)	• Lower proportion of 'we-ness' in stories
Negativity	
• Transition from negative to positives stories	• Anxiety • Pain expressed in stories • Negative dynamic delivery mechanisms • Strong negative language • Disappointment and disillusion • Delineation and reduction
Dealing with conflicts	
• Genuine acceptance of difficulties as part of reality • Hope (employees, action-based, reality-based, or passive) • Avoiding discussing difficult experiences	• Despair ,when discussing difficulties • Empathy towards the causers of their difficulty • Not considering the positives when discussing difficulties (participants) • Not directing a story from negative to a positive • Participants who expressed hostility towards elements in the organisation

To address the research questions of this study, these results need to be interpreted, compared with existing knowledge in turnover literature, and compared with marital literature. These interpretations and comparisons are provided in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to examine the usefulness of viewing employment as a relationship, and to investigate the benefits of drawing on marital methods when diagnosing this employee-organisation relationship. For this purpose, a study was conducted which adapted methods which predict the future of marital relationships to predict the future of employee-organisation relationships. The study was designed to diagnose the employee-organisation relationship and identify indicators which associate with better or worse relationships quality one year after the diagnosis. As discussed in Section 3.5, the quality of the employee - organisation relationship was measured by using survey constructs and variables calculated based on these constructs.The study was also designed to identify indicators which predict employee turnover within two years after the diagnosis. This chapter discusses and interprets the findings of this study, which were presented in Chapter 5.

The chapter is organised as follows: Section 6.1 discusses the findings resulting from the quantitative data, namely the correlations found between the quantitative indicators identified in the diagnosis of the employee-organisation relationship, and the quality of this relationship one year after the diagnosis.

Section 6.2 discusses the findings from the qualitative data, namely the processes identified from the analysis of the interviews, and the outcomes of employee-organisation relationship associated with these processes. In addition, this section compares the processes identified in this employment study and the outcomes with which they were associated, with marital processes, and the outcomes which they predicted. This comparison enhances the understanding of employment, of relationships in general, and of the method used for predicting employees' future of employment.

Finally, in Section 6.3 the results and their implications are related to the three research questions listed in Chapter 1. The theoretical, practical, and methodological significance of the findings are also presented in this context. This chapter's outputs are summarised in Section 6.4. The structure and content of this chapter is summarised in Figure 6.1.

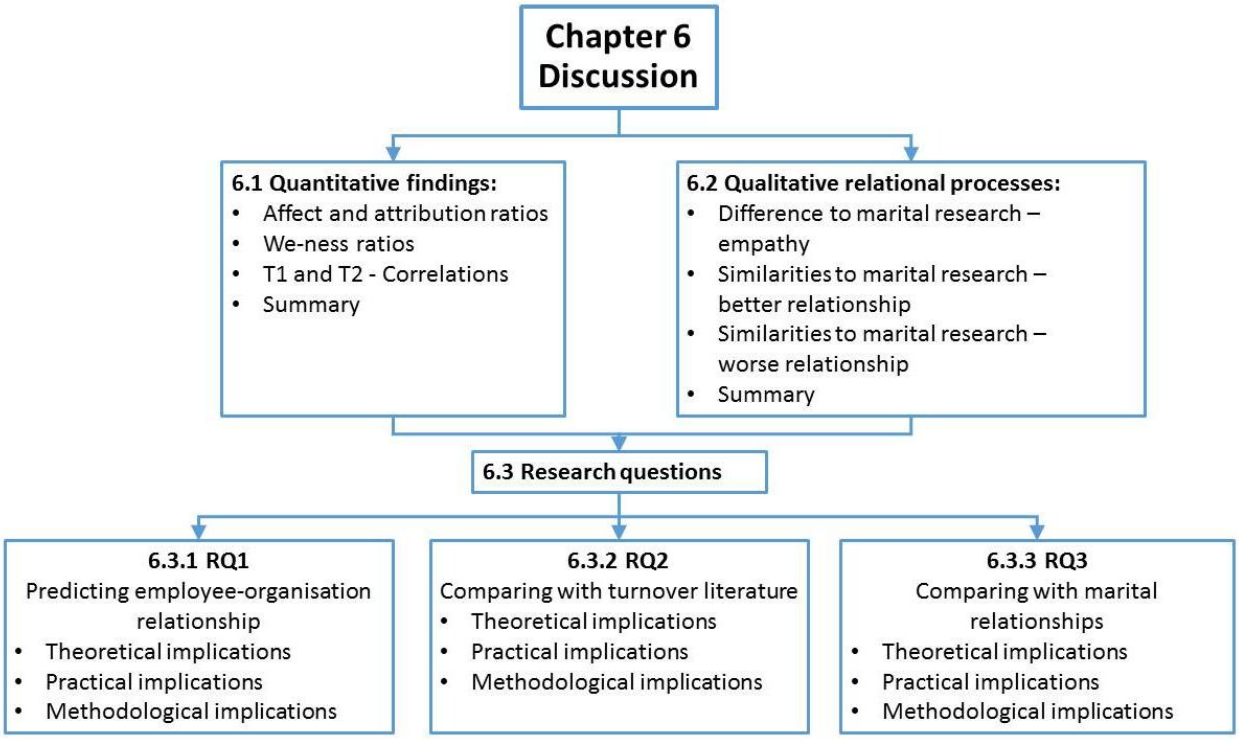

Figure 6.1 - Chapter content and structure

Note: all tables in this chapter are original and were developed for this thesis.

6.1 Interpretations and implications of quantitative findings

As summarised in Table 4.11, four ratios were derived from the interview data: affect ratio, attribution ratio, and two we-ness ratios. The results show that these ratios correlated with survey constructs (mainly, POS, OJS, INT, AC and BURN) that were measured both at the time of the interview and one year later. The correlations, however, varied between ratios,

constructs, and sub-groups of the sample. The implications of these correlations are presented and discussed.

This sub-section is structured as follows. The affect and the attribution ratios displayed similar patterns of correlation with constructs, which were different to the correlation patterns identified for the we-ness ratios. For this reason, the correlations of the affect and attribution ratios are discussed in Section 6.1.1, and the correlations identified for we-ness ratios are discussed in Section 6.1.2. Differences between sub-groups of the sample in terms of patterns of correlations of interview-based ratios and survey scores are discussed in the sections of the respective sections.

Section 6.1.3 discusses the differences between the ratios' correlations with survey scores at T1 and their correlations with survey scores at T2. Finally, Section 6.1.4 concludes with a summary of the main points identified by examining correlations in this study.

6.1.1 Affect ratio and attribution ratio

Both affect and attribution ratios, resulting from the interviews conducted at T1, significantly correlated with several survey constructs measured at T2. These correlations indicate that the ratios identified in the diagnosis process are useful at predicting the quality of the relationship between the employee and the organisation, one year after the diagnosis took place.

Neither ratio was significantly associated with employee turnover within two years. However, in marital research, the affect ratio predicted divorce within at least three years, and with greater success after a longer period (i.e., seven and 14 years). It is therefore likely that this study would need a future follow-up to see if turnover behaviour correlated with interview-based ratios. In addition, it is possible that the coding of affect, attribution, and we-ness require further refinements, in terms of inclusion and exclusion of excerpts, which would affect the resulting affect the resulting interview-based ratios.

Two other points for discussion are evident when examining the correlation results. One is the persistent difference between the correlation coefficients of the affect versus the attribution ratio, and the other is the survey constructs with which each ratio correlated with. Each point is discussed separately next.

6.1.1.1 *Affect ratio versus attribution ratio correlation coefficients*

The ratio which presented the strongest correlations with survey constructs was the affect ratio, which is the ratio between positive affect and the overall affect (positive and negative) participants expressed towards the organisation. This ratio was also the one originally used in marital research.

Presumably, the design of this study is the reason for this consistent stronger correlation with affect ratio. The method in this study was originally designed to generate and capture affect-based expressions of participants, and not necessarily attributions. The questions were crafted to elicit affect-laden responses, and did not seek attribution consistently and directly. As a result,participants did not always express their attributionfor the organisations' actions. Although the coding sought affective, evaluative, and attributional expressions, perhaps a future study which includes questions designed to elicit attributions directly would get different results.

6.1.1.2 *Survey constructs and significant correlations*

The discussion in this next section is centred on the affect ratio, because it has displayed the strongest correlation with survey constructs' scores, while the attribution ratio presented results which were generally consistent with the affect ratio, but with a weaker correlation. The few minor occasions where the attribution ratio had a stronger correlation than the affect ratio did not result in outcomes of interest, and thus are not discussed in this thesis.

The findings of this study indicate that the interview-based affect and attribution ratios correlated with the following constructs, measured at T2: perceived organisational support (POS), overall job satisfaction (OJS), affective commitment (AC), intentions to quit (INT), the degree of burnout (BURN), and a composite index of the relationship (COMP) measured one year after the interview. Neither of these ratios correlated with continuous commitment (CC), normative commitment (NC), or engagement (ENGA), measured at T2.

These results are consistent with the expectation that correlations would be found between the affect ratio and affect-laden constructs. For example, the following constructs are clearly affect-laden: POS, which identifies how supported one feels in an organisation (Eisenberger et al. 1997), OJS, which captures affect-laden satisfaction (feeling satisfied) (Shore & Tetrick 1991; Eisenberger et al. 1997), and AC, which, as its name implies, is about affective relation to the organisation (Allen & Meyer 1990). The results are also consistent with expectations that the affect ratio would correlate with INT, as this is an important indicator of the relationship quality (Hom, Griffeth & Sellaro 1984; Chau et al. 2009).

Normative commitment and continuous commitment, as discussed in Section 2.3.2, represent the individual's perception of the barriers to terminating their relationship with the organisation. In this study, no significant correlation was identified between the affect ratio and these components of commitment (continuous and normative). This indicates that the quality of participants' relationships with the organisations is not based on their perception of the barriers to leaving it.

The difference in correlation patterns identified for engagement (ENGA) and burnout (BURN) is not typically expected, as engagement and burnout are typically viewed as opposites of each other (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004; Maslach & Leiter 2008). BURN, which is one's level of exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy, correlated with the

affect ratio with a medium effect size both at T1 and T2. In contrast, ENGA, which is an individual's involvement, satisfaction with, and enthusiasm for their work, measured at T2, did not correlate with the affect ratio. Although past research has found that burnout and engagement are not diametrically opposed constructs (i.e., engagement is not the opposite of burnout) (Schaufeli et al. 2002), the two constructs (ENGA and BURN) correlated with one another strongly ($r_s \sim 0.5$) and significantly. This result indicates that the affect ratio captures elements in burnout that are separate, and not correlated with, engagement. It also indicates that work engagement is not necessarily related to the quality of an employee's relationship with the organisation. This findings suggests that the relationship with the organisation can buffer employees from getting burned out in their work, but may not be sufficient to develop or sustain their engagement with their work. One implication of this finding is that burnout can be prevented by the organisation, whereas engagement depends on the employee and their work, and not on their relationship with the organisation.

When comparing correlations in sub-groups to the correlations identified for the entire population, interesting points emerge. The following sections discusses the differences in correlations identified for long-tenure participants (as opposed to short-tenure), employees (as opposed to managers), and females (as opposed to males). In the case of tenure groups, two sub-groups with more than 20 participants in each were created, and their correlations are compared with one another. The latter two sub-groups (employees, and females) were the majority of the sample, while the numbers of participants in the second sub-groups (managers, and males) were too small for a meaningful analysis. The discussion therefore focuses on comparing the correlations of the larger sub-group with the correlations of the entire sample when the small sub-group is too small to analyse.

Tenure groups

The striking difference between tenure groups in terms of correlations between the interview-based ratios and the survey scores indicates an important point.

Correlations with the affect ratio were stronger for the long-tenure sub-group than the same correlations for the entire sample for the following constructs at T2: OJS, INT, AC, and COMP (significant), and BURN (nearly significant). In addition, the attribution ratio correlated more strongly with survey constructs for the long-tenure group. For the short-tenure sub group, however, only one significant construct correlated with interview-based ratios, with a weaker correlation than that of the entire sample. In other words, these interview-based ratios (affect and attribution) predicted the quality of the employee-organisation relationship much better when the participants' relationship with the organisation was at least six years long.

This study proposed that these interview-based ratios (affect and attribution) reflect the participants' mental image of their organisation, and indicate the future quality of their relationship with it. This finding shows that after around six years, this mental image becomes integrated and consistent, and diagnosing relationships based on this image produces more consistent and beneficial results. This finding relates to RQ 3 and arediscussed in Section 6.3.3.

Another interesting correlation is the strong, significant, and *negative* correlation between the attribution ratio and joys (both joys in total and only joys greater than 0.5), among participants of long tenure. This indicates that long-tenure participants either engage in lengthy enhancing attributions when the quality of their relationship with the organisation is lower, or, when the quality of the relationship is higher, they do not engage in such attribution. This contradiction between the quality of the relationship as indicated by the

survey constructs as opposed to the attribution ratio indicates differences in candour between participants, based on the length of their tenure. It suggests that long-tenure employees express (enhancing) views diverge from their (lower) job and workplace attitudes.

