

**THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS ON JOB STRESS
AMONG SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES EMPLOYEES IN
MATLOSANA LOCAL DISTRICT**



by

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DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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ABSTRACT

Apart from the contribution and success of the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through job creation, poverty alleviation and economic growth, there are still organisational factors such as organisational politics and job stress, which hamper the success of these enterprises. The aim of this study was to examine the influence of organisational politics on job stress among SME employees in Matlosana Local District.

The target population concentrated on SME employees within Matlosana Local District in North West province, with the population size of N=431 respondents. A quantitative approach was applied, with the use of a cross sectional survey (questionnaire) to gather information on general political behaviour (GB), get ahead (GA), pay and promotion policies (PP), time stress (TS) and anxiety (AX). Data analysis was conducted with the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 and the Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) version 25.0. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied in examining and testing the relationships between observed constructs and their causal latent constructs while Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to test the hypothesised relationships between constructs. The findings of the study revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between organisational politics and job stress. The findings also emphasised that organisational politics is considered as a hindrance-related stressor that hampers the proper functioning of individual employees. This study concludes that organisational politics are the social ills of every organisation, it is upon the management of the SMEs to apply good human resource management policies to curb the politics. Contrary, if the organisational politics are not managed well, it will result in impacting the job outcomes such as job stress.

Key words: job stress, organisational politics, small and medium enterprises, social exchange theory, Matlosana Local District

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGFI	Augmented goodness of fit index
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
AVE	Average variance extracted
AX	Anxiety
CFA	Confirmatory factor analysis
CFI	Composite fit index
CIPC	Companies and Intellectual Property Commission
CR	Composite reliability
EC	European Commission
GA	Get ahead
GB	General political behaviour
GFI	Goodness of fit index
IFI	Incremental fit index
JS	Job stress
NFI	Normed fit index
NSB Act	National Small Business Amendment Act
OP	Organisational politics
POPS	Perceptions of organisational politics scale
PP	Pay and promotion policies
RMSEA	Random measure of standard error approximation
SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SEM	Structural equation modelling
SET	Social exchange theory
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TLI	Tucker-Lewis index
TS	Time stress
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Organisational politics has developed into an essential construct in organisational research. It has gained attention of management researchers and organisational psychologists (Ugwu, Okafor, Onyishi, Casimir & Chinedu 2018:548). A previous study revealed that politics is an integral part of any organisation; however, there are key variances in the level and strength of such politics (Ahmed 2018:3).

Organisational politics is a significant element of organisational being, which represents a conduct in which individual benefits are secured over the organisational benefits (Labrague, McEnroe-Petitte, Gloe, Tsaras, Arteché & Maldia 2017:109). Furthermore, from the literature, different kind of actions, which are focused on attending to the self-centredness of workers and supervisors at all levels, are regarded as a fragment of organisational politics, which mostly rest on people's perceptions (Liang & Wang 2016:642).

According to Gbadamosi and Chinaka (2011:306), a range of research has highlighted organisational politics as a key originator of workers' performance. Yilmaz (2014:98) states that political situations within a workplace can hinder workers' performance and can be detrimental. As a result, the significance of organisational politics rests in its possible outcomes and impacts on job findings.

Miller and Nicols (2008:214) indicate that perceptions of organisational politics are multidimensional occurrences, predominantly since their presence is construed by means of the views of people and a personal opinion, which determine individual features, group interactions and certain approaches concerning work. The most recent effort to theorise the perceptions of organisational politics acknowledged three dimensions, which are regarded as general political behaviour, that consists of the behaviours of people who practice self-interested behaviour to acquire valuable findings; get ahead, which involves an absence of activity by people (e.g. keep quiet) in order to protect valuable findings; and pay and promotion policies, which include the organisation acting politically over the guiding principles it endorses (Ayobami & Ofoegbu 2013:163).

Indartono and Chen (2011:10) found that employees' perceptions of politics are virtually always negative; hence, organisational politics causes disharmony and conflict in the workplace and consequently produces high levels of stress. Stress, in general, is defined as undesirable physical and psychological reaction that happens when there is inequality concerning load of work and competencies, resources and employee's necessities (Tipu 2013:4).

Based on the findings by Faiz (2018:117), once employees observe high levels of organisational politics, job stress seems to intensify. Job stress is described as an employee's response to pressures, which result from features of his or her work consisting of time stress and anxiety (Tsauro & Tang 2012:1039). This study highlights the significance of the influence of organisational politics on job stress among small and medium enterprises (SMEs) employees in Matlosana Local District area.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Though the South African government has recognised and pursued the support of SMEs growth as a fundamental driver in employment establishment and poverty alleviation, most of the small business initiators in the country do not have the necessary knowledge and expertise to remain in the business environment (Kumah & Omilola 2014:5). Katua (2014:467) supports this view that SMEs face many challenges that hamper their development, progress and role in economic growth.

Organisational politics and job stress result in an upsetting phenomenon for managers, particularly in the SME sector of emerging nations, as they hamper the accomplishment of organisational goals (Ullah, Jafri, Gondal & Dost 2011:10428). The literature on organisational politics and job stress highlights that there is a relationship between both variables and it has been highly researched in developed countries. The nature of this relationship is required to be examined further, particularly in the SME sector in developing countries, which is a gap that is needed to be filled (Faiz 2018:117). Unfortunately, research of organisational politics and job stress has concentrated on big enterprises and with insignificant concern to the SMEs (Chinomona & Chinomona 2013:57).

In the context of the South African SME sector studies on the influence of organisational politics on job stress are limited (Rashid, Karim, Rashid & Usman 2013:348). Given that the SME sector is considered as the engine of economic growth and job creation in developing countries, it is surprising that this crucial issue in such an important sector has been overlooked in the organisational research (Chinomona & Chinomona 2013:57).

Organisational politics can operate as a possible work stressor for SMEs employees and may lead to job stress (Rashid *et al.* 2013:348). Cho and Yang (2018:60) have described organisational

politics as a hindrance stressor that prevents employees from achieving individual and organisational objectives. Organisational politics might be liable for a range of harmful work consequences, consisting of employee low productivity and high levels of stress; hence, organisational production and profitability may decline in SMEs (Lewis 2017:2).

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study determined the influence of organisational politics on job stress among SMEs employees in Matlosana Local District.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Theoretical objectives

The following theoretical objectives were set for the study:

- To review the literature on SMEs in South Africa;
- To review the literature on organisational politics and the dimensions of organisational politics
- To undertake a literature synthesis on job stressors and the dimensions of job stress.

1.4.2 Empirical objectives

The empirical objectives for this study were set as follows:

- To determine the perceptions of SME employees in Matlosana local district towards organisational politics
- To determine the perceptions of SME employees in Matlosana local district towards job stress
- To establish the relationship between organisational politics and job stress amongst employees in SMEs in Matlosana local district

1.5 THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study was restricted to the SMEs employees within Matlosana Local District in North West province. Matlosana Local District consists of the towns of Klerksdorp, Orkney, Stilfontein and Hartebeesfontein with the surrounding townships as well as the rural areas surrounding the towns.

1.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this study is illustrated in Figure 1. The framework illustrates the hypothesised relationships between the variables of the constructs PoP and job stress.

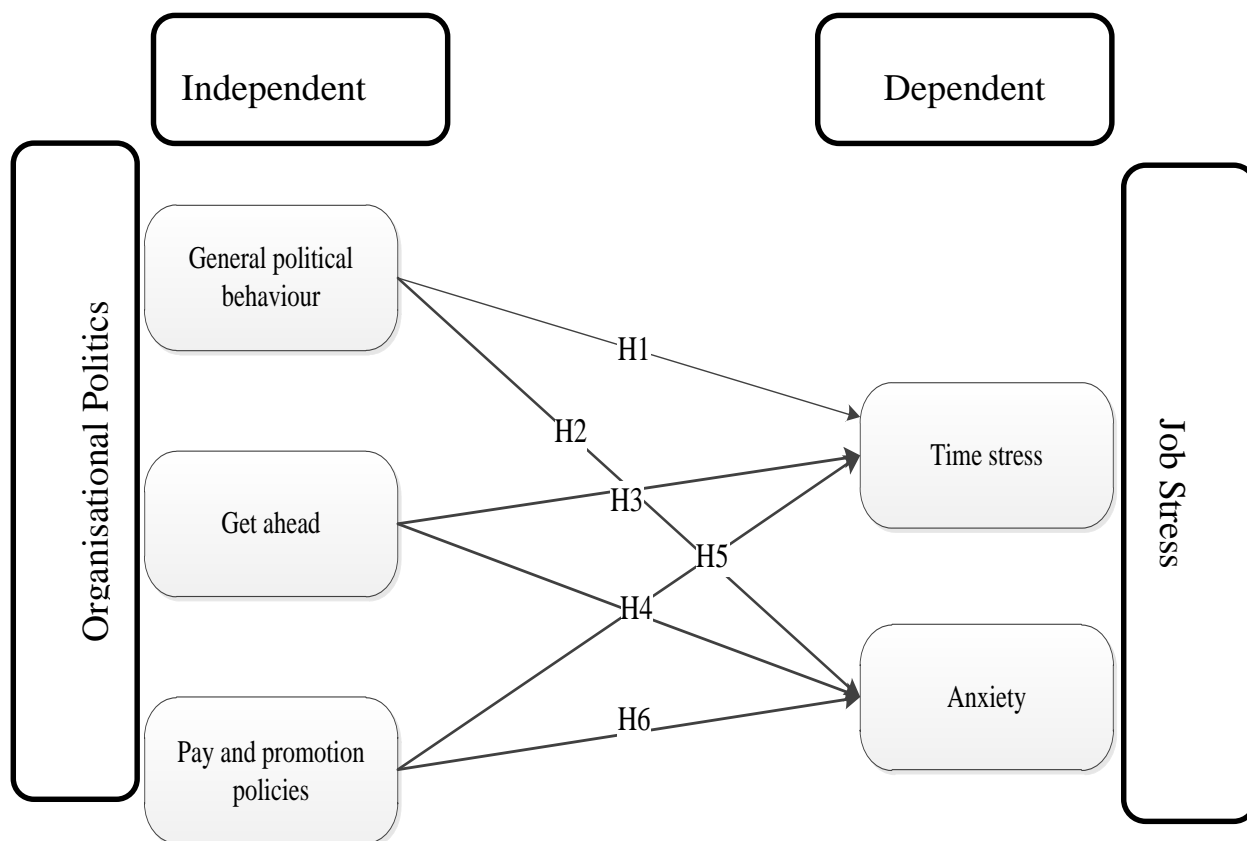


Figure 1.1: Theoretical model (own source)

1.7 HYPOTHESIS STATEMENT

The following hypotheses were constructed in terms of the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1.

- H1:** There is a significant influence between employees' perceptions of general political behaviour and time stress.
- H2:** There is a significant influence between employees' perceptions of general political behaviour and anxiety.
- H3:** There is a significant influence between employees' perceptions of get ahead in the organisation and time stress.

H4: There is a significant influence between employees' perceptions of get ahead in the organisation and anxiety.

H5: There is a significant influence between employees' perceptions of pay and promotion in the organisation and time stress.

H6: There is a significant influence between employees' perceptions of pay and promotion in the organisation and anxiety.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review on the SMEs including the social exchange theory (SET), organisational politics and job stress was undertaken. The study utilised a wide range of materials, including textbooks, Internet searches and journal articles sourced through electronic databases to establish a conceptual background for the study.

1.8.1 Social exchange theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET) was established for observing human behaviour (Homans 1958:597) and also in an effort to understand organisational behaviour (Emerson 1962:31). Previous study states that the philosophy of social exchange has the belief that there are specific standards that direct behaviour and approach (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005:876). This custom direct the exchange practice and if just, fulfilment, help and shared principles would categorise the connection, ending in trust (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005:876, Lee, Capella, Taylor, Luo & Gabler 2014:2141), which makes the way for quality, steadiness and the tenure of the exchange relationship (Cropanzano *et al.* 2005:876). Chang *et al.* (2009:779) asserts that organisational politics is well known within the workplace situation and proposes that politics are a norm that directs behaviour within most organisations. Since organisational politics frequently influences harmfully on workers, they are observed as being biased, which according to social exchange theory, places the exchange relationship in danger, conflicting with the advantage gained from justice (Saleem 2015:565). Logically, injustice provokes frustration (Chinomona & Mofokeng 2016:858). Lai, Singh, Alshwer and Shaffer (2014:2) posit that from a social exchange viewpoint, people are expected to separate with the connection if they see it as being unbeneficial to themselves. This indicates that when workers are frustrated, job stress increases and, consequently, there is a threat to withdraw the exchange relationship that is present between the workplace and the worker (Chinomona & Mofokeng 2016:858).

1.8.2 Organisational politics

Organisational politics are defined as actions that allow individuals in organisations to achieve objectives without following appropriate channels (Olorunleke 2015:60). Danish, Humayon, Aslam, Usman and Tariq (2014:44) describe organisational politics as the study of individual exercise of power or control and how it impacts on the activities of the work environment such as resource allocation, decision making and pay and promotion. Organisational politics is explained as actions involved inside organisations to gain, expand and utilise authority and other resources to acquire an individual's ideal findings in a state in which there is doubt or inconsistency about preferences (Swart & Potgieter 2017:1).

1.8.3 Job stress

Sadeghi, Khedmati and Yousefi (2018:84) explain job stress as an employee's responses to features of the job setting that appear mentally and physically upsetting. It highlights a deprived fitting among the employee's abilities and his or her job setting, in which excessive demands are made from the employee or the employee is not completely equipped to manage a specific circumstance. In common terms, the greater the inequality among workloads and the employee's competences, the higher the job stress that will be experienced. Rashid *et al.* (2013:349) identified job stress as occupational stress or work stress, which is described as the feeling of undesirable mental conditions such as frustration, hindrance, concern, nervousness and despair as a result of features associated with the job.

1.8.4 Relationship between organisational politics and job stress

Previous studies have cast organisational politics as a hindrance stressor that prevents employees from meeting personal and professional goals (Chang *et al.* 2009:780). A study conducted by Labrague, *et al.* (2017:113) suggests that perceptions of organisational politics are associated with intensified job stress. Although, most researchers established, as initially theorised, that perceptions of organisational politics and stress are associated, the relationships between perceptions of organisational politics and job stress have varied extensively in other studies (Miller, Rutherford & Kolodinsky 2008:211).

Salin (2003:10) posits that there is a major connection among organisational politics and strain and contention within the workplace. Hence, organisational politics appears to succeed in challenging and high demanding working conditions. As a stressor, organisational politics consist of actions of power and use of authority within an organisational situation (Karatepe 2013:87).

It has also been found that extremely political organisational settings are liable for a range of damaging work-related concerns, involving employee efficiency, intentions to quit and greater stress; consequently, organisational output and success declines (Miller *et al.* 2008:209).

1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

According to Maphazi (2012:160) research methodology is the plan for collecting data required for a study and examines information to respond to the actual research problem. A research design is a master plan that specifies the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing required information for a research study (Curwin & Slater 2008:183). Two methods of research were undertaken, namely a literature review and an empirical study.

1.9.1 Research approach

A research approach as a technique of investigation, which changes from the fundamental norms to research design and information gathering (Myers 2009:64). The key approaches are as follows: the quantitative, qualitative and mixed method approaches. For this study, the quantitative approach was applied.

1.9.2 Sampling design

Salkind (2012:95) states that the sampling process includes a description of the target population, the sample frame, the sample method and the sample size.

1.9.2.1 Target population

A target population is described as a collection of homogeneous elements or objects that possess the information sought by the researcher and about which inferences are to be made (Malhotra 2010:358). The target population for this study was restricted to the SME employees within Matlosana Local District in North West province.

1.9.2.2 Sample frame

Davis, Gallardo and Lachlan (2012:162) state that the sampling frame can be thought of as the realistic version of the study population, which the researcher can identify and access. The sampling frame for this study comprised the total population from which the sample size is extracted. This study's sampling frame comprised a list of SMEs employees within Matlosana Local District in North West province.

1.9.2.3 Sample size

The sample size refers to the elements to be included in a research study (Gupta 2011:196). A sample size of 500 respondents was deemed adequate for this study as it is consistent with other previous studies that focused on the SMEs (Seyal, Rahim & Rahman 2000:8; Cloete, Courtney & Fintz 2002:11); Upfold & Sewry 2006:5); Beheshti & Sangari 2007:236); Uzoka, Shemi & Seleka 2007:6).

1.9.2.4 Sample method

McLeod (2014:1) states a sample method is the procedure of choosing respondents from the population. In a collection, sampling methods could be one of two types: probability and non-probability samples. A non-probability sample is an instance where the chances of choosing respondents from the population in the sample is unknown (Tustin, Ligthelm, Martins & Van Wyk 2005:344) According to Cooper and Schindler (2008:408), the main non-probability sampling methods are convenience sampling, purposive sampling and snowball sampling.

In this research, non-probability, convenience sampling was used. Convenience sampling is reliable and usually the inexpensive and simplest to conduct.

1.10 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION AND MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT

Data collection comprises the actual collection of responses from the identified sample (Berndt & Petzer 2011:202). A survey questionnaire was used to obtain relevant data through questionnaires. McDaniel and Gates (2007:73) highlight that survey methods involve the use of structured questionnaires, with the objective being to extract specific data from respondents. The survey method was chosen due to its low cost and ease of administration (Malhotra 2010:138).

For the purpose of this study, a self-administered questionnaire was used for collecting the necessary data. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:197) posit that a questionnaire is research in which the researcher poses a series of questions to willing respondents, summarises their responses with percentages, frequency counts, or more sophisticated statistical indexes upon which inferences are drawn about a particular population.

1.11 DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH

Once the data were collected, the researcher organised and coded the data so that it might be analysed. Descriptive statistics were used to describe and present the data gathered for the research

study. In order to make inferences of the data obtained, the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 and the Analysis of Movement Structures (AMOS) version 25.0 packages were used for testing and confirming relationships among hypothesised variables.

1.11.1 Reliability and validity of measurement scales

In this study, both reliability and validity were conducted to ensure that the appropriate research instrument is utilised. Maree (2010:215) defines reliability as the extent to which test scores are accurate, consistent or stable. Reliability verification includes testing for composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (Churchill & Brown 2007:271). Therefore, CR and Cronbach's alpha were used to measure internal consistency (Ha, Janda & Muthaly 2010:1006). Malhotra (2010:733) suggests that the minimum accepted CR values should be 0.70. The acceptable value for the Cronbach alpha coefficient should also be greater than 0.70 (Pietersen & Maree 2007:215).

Validity is the extent to which a measure accurately and truthfully represents the characteristics being measured (Burns & Bush 2010:319). In this study, content, construct, convergent and discriminant validity were assessed.

