




The influence of training and career development opportunities on affective commitment: A South African higher education perspective



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Orientation: Employees with affective commitment are significant assets to their organisations because they remain loyal even when faced with attractive external opportunities. Therefore, there is a need to understand how different organisational factors enhance the affective commitment of employees.

Research purpose: The study aimed to investigate the impact of training and career development opportunities on affective commitment amongst employees at a selected higher education institution.

Motivation of the study: Literature on the influence of training and career development opportunities on affective commitment is still limited in South Africa's higher education sector, yet the sector requires a committed and highly skilled workforce.

Research approach/design and method: Using a cross-sectional survey design, a quantitative approach was used to collect data from 274 employees at a selected South African higher education institution using a stratified sampling method. Item analysis, Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analyses were performed in analysing the data using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 software.

Main findings: Significant positive correlations were found between training, career development opportunities, and affective commitment. However, the availability of career development opportunities was the most significant predictor of affective commitment.

Practical/managerial implications: Higher learning institutions are encouraged to invest in various types of training for their employees. However, more funding should be directed to career development opportunities, as these influence affective commitment.

Contribution/value-add: The CFA carried out in this study validates the use of the training, career development opportunities, and affective commitment scales in a South African setting.

Keywords: career development opportunities; employees; factor analysis; higher education institution; affective commitment; South Africa; training.

Introduction and background

Research on organisational commitment remains fragmented because of a lack of agreement amongst researchers on the nature of organisational commitment and how it develops, thus creating a problem for organisational behaviourists on the specific interventions to undertake. However, amongst all facets of organisational commitment, affective commitment has been identified to be the principal factor in the performance of organisations. According to Lambert et al. (2020), the benefits of having employees who are emotionally attached to the organisation far outweigh those with other forms of commitment. It was found that employees who are affectively committed to the organisation outperformed those who held other forms of commitment such as continuance commitment and normative commitment. Furthermore, employees with affective commitment were found to remain longer in the organisation compared to those who did not have that type of commitment.

In this context, securing the affection of employees is now a significant concern for human resources development practitioners. Many scholars seem to agree that employees who are afforded affection and security in the organisation return the affection. As a result, organisations employ several human resources management practices to generate employee affective

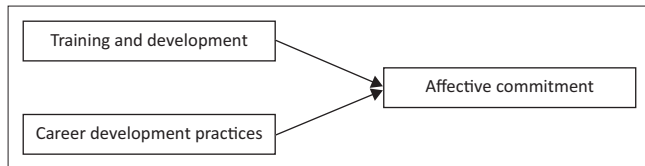


FIGURE 1: Conceptual model of the study (self-conceptualised).

commitment. Several forms of human resources management practices, training, and career development opportunities were identified as possible antecedents to affective commitment in this study because of the current economic and technological environment.

The world is undergoing drastic changes. Most organisations are preparing the employees for the jobs of the future by offering training and career development opportunities to avoid future redundancy. Given this background, it was found necessary to investigate whether training and career development opportunities are significant drivers of affective commitment in the current climate. In addition, many studies investigated the influence of either training or career development opportunities on affective commitment in the western context. However, studies exploring the relationships between training, career development opportunities, and affective commitment remain limited in South Africa. Therefore, an inquiry of this nature in this context adds to the body of knowledge about the link between training, and career development opportunities on affective commitment, in South Africa.

In higher education, universities depend on diverse and highly skilled academic and support employees to obtain a competitive advantage. This signals a need for universities to invest continuously in training opportunities for their staff. However, financial woes and maladministration continue to hamper these efforts, thereby threatening employees' affective commitment. Therefore, the study's findings communicated in this article will motivate universities to adopt a more prioritised strategic approach to training.

Research objectives

The study's objectives were to investigate the relationship between training and employee affective commitment and determine the relationship between career development opportunities and employee affective commitment. Furthermore, the study examined the two independent variables (training and career development opportunities) to determine the most significant predictor of employee affective commitment.