Employees as opposed to manager

An interesting pattern of correlations emerged when the correlation coefficient of employees' interview-based ratios were compared with those of the entire sample, summarised in Table 6.1. For employees, most correlations between interview-based ratios and survey scores at T2 were stronger than for those of the entire sample (that is, POS, OJS, INT, AC, BURN and COMP). A similar pattern was identified for the attribution ratio at T2, apart from AC and BURN. In addition, At T1, a similar pattern, but to a lesser extent, was identified, where the correlation of the affect ratio with OJS, ENGA and BURN were stronger for employees than for the entire sample. For the attribution ratio, in contrast, only correlation with one construct (BURN) was stronger for employees than for the entire sample.

Table 6.1
Comparing correlations of affect and attribution ratios with survey constructs for employees and the entire sample

	Affect ratio				
	Construct	**Employees (n=33)**		**Sample (n=45)**	
		Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
T2	POS	.503**	.001	.489**	.000
	OJS	.504**	.001	.411**	.003
	INT	-.463**	.003	-.411**	.003
	AC	.413**	.008	.412**	.002
	BURN	-.273	.062	-.271*	.036
	COMP	.542**	.001	.471**	.001 (n=43)
	Construct	**Employees (n=32)**		**Sample (n=43)**	
		Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
T1	OJS	.517**	.001	.507**	.000
	ENGA	.357*	.022	.310*	.022
	BURN	-.360*	.021	-.333*	.015
	Attribution ratio				
	Construct	**Employees (n=33)**		**Sample (n=45)**	
		Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
T2	POS	.482**	.002	.456**	.001
	OJS	.358*	.020	.323*	.015
	INT	-.349*	.023	-.324*	.015
	COMP	.376*	.016 (n=33)	.329*	.014 (n=43)
	Construct	**Employees (n=32)**		**Sample (n=43)**	
		Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)	Correlation coefficient	Sig (1-tailed)
T1	BURN	-.374*	.017	-.296*	.027

This pattern indicates that the interview-based ratios are better predictors for employees' relationship with the organisation than for managers'. This may be due to lesser authenticity in the managers' interview. It is possible that their interviews contained less affective (and

attributional) indicators which were consistent with their survey responses at that time, compared with employees. This discrepancy seems to have exacerbated over one year. Further examination of this issue by comparing a larger sample of managers would inform this suggestion.

This suggestion is further reinforced by the strong, and counter-intuitive, correlation between the affect ratio and alarms identified among managers. The affect ratio had a strong, significant, and *positive* correlation with the number of alarms that are greater than 0.5 among managers only (n=12). This inverse relationship between managers' displayed affect and the deterioration of the quality of their relationship with the organisation supports the suggestion that managers' accounts were less authentic than those of employees. It is possible that managers make more positive references to the organisation, masking the deterioration in quality of their relationship with it. Employees, on the other hand, expressed their views more authentically. This is consistent with previous findings, showing managers' expressions tend to be inauthentic (Dasborough & Ashkanasy 2002).

Females as opposed to males

Gender difference in emotional processes, expressions, and responses are widely documented (Fineman 2000; Sloan 2012), and despite inconsistencies across personality, contextual, cultural, social, and situational variables (Brody & Hall 2008), there is evidence of gender differences with regards to the effects of experienced negative emotions on burnout (Erickson & Ritter 2001). Thus, gender differences were examined in this study, and indeed, some differences were found.For females, who were the majority of the sample, the affect and attribution ratios correlated significantly with POS and BURN at T2, more strongly than they did for the entire sample. This finding indicates that women's affect is more closely related to how supported they feel, and how much they burn out. Presumably, POS is an antecedent to the quality of the employee-organisation relationship, while BURN is a consequence.

Other explanations for this difference between females and the entire sample were considered and dismissed. It is possible that females disclosed their emotions more candidly than men, opened up to a female interviewer more than men, or the interviewer was better able to read their affect than she did for men. However, if any of these possibilities were correct, it is likely that more than just the two constructs would have been stronger for females than for the entire sample.

6.1.2 Correlations with we-ness ratios

As described in Section 3.4.2.4 and 4.2.2, the we-ness ratios indicate the extent to which an individual perceives themselves as a part of the organisation, the team, the cohort, or the unit, and to which extent the participant perceives a fundamental separation between themselves and organisational components. Two main conclusions can be drawn from the correlations identified for we-ness ratios: the effect of tenure on the employee-organisation relationship, and the connection between we-ness and commitment.

6.1.2.1 *Tenure and the relationship with the organisation*

When examining correlations of we-ness ratios with survey constructs within the entire sample and within various sub-groups, there was a notable pattern for long-tenure participants. For this subgroup, more than for any other sub-group of participants, and more than for the entire sample, the we-ness ratios correlated significantly with largest number of survey constructs. Correlations were found with INT, AC, BURN, alarms, and joys over 0.5.

This difference indicates several things. First, it indicates that within six years of membership in the organisation, in addition to the development of a mental image of the organisation discussed in Section 6.1.1, a sense of being ‘part of the organisation’ is developed. This sense of belonging and identification with the organisation increases one’s affective commitment, reduces their intention to quit, and the extent of their burnout. For this

long-tenure group, no we-ness ratio correlated with either continuous or normative commitment. This lack of correlation indicates that the importance of the affective component of commitment dominates the other components.

In addition, this finding indicates that under six years, the sense of belonging to an organisation is not sufficiently developed to predict the quality of the employee-organisation relationship. However, the finding shows that over six years, this sense is predictive of the participant's relationship with the organisation. If this sense of belonging is not strong by six years, it indicates a low quality of employee-organisation relationship.

6.1.2.2 ***We-ness and commitment***

For the entire population, and particularly for employees, the we-ness ratio *negatively* correlated only with continuous commitment (CC). This indicates that when participants, mainly employees, perceive themselves as a part of theirwork unit, they underemphasise the continuous component of their commitment to the organisation. The negative correlation is evident both when the high we-ness ratio is driven by a sense of belonging to their work unit, and by a sense of belonging to a sub-group different to their work unit (for example, nurse educators).Thus, participants' continuous commitment to their organisation (that is, commitment based on the costs that employees associate with leaving the organisation) is not prominent when they feel belonging to and identification with an element of the organisation. This may be the case even if the costs associated with leaving are in fact considerable; however, when one feels belonging to the organisation, the continuous aspect is not highlighted.

For females, there was a significant *negative* medium correlation of the *general* we-ness ratio and affective commitment (AC). This suggests that when women see themselves as part of

their subgroup, as opposed to their work unit, their affective commitment to the unit is reduced.

6.1.2.3 *Conclusions based on we-ness ratios*

The findings identified through we-ness ratios indicate three conclusions regarding the employee-organisation relationship:

(1) Participants took about six years to develop a sense of belonging and identification with their employing organisation, which correlated with survey scores one year after the diagnosis.
(2) This sense of belonging counterweighs the sense of continuous commitment.
(3) For women, feeling part of a sub-group within the organisation reduces their affective commitment to their respective work unit.

6.1.3 Time 1 and Time 2 correlations

Comparing the correlations of the interview-based and ratios and survey constructs over time reveals the rations' success at capturing not only contemporary elements of the employee-organisation relationship, but also their ability to predict the quality of such elements. The significant correlations identified between the interview-based ratios and T1 survey constructs indicate that the ratios captured aspects of the employee-organisation relationship that are similar to those captured by the survey constructs measured at the time of the interview (T1). This shows that the interview-based ratios offer an alternative way to diagnose the quality of employee-organisation relationships, at the time of the interview.

Furthermore, the interview-based ratios also maintained significant correlations with several survey scores taken one year after the interview. These correlations were generally stronger at T1 than they were at T2, because the employee-organisation relationship, like most relationships, is a dynamic entity, which undergoes changes over time. Nonetheless, these

correlations indicate that the interview-based ratios captured elements (that is, affect, attribution, and we-ness references) which were predictive of the quality of the future employee-organisation relationship.

6.1.4 Summary – correlations of ratios

The interview-based affect and attribution ratios displayed significant correlations with survey scores at T2, one year after the interview. In other words, the ratios predicted, to an extent, the future quality of the employee-organisation relationship.

The affect ratio presented stronger correlations than those of the attribution ratios, presumably due to the design of the interview. A suggestion for future research is to design interview questions which directly seek attributions, which may result in a better prediction. This suggestion is discussed further in Section 7.4.

The affect and attribution ratios had significant correlations mainly with perceived organisational support, overall job satisfaction, affective commitment, intentions to quit, the degree of burnout, and the composite index of their relationship with the organisation measured one year later (at T2). These ratios did not correlate neither with normative or continuous commitment, nor with engagement at T2. These results indicate that while a better quality of employee-organisation relationship results in greater employee satisfaction, greater affective commitment, greater perceived support, lower intentions to leave, and lower burnout, it does not engender normative or continuous commitment, and does not lead to a better employee engagement. This outcome also further reinforces the views that burnout and engagement are not diametrically opposed, and that employees' normative or continuous forms of commitment (as opposed to affective commitment) do not reflect a better quality of relationship between the employee and the organisation, and are therefore less desirable.

The correlations of the affect and attribution ratios with survey scores varied for sub-groups of the sample. In particular, employees of long tenure, that is, employees who have been members of the organisation for six years and over, had stronger and more significant correlations between ratios and survey scores. This finding indicates that marital methods, which diagnose relationships, have better results when the employee-organisation relationship has had a few years to establish.

Similarly, the correlation of the we-ness ratios with survey scores indicate that participants take about six years to develop a sense of belonging to and identification with their organisation. This sense of belonging and identification, indicated by the we-ness ratios, is predictive of several survey constructs' scores.

In addition, employees' correlations were stronger than those identified for the entire sample, indicating that employees may be more candid in their interview than managers' were. A future study could examine this point with a larger sample of managers.

As for commitment, the correlations identified with the we-ness ratios suggested that a strong sense of belonging and identification with the organisation counterweighs the sense of continuous commitment. That is, the sense of continuous commitment may increase if the sense of belonging or identification decreases, even if there were no changes in objective circumstances. A future study examining commitment longitudinally, along with the quality of employee-organisational relationship, could explore this point further.

For females,perceived support and burnoutcorrelated with interview-based ratios more strongly than they did for the entire sample. This finding indicates that for females, greater organisational support reduces their burnout more strongly.

Finally, the differences in correlation coefficients identified between ratios at T1 and T2 show that the interview-based ratios correlated significantly and more strongly with survey

scores at T1 than they did at T2. This pattern of correlation indicates that although the employee-organisation relationship is dynamic, the interview-basedratios capture important aspects of it, which are predictive of its future quality.

6.2 Comparing qualitative relational processes: employment and marriage

As described in Section 2.5, relational processes identified during the diagnosis of marital couples predicted the future of their relationship (Carrère et al. 2000; Hicks et al. 2004; Gottman 2014b). This study examined if, similar to marital relationships, the future of the employee-organisation relationship can be predicted by identifying similar relational processes, as specified in RQ1b. As described in Section 5.3, indeed several processes were identified which differentiated those who expressed them at T1 from those who did not, along various survey constructs measured at T2, and turnover behaviour at T3. This section discusses these processes based on the findings described in Section 5.3.

The similarities of and differences between employee-organisation relationships and marital researchwere examined based on parallels of relational processes identified in this study and the ones described in marital research, as discussed in Section 4.2.5, and summarised in Table 4.5. The following section discusses these processes, the outcomes which they predicted at T2 and T3, and their meaning from a relational point of view. In addition, when discussing each process, the section examines if the expression of a process also differentiated survey scores at T1, and if the survey scores at T2 were consistent with them, as expected by turnover research.

First, Section 6.2.1 examines the processes *Empathy*, which is the only process identified in this study which was associated with a different relational outcome compared with its marital

research parallel process. That is, empathy was associated with a worse future relationship in this study, whereas it is associated with a better future relationship in marital research.

Then, the processes which predicted an outcome in this study which was similar to the ones identified in marital research are discussed in the following order: processes which predicted a better quality of the employee-organisation relationship are discussed in Section 6.2.2, and processes which, similar to marital research, predicted a worse quality of the employee-organisation relationship are discussed in Section 6.2.3. Table 6.2 summarises these processes (observed in T1), and the relational outcomes which they were associated with in T2. Section 6.4 summarises the comparison of qualitative relational processes identified as predictors of marital and employee-organisation relationships.