1.11.2 Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

CFA is a form of structural equation modelling that deals precisely with measurement models; that is, the relationships between observed measures or indicators (Brown & Moore 2013:362). For this research, CFA was utilised to obtain standard regression weights, through that various fit statistics were applied to regulate that the model is a suitable fit for the data.

1.11.3 Path modelling

Structural equation modelling (SEM) is a common terminology, which has been applied to define a great number of statistical models used to assess the validity of substantive concepts with empirical data. One of the key benefits of SEM is that it can be used to study the relations between latent constructs that are specified by multiple measures. In this study, SEM was used to study the relations between latent constructs that were specified by multiple measures (Lei & Wu 2007:33).

1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research complied with the ethical standards of academic research, which among other things, protects the identities and interest of respondents while guaranteeing the confidentiality of information provided by the respondents. In addition, prior instructions were given to employees, which explained that participation in this survey was strictly on a voluntary basis and no one was

forced to participate. Lastly, all the responses were kept confidential and the findings were reported in aggregate.

1.13 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1: Overview of the study

This chapter contains an overview of the research. The chapter focuses on the problem statement, purpose of the study, research objectives and research questions, justification of the study and scope of the study. Moreover, the limitations of the study and ethical considerations were outlined.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter provided a review on the literature concerning the research context of the study by providing a background on the SMEs in South Africa. Furthermore, this chapter reported, in detail, on the social exchange theory, organisational politics and job stress.

Chapter 3: Research methodology and design

This chapter described the method and design used in the research, which contains sampling techniques and data gathering method. Moreover, data analysis and statistical techniques are covered.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and findings

This chapter presented the analysis, interpretations and the evaluations of the research findings.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter provided the conclusions and recommendations concerning the research findings.

1.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter is comprised of 11 sections. The first section provided the introduction and background of the study. The second section presented the research gap in the form of the problem statement that this study addressed. The third section provided the purpose of the research followed by the fourth section explaining the research objectives under the theoretical and empirical objectives. The fifth section provided the conceptual framework and hypotheses statement clarifying the course of the dissertation. A brief review of the literature on SMEs in South Africa, including the research constructs, is presented in section six. The seventh and eighth

section described the research methodology and the method of data collect for this study. The ninth and tenth section provided the data analysis to be applied and ethical considerations to be adhered to in this study. The last section of this chapter provided an outline of the study. The following chapter presents the literature on SMEs in South Africa and on the research constructs, organisational politics and job stress.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter provided the introduction to the study. This chapter provides a background on Matlosana Local District and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in South Africa in general. Secondly, the SET is integrated to support the proposition of this study, followed by the definition and dimensions of organisational politics and the impact of organisational politics on time stress and anxiety. Factors contributing to organisational politics and the outcomes of organisational politics are described. The positive and negative side of organisational politics as well as the strategies for managing organisational politics are discussed. The last section of this chapter presents the definition, dimensions and types of job stress, followed by the sources, symptoms and consequences of job stress. Lastly, the management of job stress and the relationship between organisational politics and job stress are examined.

2.2 BACKGROUND ON MATLOSANA LOCAL DISTRICT

Matlosana Local District (previously known as the City Council of Klerksdorp) is a Category B municipality located within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda Region in the North West province; it is one of the four district municipalities in the region. The main economic sectors are mining, agriculture, manufacturing, services, construction and transport (Municipalities of South Africa 2012). The Census 2016 report showed that Matlosana Local District has a total population of 417 282 people (Statistics South Africa 2016:13). The municipality consists of Klerksdorp, Jouberton, Orkney, Kanana, Stilfontein, Khuma, Hartbeesfontein, Tigane, Alabama, Manzilpark and Vaal Reefs, as well as the rural areas surrounding the towns and townships. The highest population density occurs within the township neighbourhoods of Jouberton, Kanana, Khuma and Tigane (South African Cities Network 2014:1).

2.3 SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

Small and medium enterprises have a fundamental part to play in enhancing economic development, creating jobs and alleviating poverty, given their economic impact in the country (Herr & Nettekoven 2018:2). The essential features of SMEs give these small businesses the possibility to support and grow entrepreneurial abilities and fulfill the needs and wants of the local market. However, in the South African economy, these achievements are not imminent because

of the high failure percentage of SMEs (Smit 2012:149). Due to the failures, there is a common understanding that involvement of policy processes has to be reinforced in order to reduce the complications experienced in this sector so that it could reach its probable importance (Sandada 2012:12).

2.3.1 Definition of small and medium enterprises

According to Turner and Ledwith (2018:276), there is no distinct, universally appropriate meaning of the concept SME. The World Bank defines SMEs as firms that hire 5 to 199 workers, whereas the European Commission (EC) defines SMEs as businesses that hire less than 500 workers. In the United States of America (USA) a business is regarded as an SME once it obligates certain quantitative and qualitative criteria (Hashim & Abdullah 2000:67). Ayyagari, Demirguc-Kunt and Maksimovic (2011:6) comprehend that the term SME includes a variety of descriptions and measures that differ through countries as reported by sources on SME statistics worldwide. The countries' economies are different and it is challenging to suggest a generally recognised definition of SMEs. Nevertheless, in the South African context, SMEs are described in a variety of ways, usually with the orientation on the number of workers, turnover bands and variances according to industry sector or sub-sector (Chingwaru 2014:44).

According to the National Small Business Amendment Act (29 of 2004) a “small business” means a separate and distinct business entity (including co-operative enterprises and non-government enterprises) managed by one owner or more, which, including its branches or subsidiaries (if any), is predominantly carried on in any sector or sub-sector of the economy and which can be classified as a micro-enterprise, a very small enterprise, a small enterprise or a medium enterprise. Table 2.1 provides the formation of SMEs as stated by the National Small Business Act (29 of 2004):

Table 2.1: Comprehensive structure of small and medium enterprises according to the National Small Business Act

Enterprise size	Number of employees	Annual turnover (South African Rand)	Gross assets, excluding fixed assets
Micro	Fewer than 5	Less than R150 000	Less than R100 000
Very small	Fewer than 10 to 20, depending on industry	Less than R200 000 to R 500 000, depending on industry	Less than R150 000 to R 500 000, depending on industry
Small	Fewer than 50	Less than R2 million to R25 million, depending on industry	Less than R2,5 million to R4 million, depending on industry

Enterprise size	Number of employees	Annual turnover (South African Rand)	Gross assets, excluding fixed assets
Medium	Fewer than 100 to 200, depending on industry	Less than R4 million to R50 million, depending on industry	Less than R2 million to R18 million, depending on industry

Source: Mahembe, Chiumya and Mbewe (2011:25)

2.3.2 Classification of small businesses

According to the National Small Business Act 102 of 1996 and its Amendment of 2003, SMEs classification is based on the qualitative and quantitative principles (Maloka 2013:15), which are concentrated on the structure of the business ownership. The qualitative principles the enterprise should hold are:

- be a single and different entity;
- be controlled by its owners;
- comprise any holdings and divisions when evaluating the size;
- not be an element of a group of businesses; and
- be a natural individual, sole proprietorship, partnership or legal person, such as a close corporation or company (Makhado 2015:8).

The National Small Business Act 102 of 1996 further provides the quantitative principles and are categorised into micro, very small, small and medium enterprises. The survivalist's enterprises are not considered in the category; however, they are preferably incorporated into the classification of micro-enterprises (Maloka 2013:15). The classification is done by means of the following rules in respect of various sectors and sub-sectors of the economy (Nieman & Nieuwenhuizen 2014:11):

- total annual turnover
- total full-time paid employees
- total gross asset value (excluding fixed property)

Small and medium enterprises are categorised into four categories and are explained as follows (Maloka 2013:16):

- *Micro-enterprises:* Micro-enterprises involve the owner and several family members. These forms of businesses, as in the case of survivalist enterprises, lack formality with regards to the operating permit or official enterprise buildings. The owner possesses basic business

skills and these enterprises can function as a starting point for small business to go into more formally organised enterprises. For example, they consist of household industries, street vendors, spaza shops and minibus taxis.

- *Very small enterprises:* These enterprises function in the formal marketplace and technology is not accessible. They consist of self-employed artisans (electricians, plumbers) and professionals.
- *Small enterprises:* Small enterprises in general are well established as compared to the very small enterprises and show more multifaceted business practices. These businesses operate from a fixed business infrastructure and are owned and managed in accordance with registration requirements and compliance with tax policy.
- *Medium enterprises:* These types of enterprises are regularly branded by the delegation of authority to an additional management level. Medium enterprises function inside the formal sector and have access to technology such as telephones, computers, the Internet and other equipment. These categories of businesses uphold a maintainable employment development. Hence, labour efficiency is adequate for employees in this group.

2.3.3 Characteristics of small businesses

An important characteristic of a thriving and developing economy is an inspiring and flourishing SME sector. SMEs occupy a key part in the growth of a country (Mahembe *et al.* 2011:13). Regardless of the challenges experienced in the sector, these enterprises possess various distinctive characteristics, such as resources, management, ownership, economic sector of the activity and adjustability variation (Abor & Quartey 2010:222).

Small and medium enterprises include an independent property, which is separately owned by the landlord/manager and which is effective in a constricted market place. As a result, SMEs concentrate on a small range of goods or services traded largely on the local marketplace. The structure of ownership for this type of business revolves around individuals or family members. Thus, the majority of SMEs consist of either a person or partnerships (Fumo & Jabbour 2011:851). The owner(s) generally operate and manage the enterprises. The initiator of the business usually controls the enterprise and performs as both the employee and manager. The growth of the enterprise is determined by the owner; hence, decisions are normally made by the owner. In general, these businesses are considered as an organised group of activities that are not sections of larger enterprises (Maloka 2013:14).

SMEs are generally characterised by intensive labour production with little business skills, insufficient educational or technical experience and low capital investment (Maloka 2013:15). Additionally, there is limited or no training and development provided to workers in these businesses (Chew & Chew 2008:342). With regards to the activities of the sector, SMEs are usually involved in service, retailing and manufacturing. The fraction of SMEs activities that occur in these sectors differs significantly among nations and/or between rural and urban regions within a country. SMEs in manufacturing can be found in either rural or urban regions whereas SMEs in retail and services can be found in urban regions (Abor *et al.* 2010:222).

The extent of involvement of SMEs in the manufacturing sector relies on a number of elements, which consist of accessibility to experienced workforce, raw material, consumption trend of local customers and the level of growth of the export market. As a result of SMEs size and their dominance in informal structures of the economy, they are more flexible and easily adjust to the changes in the environment (Chew *et al.* 2008:343).

Moreover, this sector is also categorised into developing and established enterprises. The developing SME sector involves enterprises which are owned/ managed by blacks and coloured situated in informal settlements, rural areas and urban townships. The established SMEs are denoted to as enterprises that are mostly owned/ managed by whites or Asians located in the urban areas, focused in the larger cities within South African (Maloka 2013:17). Also, in the present economic groups of the country there are Chinese, Indians and foreign Africans such as Ethiopians and Somalians in the similar groupings. Hence, from the Small Business Act No. 102 of 1996, SMEs are not observed as global multi-million businesses (Maloka 2013:17).

The categorisation of SMEs consists of diverse kinds of businesses and accommodates a range of enterprises from including rural spaza shops, general dealers, supermarkets, wholesalers, hair salons, as well as brick making, dress making, shoe making, hand craft, vehicle repair, metal working, owning public phones, internet cafés, textile factories, small tourism, mini bus taxi, electronic stores and restaurants (Maloka 2013:17). A few of these small businesses could be characterised as being vibrant, innovative and developing whereas others have the slight possibility of developing into larger businesses that are capable of acquiring funding from banks and becoming globally competitive (Maloka 2013:17).

According to Sandada (2012:19), three differentiating features distinguish SMEs from large businesses, namely innovation, evolution and environmental uncertainty. As far as the introduction of new technology is concerned, SMEs are more innovative than large businesses because of their size and flexible structures. Additionally, as a result of their size and adjustable

structures SMEs are more likely to be in a state of change as they move from one stage to another, as compared to the large enterprises. Concerning the environmental uncertainty, SMEs are more vulnerable to quick changes in the environment, as compared to large businesses. This can be described by lack of resources, shortage of experience in managing intense environments and absence of understanding in preparation for the changes (Sandada 2012:19). The argument about the characteristics of SMEs directs that they are a distinctive sector in the economy, which require exclusive guidelines that support these small businesses to develop. There is a lack of agreement between policy makers about whether or not to focus additional consideration on supporting SMEs instead of advancing resources in large businesses (Sandada 2012:19).

2.4 SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

The SET was established for observing human behaviour (Sun & Xia 2018:252) in an effort to understand organisational behaviour (Oh 2015:211). According to Jinyang (2015:172), the philosophy of social exchange has the belief that there are specific standards that direct behaviour and approach. The SET custom direct the exchange practice and if fair, fulfilment, help and shared principles would establish the connection, resulting in trust (Lee, Capella, Taylor, Luo & Gabler 2014:2141), which makes the way for quality, steadiness and the tenure of the exchange relationship (Jinyang, 2015:172). SET clarifies how relationships are established and sustained through the consistent interchange of rewards and the obligation of expenses among individuals (Coulson, MacLaren, McKenzie & O’Gorman 2014:137). Through, the application of SET in the organisational environment, the theory proposes that employees work for the purpose of exchange for intended, tangible rewards such as remuneration, goods and services as well as unintended, socio-emotional rewards such as prestige and appreciation (O’Boyle, Forsyth, Banks, & McDaniels 2012:559).

These exchanges create relationships among employees and employers, which are strengthened when the rewards are valued ones and any costs created by the relationships are minimised (Coulson *et al.* 2014:137). Exchange parties trust each other to fulfil their obligations over a long period (Jinyang. 2015:172) and the exchange is ruled to be a fair one, with fairness defined principally by common adherence to the norm of reciprocity (Colquitt, Scoot, Rodell, Long, Zapata, Conlon & Wesson 2015:200). In the exchange process, both parties cultivate a psychological commitment to the relationship, as directed by increased affective attachment, a sense of loyalty, mutual support and an authentic concern for the other’s well-being (Oh 2015:211). O’Boyle *et al.* (2012:559) assert that SET offers a conceptually coherent description for an employee’s work-related outcomes. Chang, Rosen and Levy (2009:779) assert that

organisational politics is well known within the workplace situation and propose that politics are a norm that directs behaviour within most organisations. Since organisational politics frequently impacts negatively on workers, they are observed as being biased, which according to SET, places the exchange relationship in danger, conflicting with the advantage gained from justice (Saleem 2015:565). Logically, injustice provokes frustration (Chinomona & Mofokeng 2016:858). Lai, Singh, Alshwer and Shaffer (2014:313) posit that from a social exchange viewpoint, people are expected to separate with the connection if they see it as being unbeneficial to themselves. This indicates that when workers are frustrated, job stress increases and, consequently, a threat to withdraw the exchange relationship that is between the workplace and the worker occurs (Chinomona & Mofokeng 2016:858).

Within the social exchange view, the circumstances or environments are expected to result in adverse reactions like job stress, which induce a strong emotional state of injustice or inequity steered by organisational politics (Noblet & Rodwell 2008:558). The theory of social exchange suggests that employees constantly pursue a balance in what they offer in a relationship (e.g. skills, effort and time) and what they get in return (e.g. recognition, appreciation and pay) (Coulson *et al.* 2014:137). The SET consists of a series of relations that create responsibilities (Emerson 1976:346). According to the SET, these relations are generally perceived as mutually dependent and dependent on the activities of another individual and it underlines that these mutually reliant dealings have the potential to develop high-quality relationships and it might only exist based on certain conditions (Colquitt, LePine, Piccolo, Zapata & Rich 2012:5). The fundamental view of SET is that relationships change over a period into loyal, trusting and shared obligations. For achieving this, individuals must adhere to specific rules of exchange. Rules of exchange establish a normative explanation of the condition and is established or approved by the respondents in an exchange relationship (Emerson 1976:351). In other words, the guidelines of exchange process are subjected to the manner, rules and standards of exchange. Hence, the application of SET in models of organisational behaviour is outlined on the foundation of the exchange rules or standards (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005:875).

According to the SET, workers establish relations within the workplace. Even though the SET has several variants, the present descriptions of this structure tend to explain two forms of interpersonal relationships (Coulson *et al.* 2014:137). Economic exchange relationships exist within a limited period of time. They include the exchange of fairly tangible, regularly economic benefits that are exchanged in a reciprocal manner. These forms of relationships are relatively not the same when compared to social exchange relationships, which are essential to the current study. Social exchange relationships usually consist of the exchange of socio-emotional advantages and

are related with intimate individual affections and unrestricted commitments (Redmond 2015). Once employees establish social exchange relationships with the organisation, they have improved job performance, enhanced organisational citizenship behaviours and display lower propensity towards turnover intentions, lower perceptions of organisational politics as well as job stress (O'Boyle *et al.* 2012:559). The model proposes that workers establish social exchange relationships to the degree that they get valuable benefits that are allocated in a fair fashion. Employment conditions that create job stress are expected to disrupt the state of affairs within the work setting. Job stress is generally detrimental to the employees and the organisation also is often perceived as unfair. This construct also hampers the improvement of work and social exchange relationships, as it could manifest through organisational politics (O'Boyle *et al.* 2012:559). In the context of the SET, it is proposed that the lack of social exchange relationships among employees can create perceptions of organisational politics as well as job stress within the working environment (Cropanzano, Rupp & Byrne 2003:161). Colquitt *et al.* (2015:200) assert that the formation of social exchange relationships could be driven by organisational justice. Various forms of justice function as changing foundations of the exchange relationship. The organisation, through prescribed policies and procedures, is regarded as the originator of procedural justice and distributive justice. Moreover, the organisation could be regarded as political ground in which conclusions are founded on political behaviours, and therefore, might also operate as a cause of unfairness (Colquitt *et al.* 2015:200). Although procedural justice and distributive justice appear to support the social exchange relationship, organisational politics could have a conflicting influence and cripple the relationship. For this study, SET would be integrated as a basis of the relationship between the employees and the organisation and explore the interaction of the features within the workplace, which is the organisational politics and its influence on job stress (Redmond 2015).

2.5 ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS

Politics in organisations is basically an element of existence. Individual experiences, ideas and circumstantial proof have maintained the common belief that behaviour within the work environment is frequently political in nature (Akanbi & Ofoegbu 2013:162). Organisational politics is defined as actions that allow individuals in organisations to achieve objectives without following appropriate channels (Olorunleke 2015:60). Danish *et al.* (2014:44) describe organisational politics as the study of individual exercise of power or control and how it impacts on the activities of the work environment such as resource allocation, decision making and pay and promotion. Organisational politics is explained as actions involved inside organisations to gain, expand and utilise authority and other resources to acquire an individual's ideal result in a

state in which there is doubt or inconsistency about preferences (Swart & Potgieter 2017:1). According to Labrague, *et al.* (2017:111), organisational politics relates to the occurrence when people or groups intentionally behave in a manner that will defend or improve their personal interests, while their actions are not beneficial to other people, groups, including the organisation to which they belong. Furthermore, Ofoegbu, Akanbi and Akhanolu (2012:61) describe organisational politics as a common term that signifies influencing associations and power strategies within the place of work.