Theoretical framework

This study is theoretically anchored by social exchange theory and Super's developmental self-concept theory. Social exchange theory postulates that interactions between two parties are based on a cost-benefit analysis (Blau, 1964). Thus, people respond to costs with costs and benefits with benefits (Terera, 2019). In the work environment, the provision of

training and the availability of career development opportunities are perceived as benefits to employees. Employees are likely to respond through the manifestation of positive attitudes such as affective commitment. Similarly, the unavailability of or reduction in training and career development opportunities can invoke a reduction of employee affective commitment.

Super's developmental self-concept theory suggests that career development involves implementing a self-concept and that people choose occupations that allows them to express their self-concepts (Super, 1980). Thus, work satisfaction and affective commitment are strongly related to how employees can exercise their self-concepts in career development. Therefore, Super's ideas influence most career development programmes in that they align self-concepts to work concepts, which enhances employee affective commitment. Super's developmental self-concept theory is also anchored on career counselling to identify the career development stage of employees and to clarify and align their self-concepts to work concepts, exposure to different career paths, and direct work experiences (Super, 1980). The factors identified in this theory can facilitate the development of affective commitment.

Affective commitment

The maintenance of employees' affective commitment remains at the centre of any organisation's strategic plan. Businesses know that understanding the psychology, expectations, and emotions of employees, and catering to their needs result in a win-win situation for both parties. In short, affective commitment includes the positive feelings that assist employees to remain loyal to the organisation (Lumley, Coetzee, Tladinyane, & Ferreira, 2011). The strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in the organisation makes one recognise her or his value and choose to remain in that organisation because of an emotional attachment (Jehanzeb & Mohanty, 2018). Employees with a high affective commitment operate as brand ambassadors for the organisation, thereby pooling talent, customers, and business. These employees enjoy their work such that they are rarely absent, and they frequently outperform their co-workers (Jehanzeb & Mohanty, 2018).

This study is grounded in social exchange theory which states that individuals evaluate their work experience on a cost-benefit analysis and that the employment relationship is an economic exchange (Terera, 2019). According to Russell, Erica, Shanna and Alison (2016), employees' affective commitment is directly proportional to positive work experience. This implies that employees' affective commitment to the organisation is likely to increase if the organisation invests in training and career development opportunities (Paille & Meija-Morelos, 2019). However, if the organisation fails to deliver adequate rewards in return for the employees' efforts, there will likely be a decrease in affective commitment (Russell, Erica, Shanna, & Alison, 2016).

Training

Training is a critical component for personal and professional development because it aims to improve the job performance of individuals and groups within an organisation (Hassam, Umar, & Mochammad, 2015). Employees are more likely to stay in an organisation that promotes career opportunities through learning and applying what they learned on the job for a longer period (Bibi, Ahmad, & Abdul, 2018). Employees who have access to training opportunities are more likely to have a strong sense of self-worth and feel essential to the organisation. The provision of appropriate training by organisations allows employees to believe that their employers have their best interests at heart. Furthermore, employees who understand the cost of training may develop a sense of loyalty to the organisation. Therefore, employee training is an important investment strategy for employee growth and development (Dockel, 2003). Training, thus, improves the fit between the employee while also increasing employee attachment to the organisation.

Furthermore, the availability of training opportunities promotes employee growth and development, which is an important factor in employee retention. Employees may see it as the organisation's way of investing in them and showing them how valuable they are to it (Bibi et al., 2018). Employee training can be costly to the organisation. However, it may also allow the organisation to compete more effectively against its competitors. Successful training must be needs-based. Thus, an organisation should first assess its organisational needs to determine which workers need training and what type of training is required. Furthermore, retention strategies that provide employees with career challenges and competitive wages benefit employees of all ages (Bibi et al., 2018).