Table 6.2 Comparing relational processes in employment and marital interviews		
Qualitative process	**Employment**	**Marriage**
Different effect		
Empathy	Worse relationship quality at T2	Better relationship quality at T2
Similar effect		
	Qualitative process - Employment	**Qualitative process - Marriage**
Better relationships quality at T2	• Hope predicted a better relationship quality (Employees) • Positivity in negatives	• Positive speak
	• Genuine acceptance	• Glorifying the struggle
	• Avoiding negative discussion	• Conflict avoidance
Worse relationships quality at T2	• Anxiety • Pain • Delivery mechanisms negativity	• Negative speak
	• Strong negativity • Hostility	• Criticism / contempt
	• Disappointment and disillusion • Despair	• Disappointment and disillusion
	• Delineation and reduction	• Withdrawal

6.2.1 Differences to marital relationship – empathy

The only processes in this research which predicted a different outcome compared with marital research was the expressions of empathy towards the causers or perpetrators of a difficulty. Contrary to evidence from marital research, empathy expressed by participants did not indicate a better quality of relationship with their organisation either at the time of the interview (T1), or one year later (T2). Participants who expressed empathy for those who contributed to or caused their difficult experience had significantly higher mean scores of INT at T1 and T2. In addition, at T2, such participants also had nearly-significantly lower AC, suggesting that the relationship quality had deteriorated further.

In turnover research, lower scores of AC following higher scores of INT are understandable, and even expected, as low affective commitment typically leads to higher intentions to turnover. However, compared with marital research, this finding is surprising. Empathy is typically present in better relationships (Long et al. 1999). This difference may have two explanations.

It has been found that better marriages were predicted by men's empathy, but for women, attribution was a better predictor (Fincham, Paleari & Regalia 2002). It is possible that because most of the sample in this study was female, empathy did not predict a better relationship quality. If this is the case, this difference may not indicate a difference between employment and marital research.

Another possible explanation may see empathy as a step on the path towards separation. When employees (or managers) empathise with the causers of their difficulties, they do not blame or reject the causers on one hand, but on the other hand, they lose hope that the problems will disappear, and thus prefer to move to another employment setting, to avoid them. It is possible that empathy in this setting is one step prior to *resignation and acceptance*, which has been identified as a predictor of separation in marital research.

6.2.2 Similarities to marital research – predictors of better relationship quality

Among qualitative relational processes, four major processes were associated with significantly higher survey scores of job and workplace attitudes one year after the interview: transitions from negatives to positives, genuine acceptance of hardships, avoiding lengthy discussions of difficulties, and expressions of hope. The predictions of these processes were consistent with marital research. Each process is discussed next.

6.2.2.1 *Turning to a positive from a negative story*

Similar to the effect of positive speak in marital relationships(Carrère & Gottman 1999; Gottman 2014b), highlighting and focusing on the positive aspects in a negative story was associated with a better quality of future employee-organisation relationship. Participants who exhibited these types of processes measured significantly lower BURN, and significantly higher OJS at T2. In addition, a significantly lower mean number of alarms were identified, supporting the finding that this process is associated with a better quality of future employee-organisation relationship. Furthermore, this process was not identified among any of the participants who had left the organisation at T3 (2 years after the interview). At T1, no significant differences in survey scores between those who expressed this process and those who did not were identified.

Participants' transitions to positive from negativity can be seen as conflict-avoiding behaviour (Carrère & Gottman 1999), as discussed in Section 2.4.1. By directing the conversation towards positives when discussing negative events, the participant discontinues a negative engagement with the image of the organisation.

This finding shows that negatives are not necessarily a sign of a problematic employee-organisation relationship. Since hardships and negatives are to be expected in reality, the difference between a better and a worse quality of future relationship lies in how the participant copes with the negative. When the participant is able to bring up the positives even when discussing a negative story, it indicates that the positive is more prominent in their mental image of the organisation, and thus the positives can be easily accessed and recalled by them.

Another potential explanation is that participants with higher job satisfaction and lower burnout find it easier to shed a positive light on negative occurrences; however, this

explanation is not supported by evidence identified at T1. No significant difference between survey scores was found at T1 between participants who expressed this process and those who did not[10].

To summarise this finding, it indicates that a direction of a negative story into a positive view is an indicator of a better quality of future employee-organisation relationship, which is not captured by traditional survey scores made at the time of the interview.

6.1.1.1. Dealing with conflict: genuine acceptance

Genuine acceptance of difficulties can be seen as a milder form of glorification of the struggles undergone by the participant (Gottman 1979a; Carrère et al. 2000). A genuine acceptance of difficulties as part of reality was an indicator of a better future employee-organisation relationship based on significantly lower BURN mean scores at T2, and significantly lower alarms. Significantly lower mean scores of CC were also identified; however it is inconclusive if CC indeed indicates a better or worse quality of employee-organisation relationship, as discussed with respect to we-ness ratios in Section 6.1.2.2. At T1, participants who expressed this process also measured significantly higher scores of POS.

Only a few participants explicitly celebrated their struggles, however a genuine acceptance of difficulties is extrapolated to this category, as a genuine acceptance that difficulties are part of reality makes them bearable, expected, and not resented, as described in Section 2.5.1.

This finding indicates that when a participant genuinely accepts the difficulties as part of reality, and does not resent, begrudge, blame, or avoids them, they are more likely to measure lower burnout and have a better quality of employee-organisation relationship. Since

[10] For employees only, those who demonstrated this process had a significantly lower mean normative commitment than employees who did not. This difference however is irrelevant to the presence or absence of the process.

hardships and difficulties cannot be avoided, their acceptance enables the employee to continue with their daily struggles, and persevere in the face of hardships.

6.2.2.2 ***Dealing with conflict: avoiding discussion***

Participants who avoided discussing conflicts and difficulties at length had some indicators of a better quality of employee-organisation relationship. Those participants had significantly higher mean scores of OJS, significantly lower mean scores of BURN, nearly significantly lower measures of INT, and nearly significantly lower COMP, at T2. This result is consistent with marital research results(Gottman 2014a), which show that conflict avoiders, who discontinue negative reciprocity, are one of three forms of successful marriages (as discussed in Section 2.4.1). This difference was also identified in survey scores at T1.

This finding indicates that for some participants, simply avoiding a lengthy revisiting of their adverse event, and 'moving on', reduces the negative influence of the event on the quality of employee-organisation relationship. In marital research, it has been found that patterns of interaction between spouses identified in laboratory settings are consistent with patterns of their interaction at home (Gottman 1994a). If, similarly, in employment settings, participants' interviews are consistent with discussions they have with others (colleagues, friends, and internal dialogue), then this finding shows that by avoiding a lengthy discussion of negative events, the participant discontinues a negative engagement with the image of the organisation. This a plausible explanation for how this mechanism benefits the employee-organisation relationship.

6.2.2.3 ***Dealing with conflict: hope***

Hope can be categorised as a form of positive speak (Gottman 1994a), as discussed in Section 2.4.1. Similar to marital relationships, such expressions were associated with a better quality of relationship in the future compared with the relationships which did not have such

expressions. Employees who expressed hope as a way to cope with conflicts and hardships in their organisation measured significantly higher OJS and lower INT, and nearly significantly lower burnout. No correlation with Time 1 survey scores was found, which indicates that the survey scores, unlike the interview, did not detect any difference between the participants' groups.

A mental image of the organisation is consistent with this result as well. When the participant has a positive mental image of the organisation, they can access hopeful expressions more easily than if the mental image is not positive. This, in turn, reinforces a better quality of relationship between the employee and the organisation. It is also possible that hope enables better satisfaction (Lyubomirsky et al. 2011), and sustains lower turnover intentions.

There is, however, one point to make with respect to this process. Although the sample was too small to test this statistically, it seemed that there were two different forms of hope, which had different effects on participants. One form was active, or reality-based hope. This hope either relied on the participant taking action, or on evidence of realistic changes. This form of hope seemed to the researcher to prevail among participants who were more likely to maintain a better quality of relationship with the organisation, because of other indicators such as their interview-based ratios, other qualitative processes, and survey scores. The other form of hope, which was passive and quite similar to wishful-thinking, was typical of participants who seemed less empowered to bring about the change they were hoping for, and were at risk of experiencing disappointment when their wishes are not fulfilled. This dual-faceted natureof hope is a worthy direction for future research, as discussed in Section 7.4.

6.2.3 Similarities to marital research – worse relationship quality

Several relational processes were associated with a worse future quality of employee-organisation relationship. Those processes were identified as part of negativity expressed towards the organisation, and as part of ways of dealing with conflicts which have occurred with the organisation: expressions of despair, hostility, anxiety, and pain, negative delivery mechanisms, expressions of strong negativity, of disappointment and disillusion, and delineation and reduction. Each of these indicators is described next.

6.2.3.1 ***Dealing with conflict: despair***

Consistent with marital research, where despair was one of the processes predicting poorer relationship quality (Coan & Gottman 2007), participants in this study who exhibited despair measured indicators of a poorer employee-organisation relationship quality at T2, with significantly higher mean scores of INT, significantly lower mean scores of ENGA, POS, and OJS, and nearly significantly lower COMP. These measures were also consistent with those measured at T1 for these individuals, with significantly lower mean scores of OJS and ENGA. However, more indicators of the lower quality for the relationship were identified at T2, suggesting that the quality of the relationship has possibly deteriorated even further. Such a direction is consistent with the trends identified in marital research.

6.2.3.2 ***Dealing with conflict: hostility***

As described in Section 5.3.2.6, some participants expressed hostility towards parties in the organisation. Consistent with marital research, where forms of hostility (either direct or humoristic) were found to predict poorer relationship quality in the future (Coan & Gottman 2007), participants in this study who expressed hostility towards those who cause their problems or difficulties at T1 also measured lower quality of employee-organisation relationship at T2. Those participants measured significantly lower mean scores of POS,

OJS, and AC, at time 1 and at Time 2, and nearly significantly lower COMP at T2. This therefore shows that hostility is a relational process which indicates and predicts a lower quality of a relationship, be it marital or employee-organisation relationship.

6.2.3.3 *Anxiety*

As described in Section 5.3.1.2, expressions of fear, worry, and concern were grouped as expressions of anxiety. As in marital relationships, it was expected that such emotions undermine individual satisfaction, and indeed, those who displayed this process measured significantly lower mean scores of OJS one year later, compared with those who did not. In addition to this significant difference, nearly significantlyhigher mean scoresof INT and lower mean scores of AC at T2 were identified for those who expressed anxiety compared with those who did not. These differences indicate poorer quality of employee-organisation relationship one year after the diagnosis.

Interestingly, however, such participants measured a significantly higher mean of joys and a significantly lower mean of alarms, indicating that their overall quality of their relationship with the organisation has improved more than the relationships of those who did not express anxiety. Although these measures are less definitive than the survey scores because of reliability problems, the alarms and joys may indicate that individuals who experience anxiety take proactive approaches to reduce it, and thus contribute to the improvement of the quality of their relationship with the organisation. Indeed, at T1, participants who expressed anxiety had significantly lower mean scores of POS, OJS, INT, and ENGA, and significantly higher BURN, as well asnearly significantly lower AC. In comparison, by T2, POS was no longer significantly different for those who expressed anxiety and those who did not. In addition, other constructs (INT, ENGA, and BURN) only nearly significantly indicated a poorer relationship quality. This may indicate that anxiety, while indicating problems in the

employee-organisation relationship, may be temporary, and lead to an improvement in the quality of the relationship over time.

To summarise the evidence related to anxiety, it predicts that those who express it are likely to have a significantly worse quality of the relationship than those who do not express it, that the quality of this relationship will probably remain worse compared with those who do not express it one year later. However, the quality of the relationship itself is likely to improve within one year. That is, the relationship becomes 'still bad, but less bad'.

6.2.3.4 ***Pain***

Individuals who expressed pain such as grief and sorrow, as described in Section 5.3.1.3, have recorded a lower relationship quality one year later in terms of significantly lower OJS and AC (at T2). These scores, however, were not as low as the ones measured at T1. At T1, the difference between the means of OJS and ENGA was significant, and the difference between BURN and AC differences were nearly significant, where lower scores of OJS, AC, and ENGA, and higher scores of BURN were measured for those who expressed pain, compared with those who did not. That is, participants who expressed pain in their interviews at T1 had a worse relationship with their organisation at T1 and at T2,compared with those who did not express pain. Their relationship also appeared less bad at T2 than it was at T1.

Although causality cannot be proved, the findings indicate that individuals who experience events which caused them significant pain such as sorrow and grief have a lower quality relationship with the organisation. However, it seems that this quality improves over time, as they heal from the pain. This finding indicates that although employees recover from painful experiences in their organisation, painful experiences reduce the quality of employees' relationship with the organisation, and addressing this may be beneficial.

6.2.3.5 *Indirect negativity mechanisms*

An indirect form of negativity identified in interviews involved the way messages were delivered, as described in Section 5.3.1.4. Participants whose negativity was evident in their indirect delivery mechanisms also measured significantly lower POS, OJS AC and COMP, and significantly higher INT at T2. The same significant differences were also evident at T1.