Samad (2011:120) established that organisational politics descriptions share limited characteristics in general. Political conducts are intended to advocate or safeguard an individual's self-centredness, political actions are a system of practicing social impression and two parties with the possibility to hold diverse interests must be involved. Sowmya and Panchanatham (2012:20) defined organisational politics as the management of sway to attain outcomes not approved by the organisation or to attain approved outcomes through non-approved channels. Organisational politics has been investigated as workplace politics and perception of politics. Gull and Zaidi (2012:157) posit that perception of politics is an individuals' view about others self-centred actions. Self-centred actions might consist of the selective influence and administration of organisational rules and regulations. This study will make use of the definition of the organisational politics as defined by Danish *et al.* (2014:44), which describe organisational politics as the study of individual exercise of power or control and how it impacts on the activities of the work environment such as resource allocation, decision making, pay and promotion.

2.6 DIMENSIONS OF ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS

Organisational politics have been examined in different contexts to understand its impact on the job outcomes (Ugwu & Onyishi 2013:3569). Varela-Neira, del Río Araujo, & Sanmartín (2018:661) contend that the concept of organisational politics is conceptualised as a three-dimensional construct. First, general political behaviour, evolves when individuals pursue self-interested behaviours to achieve desired findings. Secondly, get ahead construct whereby individuals demonstrate silence and behave passively for the purpose of gaining specific benefits. Thirdly, pay and promotion policies, involves individuals who are responsible for the implementation of policies and react politically in the process of making-decisions. The validation of perceptions of organisational politics scale (POPS) by Kacmar and Carlson (1997:629) focused on the first three dimensions. A study by Kaya, Aydin and Ayhan (2016:251) disputes that the construct organisational politics might be examined into two more dimensions added onto the current three-dimensional construct. Additional dimensions are co-workers, which describe the

political behaviours of both co-workers and managers. Lastly, self-serving behaviours, which involve individuals' self-serving actions that place their own interests above those of their colleagues and of the entire organisation. Kaya *et al.* (2016:251) present the following five dimensions of organisational politics:

2.6.1 General political behaviours

Lau, Scully and Lee (2018:249) state that this dimension concentrates on how individuals act politically and the means by which they acquire individual gains. Kaya *et al.* (2016:251) explain that political behaviours have a tendency to escalate in a situation where guidelines are not adhered to and in such circumstances, individuals progressively develop their personal guidelines for achieving a superior place in the organisation. Additionally, political behaviours could also exist in environments where there is a lack of valued resources. Lack of valued resources such as increment, budget and work space causes competition between employees and groups, which in turn result in politics (Rashid *et al.* 2013:349).

2.6.1 Get ahead

This construct describes the actions displayed by workers in which they remain quiet in the organisation by not involving themselves in personal interactions. Certain workers attempt to protect their personal interests without attracting attention to themselves. Workers might stay quiet or demonstrate an inactive approach in order to avert personal interests in certain situations (Gull & Zaidi 2012:157). Individuals in organisation might avoid conflict and for that reason, they do not clash with others interest. Normally, conflict evasion behaviour seems to be a non-political action, however, it is a practice of political behaviour. Get ahead, might be a rational and beneficial attitude to embrace in order to lead an individual's own self-interests when operating in a political environment (Lau *et al.* 2018:249).

2.6.2 Pay and promotion policies

Ahmed (2018:3) purports that this dimension clarifies why supervisors have a tendency to give preferential treatment to workers who are most convenient to them and to whom they offer higher percentages in performance appraisal processes, so that these preferred workers enjoy superior chances of promotion and pay increment. In addition, this dimension of organisational politics includes how workers and organisations act politically over policy application and decision making (Rashid *et al.* 2013:349). Additionally, workers might embrace some political conducts in order to inspire their supervisors to act in a biased way (Haq 2011:292).

2.6.3 Co-workers

This dimension attempts to describe the political behaviours of workers and managers. Few workers who are caught in the negative behaviours might not be skilful to react effectively and consequently might be the target of different types of political behaviours (Kaya *et al.* 2016:251).

2.6.4 Self-serving behaviours

This dimension is considered significant since it could harm the organisational productivity. When employees place their personal interests over their co-workers and the entire organisation, such behaviour is regarded as self-serving (Kaya *et al.* 2016:251). Gove (2011:18) attests that self-serving behaviours increase self-interest and clash with the objectives of the organisation.

2.7 THE IMPACT OF ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS ON THE ORGANISATION

Organisational politics is considered as the social element of any organisation Varela-Neira *et al.* (2018:661). This construct is also observed as essential for the growth of the organisation (Abbas & Raja 2014:158). According to Cacciattolo (2015:121), organisational politics are essential as they offer comprehension on the casual approach of arguments and collaborations within the organisation. It is disputed that organisational politics contain detrimental outcomes, which influence the effectiveness of the organisation as a whole (Abbas & Raja 2014:158). Organisational politics impact on the organisations' well-being and are related to job outcomes such as job satisfaction, poor levels of organisational commitment, turnover intention, job performance and job stress (Chinomona & Chinomona 2013:57).

The impact of organisational politics on the organisation findings in lower efficiency and inferior performance on employees and entire organisation (Cheong & Kim 2017:3) and, therefore, impacts on the productivity of the organisation (Gull & Zaidi 2012:157). Olorunleke (2015:65) argues that the organisational politics may damage the organisation, including its personnel, when stimulated to extreme levels. The performance, effort and efficacy of the organisation could be affected by excessive politicking and decreased determination. It is presumed that organisational politics significantly impacts organisational performance and consequently corporate environment and business operations (Chinomona & Mofokeng 2016:859).

Organisational politics inspire workers to see the organisation as being unfair, unethical and irrational (Chinomona & Mofokeng 2016:858). In that case, operating circumstances intensify

hard working conditions where unpleasant work environment, ill-treatment, injustice and poor remuneration thrive within the organisation (Evans & Qureshi 2013:35).

Vigoda-Gadot and Dryzin-Amit (2006:8) state that organisational politics contributes negatively on the organisational findings and recognise a range of motives as:

- political conduct is meant to harm or mislead collective relationships and workers might not be willing to assist colleagues, in fear that volunteering actions of this nature might be politically motivated
- an environment that is political in nature depresses social systems and gives preferential treatment to advancements on merely political concerns, therefore, confining organisational performance to the level regulated by minimum employment requirements;
- within political climates workers could decide to evade involvement in political manoeuvres, concentrating firmly on their responsibilities and decreasing alliance with fellow-workers; and
- workers might observe organisational politics as a sign of lack in management and authority, of which career advancement and bonuses are politically managed and offered unethically. Observed unfairness in the distribution of limited resources might affect workers' observed destruction of psychological agreement, encouraging lack of trust towards managers.

2.8 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS

Lau *et al.* (2018:248) recognised organisational circumstances that induce workers to be involved in organisational politics activities, such as unexpected decisions, unspecified goals of the organisation and limited resources (Gotsis & Kortezi 2010:498). Furthermore, Vredenburg and Shea-VanFossen (2010:27) explained that the sources of personal characteristics that nurture political tactics in the work environment originate from the person's inherited qualities (Vredenburg & Shea-VanFossen 2010:27).

Cacciattolo (2014:239) contends that manners and personalities are not absolutely inherited in the beginning as these qualities might be derived from the individual's upbringing and traditional conditions. Manners and personalities of individuals may emerge from different situations in the organisation and can stimulate organisational politics (Vredenburg & Shea-VanFossen 2010:31). According to Chinomona and Chinomona (2013:57) if workers observe that their interests are overlooked and they are influenced, they will instigate self-interested behaviour.

The existence of organisational politics in the organisation may well be as a result of the pressures from the outside force faced by the organisation, coming from technology demands and globalisation (Evans & Qureshi 2013:36).

Organisational politics could be initiated by the structural relations in the organisation, where a certain unit of workers might possess different duties to accomplish that are different to those of another unit. This particular act is considered as task-orientated clashes (Ofoegbu *et al.* 2012:62). Cacciattolo (2014:240) attests that such kinds of clashes could advantage the organisation as they advance the processes of making decisions and production through positive reproach.

Kacmar, Andrews, Harris and Tepper (2013:34) state that the tendency concerning politics might be an intrinsic character of human nature and this tendency surfaces evidently in the organisation. Individuals reason and behave in a different way for; that reason organisational politics become ordinary in the organisation. Such difference develops conflicts that need be resolved through political means (Olorunleke 2015:62).

DuBrin (2010:211) identifies the following individual and organisational elements that influence political activities within an organisation:

- **Pyramid-shaped organisation structure:** In a pyramid-shaped structure, authority is focused at the top and limited authority is presented between various individuals who want it the most. No authority is available for employees at the bottom of the organisation. The majority of the organisations recently have limited levels in their structures and contention for authority is much evident.
- **Subjective standards of performance:** If workers feel that there is a lack of clear goals and fairness in the performance evaluation process in the organisation, they depend on organisational politics. In addition, when supervisors fail to distinguishing active workers from inactive, they depend on preferential treatment towards workers.
- **Environmental uncertainty and turbulence:** Once the organisational environment is unconducive, insecure and uncertain, individuals have a tendency to act politically. They depend on organisational politics to form a positive impression since insecurity makes it challenging for them to decide what is actually achievable. The main source of organisational politics is generated through instability, insecurity and uncertainty formed by downscaling or amalgamation.
- **Emotional insecurity:** When workers experience low self-confidence in their knowledge and abilities, they depend on political behaviour to get along with managers.

- **Manipulative tendencies:** Individuals are involved in political activities for their personal gains; for that reason, they influence others.
- **Disagreements that prevent rational decision making:** Rational criteria has been tried and tested for main decision making; however, it is regulated by huge differences on how organisation must be managed. If the plan and objectives are understood mutually between main organisational members, political drive is certain in making decisions within the organisational.

Muhammad (2007:242) also mentions the following factors that contribute to organisational politics:

- **Personality and political behaviour**

Personality may be utilised to foresee behaviours and work effectiveness. It can also impact on the interpersonal features that paint individual understandings of the situation and people informally construe and evaluate individual's personality (Barrick, Mount & Li 2013:134). Common views regarding individuals' certain personalities are created through continuous evaluation encouraged by other people. Incomplete facts about workers' exact performance are concluded through the common views (Robb 2011:20). Workers exercise authority and politics in a different way because of their personal characteristics and it becomes a challenging task for managers to handle. Hence, it is essential for managers to be aware and recognise workers with various personality traits (Robb 2011:20).

- **Fairness/ justice**

It is essential for managers to be mindful of certain conducts, which can eventually result in injustice in an organisation (Colquitt & Rodell 2015:197). Karim and Rehman (2012:95) identified forms of self-interested activities, which destabilise fairness in the workplace such as making use of inappropriate systems to acquire extraordinary tools, instigating senior personnel before making promotion conclusions and obtaining permission by avoiding the chain of command. Moreover, these kinds of activities disregard fairness since not everybody within the organisation is involved in organisational politics to attain personal goals. Employees who abide by the appropriate processes normally experience distrust and hatred because of their views on injustice and unfairness of the workplace rewards and acknowledgement (Colquitt & Rodell 2015:197).

Karim and Rehman (2012:95) state that justice impacts individuals' self-confidence, mental desires and sense of personality. Observations of more fairness and equality encourage individuals to be extra trusting. Organisational justice comprises the elements such as procedural justice and

distributive justice. Procedural justice denotes the person's view considering the equality of official procedures managing decision making in the organisation (Akhtar & Khattak 2013:509). Procedural justice contains workers participation, methodical decision procedures and regular application of decisional objectives. In addition, it includes the unbiased, principled and constant usage of procedures. Distributive justice states the justice of findings or ultimate conclusions in contrast to what others obtain. Furthermore, it envisages fulfilment with remuneration (Akhtar & Khattak 2013:509).

- **Role/ job ambiguity**

Employees need to be dedicated and absorbed with the image of the organisation they are involved in. A key organisational aspect that offers a chance for political conduct and effects to organisational politics is role/job ambiguity within the organisation (Schmidt, Rösler, Kusserow & Rau 2014:92).

According to Humborstad and Kuvaas (2013:8), job ambiguity means the extent of unclear work conditions. Work environment that is extremely ambiguous is challenging for workers to understand if there are no clear goals and responsibilities concerning their tasks. They also are uncertain on what to do to be rewarded. Workers might be subjected to accumulate authority to depend on individual relations or utilise political behaviour to safeguard and promote their interest in the organisation (Robb 2011:18).

- **Scarcity of resources**

Lack of resources in the organisation encourages political behaviour (Ahmed 2018:6). Once organisational resources valued by the workers such as financial bonuses and promotion prospects are inadequate, they have to contend for available resources (Wangui & Muathe 2014:160). The findings of allocating organisational resources are effected by depending on self-interested behaviour and political conducts. Overall contention for scarce resources possibly ends in perceived and actual politics (Lorente, Salanova, Martinez & Vera 2014:201).

2.9 OUTCOMES OF ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS

There are two ways of viewing organisational politics: either as a symptom of social influence processes that benefit the organisation (the positive side of organisational politics), or a self-serving effect that goes against the organisational goals (the negative side of organisational politics) (Cacciattolo 2015:122).

First, the positive outcomes of organisational politics have the ability of being useful in the workplace because of its social impact. Effectiveness of politics might introduce adjustments and improve easiness on the congested ways of making strategic decisions (Swartz & Potgieter 2017:7). Organisational politics and its practices are normally assumed as the organisational defence mechanisms, which change and refine authentic facts. On the other hand, it is not necessary for organisational politics to be dominated by beliefs, secrets and influence on authority (Cacciattolo 2015:122). Useful organisational politics could benefit political and non-political individuals in various ways within the organisation (Vredenburg & Shea-VanFossen 2010:41). Vigoda-Gadot and Drory (2006:47) demonstrated that organisational politics might not at all times be construed in a negative approach, as different individuals might view organisational politics in a more positive manner than others.

Organisational politics has been perceived negatively within the organisations with dysfunctional outcomes. Contrary, this construct organisational politics also possess sensible and positive outcomes (Landells & Albrecht 2013:361). Robbins, Judge, Odendaal and Roodt (2009:358) explain the other aspect of organisational politics known as positive politics, which denotes all resolute efforts devoted by the employees to enhance the organisational performance. Efforts from employees contain encouraging influential relations, avoiding tainted individuals, cultivating the correct image for the organisation, outlining opinions aligned to the aims and purpose of the organisation, continuously backing the management and being in charge of organisational resources (Robbins, *et al.* 2009:358). Mutambara (2013:123) purports that positive organisational politics exist through a concerted effort that could create a better organisational unity and nurture buy-in to main ventures.

The social purpose of the positive organisational politics is essential for the survival of the organisation (Othman 2008:44). In the workplace that is dominated by politically skilled individuals, positive organisational politics could offer the foundation for competition. Managers who are politically skilled are able to handle work situations that are experiencing strain (Drory & Vigoda-Gadot 2010:195; Gotsis & Kortezi 2010:504). Positive politics are mostly evident when politically skilled people are able to utilise positive impact activities and approaches to avoid negative activities (Cacciattolo 2015:122). Drory and Vigoda-Gadot (2010:197) dispute that within a situation that is politically operational and has positive political abilities individuals do not experience inequality and injustice. Cacciattolo (2015:122) states that positive political conduct is considered essential in amassing different interests of other parties within the organisation.

Vredenburg and Shea-VanFossen (2010:41) purport that organisational politics at some stages could be practiced to seek correct outcomes and it can be useful to rectify negligent and unproductive conduct or influence valuable adjustments that have been stagnant. Positive organisational politics could as well inspire different expressions to be considered that might be helpful to the organisation (Cacciattolo 2015:124) and contribute in the innovation process (Landells & Albrecht 2013:361). According to Mutambara (2013:123), positive organisational politics revolves around moral conducts of being recognised and possessing thoughts acknowledged without destroying relations. Positive organisational politics is concerned with executing plans, coming up with suggestions and establishing relations.

Secondly, the negative outcomes of organisational politics are detrimental as they hamper production and revenue of the organisation (Ene 2014:97). It is upon the management of the organisation to anticipate them. The concept organisational politics is generally believed to have a negative connotation and people mostly view it as being detrimental to the wellbeing of the employees and the organisation (Drory & Vigoda-Gadot 2010:195). Organisational politics means the tactical conduct that encourages self-interest and this view suggests a negative form of work politics, therefore, employees might persist to apply negative perceptions of organisational politics (Vigoda-Gadot 2007:662).

Othman (2008:44) states that the negative side of organisational politics includes opportunistic and prohibited actions practiced by individuals to serve their interests. Salin (2003:43) argues that organisational politics become negative when individual interests clash with the interests of the organisation. Wangui and Muathe (2014:158) as well as Salin (2003:44) state that organisational politics is responsible for dysfunctional work outcomes such as poor performance, high turnover, low organisational commitment, job satisfaction and job stress.

2.9.1 Poor performance

The concept of poor performance is not tolerated in the organisation as it obstructs the achievement of the goals. Poor performance findings when the employees do not fulfil tasks allocated to them accurately and in turn the organisational performance could be affected as a whole (Murage, Sang & Ngure 2018:138). Unfortunately, the same performance cannot be expected from all employees as result of the personal characteristics attached to the work. Poor performance is also exhibited within the work environment dominated by organisational politics, since employees devote their time and effort to participate in political activities instead of work operations. Poor performance resulting from the negative organisational politics can direct the focus of the organisation towards its collapse (Jamal 2011:20).

2.9.2 High turnover

In a political work atmosphere conquered by negative organisational politics, employees who are not involved in politics and those who dislike politics as well as those who are affected by the outcomes of such politics might leave the organisation (Ofoegbu *et al.* 2012:62). Existence of negative organisational politics could instigate unfairness and inequality to the extent of producing high employee turnover, which affects the working condition and leads to a decrease in productivity within the workplace (Sowmya & Panchanatham 2012:19). Furthermore, consequences of high turnover on the organisation result in loss of valuable and experienced employees, increased costs of recruiting, selecting and training of new employees (Ogungbamila, Balogun, Ogungbamila & Oladele 2014:351).

2.9.3 Low organisational commitment

Negative organisational politics is believed to contribute to the low organisational commitment. Employees with low commitment will not desire to remain in the organisation for a long period of time, instead, they will rather not contribute in helping the organisation to succeed (Jamal 2011:22). Low organisational commitment can result in employees exhibiting poor confidence and lack of recognition of the values and goals of the workplace. Consequences of low organisational commitment consist of withdrawal actions such as absenteeism and an increase in counterproductive behaviours by employees (Karakaya 2013:142).