Employees with low levels of learning orientation, on the other hand, do not respond to development support with greater commitment. Employees who feel that they are growing and not prepared to learn may be reluctant to leave (Naidoo, 2018). Employees may, however, leave if they do not believe that they are offered an adequate opportunity for development and growth opportunities. To reduce employee turnover, managers may need to guarantee that employees have equal access to training opportunities. (Osibanjo, Adenii, & Falalo, 2014).

Career development opportunities

Organisations keep on evolving such that there is now little to no predictability. Advances in technology may, from time to time, cause a change in the skills needed. This means that, as technology evolves, specialised skills may be viewed as ordinary skills (Fazio, Gong, Sims, & Yurova, 2017). Therefore, establishing structures for career development offers employees some form of security and stability. Career development opportunities refer to formal organised plans to match individual employees' career needs and an organisation's personnel requirements (Ayodele, Ekemode, Oladokun, & Kahilu, 2020). It is a complex process that shapes the career of any given individual over their life span.

According to Adekola (2011), career development involves the interaction between individual career planning and institutional career management processes.

Career planning through career development is progressive in that it relies on the formal partnership between the employer and the employee. The employees' responsibility is to grow and align their careers to any organisational change. Therefore, career development practices are ongoing and they are embedded in the structure and human resources (HR) policies of an organisation. Employers are expected to provide the necessary tools and resources for individual career development. To participate in the career development process, employees identify their skills, needs, and interests and then consult with their supervisors and the HR office on the suitable career plan that fits the identified career goals. Through consultation, management can suggest the career pathways employees can follow to fulfil their career goals. Effective career development programmes improve individual work performance by encouraging continuous learning and adaptation, while the organisation fosters positive developmental relationships with its employees.

The relationship between training and employee affective commitment

Previous studies have revealed that training significantly impacts employee affective commitment (Bulut & Culha, 2010; Lamba & Choudhary, 2013; Hanaysha, 2016). Terera and Ngirande (2014) also confirmed that training is a great human resources practice for enhancing employees' affective commitment. Some organisational studies conducted in the banking sector in Pakistan revealed that higher levels of training lead to an increase in affective commitment (Khan, 2015; Shahid, Zain, & Alam, 2017). In addition, some studies carried out in higher education also reported that the provision of training programmes to the academic staff ensures that they have enough skills and knowledge, thereby increasing employee affective commitment in the institution (Gardner, Wright, & Moynihan, 2011; Hanaysha, 2016). Hence, Maheshwari and Vohra (2015) reported that training is a critical human resources strategy in improving employees' emotional attachment, involvement, and identification with the organisation.

Literature reveals that employees who are given the opportunity for training are more likely to become committed to their jobs and, as a result, choose to stay with the organisation. Positive support by the organisation to employees in the form of training invokes positive feelings from the employees that manifest through affective commitment. Employees feel valued by their organisation.

However, while there is extensive research on training and organisational commitment, studies focusing on the influence of training on employee affective commitment in South African higher education sector remain limited, thereby revealing the scarcity of literature in this area in the South African context. As a result, whether training influences employee affective commitment in South African higher education remains open. South African higher education

sector, therefore, benefit from an inquiry of this nature. Given this and as shown in Figure 1, the study hypothesised that:

H1: There is a relationship between training and employee affective commitment.

Relationship between career development opportunities and employee affective commitment

The availability of career development opportunities in an organisation also positively impacts employee attitudes and behaviours. While the literature on the relationship between career development and overall organisational commitment is not new (Benson, Brown, Glennie, O'Donnell, & O'Keefe, 2018; Dockel, Basson, & Coetzee, 2006; Schreuder, Tladinyane, & Coetzee, 2007), studies that specifically investigate how career development influences the affective commitment, in particular, are still limited. According to Sehunoe, Viviers and Mayer (2015), the availability of career development opportunities can positively influence employees' affective commitment to the organisation. Career development opportunities provide clear career paths and advancement opportunities that employees can take in the organisation. This will show that the organisation has plans to retain its employees, thereby encouraging affective commitment in employees. Thus, adherence to career-oriented practices in an organisation is positively related to employee organisational commitment (Ayodele et al., 2020).