This result is consistent with findings in marital research, as well as findings in turnover literature. According to marital research, couples who expressed negativity through delivery mechanisms (that is, providing short or vague positive descriptions of one another, or taking a long time to bring up positives about one another) were later more likely to separate, or have lower marital satisfaction (Gottman 2014b). According to turnover research, employees who measure low scores of POS, OJS, and AC, as well as high scores on INT, are more likely to turnover (Holtom et al. 2008).

The value of this process is that it is not easy to fake (unlike survey results or response contents), because it is revealed by examining covert indicators. The authenticity of this process makes it a valuable indicator of turnover.

6.2.3.6 *Strong negativity*

As described in Sections 4.2.5.2 and 5.3.1.5, expressions of strong negativity were grouped as one code. Consistent with marital research (Gottman 2014b), participants who expressed strong negativity had multiple indicators of a poorer relationship quality with their organisation: significantly lower POS, OJS and AC, as well as higher INT. The same pattern was identified at T1, which is consistent with turnover literature(Holtom et al. 2008). However, at T1, lower ENGA mean scored were identified, whereas at T2 the association with higher mean scores of BURN was nearly significant. Although the details of the

indicators may have varied over the year, the direction remained the same – the relationship with the organisation was of poorer quality at T1 and T2.

6.2.3.7 ***Disappointment and / or disillusion***

As described in Sections 4.2.5.4 and 5.3.1.6, expressions of disappointment and / or disillusion were grouped into one code. Similar to marital research (Gottman 2014b), participants who expressed disappointment and / or disillusion with elements in their organisation had multiple indicators of a poorer quality of the relationship with their organisation: significantly lower POS, OJS and AC, as well as higher INT. The same pattern was identified at T1, which is consistent with turnover literature(Hom & Griffeth 1995; Holtom et al. 2008; Hom et al. 2012).

This finding indicates that disappointment and / or disillusion are indicators of problems in a relationship, be it with a spouse or employing organisation. Such problems are evident also in traditional survey scores at the time of the expression.

6.2.3.8 ***Delineation and reduction (mental withdrawal)***

As described in Section 5.3.1.7, individuals expressed mental withdrawal from elements in the organisation, by delineating and reducing mental interactions with organisational issues. Similar to stonewalling identified in marital research (Gottman 1994c), participants in this study who expressed this withdrawal had indicators of a poorer relationship quality with the organisation, with significantly lower OJS and ENGA at T2. The quality of their relationship with the organisation was already poorer at T1 compared to other participants, as evident by significantly lower mean scores of OJS, and ENGA, significantly higher scores of INT, and nearly significantly lower scores of AC at T1. This finding indicates that although a year later there were fewer indicators of a poorer relationship quality for those who expressed this

process, the relationship quality remained poorer, consistent with turnover literature (Hom & Griffeth 1995; Holtom et al. 2008; Hom et al. 2012).

6.2.4 Summary

Section 6.2 discussed the relational processes identified in this study which also differentiated the quality of participants' relationship with their organisation one year after the interview. The section compared the predictions of these processes in this study with their predictions in marital research. The section also examined the value of the predictiveness of these processes compared with the survey scores used in this study.

Only one process identified in this study predicted an outcome opposite to the one identified in marital research: expressions of empathy towards those who caused the problems and difficulties to the participant. Participants who expressed this process in their interview had a worse relationship with their organisation one year later. This is in contrast to marital research, where empathy indicates better quality of relationship, and is even used to improve it. This difference between organisational and marital results may be due to gender differences, as males' empathy improves relationships' quality whereas females do not, and the sample in this study was mostly female. Another possible explanation is that empathy is an indicator of an upcoming amicable separation.

The rest of the processes identified in this study, however, predicted relationship outcomes consistent with marital research. Several processes predicted a better future relationship quality between the employee and the organisation: turning to positives when discussing a negative, genuine acceptance of difficulties, avoiding lengthy discussions of negatives, and hope. Other processes predicted a worse future relationship quality between the employee and the organisation: despair, hostility, anxiety, pain, negativity in delivery mechanisms, strong negativity, disappointment and disillusion, and delineation and reduction.

Most processes which predicted differences in the future relationship quality were also associated with differences during the time of the interview. Two processes, however, only predicted a difference at T2, and were not associated with differences at T1: expressions of hope, and turning to positives in negative discussions. This indicates that the processes capture an element predictive of the future of the employee-organisation relationship, which survey scores do not.

One process also showed an interesting inconsistency between the quality of the relationship, and the direction of its change. Participants who expressed forms of anxiety had worse relationships with their organisation than those who did not, but their relationship improved over 1 year.

6.3 Addressing the research questions

This section relates the results discussed above to the research questions posed in this study, which were presented in Section 1.4. The first question, discussed in Section 6.3.1, examines the extent to which the methods for diagnosing relationships used in this study predict the quality of the relationship between the employee and the organisation. This question is addressed by examining how successfully the interview-based ratios and the qualitative processes identified through this method correlate with the quality of the employee-organisation relationship one year later.

The second question enquires about how the results of this study compare with the current knowledge in employee turnover literature. This question is addressed in Section 6.3.2 by relating the findings of this study to current turnover literature, as discussed in Section 2.1. The third and final question compares the relationship between employees and their organisation with marital relationships. This question is addressed in Section 6.3.3, by comparing characteristics of the employee-organisation relationship revealed in this study to

current knowledge of marital relationships. The theoretical, practical, and methodological implications of the answers the research questions are presented after each of them is discussed.

6.3.1 RQ1 – Predicting the quality of the employee-organisation relationship

The findings show that the new direction of treating employment as a relationship between the employee and the organisation is beneficial. When treated as a relationship, the future of the quality and status of one's employment can be predicted, to some extent. All indicators which are used to predict the quality of marital relationships (i.e., affect ratio, attribution ratio, and qualitative relational processes) correlated significantly with several measures of employment-related constructs. As discussed in Section 6.1.1, the affect ratio and attribution ratios predicted future levels of POS, OJS, INT, AC, and BURN – all constructs which indicate the quality of the relationship between the employee and the organisation. As discussed in Section 6.1.2, the we-ness ratios predicted AC, INT and BURN, and well as the numbers of joys and alarms. As discussed in Section 6.2, the qualitative processes identified in the interviews also predicted many employment-related constructs, which are summarised in Table 5.25. In addition, three qualitative processes (turning to a positive from a negative, avoiding discussion of hardships, and considering positives) significantly differentiated between participants who turned over, and those who did not.

The study shows that drawing on methods for diagnosing marital relationships provides relevant results for predicting participants' employment quality and turnover. This has theoretical, managerial, and methodological implications.

6.3.1.1 *Theoretical implications*

It has already been established that people have relationships with entities which are not human (Fournier 1998). The results of this study show such relationships operate similar to relationships with individuals. This study demonstrates that, in an employment setting, the individual constructs a mental image of their partner – in this case their organisation – like in marital relationships, where the individual constructs a mental image of their spouse. This research confirms that this mental image is consistent not only with the quality of the relationship at the time, but it is also predictive of the future, to an extent. That is, indicators of this image predicted the quality of the relationship in the future, but not turnover. The prediction of turnover could improve with a future study with larger numbers, longer follow-up time frame, refined coding, and an examination of willingness to turnover, instead of only turnover behaviour. These directions for future research are discussed in Section 7.4.

In addition, this study further strengthens the views of social exchange theory (SET), which highlights the importance of organisational social support to their employees as a way to generate outcomes beneficial to both the organisation and the employee (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005). Furthermore, the study highlights the role affect resulting from social exchange plays in the employee-organisation relationship, thus drawing attention to that affect theory of social exchange (Lawler 2001). This suggests an interesting future direction for research.

Furthermore, this study has demonstrated a way to integrate attribution theory into relational methods of diagnosing relationships. The findings show that attribution ratios are consistent with affect ratios, even when attribution is not sought directly in the diagnostic process. A future study can examine if adjustments to the interview process result in different findings.

6.3.1.2 ***Practical implications***

This study offers a practical approach to examine the quality of the relationship between the employee and the organisation, for the purpose of identifying a need for an intervention. The approach provides a 'health-check' of these relationships, and offers a reliable indication of their future state. This approach can identify not only *if* the quality of employees' relationships with the organisation needs improvement, it offers insights into*how* such improvement can be achieved. The qualitative nature of the method provides insight into practical issues which can be addressed by management. For example, managers may not address problems mentioned by few employees, because their impact may not seem significant, or problems brought up by dissatisfied employees only, because managers may attribute the problems to the complaining employees ('they just don't like change'). However, with this method, managers can become aware of issues which recurred in many interviews, or issues brought up by satisfied as well as dissatisfied employees (for example, 'we have not been consulted in the process of planning this change'), thus indicating that these issues have an impact across the organisation. Such issues are important starting-points for organisational interventions.

The method also enables the identification of differentials between management personnel and employees. Differences in perceptions that readily emerged when employees candidly shared their views on and attributions of management's actions, for example, a difference regarding the consultation process undertaken as part of planning a change. While management thought that they provide sufficient consultation opportunities, employees brought up decisions which were made without such consultation. Once these differences are identified, they can be addressed with appropriate response. For example, in this case, consultation opportunities become more apparent for managers.

Another important practical implication resulting from this study concerns the retention of employees, as well as the prediction of their turnover. This study indicates that people's relationships with their organisations have similar principles to peoples' marital relationships. This finding suggests that retention of employees should be guided by the principles of sustaining a happy marriage. Specifically, as happy marriages are sustained by a balance of positive-to-negative affect, when aiming to increase the retention of employees, the affect they experience in their interactions with the organisation needs to be considered. At the negative end of the scale, this study suggests that, similar to a marriage, the accumulation of experienced negative affect and decline in positive experienced affect drive the employee-organisation relationship towards separation. Conversely, at the positive end of the scale, the accumulation of experienced positive affect and reduction of experienced negative affect sustain and improve the employee-organisation relationship.

Furthermore, similar to marital relationships, where distressed partners initially disregard benevolent or enhancing behaviours actions of their spouses, which are inconsistent with their negative mental image of them (Fincham & Bradbury 1992), it is expected that an employee who has a distressed relationship with their organisation will initially disregard actions taken by the organisation to remedy the situation. As in marital relationships, however, persistent and continuous actions are expected to modify this mental image over time (Kelley & Michela 1980).

6.3.1.3 ***Methodological implications***

This study shows that drawing on literature on relationships, and particularly, marital relationships, provides practical tools which diagnose the quality of employees' relationship with their organisation, as well as predicts their future together (in terms of its quality, but not

stability). Thus this novel form of enquiry offers an alternative and beneficial methodological approach to turnover studies.

This study also demonstrated the value of using mixed-methods in the turnover field. It demonstrated that converting qualitative data into quantitative form and then comparing the two forms of data (that is, quantitised qualitative data and quantitative data) is useful for studying human relationships, interpersonal or others.

In addition, this study suggests a novel way of empirically examining diametrically-opposed phenomena (such as we-ness/they-ness, or enhancing/distressing attribution). Both attribution and we-ness ratios resulted in significant correlations with future job and workplace attitudes, suggesting that this is a valid way to examine balance between opposing forces in workplace relationships.

6.3.2 RQ2 – Comparing with employment literature

When comparing the method used in this study with current management literature, three main research outcomes are relevant: the survey constructs' correlations with affect and attribution ratio, the survey constructs' correlations with we-ness ratios, and the differences in survey scores between participants who expressed certain qualitative relational processes and those who did not. These outcomes and their implications are discussed next.

Affect and attribution ratios

The results of the methods used in this study to diagnose the employee-organisation relationship were compared with survey results at T1 and T2 in Sections 6.1 and 6.2 above. Most products of the diagnosis (that is, interview-based ratios and qualitative relational processes) correlated with many survey items, both at T1 and T2. As discussed in Section 6.1.1, most survey constructs correlated with the affect and attribution ratios at T1 and T2 (that is, POS, OJS, AC, INT, BURN and COMP). One construct correlated with the affect

ratio at T1 only – ENGA. Two other constructs (CC and NC) did not correlate with the affect or attribution ratios at either time, T1 or T2. This outcome suggests that the affect and attribution ratios captured elements of the participants' mental image of their organisation which were not only consistent with traditional survey constructs' scores, but also robust and predictive of the future of these survey scores. This indicates that the diagnosis approach used in this study is generally consistent with current turnover literature, which shows that for the most part, positive antecedents are followed by positive consequences (Steel & Lounsbury 2009; Brunetto et al. 2012; Hom et al. 2012). In addition, these findings suggest that, as expected, the employee-organisation relationship is not related to either the continuous or normative component of commitment. This outcome is consistent with SET, which argues that these forms of commitment do not result from social exchange (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005), and therefore do not engender relational constructs such as feelings of personal obligations, gratitude, and trust (Blau 1986). A future study could repeat the interview and examine the correlation of the original interview-based ratios with the repeat interview-based ratios and examine its stability as well.