2.9.4 Job satisfaction

According to Liu, Zhao, Shi, Zhang, Liu, Li, Duan, Li, Lou, Jia and Fan (2018:2), job satisfaction is defined as a positive expressive condition that ascends during the time when individuals value their job or job experience. Escalation in organisational politics findings in low job satisfaction. If workers observe decisions and processes in the organisation to be unjustified, their morale and enthusiasm will be affected and they become unhappy (Ram & Prabhakar 2010:43).

2.9.5 Job stress

A workplace manifested with harmful outcomes of devious organisational politics is likely to engender tension on employees, which could convert into job stress (Makhdoom, Malik & Atta 2015:402). Since negative organisational politics may create pressure, instability, injustice and inequality within the organisation, employees' psychological and physical state might be affected. Increased levels of job stress negatively impact on the operations of the organisation and on the employee's personal lives (Yuwanich, Akhavan, Nantsupawat, & Martin 2017:658).

2.10 JOB STRESS

In an organisational environment, job stress is also referred to as work stress and/or occupational stress. These constructs are frequently utilised interchangeably within the organisation and denotes a similar description (Shukla & Srivastava 2016:4). According to Wu and Shih (2010:76), job stress is not the same as stress in the sense that it is job-related mental stress. Job stress might arise when an employee is not provided sufficient training or is not given the required resources to execute the work, or is challenged with conflicting workloads. Prasad and Vaidya (2018:2458) explain job stress as an employee's responses to features of the job setting that appear mentally and physically upsetting. It highlights a deprived fitting among the employee's abilities and his or her job setting, in which excessive demands are made from the employee or the employee is not completely equipped to manage a specific circumstance. In common terms, the greater the inequality among workloads and the employee's competences, the higher the level of job stresses that will be experienced.

Rashid *et al.* (2013:349) identify job stress as the feeling of undesirable mental conditions such as frustration, hindrance, concern, nervousness and despair as a result of features associated with the job. Job stress, according to Setar, Buitendach and Kanengoni (2015:4), refers to some characteristics causing workers to feel nervousness within a work situation. Job stress is personal in nature, since its evaluation is founded on the views of employees and whether they have confidence in that they could cope with the different psychological, physical and environmental stressors dominant in the workplace. Job stress is described as detrimental psychological and physical reactions that happen when work requests do not equal the worker's needs, competences and resources (De Souza França & De Martino 2013:2). Tsaur and Tang (2012:1039) state that job stress means an employee's response to concerns resulting from the elements of his or her work, comprising time stress and anxiety.

2.11 DIMENSIONS OF JOB STRESS

Job stress possesses two major dimensions: psychological stress and physiological stress. Psychological stress is perceived as an emotional response that is triggered by stimuli in the work situation. It might contain emotional responses such as despair, exhaustion, frustration, impatience and anxiety (De Souza França & De Martino 2013:2). Physiological stress is regarded as a physical response of the body to different stressful sources within the work environment. It might consist of physiological responses such as sleeping disorder, heart palpitation, headache and stomach pain (Sibisi 2012:10).

Goodman, Evans and Carson (2011:67) argue that job stress can manifest in four dimensions and could be theorised as having:

- responsibility pressures — having too much responsibility for people, process, or products and inadequate human or material support
- role conflict — receiving unclear and/or conflicting expectations from others at work
- quality concerns — having concern about not being capable to do work as well as one could or should
- job vs non-job conflict — feeling that the job hinders non-work life (e.g. family or leisure time)

2.12 TYPES OF JOB STRESS

As a result of various internal and external cues of the workplace, stress is generated and it produces battle of characters, influence and power between workers, which might be responded to through conflict management (Danish *et al.* 2014:45). Sibisi (2012:10) mentions that job stress has two major types: eustress (positive stress) and distress (negative stress). Eustress is a good nature of stress and is related with positive feelings and positive effects. When a person is in a state of low levels of stress, such person is experiencing eustress. Contrary, distress is a negative kind of stress and is related with negative feelings and negative effects. Distress arises when a person regularly experiences high levels of stress. The existence of eustress does not weaken employee's capability to attend to workloads. Instead, employees are capable of sustaining a positive work life under circumstances of eustress. Alternatively, employees who go through distress are not capable of accomplishing workloads and this might result in the decline of their excellence of work life (Danish *et al.* 2014:45).

2.13 SOURCES OF JOB STRESS

Heidari, Mahdinia and Rahimifard (2016:6) argue that work demand, hours of work, technological challenges and varying working arrangement are the key sources of job stress among employees. Job stress might originate from several sources and impact on employees' health and well-being in various ways (Van Niekerk 2011:31). Engle (2012:19) posits that elements inherent to the work, such as working circumstances, shift work, the risk associated with the work, work pressure and elements that originate from the employees' role in the workplace, such as responsibility and quality of interactions at work, personality variables, role conflict and role ambiguity, are entirely contributed to job stress. Furthermore, Engle (2012:10) identified environmental factors as source

of job stress and they consist of the speed of work, reviewed work processes, new premises of work, number and nature of clients or customers and distance to and from work.

According to Mosadeghrad (2014:224), the main sources of job stress are tight deadlines, job uncertainty, unfairness at work, lack of sufficient employees, lack of appreciation and advancement, lack of management support and inadequate remuneration. Additionally, employees' stress is influenced by individual, work related, organisational and situational aspects. Noticeable sources of job stress originate from the work content and framework. Stress experiences founded from the work content are normally related with aspects inherent to the job role illustrated in Figure 2.1 below. Within this classification, workers are usually seen struggling with job features that produce a fundamental deficiency of fit between workload and the employee's ability to handle such workload (Babatunde 2013:75).

In the work environment, there are several elements with the potential of creating negative organisational and extra organisational outcomes, which regularly harm the physical wellbeing and psychological health of employees. Sources of job stress elements are conceptualised using work framework exhibited in Figure 2.1 (Babatunde 2013:75). The elements of job stress are categorised in three segments, first, the elements that are distinct to the job role content. Secondly, it concentrates on how stress is prompted by the character and duty that an employee possesses in the workplace (Ackfeldt & Malhotra 2013:354). Thirdly, it present that the elements of circumstantial stressors come from matters that disregard career growth (Babatunde 2013:76).

Maxwell (2012:25) asserts the transactional model of stress in Figure 2.1, which presents different sources of job stress as they stem from organisational and individual's characteristics.

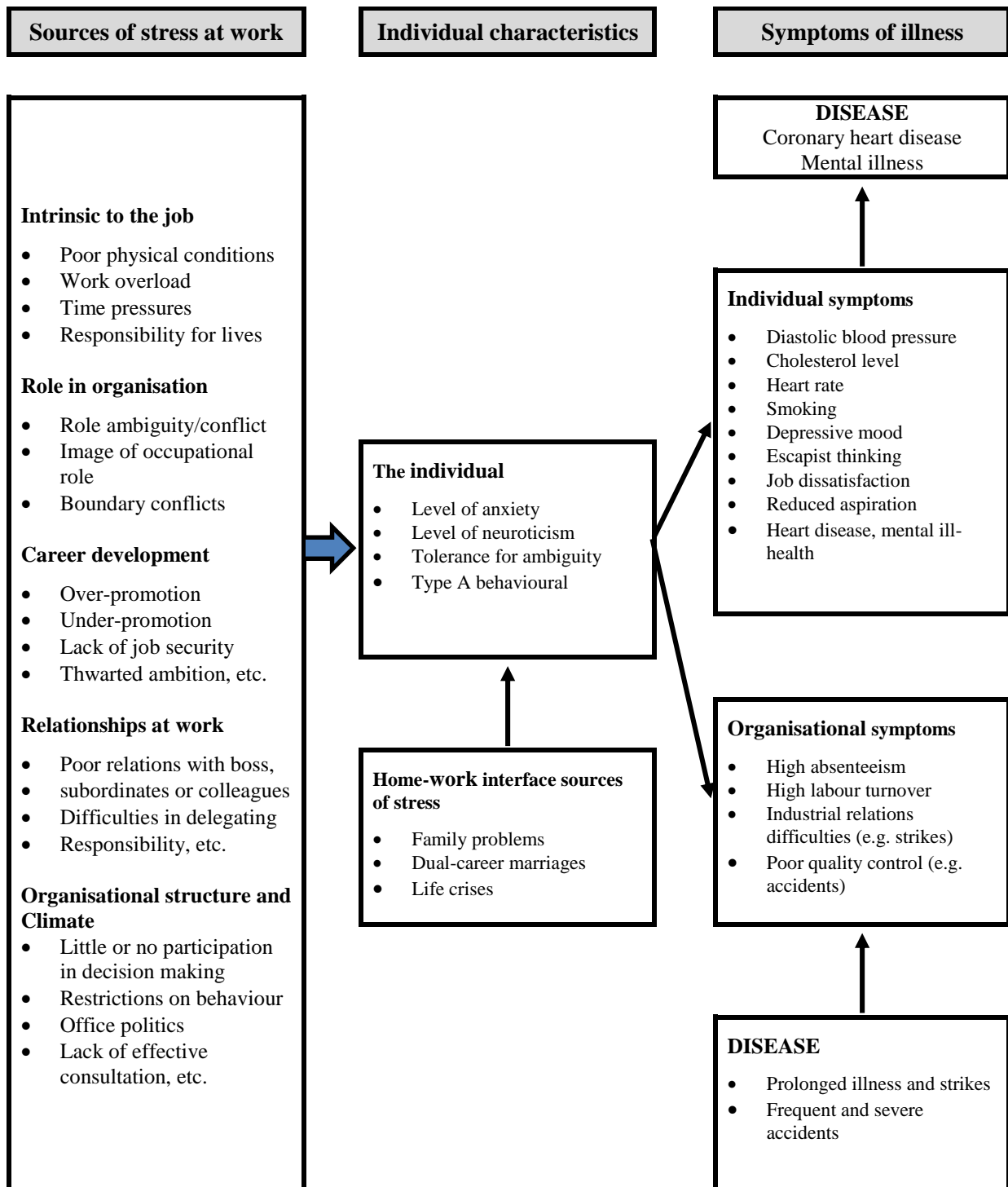


Figure 2.1: Transactional model of stress

Source: Stranks (2005:25).

2.13.1 Work-related sources of job stress

2.13.1.1 The work itself

Working conditions denote the circumstances within an individual's work setting. Conditions that employees' work in have a strong outcome on their work approaches and their responses to their

work. Unconducive work conditions might produce stress in the workplace and make employees feel uncomfortable to perform their duties or feel pressured to do work. Working conditions that might develop into stressors in the workplace are the lack of privacy, noise levels and the lack of control over features of the work situation (Van Niekerk 2011:30).

Work underload exists in situations where workers feel bored or depressed as a result of being discontented at work, even if they have less work to perform. Qualitative underload arises in circumstances where there is a lack of mental inspiration coming from the work itself and the employee finds the work assignment monotonous and predictable (Thabane 2015:33).

Work overload is experienced when too much is anticipated from workers. There are two kinds of work overload, namely qualitative overload and quantitative overload (Mudzimu 2012:38). Qualitative overload is experienced when the type of work to be performed by the employee is too challenging for an employee to execute. Additionally, this kind of overload generates depression, less satisfaction and more aggression as workers sense disappointment when they are incapable of performing. Quantitative underload takes place when employees have much less work to perform and are idle at work (Thabane 2015:33).

Resource inadequacy occurs when there is a shortage of resources required for workers to execute their tasks successfully. Insufficient resources escalate the demands of the work given to workers and decrease the control they have over their work (Fourie 2015:11).

Task autonomy means the degree of control workers have over their work. Situational control as a work moderator of job stress is described as the level to which an employee is certain that they are capable to control responsibilities in terms of work speed, processes for assignment conclusion and task planning (DeTienne, Agle, Phillips & Ingerson 2012:381).

Role competence denotes the specific skills, knowledge, attitudes and actions that are needed by job incumbents. Different competencies to be acquired might generate job stress if incumbents lack the ability to handle the prerequisite level of performance (Qureshi, Iftikhar, Abbas, Hassan, Khan and Zaman 2013:765).

2.13.1.2 Relationships at work

Relationships with co-workers mean the interactions among workers. Colleagues care is support that is required by workers when facing challenging periods and that they receive from others within the workplace. Stress might exist as a result of poor relations between employees if there is a lack of understanding of the roles and the responsibilities of others and management delegates

authority poorly in order to get work completed on time. When workers have good support from others, they are able to handle stressors at the workplace (De Villiers 2014:25).

Relationships with leaders and others mean the relationships among workers and the individuals who manage the activities of the work environment. Support from managers within the workplace assists workers to respond to stressors in a proper manner, therefore, managers should support workers to deal with discomfort, undesirable feelings and stress in the organisation (Duan, Ho, Siu, Li & Zhang 2015:33).

2.13.1.3 Role in the organisation

The role theory interprets an organisation as a set of interconnecting roles. The roles within organisations describe what individuals are required to perform and what others could expect from them. Job stress arises when employees experience challenges in their role. Role conflict occurs when work and non-work load in an employee's life are mismatched and their expectations are in conflict with each other. Role conflict is also a source of lower job satisfaction and high levels of job stress and it can result in ill health for employees (DeTienne *et al.* 2012:380). Role ambiguity is experienced when employees are not confident about work goals, the scope work of the work and of what is anticipated of them. Vague or uncertain expectations regarding the scope of work responsibilities and the level of power also cause employees to experience role ambiguity (Olivares-Faúndez, Gil-Monte, Luis, Jélvez-Wilke & Figueiredo-Ferraz 2014:112).

2.13.1.4 Organisational structure and environment

The organisation's management style is expressed in its values, rules and regulations and its objectives might produce job stress on workers if it is determined by competitive goals that do not consider the health and well-being of workers and it is not consistent. Organisational culture can generate job stress if the work environment is dominated by too strict instructions, lack of coordination among business units, swift and regular changes that happen throughout the entire levels within the workplace and too much requests to work overtime due to a lack of trained personnel (Maxwell 2012:33). Additionally, if the policies and procedures of the organisation are not implemented as required and employees do as they please, such behaviour may contribute to the job stress to other employees. Employees might be conflicted on accomplishing organisational outcomes under circumstances of that nature (DeTienne *et al.* 2012:378).

2.13.1.5 Career progress and change

Career progress uncertainties could cause job stress in workers when job prospects are not clear based on the present and intended future requirements of the organisation. Promoting employees by not following the correct processes and selecting new workforce without using appropriate criterion methods may contribute to the job stress experienced by employees (Bano & Talib 2011:151). The imbalance between lower status position and the demand for workers to perform at very high levels with poor remuneration also contributes to job stress. Career changes could result in job stress when the transition is unwelcome, when it is not expected or when it is enforced on employees. Moreover, if employees lack the capacity to handle the transition process it could turn into job stress (Mani, Sritharan & Gayatri 2014:48). Job insecurity is realised when workers observe that their employment is not secured. Job insecurity might produce heightened levels of job stress within the workplace when employees are worried about the effects of retrenchments, re-organisation and amalgamation of enterprises (Maxwell 2012:34).

2.13.2 Personal sources of job stress

2.13.2.1 Individual characteristics

Personal characteristics of employees that contribute to the degree of job stress experienced by workers are low self-confidence, lack of exercise and fitness, lack of coping strategies, poor work and sleeping patterns, poor tolerance for ambiguity, financial constraints, gender and insufficient social support (Mudzimu 2012:29).

Personality type A inclines employees to job stress. Employees with distress-predisposed characters are more likely to be exposed to undesirable events in their lives. Employees with Type A personalities attempt to reach greater levels of performance until they end up being annoyed, worried and aggressive. Such employees are exposed to job stress as a result of being highly competitive, impatient, concurrently multi-tasking and pursuing excellence. Employees with personality Type B are known to be ambitious and goal orientated, however, in a less competitive approach than the Type A personality. Employees with this personality type have been found to experience less job stress (Maxwell 2012:36).

2.13.2.2 Home-work interface

Work-life balance is a part of the study that examines the level of satisfaction or conflict employees experience concerning their job and non-job loads. It might be challenging for an employee to

create a balance between work-life and family responsibilities and within that situation, job stress could arise (Mani *et al.* 2014:48).

2.14 SYMPTOMS OF JOB STRESS

2.14.1 Organisational symptoms of job stress

The result of job stress experienced by employees in the workplace might be ascribed to the symptoms the organisation is confronted with. Organisational symptoms of job stress may consist of poor performance, absenteeism, low organisational citizenship and behaviour and turnover (Qureshi *et al.* 2013:764).

2.14.1.1 Poor performance

Poor work performance is usually exhibited by workers who are suffering from job stress. Indication of inferior performance standards can be found in repeated faults, poor commitment and poor time management, high wastage of material, poor decision making and lack of enthusiasm to perform tasks. Declining work performance and poor relationships with colleagues and managers are considered as outcomes of job stress experienced by workers (Elnaga & Imran 2013:140).

2.14.1.2 Absenteeism

Gosselin, Lemyre and Corneil (2013:77) assert that absence of employees from work is a behavioural outcome of job stress. Regular time off from work because of sickness and an increase in general rate of sickness of workers' is a sign that the entire workplace is suffering from stress.

2.14.1.3 Low organisational citizenship and behaviour

Once workers are unable to handle workload subjected to their own responsibilities, they might not demonstrate organisational citizenship behaviour. Hence, they might not assist co-workers on tasks, persevere to achieve success at tasks and adhere to the guidelines and policies of the workplace (Kacmar *et al.* 2013:36).

2.14.1.4 Turnover

Turnover in the organisation might be instigated by job stress. Turnover denotes the frequency at which workers quit the organisation. As soon as workers exit the workplace, investment done in their training and development is forfeited by the organisation (Tom 2015:18).

2.14.2 Personal symptoms of job stress

The effects of job stress experienced by employees have impact on the organisation and the influences of job stress on employees become evident through psychological, physiological and behavioural problems. Job stress affects the organisation by destroying the effective communication channels, intensifying hatred, decreasing the value of relations and reducing reliance among colleagues (Qureshi *et al.* 2013:764).

2.14.2.1 Psychological symptoms

High levels of job stress instigate psychological disorders and well-being of employees as a result of mood swings, feelings of not coping and avoiding contact with other people, incidences of nervousness, challenges in making conclusions, poor concentration and continuous fatigue (Yanovich, Hadid, Erlich, Moran & Heled 2015:1).

- **Burnout**

The term burnout is defined as a distressed psychological condition experienced by a worker after a lengthy engagement period in the same employment; furthermore, the state of burnout demonstrates symptoms of reduced energy, decreased motivation, emotional fatigue and lack of passion for the job (Tshabalala, 2011:23).