Research has also shown that when employees understand their career path and experience career growth within an organisation, employee affective commitment to the organisation is increased and intentions to leave reduced (Fazio et al. 2017). Career development opportunities motivate employees to achieve their personal career goals; hence emotional attachment and identification with the organisation are stimulated (João & Coetzee, 2012). Furthermore, Coetzee and Bester (2020) revealed that the feelings of career satisfaction and career goal achievement brought about through career development opportunities significantly raise employee affective commitment. However, studies on whether career development opportunities affect affective commitment in South Africa's higher education sector are still missing. Based on this knowledge gap and as conceptualised in Figure 1, this study hypothesised that:

H2: There is a significant relationship between career development opportunities and employee affective commitment.

Research methodology

Participants and sampling procedure

A quantitative research design was used. The study population was made up of academic and non-academic staff from a South African institution of higher learning. Stratified random sampling was utilised to draw a sample of 274 participants from a population of 852 employees. Most of the participants were females, 140 (51.1%), and in the age category of between 31 and 39 years 88 (32.1%). In addition, the majority of the participants were black people, 261 (95.3%), and mostly Tshivenda speaking 130 (47.4%). The majority,

176 (64.2%), were academic staff who hold Master's degree as their highest qualification 143 (52.2%). Most of the participants, 100 (36.5%), had 2–5 years of working experience.

Measuring instrument

Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. A self-developed demographic questionnaire was used to measure the sample profile. To measure training and career development opportunities, 4-items and 3-items, respectively, were adopted from Dockel's (2003) 24-items retention factor scale. Some of the items included are 'I cannot leave because I need to apply the training I received in this organisation', 'I am going to stay in this organisation because an employee's career development is important to this organisation'. Van Dyk, Coetzee and Takawira (2013) reported a high Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.88 for training and 0.73 for career development opportunities. A six-item affective commitment subscale from the Organisational Commitment questionnaire was used to measure employees' affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Amongst the items included are 'I feel very loyal to this organisation'. Ngirande (2020) reported a high alpha coefficient of 0.87 for the affective commitment subscale (Pallant, 2016). The questionnaire was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' (1) to 'strongly disagree' (5).

Ethical considerations and research procedure

A research ethics certificate was obtained from the University research directorate. A cover letter accompanied the questionnaire, and it assured the participants of their anonymity and confidentiality. The study also took note of informed consent and made sure that the participants were fully informed about the study's goal and its consequences. In addition, the research made sure that the participants voluntarily participated in the study without any coercion.

Data processing and analysis

The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. Descriptive statistics were used to describe data collected in summary form. Several inferential statistics were performed. At first, item analysis was conducted to inspect the internal consistency of variables under investigation. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was carried out to determine the goodness of fit for the overall measurement model. Correlation analysis was further used to determine the relationship between training and employee affective commitment and between career development opportunities and employee affective commitment. Multiple regression analysis was performed to check the most contributing variable to employee affective commitment.

Descriptive statistics and reliability analysis

A summary of the key descriptive statistics of training, career development opportunities, and affective commitment

scales was provided, as shown in Table 1. The normality of the data set was assessed using skewness and kurtosis values, and Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were given. The mean scores of the training, career development opportunities, and affective commitment were 1.768 (standard deviation [SD] = 1.930), 3.173(SD = 2.884), and 3.269(SD = 4.027), respectively. Data were also normally distributed and allowed for further analysis as it ranged from -2 to 2 for both skewness and kurtosis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Cronbach’s alpha coefficients was used to demonstrate item consistency (see Table 1). Items with a correlation of less than 0.30 with the total score were deemed poor and were removed from further analysis (Pallant, 2016). All three scales obtained good alphas, ranging from 0.761 to 0.850 (Pallant, 2016). The highest reliability amongst the scales was affective commitment ($\alpha = 0.850$), followed by career development opportunities ($\alpha = 0.818$), and training ($\alpha = 0.761$) being the least.