As discussed in Section 6.1.1., this study also indicates that, surprisingly, although the participants' relationships with the organisation is associated with their burnout levels, it is not related to their engagement with their work. Although the two constructs, burnout and engagement, are known to not be diametrically opposed (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004), it is surprising that the employee-organisation relationship only affects one. It is possible that the fatigue, disillusion, and despair that employees feel when they are burnt out is balanced when their relationship with the organisation is good, whereas such good relationships do not lead to greater engagement levels with their work, or a bad relationship does not make them detach from their work. Further research confirming this point would be of interest.

We-ness ratios

Correlations between the we-ness ratios and the survey constructs, discussed in Section 6.1.2, revealed some interesting points. Firstly, it shows that participants' sense of belonging counterweighs their sense of continuous commitment. This finding was discussed in Section 6.1.2.2, and suggests that perhaps there is a dynamic balance between the three components of organisational commitment. It is possible, as indicated by this result, that one's overall commitment to the organisation may remain similar over time, however, the quality of as their relationship with the organisation changes, the balance between the components changes as well. For example, while the participant's relationships with their team members are good, they measure a higher affective commitment and lower continuous commitment. Nevertheless, if the quality of the relationships change (due to fallouts with colleagues, for example, or changes in unit's personnel), their affective commitment would measure lower, however they would measure higher continuous commitment. Overall, their commitment level would remain the same, though different aspects of this commitment wouldbe prominent. It has been shown that longitudinal changes in commitment predict turnover (Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2005). Based on the findings of this study, a further refinement to this finding to be examined in future research, as discussed in Section 7.4.

Another outcome which is relevant for turnover research relates to women, belonging, and commitment. The findings discussed in Section 6.1.2.2 show that for women, feeling part of a sub-group within the organisation reduces their affective and continuous commitment to their respective work unit. This means, for example, that an educator who works in a ward of nurses feels like she belongs with her fellow educators. Once that needs to belong is satisfied by a group outside her work unit (Kelly 1986; Duck 2010), her commitment to her work unit (affective and continuous) is lower. This highlights the practical need to reinforce the belonging of cross-functional unit members to their work unit.

Qualitative relational processes

As discussed in Section 6.2, many qualitative relational processes differentiated levels of survey constructs measured at T1 and T2, as summarised in Table 6.2. Most relational processes which differentiated the levels of survey scores at T2 also differentiated their levels at T1. This shows that the relational processes capture aspects consistent with traditional survey scores, which also predict future attitudes.

However, as discussed in Section 6.2, two processes were associated with differences in attitudes measured in T2, but were not associated with any differences measured in T1: hope, and turning to positives from a negative. This indicates that the method reported here captures aspects of the relationship between the employee and the organisation which are currently not identified through traditional survey constructs, and are effective at predicting future attitudes. This offers a practical addition seeking to identify (or rather, rule out) the risk of employee turnover.

6.3.2.1 ***Theoretical implications***

The correlations between survey scores and products of the method used in this study to diagnose the employee-organisation relationship suggest that both methods capture different aspects of this relationship, and that these aspects have a substantial overlap. Specifically, POS, OJS, AC, INT, BURN and COMP clearly overlap with products of the marital-based diagnosis method, as they significantly correlated with various products of this method at T1 and at T2. Similarly, CC overlaps with some aspects captured by the we-ness aspect of marital-based diagnosis method. In contrast, it is not clear to what extent ENGA overlaps, because only its values measured at T1 correlated with interview-based ratios, and not those measured at T2. It is also seems that CC does not overlap with any products of the marital-

based diagnosis method, because its values measured at either T1 or T2 did not correlate with interview-based ratios.

This suggests that employment can be conceptualised as an interpersonal relationship between the employee and the organisation, whereby how one partner perceives the other is critical to the quality of the relationship. This contribution means that principles of interpersonal relationships can be applied to employment. In other words, the ways to improve interpersonal relationships are relevant to the ways one would improve the relationship between the employee and the organisation.

6.3.2.2 ***Practical implications***

The findings further reinforce the view that burnout and engagement are not opposites of each other (Schaufeli et al. 2002). This draws attention to the need to use different strategies to address problems in each. While improving the employee-organisation relationship can reduce burnout, it may not increase employee engagement.

Furthermore, the findings draw attention to the practical need to reinforce the belonging of cross-functional female unit members to their work unit. As discussed above, when females displayed a sense of belonging to a sub-group within their organisation which is not their work unit, their affective and continuous commitments measures were significantly lower.

6.3.2.3 ***Methodological implications***

A suggested methodological contribution results from the inverse relationship identified of we-ness and commitment components. Although the affect ratios did not correlate with continuous and normative commitment, some relational processes were associated with certain levels of these constructs. As discussed above, participants' sense of belonging (indicated by their expressions of we-ness) counterweighs their sense of continuous commitment. This suggests that the balance between the three components of commitment to

the organisation is dynamic. It is possible, as indicated by this result, that, while one's overall commitment to the organisation may remain similar over time, the quality of their relationship with the organisation changes, and the balance between the components changes as well. A methodological approach examining temporal changes in commitment has been successful in previous turnover studies (Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2005). The results of this study suggest that temporal changes in the components of commitment (affective commitment and / or continuous commitment) may be indicators of turnover, perhaps more so than temporal changes in overall commitment.

6.3.3 RQ3 – Comparing with results in marital research

Because in this study, as well as in marital research, similar methods were used, a comparison of the results of this study with results in marital research essentially allows for the comparison of marital relationships with employee-organisation relationships. This comparison reveals differences and similarities of the two relationship types. The similarities between these rather different relationship types attest to core elements of relationships that people have with others, human or non-human. Understanding these similarities and differences between them can also enhance the understanding of employment, and guide future attempts to draw on knowledge from marital research when examining employment.

For the most part, despite the differences between the two types of relationship, most of the results in this study of employment were consistent with the findings identified in marital research. As discussed in Section 6.1.1, the quantitative affect ratio, which predicted the future status of marital relationships, also predicted (to an extent) the status and quality of the employee-organisation relationship. As discussed, the interview-based affect ratio correlated with several constructs measured one year after the interview (POS, OJS, INT, AC, and

BURN), all constructs which indicate the quality of the relationship between the employee and the organisation.

One notable difference between the affect ratio results in this study compared with marital research is the range of the ratio identified. The highest affect ratio of positive-to-negative identified in this study is lower than ratios identified in studies of marital interactions. For example, a study of the ratio of positive-to-negative interactions during conflict found that ratios varied between 0.67 and 5.32 (Notarius et al. 1989), compared with the range found in this study (0.33 to 3.13). This difference indicates that employees are more likely to recall and recount negative incidents in their workplace than positive, consistent with other studies of employment (Dasborough 2006).

Other interview-based ratios (attribution, general we-ness and total we-ness) also provided beneficial insight. These ratios have not been reported in a marital setting, and the correlations of relational constructs with these ratios had lower correlation coefficient than the affect ratio. However, these interview-based ratios demonstrate a novel way for empirically examining diametrically opposed phenomena (such as attribution), in a relational context.

A major difference identified between subjects concerned their tenure. When only participants who have been with their organisation longer than six year were examined, their ratios correlated more strongly with more constructs than the rest of the sample, whereas for those with a shorter tenure, the ratios correlated with hardly any constructs at T1 and T2. This indicates that the methods which produce ratios consistent with and predictive of the quality of marital relationships are only successful at producing rations which are consistent with and predictive of the quality of employee-organisation relationships, when the employee-organisation relationship has existed for longer than six years. This indicates that

an employee-organisation relationship develops over time, and after six years, become more marriage-like in terms of involving a mental image which is consistent with and predictive of the quantitative scores of the quality of the employee-organisation relationship. This duration is similar to the duration of marital relationships examined in marital research. Most couples examined were married for a few years, and even newlywed couples typically have a relationship for a few years before their marriage (Gottman et al. 1998b; Carrère et al. 2000). Therefore, the mental image develops over similar timeframes in the case of both relationship types.

In addition to the quantitative interview-based ratios, several relational processes were identified as significant predictors of the future quality and status of the employee-organisation relationship, as discussed in Section 6.2. Most of these processes were similar to processes identified in marital relationships, and their prediction of the future quality of the relationship was similar to the predictions identified in marital research, as summarised in Table 6.2. However, one notable exception is *empathy*, which unlike in marital relationships, was associated with a lower quality of employee-organisation relationships. Participants who expressed empathy towards those who instigate hardships for them reported significantly greater intentions to leave the organisation, compared with those who did not express it. While empathy towards the partner in time of conflict was generally found to contribute to the sustainability and quality of marital relationships (Long et al. 1999; Fincham, Paleari & Regalia 2002), in an organisational setting, empathy may have a different effect. It is possible that when an employee empathises with the causers of hardships, they also come to relinquish expectations that the impact of such hardships will be reduced. This may lead the employee to believe that the best way to address these hardships is by leaving the organisation when these hardships occur. Alternatively, this may be the result of a gender

biased sample, which was mostly female, and empathy having a stronger association with better relationships for males.

Predictive success and limitations

The affect and other interview-based ratios predicted the future of the quality of the employee-organisation relationship; however they did not significantly predict employee turnover, as opposed to affect ratio's success in marital research. This could be the result of several differences:

1. The number of turnover cases in this study was too small to generate meaningful predictive results. In addition, including willingness to turnover (that is, did they leave willingly, or were they forced to) may also improve the predictions of this method(Becker & Cropanzano 2011b; Maertz Jr, Boyar & Pearson 2012), as such turnover is more likely to be consistent with the employee-organisation relationship.
2. The sample used in marital research, as discussed in Section 2.4.2.3 included only 'extreme' cases (very happy and very unhappy couples). In contrast, this study had a large portion of employees in the middle, as evident in the descriptive statistics and summarised in Section 5.1.3. Perhaps a more extreme sample would have provided better prediction rates for turnover behaviour.
3. The duration of the relationship may also increase predictive ability. The predictive results in this study were better when participants had longer tenure. This shows that, for the employee-organisation relationship to become similar to marital relationships, it needs a longer time to develop. A sample of participants with longer tenure may produce better predictive results.
4. The time gap used in this research (two years) is significantly shorter than that used in most marital research, as discussed in Section 3.3.3. It is possible that a longer time gap may result in a better correlation.

5. Coding of positive and negative affect may require further refinement. The coding by two independent researchers, as commonly done in marital research (Gottman 1994a; Buehlman, Carrere & Siler 2005; Coan & Gottman 2007) may result in improved data analysis which then better predicts turnover.

The comparison of marital and the employee-organisation relationships results in theoretical, practical, and methodological implications, as described next.

6.3.3.1 ***Theoretical implications***

The findings in this study demonstrate that employment shares many similarities with marital relationships, in terms of the underlying mechanisms which sustain them and influence their quality. Similar to the contribution discussed in Section 6.3.1.1, the comparison of employment to marital relationships revealed that in both relationship types, individual constructs a mental image of their relationship partner, and this mental image is consistent not only with the quality of the relationship at the time, but it is also predictive of the future, to an extent. The findings, however, point to the importance of time for the development of this relationship between the employee and the organisation.

6.3.3.2 ***Practical and methodological implications***

The findings show that although the interview-based ratios do not predict actual turnover within two years, they do predict several employee job and workplace attitudes. In addition, most relational processes identified in this study were similar to relational processes identified in marital research, and predicted similar results to those predicted in marital research. This means that the method used in this study, which is derived from marital research, is beneficial for diagnosing and predicting the future of employee-organisation relationships.

Furthermore, the findings show that, as previously found, employees provide more negative input towards organisations than spouses do towards their partners(Argyle 1986). This indicates that people tolerate a more negative mental image of their organisation than they do of their partners.

In addition to the methodological contribution of demonstrating the success of the method used in this study, this study demonstrates the benefits of a mixed-methods approach for examining diametrically-opposed constructs. The interview-based ratio approach was shown to provide useful insights into various employment constructs, such as commitment, engagement, and burnout.

Finally, the findings show that drawing on marital research for studies of employment is more beneficial when the employee-organisation relationship has had a few years to develop.

6.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the findings presented in Chapter 5, and highlighted evidence of the benefits to viewing employment as a relationship between the employee and the organisation. The chapter also discussed how these findings addressed the research questions, and presented the contributions of this study to theory, methodology, and practice.

First, this chapter interpreted the quantitative results of this study, and discussed their implications. It was shown that overall, the methods used in this study predicted, to an extent, the future quality of the employee-organisation relationship. That is, the interview-based affect, attribution, and we-ness ratios correlated with several survey constructs measured one year after the interview, which indicate the quality of the employee-organisation relationship. These ratios, however, did not predict employee turnover in this sample within two years.

The quantitative results also suggest that the method used in this study captures some aspects which are similar to some survey constructs used here, but not to all of them. That is, the results suggest that perceived organisational support, overall job satisfaction, affective commitment, intentions to quit, the degree of burnout correlate with interview-based ratios, and continuous commitment was related to participants' sense of belonging and identification with their work unit. However, the results were not clear whether work engagement and normative commitment were related to aspects of the employee-organisation relationship.