- **Physiological symptoms**

Qureshi, *et al.* (2013:765) argue that physical tension is exhibited in sicknesses such as heart disease and an immunity system disorder vulnerable to infections and further describe three phases to stress reaction as:

Phase one – fast moving, speaking fast, eating and drinking quick, functioning at high pace and for long periods of time without exhausting.

Phase two – sleepiness, headaches, anger, stomach symptoms, loss of energy, looking for relief in smoking and alcohol and increased consumption of foodstuff and beverage.

Phase three - stomach ulceration, shivers, chest pain, cardiac incident, depression, nervousness, fatigue and physical and emotional breakdown.

- **Behavioural symptoms**

Job stress is considered the source of dysfunctional behaviour of employees and within the well-being of the organisation. Behavioural signs of job stress are categorised as work interruptions,

forceful behaviour, interferences on non-job related issues, job flight and self-destructive behaviours. Attention should be paid when evaluating whether the behavioural signs of employees are linked to job stressors or are a reaction prompted by elements not relating to work (Cozett 2016:180).

Engle (2012:43) presents symptoms of stress in Table 2.2 as they originate from physical, psychological and behavioural reactions of individuals.

Table 2.2: Symptoms of stress

Physical reactions		
Apathy	Dizzy spells for no reason	Feeling tight-chested for no reason
Disturbing dreams	Frequent indigestion	Muscle stiffness
Difficulty in relaxing	Feeling physically ill	Sexual problems
Psychological reactions		
Awkward feelings when around people	Feeling of frequent criticism	Feeling of helplessness
Being over self-critical	Feeling of general anxiety	Feelings that you are a failure
Feelings of confusion	Feeling of hating yourself	Low self-confidence
Behavioural reactions		
Difficulty in thinking	Increased aggressiveness	Memory loss
Disconnection with other people	Lack of interest in life	Nervous habits
Frantic burst of energy	Little sense of humour	Sleeping disorders

Source: Engle (2012:43)

2.15 CONSEQUENCE OF JOB STRESS

Job stress is inevitable in order to cope with job demands and may be tolerable in the short term to human resources, but in the long-term will cause degeneration of psychological and physical strength of an organisation and eventually leads to job burnout (Heidari *et al.* 2016:6). Job stress has intended and unintended outcomes that interrupt the job performance and customer orientation (Tshabalala 2011:26). Failure of workers to manage psychological and physiological stresses

could harmfully distract their work conduct and approaches within the organisation (Shukla & Srivastava 2016:4).

Nouri and Soltani (2017:102) denote that job stress generates a range of adverse, costly and irreversible consequences that impact on the employees and the organisation. Job stress is the major source of challenges in the health and performance of employees within the organisational setting, resulting in consequences for the workplace. Job stress consequences could be examined with reference to individual and organisational characteristics (Nouri & Soltani 2017:103).

2.15.1 Individual characteristics

Job stress consequences resulting from individual characteristics include:

- Physiological conditions like cardiovascular diseases, heart rate, contamination, skin disorders, high blood pressure, increased cholesterol and high levels of blood sugar
- Psychiatric conditions such as loss of focus, emotional exhaustion, distress, impulsiveness, anxiety, anger and reduced strength, feeling useless, ignoring shared rules and principles, discontent work and life, isolation from realities, loss of confidence and self-enthusiasm
- Negative behaviours such as isolation, tendency to neglect the tasks, low efficiency, lack of enthusiasm, lack of career aspirations, reduced quality and quantity of work, poor decision making, unnecessary delay at work, regular absenteeism from work and reduced employee morale.

2.15.2 Organisational characteristics

Job stress consequences resulting from organisational characteristics include:

- Expenses incurred by the organisation as a result of costs experienced because of decreased performance and production, broken equipment, replacement of employees who resigned, increased healthcare and lawsuit claims against the organisation
- Organisational consequences such as loss of skilled employees, declined relationships with customers, loss of customers, loss of opportunities, tarnished company reputation and image, increased rates of faults and accidents, decreased teamwork, high rate of employees leaving the organisation, quick withdrawal from work, high rate of sick leave and ineffective communication systems.

2.16 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS AND JOB STRESS

Previous studies have cast organisational politics as a hindrance stressor that prevents employees from meeting personal and professional goals (Chang *et al.* 2009:780). A study conducted by Abbas and Raja (2014:159) suggests that perceptions of organisational politics are associated with intensified job stress. Although most researchers established, as initially theorised, that perceptions of organisational politics and stress are associated, the relationships between perceptions of organisational politics and job stress have varied extensively in other studies (Lewis 2017:26). Haq (2011:288) posits that there is a major connection among organisational politics, strain and contentment within the workplace. Hence, organisational politics appears to succeed in challenging and demanding working conditions. As a stressor, organisational politics consists of actions of power and use of authority within an organisational situation (Karatepe 2013:87).

Rashid *et al.* (2013:349) proposes that organisational politics might operate as a possible stressor for workers and could result in job stress. Organisational politics is an endless action that incorporates and works in the organisational environment, consequently, its influence on workers accumulates over time. Haq (2011:293) states that organisational politics is another cause of job stress with dysfunctional effects for both the employee and the organisation. Rashid *et al.* (2013:349) posit that there are some similarities in both organisational politics and job stress constructs, as they are opinion orientated. Job stress is understood to arise from the uncertainty related with organisational politics and the organisational politics is expected to be observed as a risk and/or opportunity (Goodman *et al.* 2011:68). It has also been found that extremely political organisational settings are liable for a range of damaging work-related concerns, involving employee efficiency, intentions to quit and greater stress; consequently, organisational output and success declines (Miller *et al.* 2008:209).

2.17 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a background on the SMEs in South Africa and discussed the definition and characteristics of SMEs. The importance of SMEs to the country as well as growth of SMEs is also elaborated. Secondly, this chapter discussed the literature review of the constructs organisational politics and job stress. The definitions of organisational politics were presented, as well as the impact of organisational politics on the organisation, factors contributing to the organisational politics and outcomes of organisational politics. Thirdly, definitions of job stress, types of job stress, sources and symptoms were explained. Finally, this chapter concentrated on

the consequences and the management of job stress including the relationship between organisational politics and job stress.

The chapter that follows describes the method and design to be used in the research, including the sampling techniques and data gathering methods.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research paradigms, methodology and design to be followed in this study. The following aspects to be applied in this study will be explained, namely the research approach, which is quantitative, sampling design, procedure for data collection, data preparation, data analysis approach consisting of descriptive and inferential statistics, issues of reliability and validity of the measurement instrument and lastly, ethical considerations.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGMS

A paradigm is described as a “set of interrelated assumptions about the social world, which provides a philosophical and conceptual framework for the organised study of that world” (Ponterotto 2005:127). Within the study, a paradigm is chosen to guide the researcher in philosophical assumptions concerning the research and particularly in the selection of instruments, respondents and methods to be deployed in the study (Quinlan 2011a:13). A research paradigm establishes the framework for research. Research paradigms guide the research and researchers incorporate different paradigmatic schemas to conceptualise and classify their research (Antwi & Hamza 2015:2018). According to Sobh and Perry (2006:1195), common research paradigms are positivism, constructivism, critical theory and realism.

3.2.1 Positivism

Positivism is described as an umbrella term for a host of philosophical concepts or views, which contain or intersect with positions such as naturalism, behaviourism and empiricism. Positivism embraces any technique, which applies scientific method to social sciences (Hussain, Elyas & Nasseef 2013:2377). Positivism paradigm characterises the ‘dualism’ idea of mind and substance as distinct objects. It embraces philosophies that view reality as independent of the observer. It also eliminates all non-empirical concerns from its preview. Positivist researchers assume that the world is stable and organised and their task is to measure data, process information and recommend the best appropriate solution to the identified problems (Wahyuni 2012:78). Since the nature of this study is quantitative, the positivism paradigm was adopted.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Research methodology is described as the method, process and procedures to be applied in the course of executing a research design (Berg 2009:5). According to Maphazi (2012:160), research methodology is the plan for collecting data required for a study and examines information to respond to the actual research problem. Research methodology comprises the following components of the research design: research approach, sampling design, method of data collection and measurement instruments, data analysis techniques, validity and reliability and research ethics.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is a strategy or plan for conducting the research (Gashi 2015:43). According to Polit and Beck (2012:802), research design is the researcher's approach for responding to the evaluation of the research hypothesis from the theoretical underpinning to the collection and analysis of the data. In this study, a cross-sectional survey design was utilised, which is a form of the research design that comprises the gathering of information on more than a single item and at a particular point in time in relation to two or more constructs, which are then reviewed to discover forms of connection or relationships (Ruzungunde 2014:53).

3.5 RESEARCH APPROACH

Myers (2009:64) describes a research approach as a technique of investigation, which changes from the fundamental norms to research design and information gathering. The key approaches are as follows: the quantitative, qualitative and mixed method approaches. For this study, the quantitative approach was followed.

3.5.1 Quantitative research

A quantitative approach denotes applying figures and measurements in order to develop and evaluate thoughts or theories (Wilson 2009:137). Additionally, a quantitative approach is the logical gathering and interpretation of statistical information utilised to substantiate or challenge theory (Baden & Major 2013:525). The benefit of quantitative research is that responses from respondents could be measured with a limited amount of questions and comparisons are, therefore, possible and it is probable to generalise the findings (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole 2013:16). The quantitative approach is grounded in the positivist social sciences paradigm, which principally reflects the scientific method of the natural sciences (Makhathini 2015:31). By means of a

quantitative approach, the relationship was examined that determines the presence of organisational politics and job stress among SMEs employees.

3.6 SAMPLING DESIGN

Creswell (2009:145) states that a sampling design can be viewed as an establishment of strategy for quantitative or statistical explanation of developments, behaviours or views of people by studying a section of those people. Leedy and Ormrod (2013:152) explain that sampling depends on the research question(s) that the researcher wants to answer. In addition, sampling design comprises target population, sampling frame, sample size and sampling method.

3.6.1 Target population

The target population can be described as a definite group of individuals or substances for which queries can be examined or opinions acknowledged to produce required information and evidence (Bless *et al.* 2013:394). The target population is made up of people, groups, organisations, officials and enterprises (Quinlan 2011b:206). For the purpose of this research, the target population was composed of SME employees within Matlosana Local District in North West province. Matlosana Local District consists of the towns of Klerksdorp, Orkney, Stilfontein and Hartebeesfontein with the surrounding townships as well as the rural areas surrounding the towns; the district has a total population of 417 282 people (Statistics South Africa 2016:13).

3.6.2 Sample frame

Sample frame is a list that contains all individuals of the population from which a sample is identified or extracted and it is important to the process of sampling (Wiid & Diggins 2009:196). In other words, a sample frame is a database of the full population. For this study, the sample frame was gathered from the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) and the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC).

3.6.3 Sample size

Dube, Roberts-Lombard and Van Tonder (2015:243) define a sample as a portion of a larger population. A sample size is the counting of factors involved in the study (Roets 2013:36). Kumar (2014:233) as well as Gupta (2011:116) posit that the number of subjects in a study is the sample size and refers to the elements included in a research study. The determination of the sample size is influenced by a number of factors, including the research design, the average sample size used in similar studies, the number of variables and proposed methods of data analysis (Malhotra

2010:374). In determining the sample size for this study, the historical evidence method was used where the researcher was guided by past research studies on SMEs. Based on these studies, a sample size of 500 respondents was deemed adequate for this study.

3.6.4 Sample method

Zeeman (2013:48) defines the sampling method or the selection thereof as the way the sample units are selected. Dahlberg and McCaig (2010:175) assert that two methods exist for sampling, namely probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is based on the premise that each member of the population has a definite opportunity to be selected such that sample elements are selected by chance and chance is known for each element that is selected (Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin 2013:398).

On the other hand, non-probability sampling relies on the discretion of the researcher and the degree of sampling error cannot be determined (Tustin, Ligthelm, Martins & Van Wyk 2010:345). A non-probability convenience sampling method was chosen for the purpose of this study since the characteristics of this method have particular appeal to financial and time constraints. Convenience sampling allows a large number of respondents to be interviewed within a relatively short period of time (Malhotra 2010:230). Moreover, the convenience sampling procedure was used in selecting the respondents because of the ease of the researcher's access to the SMEs employees and their willingness to participate in the study.

3.7 PROCEDURES FOR DATA COLLECTION

According to Berndt and Petzer (2011:202), data collection comprises the actual collection of responses from the identified sample. Survey methods are used when the researcher wants to acquire information about the respondents, including their opinions, attitudes and behaviour (McDaniel & Gates 2007:73). The survey method is the most preferred method of primary data collection due to this method being simple to manage, analyse, code and interpret (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler 2008:278). In particular, the survey method is intended to extract responses from a large pre-selected group of respondents (Baines, Fill & Page 2011:134) and can be administered through different methods such as personal interviews, mail surveys, telephone surveys and online interviews (Malhotra & Birks 2007:267). A survey method of collecting data is ideal for this study since a quantitative approach is utilised. For this purpose, a structured questionnaire consisting of a series of questions that respondents answered was used. The use of the questionnaire during the survey generated crucial information useful for improving the response rate.

3.8 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was not conducted because the study made use of validated instruments and the questions were used widely by other researchers. Questions included in sections B, C and D were adapted from Kacmar and Ferris (1991:119). Questions in section E and F were adapted from Parker and Decotiis (1983:132).

3.9 DATA PREPARATION

Data collected through the questionnaires have to be prepared before it can be analysed. Data preparation involves the process of translating data from questionnaires into a format that can be analysed (Chinomona 2015:132). The process of data preparation entails the checking of data for accuracy before it can be entered into the system (Stangor 2014:346). This study made use of the following phases of data preparation, namely editing, coding and cleansing, to confirm that data collected are complete and ready for analysis.

3.9.1 Data editing

Editing is the process of evaluating and correcting data collected in questionnaires to identify errors, omissions, incompleteness, illegibility and inconsistencies to ensure that they are rectified before tabulation (Sam & Sam 2011:178). Editing entails a process of ascertaining that questionnaires are filled out properly and completely (Chinomona 2015:132).

3.9.2 Data coding

Coding is considered the technical procedure through which raw data is converted into symbols and it includes specifying the alternative categories or classes into which responses are to be placed and assigning code numbers to the class (Zikmund & Babin 2010:353). The purpose of coding is to make sense of data and analyse data that are collected (Mgiba 2015:54). Data coding defines the process of grouping and allocating numeric codes to responses of a question or statement (McDaniel & Gates 2013:444).

3.9.3 Data cleansing

Data cleansing is the process of excluding the errors and the irregularities in data and solving the object identity problem (Fourie 2015:85). Data cleansing also considers the ethical issues about privacy and confidentiality of the respondent's particulars, any information that might recognise the respondents and the organisation should be deleted (Wahyuni 2012:75). Data cleansing

consists of defining and determining type of errors, searching and detecting error instances and correcting the uncovered errors (Sarpong & Arthur 2013:14).

3.10 DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH

Data analysis entails defining, grouping and interpreting the data collected into a meaningful form for the purpose of answering the research question (Leedy & Ormrod 2013:97). Collected data will be converted into an Excel spread sheet and the data will then be imported to the SPSS and AMOS statistical software. This software will permit the researcher to execute statistics or rational techniques methodically to define and demonstrate, summarise and review and assess information (Jandagh & Matin 2010:67). Data will be analysed using descriptive statistics, inferential statistics and multivariate analysis.

3.10.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics are used to define the basic features of the data in research (Privitera 2014:5). Descriptive statistics provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Together with simple graphics analysis, they form the foundation of every quantitative analysis of data (Nenzhelele 2017:88). Descriptive statistics consist of frequencies, means and standard deviations, which are normally illustrated in a graph or in a table format or as a summary of statistics (Motaung 2016:57). SPSS will be used in this study to define frequencies, mean and standard deviations.

3.10.1.1 Frequencies

Frequency is a form of descriptive statistic that is applied in summary to display how often characteristics occur in each category of the scale of measurement (Privitera 2014:32). Generally, a frequency table or frequency graph is used to summarise data (Cuff 2011:96). Rubin (2013:34) states that frequencies could be expressed in percentages as well to support interpreting the pattern of scores.

3.10.1.2 Mean

Mean is “a measure of central tendency that measures the average value in a given distribution” (Wilson & MacLean 2011:286). It is the most commonly used measure of central tendency, as it sums up the values of the characteristics and dividing them by the total number of the same characteristics (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner 2012:177).

3.10.1.3 Standard deviation

Standard deviation is the tool that measures the average variance between each score and the distribution of the dataset around the mean (Zikmund & Babin 2013:343). It is the most stable measure of variability and includes every score in its calculation (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen & Walker 2013:129). If the spread of data is low, the sample value will be close to the mean. A higher spread of data indicates that the sample value tends to be too far from the mean (Awang, Muhammad & Sinnaduai 2012:44).

3.10.2 Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

CFA is a form of structural equation modelling that deals specifically with measurement models; that is, the relationships between observed measures or indicators (e.g. test items, test scores, behavioural observation ratings) and latent variables or factors (Brown & Moore 2013:362). The goal of latent variable measurement models (e.g. factor analysis) is to establish the number and nature of factors that account for the variation and co-variation between a set of indicators (Holtzman 2014:1651). A factor is an unobservable variable that influences more than one observed measure and which accounts for the correlations among these observed measures. In other words, the observed measures are inter-correlated since they share a common cause (e.g. they are influenced by the same underlying construct); if the latent construct was partial out, the inter-correlations among the observed measures would be zero. Thus, a measurement model such as CFA provides a more parsimonious understanding of the co-variation among a set of indicators because the number of factors is less than the number of measured variables (Brown & Moore 2013:362).

The purpose of CFA is to calculate factor loadings and reveal the correlation coefficients between variables (Muijs 2011:224). The meanings of factor loadings are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Confirmatory factors analysis

Factor loading analysis		Interpretation
Very high factor loading	(>0.6)	The variable describes the factor very well
High factor loading	(>0.3)	The variable describes the factor well
Low factor loading	(<0.3)	The variable should be ignored

Source: Bradley (2013:321)

In this study, CFA will be utilised to obtain standard regression weights, through various fit statistics being applied to regulate that the model is a suitable fit for the data. The indicators will be chi-square/degrees of freedom, goodness of fit index (GFI), augmented goodness of fit index (AGFI), normed fit index (NFI), incremental fit index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), composite fit index (CFI) and the random measure of standard error approximation (RMSEA) to assess model fit. Table 2 presents the summary of model fit indices, which differ in terms of their purpose (Tarhini, Hone & Liu 2013:193).