Evaluating the measurement model

Confirmatory factor analysis was carried out on all three scales to assess the goodness of fit of the measurement models using the Analysis of Moments Structure (AMOS) version 27 software. The measurement model was assessed through CFA regarding the latent constructs’ unidimensionality, validity, and reliability. In this measurement model, unidimensionality was achieved after removing two items from the affective commitment scale and one from the training scale that had poor factor loadings below 0.6. All the remaining items had good factor loading values. After achieving unidimensionality, the measurement model was assessed in terms of convergent validity, construct validity, and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was checked by computing the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of every construct. As depicted in Table 2, all the constructs surpassed the minimum recommended AVE value of 0.5. Hence, convergent validity was achieved (Rose, Awang, & Yazid, 2017).

TABLE 1: Descriptive statistics, reliability statistics.

Scale	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	α	No. Items
Training	1.768	1.930	-0.554	-0.213	0.761	4
CD	3.173	2.884	-0.210	-0.723	0.818	3
AC	3.269	4.027	-0.618	0.053	0.850	6

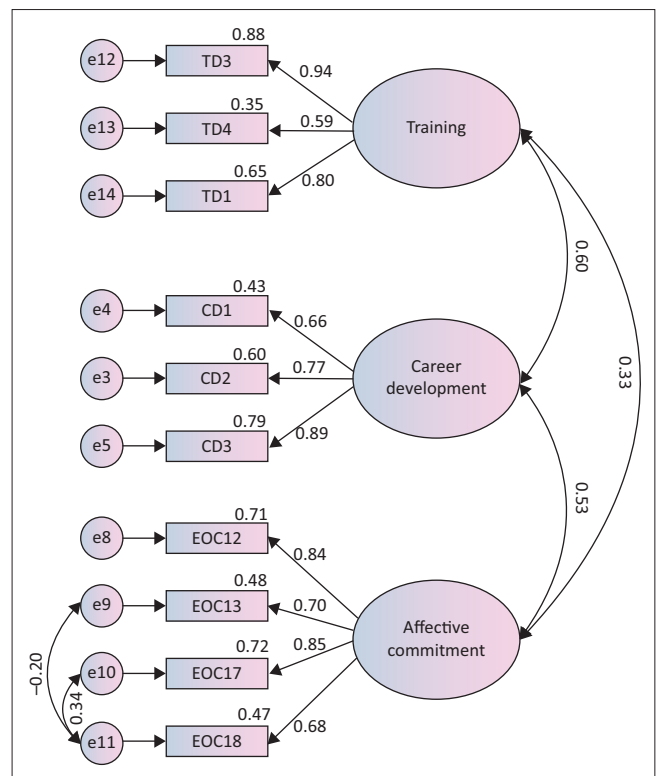
CD, Career development opportunities; AC, Affective commitment; M, Sample mean; SD, Standard deviation; α , Cronbach’s alpha.

TABLE 2: Measurement model fit and composite reliability.

Fit index	<i>p</i>	GFI	CFI	IFI	NFI	TLI	PGF1	SRMR	RMSEA	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
Values	0.000	0.924	0.934	0.935	0.915	0.901	0.501	0.798	0.096	-	-
Constructs											
Training	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.779	0.540
Career development opportunities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.820	0.606
Affective commitment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.872	0.535

GFI, goodness of fit index; CFI, Comparative fit index; IFI, Incremental fit index; NFI, Normed fit index; PGFI, Parsimony goodness fit index; RMSEA, Root mean square error of approximation; SRMR, Standardized root mean square residual; CR, Composite reliability; AVE, Average variance extracted.