The results indicate, consistently, that employees' relationship with their organisation is similar in many ways to interpersonal relationships (as assessed through a marital relationship diagnosiss tool). One major similarity is the inferred existence of a mental image that a person forms of their relationship partner – be it a person or an organisation. This study shows, however, that the formation of a consistent and integrated mental image of an organisation takes about six years. Once this image is formed, methods for diagnosing marital relationships are suitable for assessing employee-organisations relationships, whereas prior to this formation, the methods' success is more limited.

After a discussion of the quantitative results, the chapter compared the qualitative processes identified in this study of employee-organisation relationships with the qualitative processes which predicted the course of marital relationships. It was shown that for the most part, the processes are similar, and they indicate similar future quality and status of relationships. That is, processes which predicted a breakdown in marital relationships were also associated with poorer quality of employee-organisation relationships, one year after they were identified. This is also true of most processes which were associated with a better quality of employee-organisation relationship one year after they were identified – they were equivalent to processes which predicted better marital relationships. There was one notable exception –

empathy – which predicted a worse relationship quality between the employee and the organisation, as opposed to its association with better marital relationships.

Finally, the last section of this chapter related the study findings back to the research questions, and identified their theoretical, practical, and methodological implications. Theoretical implications in this study concern relationships, mainly relationships between employees and their organisation, social exchange theory (SET), and the relevance of constructs to the quality of employee-organisation relationships. As explained above, this work highlights that studies of relationships can benefit from tapping into the mental image one partner has of another. This study suggested a methodology for such tapping and practical benefits of it. The results discussed in this chapter also show that an integrated mental image of the organisation develops over six years. The idealised duration of such development may be confirmed in future studies, with larger samples, as discussed in Section 7.4.

In further support of social exchange theory (SET), this study reinforces the importance of organisational social support to their employees as a way to generate outcomes beneficial to both the organisation and the employee – an important implication for practitioners.

The methodological implications of the findings discussed in this chapter include the contribution of this study to studies of relationships, to studies of employee turnover, and to the field of mixed-methods. This study presents a novel way to study diametrically-opposed constructs (such as affect, attribution, and we-ness), which are relevant for relationships. The findings also indicate a potential direction for predicting turnover based on a shift in commitment components. Finally, this study demonstrated the practicalities and the benefits of using complex mixed-methods in studies of relationships and employment.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes this thesis in the following way. First, the chapter restates the research problem, the purpose, and the aims of this study. The chapter then re-emphasises the theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions of this study which resulted fromdrawing on marital research for studying employment.The chapter describes the limitations of this study, and suggests directions for future research. The chapter concludes with a summary.

7.1 Problem addressed by this study

This study was motivated by the adverse effect that employee turnover has on the organisation, and on the leaving employees. Turnover literature, after decades of research, and despite identifying many factors leading to employee turnover, has had limited success at predicting it(Holtom et al. 2008; Steel & Lounsbury 2009), and thus offers limited benefits to organisations and employees. This limited success also implies deficiencies in underlying theories of employee turnover, and in methods of predicting it. Consequently, the intention of this study was to apply an alternative perspective to this phenomenon which viewed employment as a relationship between the employee and their organisation, and turnover as a breakdown in this relationship, leading to a separation between parties. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the usefulness of this perspective in the workplace context.

For this purpose, the study utilised methods which successfully predicted separations in marital relationships and explored how these might also assist in predicting employee turnover. The study was designed to diagnose employee-organisation relationships at a point in time, and compare the diagnosis with the quality of the relationship and turnover behaviour some time later. Participants involved in this study worked either in industry with high

turnover rates (e.g., lawyers), or in an industry where turnover results in strong adverse effects on many stakeholders (e.g., nurses), as described in Section 3.3.2.

The relationship of 46 participants (across two organisations) with their employing organisation were diagnosed using survey tools and interviews. This diagnosis resulted in two forms of indicators of the future of the participants' relationship with their organisation: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative indicators were ratios of expressions which in marital research predicted a better quality of relationships to expressions which predicted a worse quality of relationships, or separation(Buehlman, Gottman & Katz 1992; Gottman 2014b; Gottman 2014a), that is, ratios of positive-to-negative affect, enhancing-to-distressing attribution, and expressions of we-ness versus separateness. The qualitative indicators were relational processes which had been successfully used in predicting the status of marital relationships.

Both qualitative and quantitative indicators were compared with participants' survey scores of job and workplace attitudes collected one year after their interview. In addition, the indicators were compared with turnover behaviour within two years after the interview.

Indeed, as described and discussed in preceding chapters, this study found qualitative and quantitative indicators which were significantly associated with participants' survey scores one year after the diagnosis of their relationship with their organisation. In contrast to job and workplace attitudes, only qualitative indicators were significantly associated with turnover behaviour within two years. In addition to the indicators of the future of the relationship between the participants and the organisation, this study identified differences between employees based on their demographic attributes (tenure, position, and gender).

In contrast to the many indicators which associated with the future quality of the relationship, only a limited amount of indicators was associated with actual turnover. The ability to

predict turnover may improve with a future study with larger numbers, as discussed in Section 7.4. Nonetheless, the findings of this study contribute to theory, methodology, and practice. The contributions to these aspects are discussed next.

7.2 Contributions

The results identified in this study contribute to theories of employment and employee turnover, as well as human relationships. They also make a contribution to industry practitioner knowledge, particularly to those who aim to improve the relationships of employees and their organisations and to reduce employee turnover.

7.2.1 Theoretical contribution

This study offers a novel conceptual view of employment, as an interpersonal relationship between the employee and the organisation. The study shows that in an employment setting, like in marital relationships, where the individual constructs a mental image of their spouse, the individual constructs a mental image of their organisation. This mental image indicates the quality of the employees' relationship with their organisation and is strongly related to their descriptions of the organisation. In addition, this research shows that this mental image is not only consistent with the quality of the relationship at the time, but it is also predictive of the future of this relationship. This point has important methodological implications, as described in Section 7.2.2.

With this view of employment as a relationship, three theoretical concepts were involved in this study: social exchange, affect, and attribution. In line with the views of social exchange theory (SET) (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005; Mitchell, Cropanzano & Quisenberry 2012), this study highlights the beneficial outcomes to both the organisation and the employee as a result of organisational social support. These outcomes include reduced turnover, as well as indicators of a better employee-organisation relationship quality, in terms of satisfaction,

commitment, intentions to turnover, and burnout. This contribution has important implications for practitioners, which are discussed in Section 7.2.3.

This study has also brought the theory of marital affect balance (Gottman 2014b) into organisational and employment research. This theory posits that the portions of positive affect in a relationship is indicative of its quality, and its future. This study has shown that this is valid not only for marital relationships, but also for the relationship between employees and their organisations. This finding also has important methodological implications, which are discussed in Section 7.2.2.

The contributions discussed above, to SET and to the theory of marital affect balance, highlights the role that affect plays in the employee-organisation relationship, thus drawing attention to that affect theory of social exchange (Lawler 2001).

Furthermore, the results of this study promote the role of attribution as an indicator of the quality of a relationship. This study shows that, similar to affect, portions of attributions which are enhancing of the relationship partner (as opposed to distressing attributions) indicate the quality of the relationship at the time, as well as its quality in the future. In addition, this study has broken new theoretical ground by integrating attribution theory with the marital affect balance theory. This is a significant convergence step between these two theories of human relationships. This contribution also has important methodological implications, described next.

7.2.2 Methodological contribution

Methodologically, this study makes a significant contribution to the studies of relationships, to studies of employee turnover, and to the field of mixed-methods.

Studies of relationships can benefit from the inclusion of attribution, similar to this study. The study showed how attribution can be investigated, even in cases where attribution is not

made towards one person. Supporting calls to examine attributions in various aspects of business studies (including information systems) (Kelley et al. 2013), this work offers a practical approach to investigating attribution, which can be applied in such studies. The approach used here, which focused on the effect of the attribution on the relationship, i.e., enhancing or distressing, as described in Section 2.5.2, resulted in meaningful results in terms of the quality of the relationship between the parties. This demonstrated approach also reduced the complexity typically evident in studies of attribution(e.g., Kelley et al. 2013), by avoiding the need to identify specific dimensions of attribution.

Employee turnover studies can now benefit from the research approach demonstrated in this study. By treating employment as a relationship between the employee and the organisation, this study has demonstrated how qualitative expressions of affect and attribution can be captured, converted into quantitative form, and provide meaningful results about the quality of this relationship in the present and in the future. This form of diagnosis of the employee-organisation relationship can therefore be used in turnover studies as an additional form of input into turnover propensity. These ways of capturing and examining affect and attribution are also beneficial for studies of other relationship types.

In addition, this study has advanced the field of mixed-methods research, by providing an example of a complex approach to mixing qualitative and quantitative data. The study showed that the conversion of qualitative affect- and attribution-laden data into quantitative form produces meaningful results, and provided practical descriptions of how such a conversion is performed. The study also showed how results from the different data forms can be integrated to produce meaningful findings. Such a mixed methodological approach may aid other researchers' confidence and endeavours in pursuing research that may benefit from a mixed methodological approach.

7.2.3 Practical contributions

The practical implications of this study concern the diagnosis of the quality of employee-organisation relationship and the prediction of employee turnover. The methods used here to diagnose the employee-organisation relationship provide reliable indicators of the future of this relationship. Practitioners can use the outcomes of such diagnosis of the relationship between the employee and the organisation to guide decisions on, for example, training, employee assignments, and promotion. In addition, the method used here indicates not only *if* the quality of employees' relationships with the organisation needs improvement, but also offers insight into suggestions for *how* such improvement can be achieved. Put simply, the qualitative nature of the method provides insights into practical issues which can be pragmatically addressed by management.

This study also indicates that people's relationships with their organisations have similar principles to marital relationships. This finding suggests that retention of employees should be guided by the principles of sustaining a marriage. Specifically, marriages are sustained by a balance of positive-to-negative affect. Therefore, when aiming to increase the retention of employees, the affect employees experience in their interactions with the organisation needs to be considered. Any accumulation of experienced negative affect and any decline in experienced positive affect drive the employee-organisation relationship towards separation.

7.3 Limitations of this study

The limitations of this study mainly include its sample size, time gap, relational processes explored as independent variables, and constructs examined as dependent variables. The sample size, below 100 participants, did not allow for meaningful predictive results. In addition, about a third of the participants had been with the organisation only for three years or less, and about half have been with the organisation for less than six years. This may have

reduced predictive accuracy. Furthermore, the sample included participants from two industry sections: nursing, and law.

In terms of time gaps, this study only examined job and workplace attitudes one year after the diagnosis of the relationship, and turnover behaviour two years after the diagnosis. Compared with marital research, the affect ratio was only successful at predicting job and workplace attitudes (which represent the quality of the employee-organisation relationship) after one year, and not predict separation within two years.

Methodologically, in terms of the independent variables explored here, the indicators used in this study resulted from one person's coding, unlike commonly done in marital research (Buehlman, Carrere & Siler 2005; Coan & Gottman 2007). This means that the reliability and validity of these constructs may need further improvement.

In terms of dependent variables, several constructs of interest were not included in this study, such as leaving willingly or reluctantly (in addition to turnover behaviour), as discussed in Section 2.1, and constructs discussed in Section 3.5.2, such as trust, justice, perceived supervisor and team support, job performance, absenteeism, psychological contract, embeddedness, OCB, and the components of ENGA and BURN, as discussed in Section 3.5.2.5. These constructs are suggested as a future research direction, as discussed in Section 7.4.

Overall, however, this study achieved its purpose, to explore and examine the usefulness and practicality of a relationship perspective to employee turnover research and practice, by engaging a marital diagnosis method, adapted to suit the employment setting. Direction for future research based on this study are discussed next.

7.4 Future research direction

This study offers two types of directions for future research. The first suggestsperforming research which address the limitations of this study. The second suggests further research based on the findings of this study, which offer potential directions for future research. These types of research are described in detail next.

7.4.1 Addressing limitations

Repeating this study with a different sample would also provide further insight into the method used for diagnosing employee-organisation relationships. Not only would a larger sample size provide more confidence in the results, but also diversity in terms of professions, managerial positions, gender, and tenure would provide insight into how such factors affect turnover prediction and behaviour. A larger sample may also pinpoint the number of years it takes to develop a consistent mental image of one's organisation. This would indicate how many years of tenure are needed for the method in this study to be used effectively.

In addition, a similar study with a longer time-frame and / or an inclusion of a dimension of willingness to leave in a future study will provide different results, as this dimension is more likely to be associated with the quality of the employee-organisation relationship. A future study tracking job and workplace attitudes, as well as turnover behaviour after a longer period could also identify the benefits of this diagnosis over a longer timeframe.