Table 3.2: Model fit indices

Fit indices	Acceptable threshold
Chi-square (CMIN/DF)	Tabled chi-square smaller <2.0
Normed fit index (NFI)	Value equal to or greater than 0.90
Increment fit index (IFI)	Values greater than 0.90
Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)	Values greater than 0.90
Comparative fit index (CFI)	Values greater than 0.90
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	Values greater than 0.90
Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	Values greater than 0.90
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	Less than 0.80 with 90% confidence interval

Source: Bagozzi and Yi (2012:15)

3.10.3 Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis is used to describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables (Pallant 2010:129). Through definition, correlation analysis consists of measuring the closeness of the relationship or joint variation between two variables at a time (Churchill & Iacobucci 2010:512). Correlation analysis is applied when a researcher wants to describe the extent to which a variable affects another variable (Kent 2007:363). Correlation analysis establishes the degree to which changes in one variable are associated with changes in another variable and attempts to estimate the magnitude of the changes (Kumar 2014:13; McDaniel & Gates 2010:560). The Pearson's correlation procedure will be utilised for this study. Pearson's correlation coefficient is a measure of the strength of the linear relationship between two variables

(Hauke & Kossowski 2011:88). Table 3.3 presents how the strength of the relationship between the variables would be determined (Turkmen 2013:1011).

Table 3.3: Strength of relationship between variables

Size of r	Interpretation
(0.50 to 1.00)	Strong relationship / high correlation
(0.30 to 0.49)	Moderate relationship / medium correlation
(0.10 to .29)	Weak correlation / relationship
(0.00 to 0.09)	Weak correlation / relationship

Source: Turkmen (2013:1011)

3.10.4 Structural equation modelling (SEM)

Structural equation modelling (SEM) is a common terminology, which has been applied to define a great number of statistical models used to assess the validity of substantive concepts with empirical data. One of the key benefits of SEM is that it can be used to study the relations between latent constructs that are specified by multiple measures. It is also appropriate to both experimental and non-experimental data, as well as cross-sectional data (Lei & Wu 2007:33).

Path analysis is an extension of multiple regressions in that it includes different multiple regression models or equations that are projected concurrently (Lei & Wu 2007:34). This offers a more effective and straight method of modelling mediation, indirect effects and other multifaceted relationships between variables. Path analysis can be regarded as a distinct case of SEM in which structural relationships between observed variables are modelled.

3.11 RELIABILITY

Reliability is described as the degree to which an evaluating instrument is repetitive and still reliable. In others words, through reliability, any measurement process creates the identical findings in recurring trials (Maree 2010:215). Rubin and Babbie (2011:194) assert that reliability is a matter of whether a specific technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, would produce the same outcome each time. Through reliability, consistent findings are achieved and errors and biases are minimised (Hammond & Wellington 2013:150). There are methods commonly applied to test reliability, namely the CR test, the average value extracted (AVE) tests and Cronbach's

alpha reliability test (Maziriri 2016:86). By means of Cronbach's alpha, the internal reliability will be tested in this study (Tavakol & Dennick 2011:53).

3.11.1 Composite reliability (CR) test

CR coefficient is another measure of internal reliability. It provides a solid measure of reliability by taking into account the contribution of each latent factor to each item and each item's error (Mkhatshwa 2015:33). Geldhof, Preacher and Zyphur (2014:74) suggest that if CR is calculated from factor loadings it produces more accurate estimates of reliability. If the measure is interpreted the same as Cronbach alpha, the minimum accepted CR values should be 0.70 (Malhotra 2010:733).

3.11.2 Average value extracted (AVE) tests

Malhotra (2010:725) describes AVE as the variance in the indicators or observed variables that are explained by the latent construct. A value of 0.40 or higher indicates a satisfactory measure (Anderson & Gerbing 1988:411). It is calculated as the sum of the squared factor loadings divided by the sum of the squared factor loadings and summation of error variances (Bewick, Cheek & Ball 2004:131).

3.11.3 Cronbach's alpha reliability test

Cronbach's alpha reliability is one of the most generally used measures of reliability in the social and organisational sciences. Cronbach's alpha reliability defines the reliability of a sum (or average) of q measurements where the q measurements may represent q raters, occasions, alternative forms, or questionnaire/ test items (Bonett & Wright 2014:3). Cronbach's alpha is fundamentally a measure of internal consistency reliability that is the average of all possible split-half coefficients resulting from different splitting of the scale items (Maziriri 2016:86). Internal consistency measures how well the items of the questionnaire measure the same concept (Muijs 2011:63). Thebane (2016:53) asserts that internal consistency reliability refers to the correlation of each item with the sum of all the other items. It is a measure of the internal consistency among the items that determine the average correlation among all the items in question and is used for multi-item scales. A high internal consistency implies a high degree of general applicability across the items within the measurement. Cohen and Golan (2007:506) recommend that the following guidelines for the Cronbach's alpha coefficient should be used:

Table 3.4: Guidelines for Cronbach’s alpha coefficient

Cronbach’s alpha coefficient	Reliability
0.90	very highly reliable
0.80 – 0.90	highly reliable
0.70 – 0.79	reliable, satisfactory
0.60 – 0.69	marginally/minimally reliable

Source: Cohen and Golan (2007:506)

In order to guarantee the precision or accuracy of the questionnaire, the Cronbach alpha coefficient method would be employed in this study to enhance the reliability of the survey instrument (Mgiba 2015:57).

3.12 VALIDITY

Kapondoro, Iwu and Twum-Darko (2015:7) state that validity refers to how well a measurement instrument measures what it is expected to measure. Validity is described as the quality of research outcomes that leads one to expect them to be accurate (Uysal & Madenoğlu 2015:39). According to Punch (2014:239), validity is concerned with the meaningfulness of research elements; it describes the extent to which an instrument accurately measures what it is intended to measure. In quantitative data, validity can be enhanced through careful sampling, appropriate instrumentation and appropriate statistical handling of data (Cohen & Golan 2007:133). There are different types of validity, namely content, construct and convergent validity (Maziriri 2016:87; Royce 2008:153).

3.12.1 Content validity

Kumar (2014:214) refers to content validity as the extent to which statements or questions represent the issue they are supposed to measure. In order to measure content validity, the researcher would compare the content of the items in the measuring instrument with the appropriate content field for the construct being measured (Wagner *et al.* 2012:81). Content validity was established through a comprehensive and appropriate literature review, examination of prior instruments and consulting academic experts to confirm the relevance of items/statements covered in the questionnaire.

3.12.2 Construct validity

Construct validity is the degree to which the conclusions of the research support the theory that the research project is based on (McBurney & White 2009:130). The instrument in construct validity measures an unseen (not tangible) characteristic, yet is presumed to exist on the basis of people's behavioural patterns (Ary *et al.* 2014:31.). Construct validity focuses on how well a measure conforms to theoretical expectations (Punch 2014:240). McBurney and White (2009:130) posit that to determine whether the instrument produces data that have construct validity, the instrument should measure the construct it is designed to measure; it should also predict the findings that are related to the theoretical construct it is designed to measure. Construct validity was determined in this study through CFA.

3.12.3 Convergent validity

According to Moutinho and Hutcheson (2011:327), convergent validity is the degree to which items, which make up the scale, correlate in the same direction with other instruments measuring the same construct. In principle, an instrument is said to have high convergent validity when it yields comparable findings to other tested instruments that measure the same constructs in the same field (Johnson & Christensen 2010:148). In this study, a correlation analysis was used to establish convergent validity of the variables in Section B (GB), Section C (GA), Section D (PP), Section E (TS) and Section F (AX).

3.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics is defined as “a branch of applied ethics focused on the specific contexts of planning, conduction, communicating and following up research” (Punch 2014:36). Ethics relate to two groups of people, namely those conducting research, who should be aware of their obligations and responsibilities and the respondents, who have basic rights that should be protected. Ethics denotes the part of philosophy that deals with how people should live with thoughts such as right and wrong (Fieser & Pojman 2012:1). In other words, ethics are values and rules that explain the circumstances under which the study will be undertaken (Oates, Kwiatkowski & Coulthard 2010:4). Ethical issues to be implemented for this research will be as follows:

- The researcher requested permission from the owner/manager of the enterprise to conduct the study.
- The researcher informed the respondents about the purpose of the survey.

- Involvement in the research was voluntary. Respondents' were not be compelled to contribute in this research.
- The respondents' confidentiality was respected.
- The questionnaires did not include the names of the respondents. The privacy of the respondents was upheld through the research.
- Private information from the respondents was not disclosed to any person.
- Data was analysed as an aggregate and not linked to any respondents.

3.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter described the research paradigms, methodology and design deployed in this study and the study is quantitative in nature. Procedure for data collection, data preparation and data analysis approach to be used are outlined. The reliability and validity of the measurement instrument, including the ethical considerations concerned with this study, will be addressed. A survey questionnaire will be used for collecting data from the SME employees in Matlosana Local District. The next chapter will present data analysis, interpretations and the evaluations of the research findings of data collected from the distributed questionnaires.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to determine the influence of organisational politics on job stress among SME employees in Matlosana Local District. This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the study findings. Initially, an analysis was conducted on the demographic profile and employees perceptions of organisational politics and job stress in the organisation. In addition, the following methods, CFA and structural equation modelling (SEM) were utilised to examine the fit indices and to test the hypothesised relationships among the study constructs.

4.2 RESPONSE RATE

Table 4.1: The response rate

Respondents	No of questionnaires distributed	Number returned	Response rate
SME employees	550	431	78%

Table 4.1 presents the response rate of the study. A total of 550 questionnaires were distributed to SME employees and 431 questionnaires were returned. The response rate was 78 percent. A pilot study was not conducted because the study made use of validated instruments and the questions had been used widely by other researchers.

4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

This section presents a descriptive analysis of the demographic information of the respondents. The information includes the gender, marital status, age, race, language, sector and the number of employees. This study made use of tables and graphs to provide the analysis of the items included in Section A of the questionnaire.

4.3.1 Respondents' gender

The frequencies and percentages for the respondents' gender are provided in Table 5.2 and in Figure 4.1.

Table 4.2: Frequencies and percentages of gender

Variable	Category	N	n	%
Gender	Male	431	238	55
	Female	431	193	45

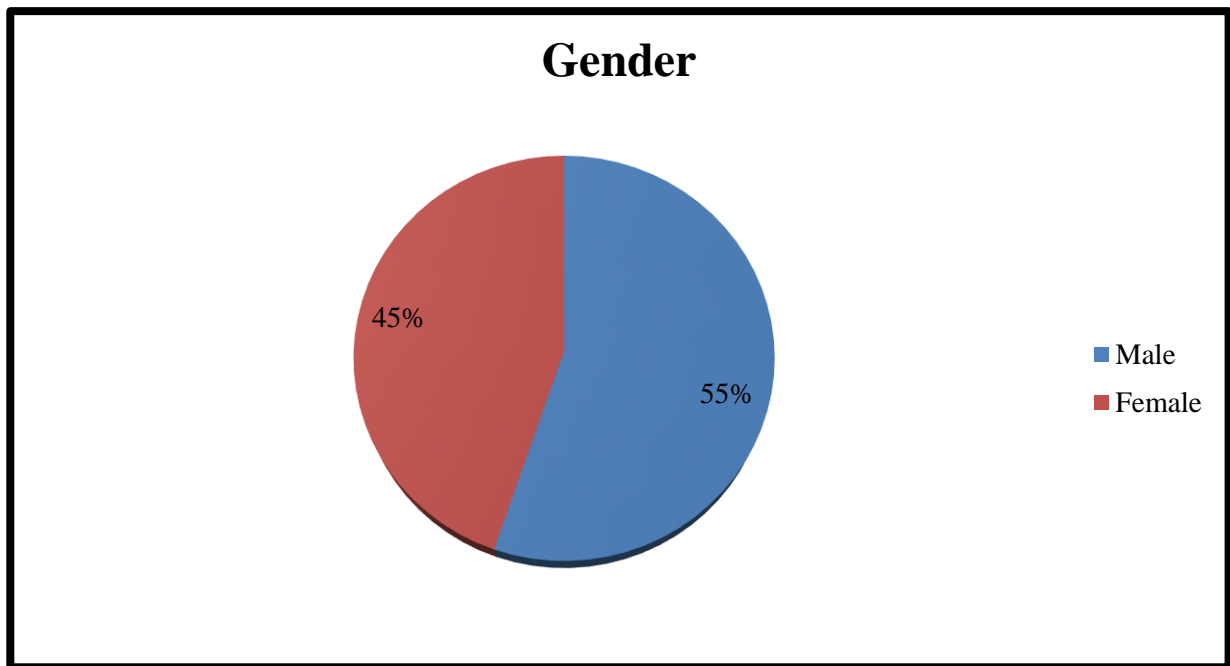


Figure 4.1: Gender profile of the respondents

Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 indicate the gender of the respondents who participated in this study. The findings show that the majority of the respondents were male (55%; n=238) compared to females (45%; n=193).

4.3.2 Respondents marital status

The frequencies and percentages for the respondents' marital status are provided in Table 4.4 and in Figure 4.2.

Table 4.3: Frequencies and percentages of marital status

Variable	Category	N	n	%
Marital status	Single	431	291	68
	Married	431	103	24
	Divorced	431	23	5
	Widowed	431	14	3

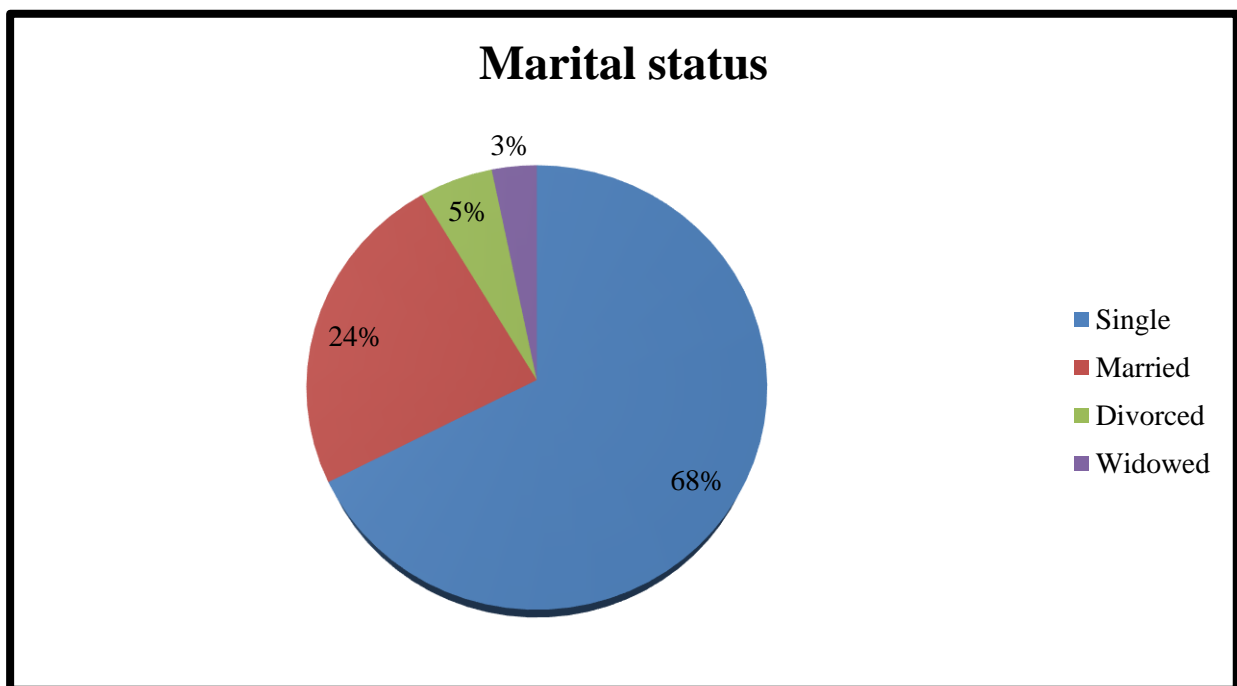


Figure 4.2: Marital status of respondents

Table 4.3 and Figure 4.2 indicate the marital status of the respondents who participated in this study. The findings reveal that 68 percent (n=291) of the respondents are single, 24 percent (n=103) of the respondents are married, 5 percent of the respondents (n=23) are divorced and 3 percent (n=14) are widowed. The findings indicate that the marital status of the respondents who participated in this study is dominated by single employees. Single employees have probabilities to leave for greener pastures because of being young and ambitious, not like the married employees who are generally pleased with the status quo (Chinomona 2015: 149).

4.3.3 Respondents age

The frequencies and percentages for the respondents' age are provided in Table 4.4 and in Figure 4.3.

Table 4.4: Frequencies and percentages of age category

Variable	Category	N	n	%
Age	Under 30 years	431	154	36
	30-39 years	431	174	40
	40-49 years	431	73	17
	50-59 years	431	21	5
	60 years and over	431	8	2

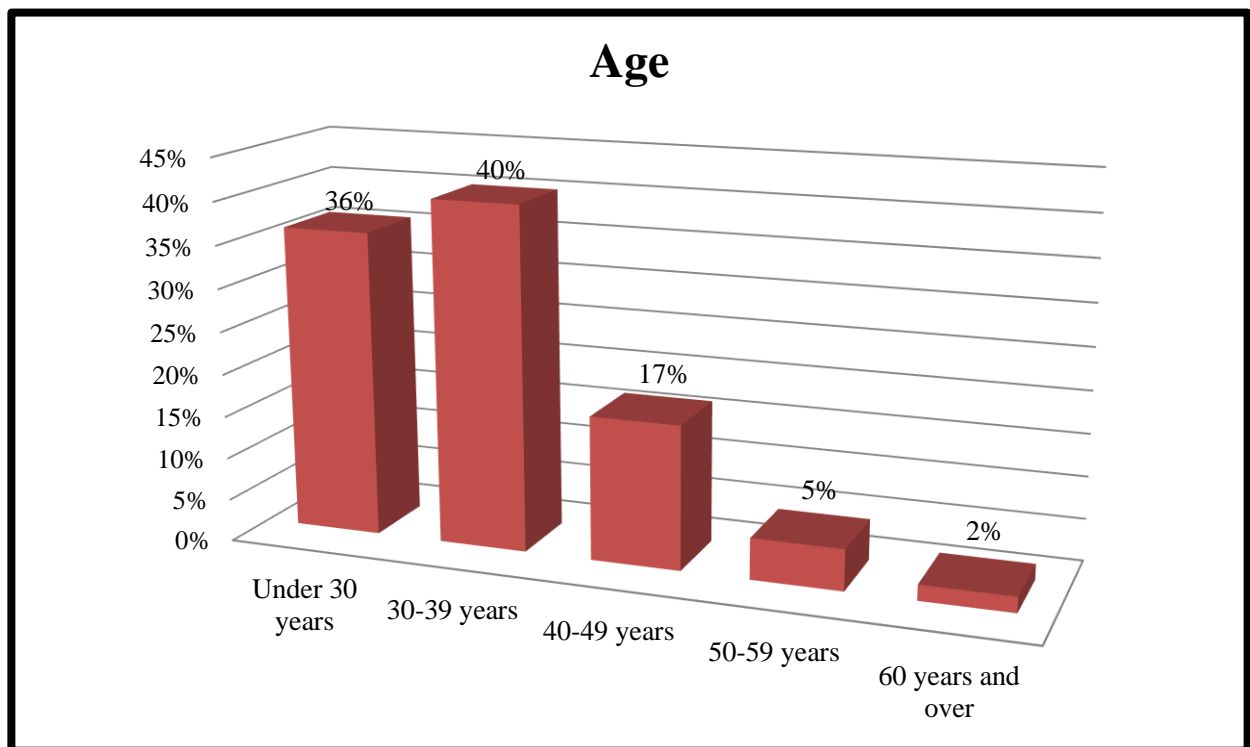


Figure 4.3: Age category of respondents

The respondents' ages ranged from under 30 years to 60 years and above. The majority of respondents were under 30 years (40%; n=174) followed those employees who were between 30 and 39 years (36%; n=154). Around (17%; n=73) of the respondents were aged between 40 and 49 years. The respondents aged between 50 and 59 years represent (5%; n=21) followed by (2%; n=8) of the age group of 60 years and above. The literature on the SMEs employees indicates that this sector is dominated by employees aged between 16 years and 39 years and it is attributed to factors such as unemployment and willingness to assist their families financially (Maloka 2013: 71).