Construct validity is verified by assessing the fitness indexes of the measurement model. As shown in Table 2, most of the fitness indexes revealed a good fitting model. The *p*-value was 0.000, and Root mean square error of approximation index (RMSEA) was 0.096. Hence, the two values were acceptable (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The goodness of fit index (GFI) (0.921), the comparative fit index (CFI) (0.934), the incremental fit index (IFI) (0.935), and the normed fit index (NFI) (0.915) fulfil the reasonable fit requirement of 0.90 and above (Hair et al., 2010). The Parsimony goodness fit index (PGFI) also showed a good fitting model with an acceptable value of 0.501. The acceptable fit was shown by the Standardized Root mean square residual (SRMR) (0.798) and Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (0.096), respectively. Discriminant validity was verified by checking for redundant items under a discrepancy measure titled Modification Indices (MI). Discriminant validity was achieved after identifying the redundant items through high MI and constraining them as free parameter estimates. See items EOC 13, EOC 17, EOC 18 in Figure 2.



T, training; CD, Career development opportunities; AF, Affective commitment; EOC, Employee Organisational Commitment.

FIGURE 2: The measurement model.

The measurement model was also assessed in terms of composite reliability. Composite reliability refers to the reliability and internal consistency of a latent construct, and to achieve composite reliability, values of 0.6 and above are required (Hair et al., 2010). As depicted in Table 2, composite reliability was achieved for all constructs as all the composite reliability (CR) values were above 0.6. Thus, the data fit the model as shown in Table 3 and supported by the measurement model in Figure 2.

Research results: Hypothesis testing

Hypotheses one and two were tested using Pearson Product moment correlation. Hypothesis one assumes that there is a positive relationship between training and development and affective commitment. A relationship between training and development and employee affective commitment was found ($r = 0.370$; $p = 0.000$). Thus, as employees' training and development improve, they become more attached to the organisation. Hypothesis two also sought to determine whether a relationship exists between career development opportunities and affective commitment. The results in Table 3 show a positive and significant relationship between career development opportunities and affective commitment ($r = 0.453$; $p = 0.000$). This indicates that as career development opportunities increase, employees become more affectively committed to the organisation. From the results, both hypotheses were supported. Thus, we concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between training and development, career development opportunities, and affective commitment.

Training and career development opportunities as predictors of affective commitment

Multiple regression analyses were performed to see if training and career development opportunities could predict affective commitment. In model 1, affective commitment was used as the dependent variable, with training and career development opportunities as

TABLE 3: Relationship between training, career development opportunities, and affective commitment.

Variable	1	2	3
1. Training	-	-	-
2. Career development opportunities	0.529*	-	-
3. Affective commitment	0.370*	0.453*	-

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

TABLE 4: Training, and career development opportunities as predictors of affective commitment.

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients (β)	t	P	F	R ²
	Beta	SE					
(Constant)	5.229	0.625	-	8.372	0.000	40.229	0.229
Training	0.181	0.063	0.181	2.886	0.004*	-	-
Career dev opp	0.359	0.063	0.357	5.689	0.000*	-	-

a. Dependent variable: Affective commitment.

SE, standard error; β, regression coefficient; t, test; p, probability value; F, overall significance; R², percentage variance explained; Career dev opp = Career development opportunities.

*, $p < 0.01$.

independent variables. As shown in Table 4, entry of training and career development opportunities at the first step of the regression analysis resulted in a statistically significant model $R^2 = 0.229$ ($F_{(2,271)} = 40.229$; $p < 0.01$) and account for 22.9% of the variance. From the results, training ($\beta = 0.181$; $t = 2.886$; $p < 0.01$) was shown to be a significant predictor of affective commitment. Career development opportunities was also a significant predictor of affective commitment ($\beta = 0.357$; $t = 5.689$; $p < 0.01$). From the results, career development has the highest standardised beta coefficient between the two predictor variables. In comparison to training, career development opportunities was found to be the best predictor of affective commitment.