Methodologically, a future study can explore the value of addressing limitations in the method presented here. The study presented here examined both affect and attribution as dependent variables, but the methods used did not seek attribution directly. Revised interview questions which probe participants for attribution may result in a better coverage of participants' attribution of organisational actions, and thus perhaps will provide a better predictive angle.

In terms of the independent variables explored here, the indicators used in this study can be extended to positive relational processes. This study only examined negative relational processes. However, in terms of diagnosis, further research can examine which positive relational processes predict turnover behaviour, or relationship quality outcomes. In addition, in line with the rise of positive psychology, which focuses on identifying strengths and nurturing them to enhance personal success (Nelson, Kurtz & Lyubomirsky 2013), further research can examine which processes are typical of employees who have a better relationship with their organisations, and identify ways to stimulate them in other employees.

Besides extending the indicators used in this study, these indicators can be further refined. This can be done by adding independent coders, as performed in marital research (Buehlman, Carrere & Siler 2005; Coan & Gottman 2007)., and by repeating the diagnosis interview after a period of time, and examine the stability of these indicators (that is, interview-based ratios and relational processes). Furthermore, this study attempted to integrate attribution theory into the methods for diagnosing relationships. This attempt, while successful, can be extended further. Developing interview questions which directly seek participants' attribution towards their organisation would further extend the integration of attribution theory into the diagnosis of the relationship.

In terms of dependent variables, extending the constructs measured when examining the quality of the employee-organisation relationship would provide a more comprehensive view of these relationships. The study could also be extended by including additional dependent variables,such asleaving willingly or reluctantly (in addition to turnover behaviour), as discussed in Section 2.1, constructs discussed in Section 3.5.2, such as trust, justice, perceived supervisor and team support, job performance, absenteeism, psychological contract, embeddedness, OCB, and the components of ENGA and BURN, as discussed in Section 3.5.2.5. A study which includes such additional dependent variables would show if

the diagnosis of the relationship between the employee and the organisation is predictive of other measures of its quality.

7.4.2 Advancement

Several findings in this study suggest the need for further research. Findings related to some survey constructs were not consistent with expectations based on previous literature, thus pointing to the need to clarify these inconsistencies with further research. In addition, the main findings in this study highlight a need for further investigation on the theoretical inclusion of affect within SET. Furthermore, the findings identified differences among participants of different tenure groups. This suggests that further research on the development of the employee-organisation relationship over time, and the timeframes for this development, is of benefit. Moreover, relational processes identified as predictors in this study need to be confirmed. Finally, astudy of an intervention based on the overall findings of this study, which focused on diagnosing the employee-organisation relationship, is also desirable. Such an intervention-based study would examine the usefulness of the diagnosis' outcomes for the purpose of improving employee retention and the quality of the employee-organisation relationship. The next sections describe these research directions in more detail.

7.4.2.1 ***Survey constructs***

In terms of findings relevant to the constructs which were measured as the dependent variables in this study, the need for future research is indicated by correlations identified for ENGA, and normative commitment. Unlike the other constructs measured in this study, which were clearly related to products of the marital-based diagnosis method, these constructs did not have such clear relations. Specifically, ENGA values measured at T2 did not correlate with interview-based ratios (as opposed to those measured at T1), and NC values measured at either T1 or T2 did not correlate with any interview-based products. The

role of these constructs and how it is expressed in the employee-organisation relationship is therefore not clear in this study. Further research seeking qualitative input on these constructs (ENGA and NC) alongside input on the employee-organisation relationship would further scholarship in this area.

Compared with current turnover literature, this study also draws attention to the conceptual and practical differences between work engagement and burnout, discussed in Section 3.5.2.5. Consistent with previous evidence that the two concepts are not diametrically opposed (discussed in Section 6.1.1), this study shows that burnout is related to the employee-organisation relationship, whereas engagement is not. This draws attention to the need to use different strategies to address problems in burnout compared with engagement.

The study also draws attention to the components of commitment. The results of this study suggest that perhaps shifts in commitment components could indicate upcoming turnover, as discussed in Section 6.3.2, and therefore a study tracking these components over time with relation to turnover behaviour would also be of interest.

7.4.2.2 ***Theoretical inclusion of affect in SET***

From a theoretical perspective, in addition to supporting the underlying premise of SET, the results of this study draw attention to the importance of affect in the relationship between employees and their organisation. This is consistent with the affect theory of social exchange, arguing that positive affect involved in social exchange in the workplace is at the core of the development of the relationship between the employee and the organisation. This argument can be examined further when using the diagnosis method described in this study. Coding positive and negative affect resulting from social exchange in the workplace could provide a different ratio to the affect ratio examined in this study, which may be a better predictor of the quality of the employee-organisation relationship.

7.4.2.3 *Timeframe for relationship development*

This study identified six years as the duration needed for the development of a relationship between the employee and the organisation which is similar to a marital relationship. Further research with a larger sample may identify a more accurate timeframe, which can guide not only the understanding of relationships, but also the practical effectiveness of the prediction methods described here. That is, a future study can determine how many years of tenure are needed before these methods provide useful results.

7.4.2.4 *Methodological confirmation*

Methodologically, some relational processes were significantly associated with certain relationship quality outcomes, however their predictive ability needs to be further confirmed with repeating studies. Moreover, this study identified one relational process – hope – which was associated with significantly better relationship quality. However, as previously discussed In Section 6.2.2.3, two types of hope were identified: reality-based hope, and passive hope. A future study could examine if expressions of these types of hope have difference consequences for the employee-organisation relationship.

7.4.2.5 *Benefits of intervention*

Finally, the effect of an intervention-based on the results of this study can be examined. This study suggests that high portions of positive affect expressed by a participant toward their organisation is indicative of a better relationship quality with the organisation. It is worth examining if interventions designed to increase experiences of positive affect (or reduce experiences of negative affect) among participants translate to a better quality of employee-organisation relationship. This converges with efforts originating in positive psychology research and practice, aiming to benefit workers, managers, and society as a whole.

7.5 Chapter summary

The findings presented in this thesis highlight the importance of mental images, social exchange, and affective experiences in forging positive employee-organisation relationships. Social exchange and affective experiences have long been recognised as the building-blocks of interpersonal relationships, and this study provides evidence of their importance for employee retention and turnover reduction.

This chapter has summarised the elements of this study which brought forth and examined the importance of these issues. First, the chapter restated the study's purpose, aims, research methodology, and results. It then brought together the main contributions of the study, in terms of theory, methodology, and practice. It emphasised the validity of viewing employment as a relationship between the employee and the organisation, based on how employees construct a mental image of their organisation, similar to how marital spouses construct a mental image of each other. As demonstrated in this study, social exchange and affective experiences underlie that process of constructing this mental image. These phenomena are therefore considered of high value and warrant attention by organisational practitioners, who are concerned about reducing employee turnover, increasing retention, and improving the quality of the employee-organisation relationship. This study has also demonstrated and argued for a diagnostic investigative method adapted from marital research to examine the effects of affect and social exchange on the employee-organisational relationship, by using the mental image of the organisation, as constructed by employees.

Additionally, this chapter has also suggested a number of directions for future research, based on the study's key findings and limitations. Building on this study, those opportunities can further advance a greater understanding of the employment relationship viewed from an interpersonal relationship perspective.

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APPENDIX A - RELATIONAL CONSTRUCTS STUDIED IN TURNOVER RESEARCH

This appendix provides tables of relational constructs studied in turnover research the past two decades. The table presents the constructs, their description, and their sources. In addition, the constructs are grouped into categories, based on the party directly involved in the interaction with the employee. The categories in this table are: co-workers, the organisation, management, HR policies / practices, supervisor, individual's work / obligation, and other.

Table A.1

Relational constructs influencing turnover: co-workers

Construct Name	Construct Description	Source	Additional categories
Network centrality	The relative numbers of direct and indirect links an individual has with others comprising a social network.	(Mossholder, Settoon & Henagan 2005)	
Interpersonal citizenship behaviour	Cooperative assistance for individuals in need	(Mossholder, Settoon & Henagan 2005)	
Indirect Person-Environment fit	A comparison between individual assessment of values and other workers assessment of their values	(Ostroff, Shin & Kinicki 2005)	
Perceived co-workers social support	Perceived availability of supported if needed	(De Cuyper et al. 2010)	
Collective turnover	A process of a shared decision to leave an organisation	(Bartunek, Zhi Huang & Walsh 2008)	
Job embeddedness	Includes individuals' (1) links to other people, teams, and groups, (2) perceptions of their fit with job, organisation, and community, and (3) what they say they would have to sacrifice if they left their jobs.	(Mitchell et al. 2001; Ramesh & Gelfand 2010)	
Relational job learning	Learning about the context of work to see the self in relation to others	(Lankau & Scandura 2002)	

Table A.1(Cont.) Relational constructs influencing turnover: co-workers			
Construct Name	**Construct Description**	**Source**	**Additional categories**
Perceived deep-level dissimilarity	An individual's perceived differences to workgroup members in terms of non-visible, underlying characteristics	(Liao, Chuang & Joshi 2008)	
Surface level diversity	Different social categories while similar values, attitudes and opinions	(Phillips & Loyd 2006)	
Group self-investment components of identification	Maintaining a positive evaluation of the in-group	(Smith et al. 2010)	
leader group prototypicality	The extent to which the leader is representative of the collective identity	(Cicero, Pierro & Van Knippenberg 2010)	Supervisor, work group
Uncivil behaviour	Incivility	(Morse 2005)	Co-workers, supervisor
Perceived voluntary redundancy	Voluntary versus involuntary retirement	(Clarke 2007)	Co-workers, Management, policy
Colleague quality	Colleagues performance	(Groysberg & Lee 2010)	
OCB	Altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, sportsmanship and civic virtue	(Coyne & Ong 2007)	
Coworkers' job embeddedness and job search behaviours	How embedded the co-workers are in the workplace, and to what extent have they been searching other jobs	(Felps et al. 2009)	

Table A.2 Relational constructs influencing turnover: Organisation			
Construct Name	**Construct Description**	**Source**	**Additional categories**
Hostile attribution	Attributing hostile motivates to actions in the organisation	(Harvey, Harris & Martinko 2008)	
Organisation receptivity, feedback seeking	Not clear how all these things were measured.	(Holton & Russell 1999)	
Organisational identification	The degree to which a member defines him- or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organisation	(Reiche 2009)	
Psychological contract	Individual beliefs in a reciprocal obligation between the individual and the organisation	(Blomme, van Rheede & Tromp 2010)	
Met expectations	Intrinsic, extrinsic, and social	(Taris, Feij & van Vianen 2005)	
Normative commitment	Commitment based on a sense of duty	(Yao & Wang 2006)	
Perceptions and reality congruence	Congruence between perceptions of work and reality of work by new employees	(Morse & Popovich 2009)	Job
Perceived employee involvement (EI) climate	Decision making power; access to information; training, performance based-rewards	(Riordan, Vandenberg & Richardson 2005)	Policy, management
Practical vs. Emotional reasons	Practical seem to overwhelm turnover decisions	(Loan-Clarke et al. 2010)	
Feedback coaching	Coaching for 360-evaluation	(Luthans & Peterson 2003)	
Network groups participation	Participation in minority network group	(Friedman & Holtom 2002)	
Personal control in organisations	The extent to which input is perceived as impacting	(Avery et al. 2011)	
Organisational identification	The perception of oneness with or belonging to the organisation, self-categorisation in terms of the organisation	(Van Dick et al. 2004) (Kumar Mishra and Bhatnagar 2010)(Olkkonen & Lipponen 2006)	

Table A.2 (Cont.) Relational constructs influencing turnover: Organisation			
Construct Name	**Construct Description**	**Source**	**Additional categories**
Overall fairness – culture bound	Justice of the outcomes, procedures, and interactional encounters they experienced in the workplace	(Kim & Leung 2007)	
Investment in training	Tuition reimbursement	(Benson, Finegold & Mohrman 2004; Benson 2006)	Policy, management
Intensive recruitment practices	Recruitment duration and methods	(Pellizzari 2011)	
Organisation-based self-esteem	An individual's self-esteem formed around work and organisational experiences	(Pierce & Gardner 2004)	
Job embeddedness	Person-organisation and person job fit, and relationships	(Ramesh & Gelfand 2010)	Co-workers
Perceptions of change experience	Positive or negative experience with organisational change	(Rafferty & Restubog 2010)	Management/ policies
Perceptions of organisational justice	Mediated by emotional exhaustion	(Cole et al. 2010)	Management, policies,
Sexual harassment	Unwanted sexual attention, coercion, and hostility	(Sims, Drasgow & Fitzgerald 2005)	
Stressors	Stimuli that induce the stress process	(Podsakoff, LePine & LePine 2007)	Job
Employee perceptions of the fairness of general corporate systems	Perceptions of compensation system fairness in terms of distributive justice	(Choi & Chen 2007)	Management, policies,
Diversity perceptions	The organisation value diversity	(Mckay & Avery 2005)	
Perceived fit	Person-organisation, person-job, person-supervisor	(Tak 2010)	Supervisor
Perception of organisational politics	Behaviours that are designed to foster self-interest and are taken without regard to or at the expense of organisational goals	(Andrews, Witt & Michele Kacmar 2003)	Management