4.3.4 Respondents' race

The frequencies and percentages for the respondents' race are provided in Table 4.5 and in Figure 4.4.

Table 4.5: Frequencies and percentages on the respondents' race

Variable	Category	N	n	%
Race	Black	431	349	81
	Coloured	431	34	7.9
	Indian	431	24	5.6
	White	431	23	5.3
	Other	431	1	0.2

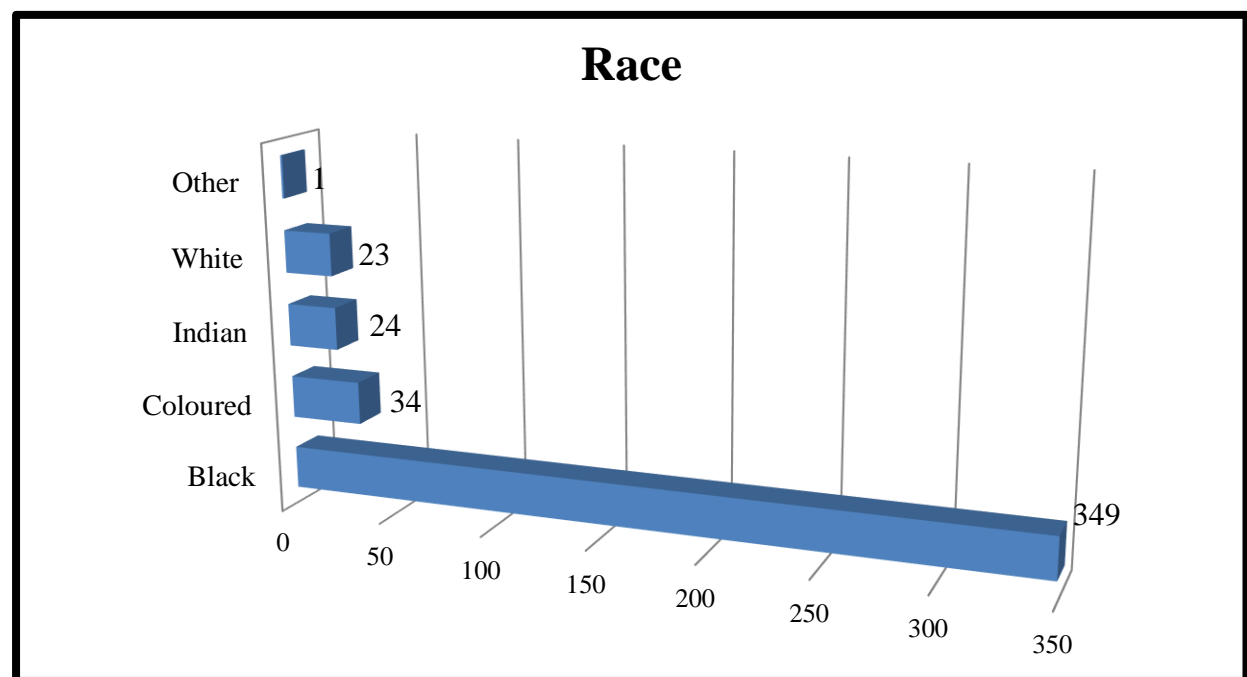


Figure 4.4: Race of respondents

Table 4.5 and Figure 4.4 indicate the race of the respondents who participated in this study. The findings present that the majority of respondents (81%; n=349) are Black, followed by 7.9 percent (n=34) Coloureds, 5.6 percent (n=24) Indians, 5.3 percent (n=23) White and 0.2 percent (n=1) of the respondent indicated other as their race.

4.3.5 Respondents' language

The frequencies and percentages for the respondents' language are provided in Table 4.6 and in Figure 4.5.

Table 4.6: Frequencies and percentages on the respondents' language

Variable	Category	N	n	%
Language	English	431	44	10
	Setswana	431	155	36
	Afrikaans	431	46	11
	Sesotho	431	80	19
	isiXhosa	431	57	13
	Sepedi	431	4	1
	isiZulu	431	16	4
	Other	431	29	7

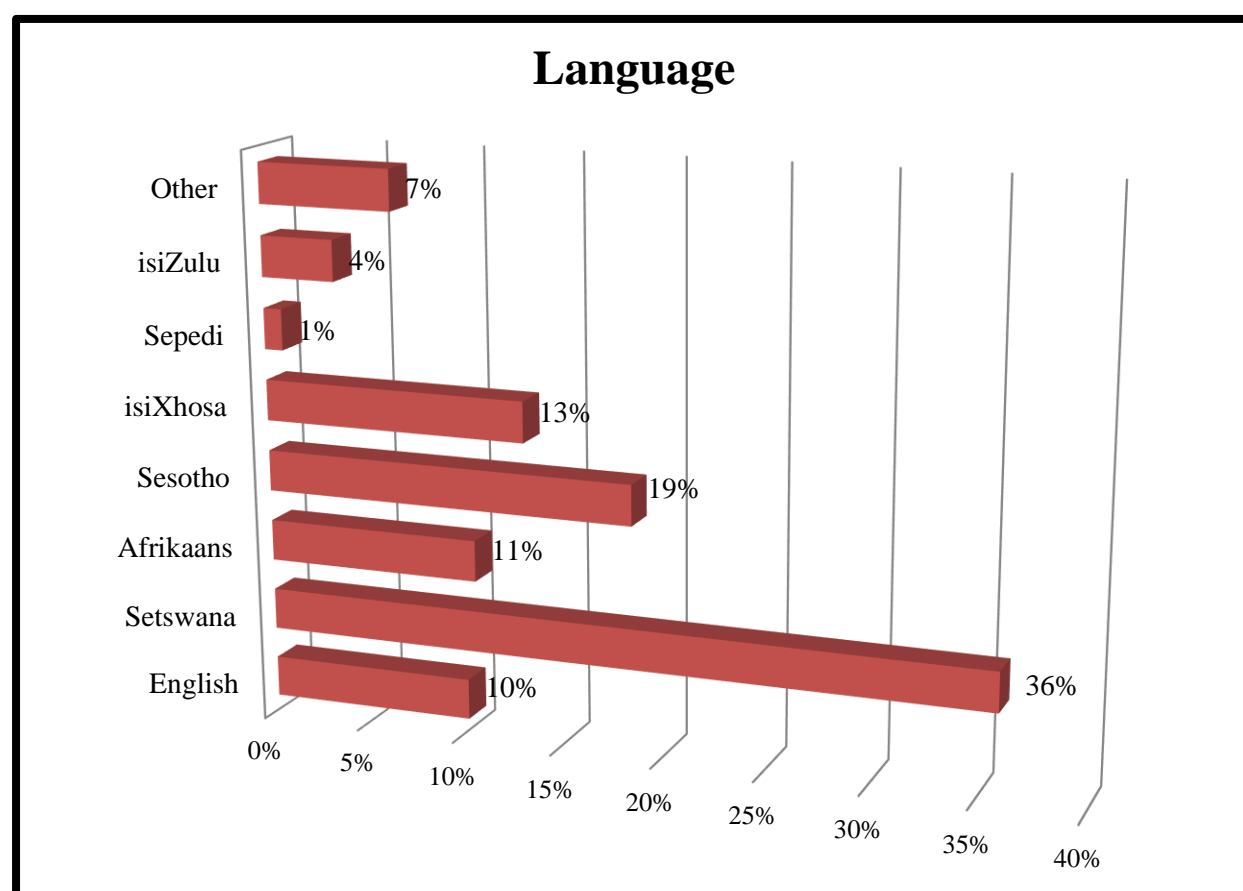


Figure 4.5: Language of respondents

The findings show that the majority of the respondents speak Setswana (36%; n=155) followed by those who speak Sesotho (19%; n=80), isiXhosa (13%; n=57), Afrikaans (11%; n=46), English (10%; n=44), other language (7%; n=29), isiZulu (4%; n=16) and Sepedi (1%; n=4). In support of the findings, according to statistics South Africa, the majority of the people in Matlosana local District are Tswana speaking (Statistics South Africa 2016).

4.3.6 Respondents' sector

The frequencies and percentages for the respondents' sector are provided in Table 4.7 and in Figure 4.6.

Table 4.7: Frequencies and percentages on the sector

Variable	Category	N	n	%
Sector	Agriculture	431	34	8
	Catering, Accommodation & other trade	431	87	20.2
	Community, Social & Personal Services	431	45	10.4
	Construction	431	14	3.2
	Electricity, Gas & Water	431	0	0
	Finance & Business Services	431	36	8.4
	Manufacturing	431	7	1.6
	Mining & Quarrying	431	1	0.2
	Retail and Motor & Repairs Services	431	166	38.5
	Transport, Storage & Communication	431	18	4.2
	Wholesale Trade, Commercial Agents & Allied Services	431	23	5.3
	Other	431	0	0

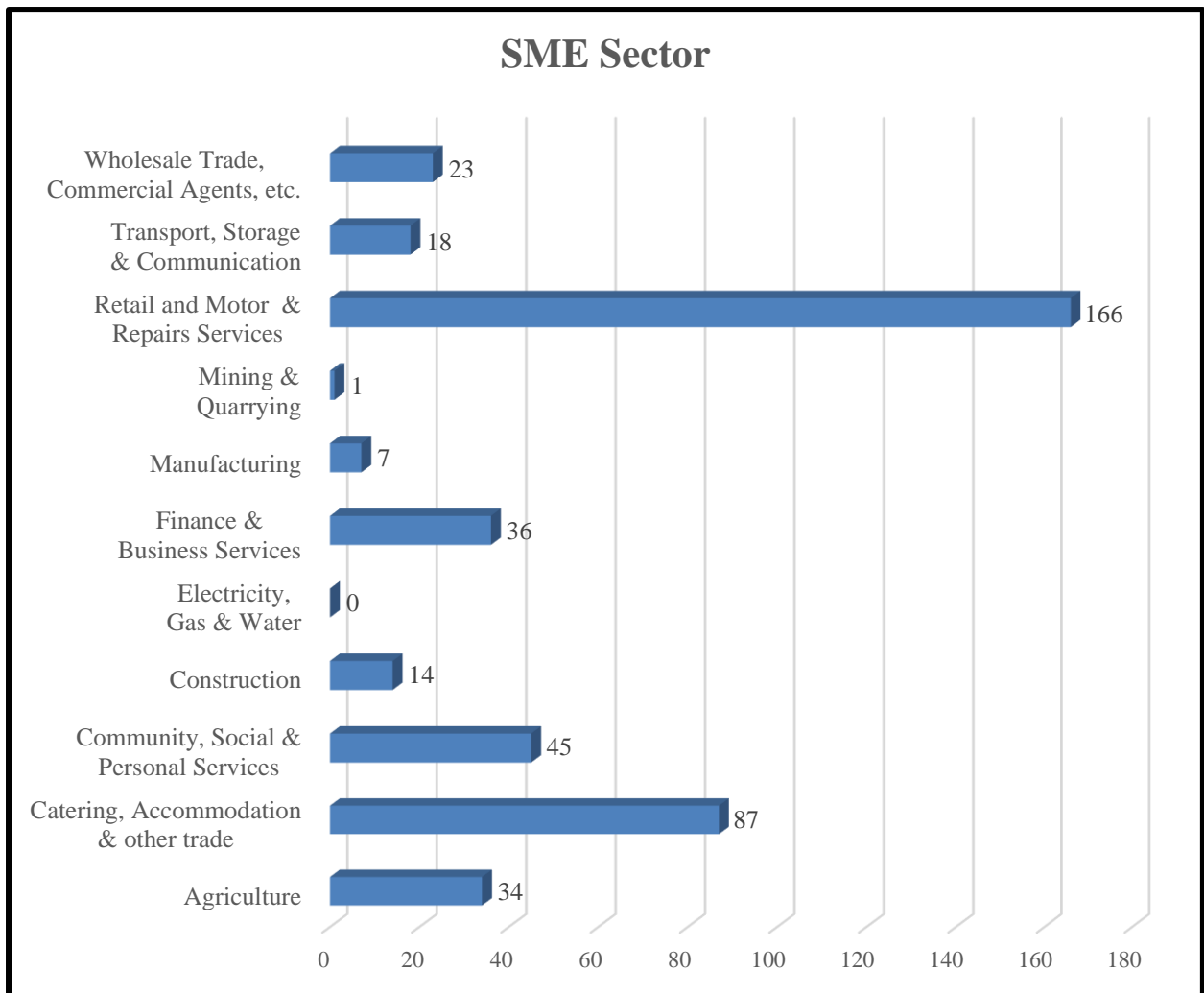


Figure 4.6: SME sector

Table 4.7 and Figure 4.6 indicate the sector of the respondents who participated in this study. The findings indicate that the majority of the respondents (38.5% n=166) were in retail, motor and repair services sector, followed by 20.2 percent (n=87) in catering, accommodation and other trade sector. 10.4 percent (n=45) were in community, social and personal services sector, 8.4 percent (n=36) in the finance and business services sector, 7.9 percent (n=34) in agricultural sector, 5.3 percent (n=23) in the wholesale trade, commercial agents and allied services, 4.2 percent (n=18) in the transport, storage and communications sector, 3.2 percent (n=14) in the construction sector, 1.6 percent (n=7) in manufacturing, 0.2 percent (n=1) in mining and quarrying 0% (n=0) electricity, gas and water and other sectors 0% (n=0).

4.3.7 Number of employees

The frequencies and percentages of the number of employees are provided in Table 4.8 and in Figure 4.7.

Table 4.8: Frequencies and percentages on the number of employees

Variable	Category	N	n	%
Number of employees	<5	431	177	41
	<20	431	220	51
	<50	431	28	6
	<200	431	6	1

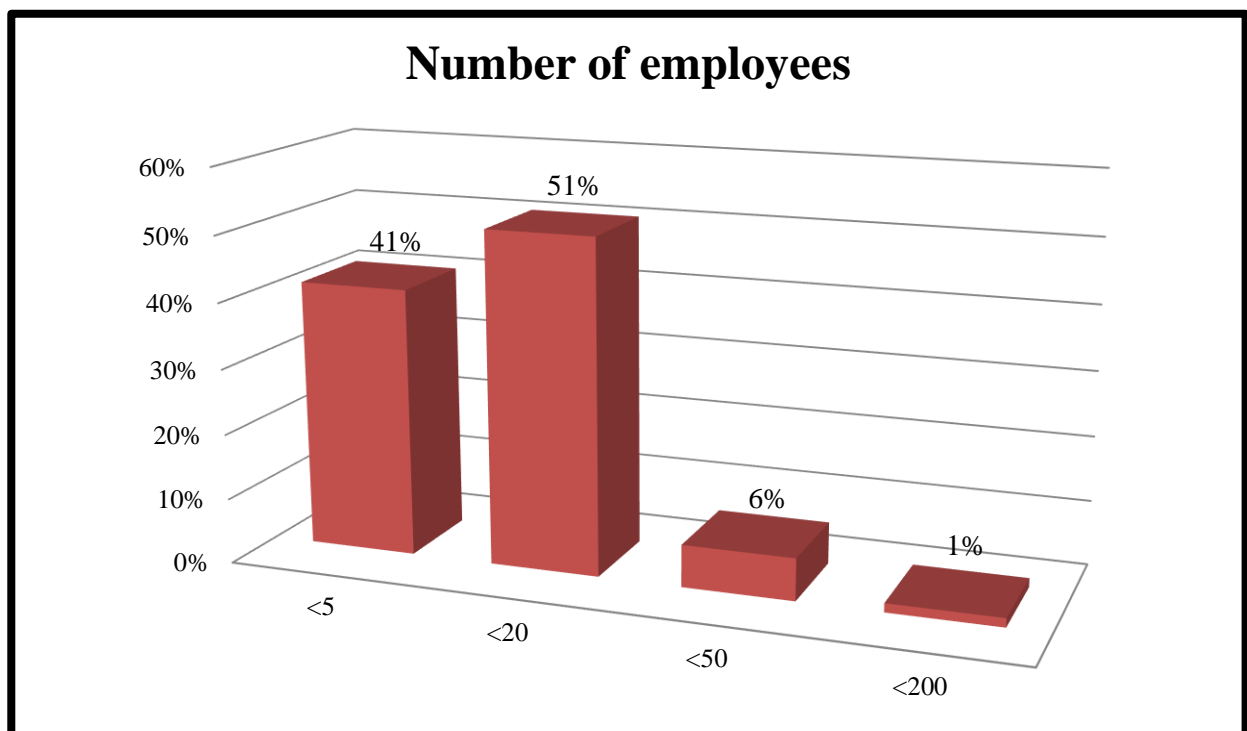


Figure 4.7: Number of employees

The findings presented in Table 4.8 and Figure 4.7 reveal that the majority of the SMEs employ less than 20 employees (51%; n=220) followed by those SMEs who employ less than 5 employees (41%; n=177). Furthermore, the rest of enterprises employ less than 50 employees (6%; n=28) and less than 200 employees (1%; n=6). In small enterprise research, the number of employees is one of the criteria commonly used to measure the size of the SMEs (Nieman & Nieuwenhuizen 2014:11). The findings show that many of the SMEs who participated in this study employ less than 20 employees (51%; n=220). The findings are consistent with the findings of the study by Sandada (2012:193) who found that the majority of the SMEs are small- rather than medium-sized.

4.4 PERCEPTIONS OF RESPONDENTS TOWARDS RESEARCH CONSTRUCTS

In the following section the perceptions of respondent towards organisational politics and job stress in SMEs is analysed.