Discussion

The study's goal was to investigate the impact of training and career development opportunities on the affective commitment amongst employees at a South African higher education institution. The study included nearly an equal number of males and females, with most participants falling between the ages of 31 and 49. Regarding race and language background, the results show that most respondents were black African and Tshivenda speaking. The majority were academics and, as expected, with Master's degree as the highest qualification. Most of the respondents had 2–10 years of working experience in the institution.

Reliability and validity of instruments

Acceptable reliability coefficients of $\alpha \geq 0.70$ were found in all three scales (Pallant, 2016). Career development opportunities scale ($\alpha = 0.818$) was found to be the highest amongst the scales, followed by affective commitment ($\alpha = 0.850$) and training ($\alpha = 0.761$). The measurement model was also reliable and valid as the composite reliability and AVE requirements were met (Hair et al., 2010) and (Rose et al., 2017), respectively.

The relationship between training, career development opportunities, and affective commitment

The study employed Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients to determine the relationship between training, career development opportunities, and affective commitment. The result confirmed the study's first hypothesis, that there is a significant relationship between training and affective commitment. This finding is supported by Bashir and Long's (2015) study, which revealed a connection between training and affective commitment. Contrary to this finding, other studies confirm that untrained employees are more likely to be less affectively committed to their organisations. From the results, one can argue that training is a significant predictor of affective commitment. Thus, as employees are provided with opportunities to improve their skills through training they tend to be more emotionally attached (i.e., affective commitment) to their organisation. This could be explained by the rapid changes in the higher education sector in general and in South Africa, which necessitate employees being well-

skilled to be effective in their day-to-day activities. Once employees are comfortable doing their jobs, they are likely to become emotionally attached to their organisation.

The study also found a significant positive relationship between career development opportunities and affective commitment. The finding confirmed hypothesis two, which stated a relationship between career development opportunities and affective commitment. Previous studies also established a positive relationship between career development opportunities and organisational commitment (Bashir & Long, 2015; Bibi et al., 2018). The regression analysis also confirmed these findings, and career development opportunities was found to be the best predictor of affective commitment. In support of the current study's findings, Bibi et al. (2018) revealed that training and career development opportunities have a significant predictive value on affective commitment. Majid (2017) also confirmed these thoughts, arguing that when employees are provided with career growth opportunities, they are more likely to become loyal to the organisation.

The findings of this study add to the existing body of knowledge because there was a paucity of information about the impact of training and career development opportunities on affective commitment in general and in the South African higher education sector in particular. Thus, higher education institutions might use the findings to build strategies and interventions to increase employee affective commitment.

Limitations and recommendations of the study

The study is limited in the sense that it only focused on higher education institutions in South Africa. Therefore, the findings may differ from other universities outside the country or other sectors outside the higher education context. In addition, self-administered questionnaires are not easy to distribute and collect. For future research, the researchers recommend that employers in general and higher education institutions, in particular, pay more attention to the retention factors that influence the employees' affective commitment to the organisation. Future research should be conducted at multiple universities to allow for cross-university comparison.

Contribution of the study

The study adds to the body of knowledge on how human resources factors such as training and career development opportunities influence employees' affective commitment in South African higher education institutions. The study will also influence policy on employee development by allocating more funds to career development opportunities as they were identified as a better predictor of employee affective commitment than training. Furthermore, the use of CFA in analysing the data validates the use of the training, career development, and affective commitment scales in South Africa.

Conclusion

The study results revealed that both training and career development opportunities have an impact on employee affective commitment. Furthermore, the results showed that career development opportunities are the most significant retention factor that predicts employee affective commitment.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

D.M. was responsible for the conceptualisation, manuscript write-up and sourcing of data. H.N. shared the expertise by guiding the write up and analysis. S.R.T. assisted with advanced analysis expertise, updating the literature and manuscript alignment.

Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from the University of Venda, Research ethics committee (No: SMS/16/HRM/04/0806).

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Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author, [H.N.].

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

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