Table A.2 (Cont.) Relational constructs influencing turnover: Organisation			
Construct Name	**Construct Description**	**Source**	**Additional categories**
Culture and climate	Normative beliefs and shared behavioural expectations in an organisational unit	(Glisson & James 2002)	
Perceptions of organisational politics	Perceptions of illegitimate, self-serving political activities	(Chang, Rosen & Levy 2009)	Management
Perceptions of psychological job control	Psychological experiences with control over where, when, and how one works, beliefs that one can choose to separate work–family boundaries	(Kossek, Lautsch & Eaton 2006)	Supervisor
Affective commitment	Commitment based of feelings of care, appreciation, and involvement with the organisation	(van Knippenberg & Sleebos 2006)	
Employee–organisation relationship	Perceived organisational support, affective organisational commitment, and procedural and interactional justice	(Kuvaas 2008)	
Person – organisation fit	Perceived match between own and organisational values	(Hoffman & Woehr 2006; De Cooman et al. 2009)	
Perceptions of discrimination	Perceived toleration of inappropriate or illegal behaviourin the organisation, and actions taken against it	(Goldman et al. 2008)	
Person-Organisation fit	Fit between employees' perceptions of and preferences for organisational culture.	(Meyer et al. 2010)	
Perceived glass ceiling	Perception that abarrier to advancement (glass ceiling) exists in an organisation based solely on demographic(ascribed by the individual or others) rather than human capital (achieved) characteristics.	(Foley, Kidder & Powell 2002)	Management
Perceived fairness of promotion decisions	Promotion decisions to partner in this organisation are fair and satisfactory	(Foley, Kidder & Powell 2002)	Management
Perceived organisational support	A general perception concerning the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being	(Allen, Shore & Griffeth 2003; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe 2003)	
Perceptual P-E fit	An individual's assessment of their own fit with their organisation's values	(Ostroff, Shin & Kinicki 2005)	

Table A.3 Relational constructs influencing turnover: Management			
Construct Name	**Construct Description**	**Source**	**Additional categories**
Perceived glass ceiling	Perception that abarrier to advancement (glass ceiling) exists in an organisation based solely on demographic(ascribed by	(Foley, Kidder & Powell 2002)	Organisation

	the individual or others) rather than human capital (achieved) characteristics.		
Perceived fairness of promotion decisions	Promotion decisions to partner in this organisation are fair and satisfactory	(Foley, Kidder & Powell 2002)	Organisation
Mentoring support	Sponsorship, exposure and visibility, and role modelling	(Baranik, Roling & Eby 2010)	
perceptions of organisational politics	Perceptionsof illegitimate, self-serving political activities	(Chang, Rosen & Levy 2009)	Organisation
Procedural justice perception	Advanced notice, consistency, non-politics	(Posthuma, Maertz & Dworkin 2007)	
Perception of organisational politics	Behaviours that are designed to foster self-interest and are taken without regard to or at the expense of organisational goals	(Andrews, Witt & Michele Kacmar 2003)	Organisation
Perception of family supportiveness	Supportiveness of family life	(Allen 2001)	Policies
Employee perceptions of the fairness of general corporate systems	Perceptions of compensation system fairness in terms of distributive justice	(Choi & Chen 2007)	Policies, Organisation
Perceptions of change experience	Positive or negative experience with organisational change	(Rafferty & Restubog 2010)	Organisation, policies
Perceived reward for performance	The interaction of pay growth and promotion rate with individual performance	(Nyberg 2010)	Policies
Threat appraisal during organisational change	concerns over potential future losses	(Fugate, Prussia & Kinicki 2012)	Supervisor

Table A.3 (Cont.) Relational constructs influencing turnover: Management			
Construct Name	**Construct Description**	**Source**	**Additional categories**
Recent managerial promotion	Promotion over the last 11 months	(Lyness & Judiesch 2001)	Supervisor
Play supportiveness	Supporting task-related and diversion play	(Mainemelis & Ronson 2006)	Policy, supervisor
Investment in training	Tuition reimbursement	(Benson, Finegold & Mohrman 2004), (Benson 2006)	Organisation, policy
Moral congruence	Congruence between employee and leader moral development	(Schminke, Ambrose & Neubaum 2005)	Supervisor,
Diversity and equality management system	Bundles of work practices and policies, include diversity training and monitoring recruitment, pay, and promotion across minority or other disadvantaged groups	(Armstrong et al. 2010)	Policy
Eliciting psychological attachment	information sharing, job significance, opportunity for learning, and availability of rewards for performance	(Ng & Butts 2009)	Policy
Employee involvement		(Park, Appelbaum & Kruse 2010)	Supervisor
Supportive management	supervisory support, organisational support, and work-life balance	(Dupré & Day 2007)	Supervisor
Perceived supervisor support and perceived investment in employee development		(Kuvaas & Dysvik 2010b)	Supervisor, policy
Reason for contingent workforce	To enhance standard employee employment stability and to reduce labour costs	(Way et al. 2010)	
Perceived voluntary redundancy	Voluntary versus involuntary retirement	(Clarke 2007)	Co-workers, policy
Perceived employee involvement (EI) climate	Decision making power; access to information; training, performance based-rewards	(Riordan, Vandenberg & Richardson 2005)	Organisation, policy,

Table A.3 (Cont.) Relational constructs influencing turnover: Management			
Construct Name	**Construct Description**	**Source**	**Additional categories**
Psychological contract	Individual beliefs in a reciprocal obligation between the individual and the organisation	(Blomme, van Rheede & Tromp 2010)	Organisation,
Perceived empowerment, perceived information sharing		(Kuvaas & Dysvik 2010a)	Policy, supervisor
Actual promotion	the actual change in reward distribution in the organisation	(Saporta & Farjoun 2003)	Supervisor,
Organisation receptivity, feedback seeking	Not clear how all these things were measured.	(Holton & Russell 1999)	Organisation, supervisor

Table A.4 Relational constructs influencing turnover: HR practices/ policy			
Construct Name	**Construct Description**	**Source**	**Additional categories**
Perceived HRM practices	Retention-oriented compensation and formalized training	(Lam, Chen & Takeuchi 2009)	
Perceived high-commitment HRM practices	Job design, participation in decisionmaking, training and development practice, pay for performance, high level of pay, andperformance appraisal.	(Kwon, Bae & Lawler 2010)	
Perceived empowerment, perceived information sharing		(Kuvaas & Dysvik 2010a)	Policy, management, supervisor
Perceived employee involvement (EI) climate	Decision making power; access to information; training, performance based-rewards	(Riordan, Vandenberg & Richardson 2005)	Organisation, policy, management
Perceived voluntary redundancy	Voluntary versus involuntary retirement	(Clarke 2007)	Co-workers, Management, policy
Perceived investment in employee development	The extent of viewing the organisation's investment in training and advancing employee skills	(Kuvaas & Dysvik 2010b)	Supervisor, management, Policy
HR configuration: compliance is the worst	Securing compliance with terms and conditions.	(Chow, Huang & Liu 2008)	Policy
Employee health management programs	Voluntary or not	(DeGroot & Kiker 2003)	Policy
Diversity and equality management system	Bundles of work practices and policies, include diversity training and monitoring recruitment, pay, and promotion across minority or other disadvantaged groups	(Armstrong et al. 2010)	Policy, management
Eliciting psychological attachment	Information sharing, job significance, opportunity for learning, and availability of rewards for performance	(Ng & Butts 2009)	Policy, management

Table A.4 (Cont.) Relational constructs influencing turnover: HR practices/ policy			
Construct Name	**Construct Description**	**Source**	**Additional categories**
Career development opportunities	Opportunities for advancing one's career within the organisation	('Halting the Exodus after a Layoff' 2008)	Policy, organisation
Investment in training	tuition reimbursement	(Benson, Finegold & Mohrman 2004), (Benson 2006)	Organisation, policy, management
Play	Task-related and diversion play	(Mainemelis & Ronson 2006)	Policy, management, supervisor
Perceived reward for performance	The interaction of pay growth and promotion rate with individual performance	(Nyberg 2010)	Policies/ management
Perceptions of change experience	Positive or negative experience with organisational change	(Rafferty & Restubog 2010)	Organisation / management/ policies
Perceptions of organisational justice	Mediated by emotional exhaustion	(Cole et al. 2010)	Management, policies, organisation
Perception of family supportiveness	Supportiveness of family life	(Allen 2001)	Management/ policies
Job perceptions	Job characteristics	(Rose 2002)	Job perception
perception of developmental HR practices	Organisational opportunities that improve the motivation, skills, attitudes and behaviours of employees	(Kuvaas 2008)	HR practices
perceptions of supportive human resources practices	Perception of participation in decision making, fairness of rewards, and growth opportunities	(Allen, Shore & Griffeth 2003)	HR practices

Table A.5 Relational constructs influencing turnover: Individual work / obligations			
Construct Name	**Construct Description**	**Source**	**Additional categories**
Perceived work ideologies	Perceived administrative and professional role obligations, Psychological contract breach	(Bunderson 2001) (Dulac et al. 2008b)	
Perceived underemployment	Perceived over-qualification	(Maynard, Joseph & Maynard 2006)	
Perceived role stressors	Role ambiguity and role conflict	(Barsky et al. 2004)	
Job perceptions	Job characteristics	(Rose 2002)	Job perception
Employee affectivity	PA: the extent to which an individual feels enthusiastic over time and across situations	(Iverson & Deery 2001)	Employee affectivity
Job burnout	emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment	(Swider & Zimmerman 2010)	Employee affectivity
Commitment profile	affective-normative dominant	(Somers 2009)	Commitment nature
Employee task, social, and personal resources	job control, positive work relationships, and active coping behaviour	(Weigl et al. 2010)	Relationships/ job control
Dynamism of turnover	A downward performance change increases the likelihood of organisational separation	(Becker & Cropanzano 2011a)	Individual job performance

Table A.6 Relational constructs influencing turnover: Other			
Construct Name	**Construct Description**	**Source**	**Additional categories**
Public - Perceived external prestige	Perceived organisation's external image	(Mignonac, Herrbach & Guerrero 2006)	
Subordinates - Managerial perceptions of employee abilities	Perceptions of employee abilities to perform	(Richardson & Vandenberg 2005)	

APPENDIX B - INFORMATION SHEET

University of Wollongong

Multinational Research on Organisational Processes

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS
Interview

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to invite you to participate in a study titled "**INCREASING EMPLOYEE RETENTION**", approved by your organisation. This study aims to **gain feedback** from employees on **organisational processes**, and to use this feedback to increase staff retention. The study is part of a PhD thesis, supervised by Associate Professor Helen Hasan and Associate Professor Andrew Sense.

Employees who agree to participate in the study will be asked to describe their own employment experience, in a face-to-face interview. The interview will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The results of this study will inform employers about the influence of organisational processes on attitudes and behaviours of employees.

In this interview, you will be asked to describe your experiences and opinions of processes in the organisation. For example, you will be asked to describe your first meeting with your manager or colleagues. Some questions will ask for your description of difficulties that you might have encountered while working in the organisation. In the unlikely case emotional distress as a result of this interview, and in the need of emotional support, Lifeline's 24-hour service of telephone support can be accessed on 13 11 14.

In addition to the interview, I will ask you to complete a survey. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete. The results of my survey will be kept confidential and will only be reported in an aggregated form. That way, no answer can be linked to a specific person.
I will also ask some demographic and organisational questions (e.g., age, tenure, education level, performance evaluations results, etc.). The purpose of these questions is to allow us to compare the answers across different participants.

Participation in the interview is completely **voluntary**. During the interview, participants can **choose not to answer** questions, and **can leave** the interview at any time. Participants are also free to withdraw their input, up to two months after interview completion.

The interviews will be conducted at your **work premises**, at a **time of mutual convenience**. Ms. Irit Alony will facilitate the interview. The interviews will be digitally recorded (video and voice) for the purpose of further analysis. All transcripts will be conducted by Ms. Irit Alony. Responses are **strictly confidential** and answers will not be displayed with identifiers of individual participants or organisations.

The answers provided will be used for academic research purposes, and all collected information being amalgamated so that individual responses cannot be identified. These aggregated results may also be reported to the organisation's management, with no individual identifiers.

If you consent to participate in the study, please sign the consent sheet attached.
Thank you for your interest and support in this project.

Regards,

Irit Alony, Email: iritalony@gmail.com	Centre for People and Organisation Research, University of Wollongong
Supervisors:	
Associate Professor Helen Hasan hasan@uow.edu.au 02 4221 3757	Associate Professor Andrew Sense asense@uow.edu.au 02 4221 4723

Queries may be directed to the **Human Research Ethics Officer**, Research Office, University of Wollongong.