4.4.1 Frequencies and percentages towards general political behaviour

The perceptions of respondents towards general political behaviour are presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Frequencies and percentages of general political behaviour

Item	Description	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Moderately agree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean score	Standard deviation
GB1	There is one group that always gets their way	96 (22.3)	104 (24.1)	73 (16.9)	108 (25.1)	50 (11.6)	2.80	1.345
GB2	There is one influential group no one crosses	84 (19.5)	130 (30.2)	62 (14.4)	106 (24.6)	49 (11.4)	2.78	1.318
GB3	Policy changes help only a few	99 (23.0)	99 (23.0)	84 (19.5)	96 (22.3)	53 (12.3)	2.78	1.349
GB4	Employees build themselves up by tearing others down	96 (22.3)	126 (29.0)	56 (13.0)	97 (22.5)	56 (13.0)	2.75	1.367
GB5	Favouritism not merit gets people ahead	83 (19.3)	109 (25.3)	88 (20.4)	87 (20.2)	64 (14.8)	2.86	1.343
GB6	Employees don't speak up for fear of retaliation	85 (19.7)	86 (20.0)	67 (15.5)	116 (26.9)	77 (17.9)	3.03	1.406

Table 4.9 depicts that the majority of the respondents (46.4%; n=200) were in disagreement that in their organisation “there is one group that always gets their way, in terms of their political behaviour”, while 36.7 percent (n=158) agreed with the statement. A small percentage (16.9%; n=73) of the respondents moderately agreed to the statement.

In item GB2, the majority of the respondents (49.7%; n=214) were in disagreement that “there is one influential group no one crosses in their organisation”. In the same statement, 36 percent (n=155) of the respondents were in agreement, followed by 14.4 percent (n=62) who moderately agreed. Item GB3 stated, “policy changes help only a few in their organisation” and 46 percent (n=198) of the respondents disagreed with the statement. In addition, 34.6 percent (n=149) of the

respondents were in agreement, whereas 19.5 percent (n=84) moderately agreed with the statement.

In the statement, “employees build themselves up by tearing others down”, the majority of the respondents (51.3%; n=222) were in disagreement with the statement, followed by 35.5 percent (n=153) of the respondents who were in agreement with the statement. A small percentage of the respondents (13%; n=56) moderately agreed in the statement. The majority of the respondents (44.6%: n=192) were in disagreement that in their organisation “favouritism not merit gets people ahead”, whereas 35 percent (n=151) of the respondents disagreed and about 20.4 percent (n=88) of the respondents moderately agreed with the statement. Regarding the statement “employees don’t speak up for fear of retaliation”, 44.8 percent (n=193) of the respondents agreed, while 39.7 percent (n=171) of the respondents disagreed, followed by 15.5 percent (n=67) of the respondents who moderately agreed to the statement.

Table 4.9 further presents mean scores for the six items, which ranged from 2.75 to 3.03. The statement, “*employees don’t speak up for fear of retaliation*” ($\bar{x} = 3.03$: $SD=1.406$) indicates that employees fear to speak up if they find something politically incorrect.

The findings indicate that general political behaviour moderately exists in SMEs. In agreement with the findings, Ugwu and Onyishi (2013:3572) state that general political behaviour to some extent is a norm in most organisations and considered to be a way of life. These findings are in line with the study undertaken by Wangui and Muathe (2014:160) who found that where there is uncertainty within an organisation, employees will embrace the uncertainty as a chance to be involved in political behaviour. Additionally, political behaviours could also exist in environments where there is a lack of valued resources. Lack of valued resources such as increment, budget and work space causes competition between employees and groups, which, in turn, result in organisational politics (Rashid *et al.* 2013:349). A study by Ene (2014:94) concludes that a certain level of political behaviour is both moral and essential, as long as it does not directly harm anyone.

4.4.2 Frequencies and percentages towards the get ahead construct

The perceptions of the respondents towards get ahead are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Frequencies and percentages of get ahead

Item	Description	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Moderately agree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean score	Standard deviation
GA1	Promotions go to top performers	96 (22.3)	85 (19.7)	66 (15.3)	110 (25.5)	74 (17.2)	2.96	1.426
GA2	Rewards come to hard workers	77 (17.9)	77 (17.9)	73 (16.9)	125 (29.0)	79 (18.3)	3.12	1.381
GA3	Employees are encouraged to speak out	65 (15.1)	62 (14.4)	76 (17.6)	139 (32.3)	89 (20.6)	3.29	1.347
GA4	There is no place for 'yes men' here	62 (14.4)	58 (13.5)	101 (23.5)	124 (28.8)	86 (20.0)	3.26	1.315

Table 4.10 presents that the majority of the respondents (42.7%; n=184) agreed that in their organisation “promotions go to top performers”, while 42 percent (n=181) of the respondents were in disagreement and 15.3 percent (n=66) of the respondents moderately agreed.

With regard to the item, “rewards come to hard workers”, the majority of the respondents (47.3%; n=205) were in agreement, while 35.8 percent (n=154) of the respondents disagreed, followed by 16.9 percent (n=73) of the respondents who moderately agreed with the statement. In item GA3, the majority of the respondents (52.9%; n=228) were in agreement that “employees are encouraged to speak out”, in their organisation, while 29.5 percent (n=127) of the respondents disagreed, followed by 17.6 percent (n=76) of the respondents who moderately agreed. The majority of the respondents (48.8%; n=210) were in agreement that “there is no place for ‘yes men’ here”, while 27.9 percent (n=120) of the respondents disagreed and 23.5 percent (n=101) of the respondents moderately agreed with the statement.

Table 4.10 further depicts mean scores for the four items, which ranged from 2.96 to 3.29. The statement, “employees are encouraged to speak out” scored the maximum mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.29$; SD=1.347).

These findings denote that get ahead construct is moderately observed by the employees in the organisation. To support the above, a study conducted by Adebuseyi, Olasupo and Idehen (2013:56) asserts that get head is perceived mostly by the employees within the organisation. This means that the workers believe that they have to agree with and approve of whatever the influential people do. Moreover, get ahead is about conflicting interest in the organisation; conflict is an important component in crafting the political environment. The lack of scarce resources and unavailability of conflict in the existence of competing interests creates the fertile environment

for get ahead (Adebusuyi *et al.* 2013:57). Consonant with the findings, when get ahead is perceived as high, the workers develop feelings of ineffectiveness and lack of success (Makhdoom *et al.* 2015:406).

4.4.3 Frequencies and percentages towards pay and promotion policies

The perceptions of respondents towards pay and promotion policies are presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Frequencies and percentages of pay and promotion policies

Item	Description	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Moderately agree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean score	Standard deviation
PP1	Pay and promotion policies are not politically applied	70 (16.2)	53 (12.3)	89 (20.6)	140 (32.5)	79 (18.3)	3.24	1.332
PP2	Pay and promotion decisions are consistent with policies	54 (12.5)	85 (19.7)	96 (22.7)	123 (28.5)	73 (16.9)	3.18	1.278
PP3	Pay and promotion policies are applied to certain employees only	91 (21.1)	91 (21.1)	94 (21.8)	95 (22.0)	60 (13.9)	2.87	1.349
PP4	Pay and promotion policies are fairly applied to employees	66 (15.3)	62 (14.4)	99 (23.0)	124 (28.8)	80 (18.6)	3.21	1.322

Table 4.11 illustrates that the majority of the respondents (50.8%; n=219) were in agreement that “*pay and promotion policies are not politically applied*”, in their organisation, while 28.5 percent (n=123) of the respondents disagreed, 20.6 percent (n=89) of the respondents moderately agreed to the item. Regarding item PP2 titled “*pay and promotion decisions are consistent with policies*” in their organisation, most of the respondents (45.4%; n=196) were in agreement with the statement, 32.2 percent (n=139) of the respondents were in disagreement, followed by 22.7 percent (n=96) of the respondents who moderately agreed to the statement.

With regard to item PP3, “*pay and promotion policies are applied to certain employees only*” in their organisation, most of the respondents (42.2%; n=182) were in disagreement, followed by 35.9 percent (n=155) of the respondents who agreed while 21.8 percent (n=94) of the respondents moderately agreed with the statement. The analysis of the statement, “*pay and promotion policies are fairly applied to employees*”, reveals that the majority of the population (47.4%; n=204) were in agreement with the statement, while 29.7 percent (n=128) of the respondents were in disagreement and 23 percent (n=99) of the respondents moderately agreed with the statement.

Additionally, Table 4.11 shows mean scores of the four items, which ranged from 2.87 to 3.24. The statement, “*pay and promotion policies are not politically applied*”, scored the highest mean score of ($\bar{x} = 3.24$: $SD=1.332$).

In support of the above findings that employees moderately agree that pay and promotion policies are of a political nature in organisation, a study by Wangui and Muathe (2014:158) proposed that organisational politics often affects normal organisational processes, for example, decision making and pay and promotion decisions. According to Ene (2014:96), decisions regarding pay and promotion policies have constantly been found to be of a political nature in organisations. The opportunity for progression or promotion instigates employees to contend for limited resources and attempt to influence the decision outcome positively. Furthermore, unfair structure of pay and promotion also causes job stress and when workers observe that the workplace is biased in its pay and promotion structure because of organisational politics, it is expected for workers to develop symptoms of job stress (Makhdoom *et al.* 2015:402). The findings of a study by Makhdoom *et al.* (2015:402) proposed that when employees are operating in a workplace that is high in politics, irrational decisions and unfair pay and promotion policies develop feelings of dissatisfaction among them.

4.4.4 Frequencies and percentages towards time stress

The opinions of respondents towards time stress are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Frequencies and percentages of time stress

Item	Description	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Moderately agree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean score	Standard deviation
TS1	Working here makes it hard to spend enough time with my family	84 (19.5)	100 (23.2)	55 (12.8)	113 (26.2)	79 (18.3)	3.01	1.418
TS2	I spend so much time at work, I can't see the forest for the trees	66 (15.3)	114 (26.5)	56 (13.0)	119 (27.6)	76 (17.6)	3.06	1.364
TS3	Working here leaves little time for other activities	75 (17.4)	90 (20.9)	67 (15.5)	121 (28.1)	78 (18.1)	3.09	1.381
TS4	I frequently get the feeling I am married to the company	82 (19.0)	103 (23.9)	69 (16.0)	91 (21.1)	86 (20.0)	2.99	1.419

Item	Description	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Moderately agree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean score	Standard deviation
TS5	I have too much work and too little time to do it in	75 (17.4)	107 (24.8)	84 (19.5)	103 (23.9)	62 (14.4)	2.93	1.326
TS6	I sometimes dread the telephone ringing at home because the call might be job related	114 (26.5)	107 (24.8)	60 (13.9)	88 (20.4)	62 (14.4)	2.71	1.417
TS7	I feel like I never have a day off	88 (20.4)	89 (20.6)	73 (16.9)	99 (23.0)	82 (19.0)	3.00	1.421
TS8	Too many people at my level in the company get burned out by job demands	93 (21.6)	85 (19.7)	108 (25.1)	91 (21.1)	54 (12.5)	2.83	1.322

Table 4.12 reflects that most of the respondents (44.5%; n=192) were in agreement with the assertion that “*working here makes it hard to spend enough time with my family*” while 42.7 percent (n=184) of the respondents were in disagreement and 12.8 percent (n=55) of the respondents moderately agreed with the statement.

With regard to the analysis of item TS2, “*I spend so much time at work, I can’t see the forest for the trees*”, the majority of the respondents (45.2%; n=195) were in agreement with the statement, followed by 41.8 percent (n=180) of the respondents who disagreed, while 13 percent (n=56) of the respondents moderately agreed. The majority of the respondents (46.2%; n=195) were in agreement that “*working here leaves little time for other activities*” while 38.3 percent (n=165) of the respondents disagreed and 15.5 percent (n=67) moderately agreed.

Item TS4 stated, “*I frequently get the feeling I am married to the company*”, the majority of the respondents (42.9%; n=185) were in disagreement, whereas 41.1 percent (n=177) of the respondents agreed with the statement and only 16 percent (n=69) of the respondents moderately agreed with the statement. Furthermore, most of the respondents (42.2%; n=182) were in disagreement that “*I have too much work and too little time to do it in*” while 38.3 percent (n=165) of the respondents agreed, while 19.5 percent (n=84) moderately agreed with the statement.

With regard to item TS6, “*I sometimes dread the telephone ringing at home because the call might be job related*”, the majority of the respondents (51.3%; n=221) were in disagreement, while 34.8 percent (n=150) of the respondents agreed and 13.9 percent (n=60) of the respondents moderately agreed to the statement. With regard to the statement, “*I feel like I never have a day off*”, 42 percent (n=181) of the respondents were in agreement, while 41 percent (n=177) of the respondents

disagreed, followed by 16.9 percent (n=73) of the respondents who moderately agreed. In the analysis of the statement, “*too many people at my level in the company get burned out by job demands*”, the majority of the respondents (41.3%; n=178) were in disagreement with the statement, while 33.6% (n=145) of the respondents agreed and 25.1 percent (n=108) of the respondents moderately agreed to the statement.

Table 4.12 shows mean scores of the eight items, which ranged from 2.71 to 3.09. The statement, “*working here leaves little time for other activities*”, received the highest mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.09$: SD=1.381).

The findings of this study indicate that employees experience time stress. In agreement with the findings, Heidari *et al.* (2016: 6) maintain that work demand, hours of work, technological challenges and varying working arrangements are the key sources of time stress in employees. A study conducted by Engle (2012:19) further supports that elements inherent to the work, such as working circumstances, shift work, the risk associated with the work and work pressure contribute to time stress. The effects of time stress experienced by employees have an impact on the organisation and become evident through psychological, physiological and behavioural problems (Maxwell 2012:43).

4.4.5 Frequencies and percentages towards anxiety

The opinions of respondents towards anxiety are presented in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Frequencies and percentages of anxiety

Item	Description	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Moderately agree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean score	Standard deviation
AX1	I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job	100 (23.2)	98 (22.7)	67 (15.5)	101 (23.4)	65 (15.1)	2.84	1.405
AX2	My job gets to me more than it should	66 (15.3)	115 (26.7)	70 (16.2)	103 (23.9)	77 (17.9)	3.02	1.355
AX3	There are many times when my job drives me right up the wall	88 (20.4)	88 (20.4)	82 (19.0)	107 (24.8)	66 (15.3)	2.94	1.372
AX4	Sometimes when I think about my job I get a tight feeling in my chest	111 (25.8)	114 (26.5)	70 (16.2)	84 (19.5)	52 (12.1)	2.66	1.363

Item	Description	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Moderately agree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean score	Standard deviation
AX5	I feel guilty when I take time off from job	138 (32.0)	99 (23.0)	53 (12.3)	75 (17.4)	66 (15.3)	2.61	1.466

Table 4.13 reflects that the majority of the respondents (45.9%; n=198) were in disagreement with the statement: “*I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job*”, followed by 38.5 percent (n=166) of the respondents who agreed with the statement while only 15.5 percent (n=67) of the respondents moderately agreed.

In the same table, 42 percent (n=181) of the respondents disagreed with the assertion “*my job gets to me more than it should*”, while 41.8 percent (n=180) were in agreement and 16.2 percent (n=70) of the respondents moderately agreed to the statement. Moreover, on the statement, “*there are many times when my job drives me right up the wall*”, the majority of the respondents (40.8%; n=176) were in disagreement, while 40.1 percent (n=173) were in agreement and 19 percent (n=82) of the respondents moderately agreed to the statement.

In item AX4, “*sometimes when I think about my job I get a tight feeling in my chest*”, the majority of the respondents (52.3%; n=225) were in disagreement with the item, whereas 31.6 percent (n=136) agreed, 16.2 percent (n=70) moderately agreed with the statement. Item AX5, “*I feel guilty when I take time off from job*”, reveals that the majority of the respondents (55%; n=237) were in disagreement, while 32.7 percent (n=141) agreed and 12.3 percent (n=53) of the respondents moderately agreed with the statement.

Table 4.13 shows mean scores of the five items, which ranged from 2.61 to 3.02. The statement, “*my job gets to me more than it should*”, received the highest mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.02$; SD=1.355).

The findings of this study show that the SME employees do not experience anxiety. The findings are supported by the study conducted by Ofori (2014:92), who states that if workers possess political skills, they are able to operate within a politically infused work environment and express low levels of anxiety. Anxiety could not only be the major source of challenges in the health and performance of employees within the organisational setting, resulting in consequences for the workplace (Nouri & Soltani 2017:103).

4.5 RELIABILITY AND ACCURACY STATISTICS – MEAN SCORE RANKINGS OF CONSTRUCTS

The reliability of the constructs in this study was tested through Cronbach’s alpha and CR. Table 5.15 reports on the findings of the reliability means, standard deviation, items-total correlations and factor loadings, which are elaborated upon later.

Table 4.14: Accuracy analysis statistics

Research constructs		Descriptive statistics		Cronbach’s test		C.R. value	AVE value	Factor loading	Highest shared variance
		Mean	SD	Item-total	α Value				
General Political Behaviour (GB)	GB1	2.833	5.423	0.680	0.881	0.880	0.551	0.771	0.250
	GB2			0.740				0.823	
	GB3			0.665				0.726	
	GB4			0.706				0.729	
	GB5			0.666				0.685	
Get Ahead (GA)	GB6	3.158	4.147	0.677	0.833	0.828	0.556	0.714	0.175
	GA1			0.668				0.833	
	GA2			0.738				0.909	
	GA3			0.620				0.585	
	GA4			0.627				0.603	
Pay and Promotion Policies (PP)	PP1	3.210	3.387	0.659	0.827	0.833	0.629	0.753	0.189
	PP2			0.781				0.931	
	PP4			0.614				0.691	
Time Stress (TS)	TS1	2.952	5.200	0.789	0.928	0.999	0.618	0.859	0.255
	TS2			0.834				0.898	
	TS3			0.803				0.863	
	TS4			0.765				0.805	
	TS5			0.752				0.759	
	TS6			0.612				0.599	
	TS7			0.754				0.760	
	TS8			0.719				0.710	

Research constructs		Descriptive statistics		Cronbach's test		C.R. value	AVE value	Factor loading	Highest shared variance
		Mean	SD	Item-total	α Value				
Anxiety (AX)	AX1	2.815	5.556	0.659	0.859	0.864	0.566	0.751	0.131
	AX2			0.736				0.829	
	AX3			0.787				0.876	
	AX4			0.706				0.745	
	AX5			0.500				0.510	
Note: GB= General political behaviour; GA= Get ahead; PP= Pay and promotion policies; Time stress= Time stress; AX= Anxiety; CR: Composite reliability; AVE: Average variance									

4.5.1 Cronbach's alpha test

The internal reliability of the research constructs was measured with Cronbach's alpha. A high level of Cronbach's alpha coefficient indicates a higher reliability of the scale (Chinomona 2011:108). According to Martin (2007:93), for items to be considered, a minimum Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7 should be accepted.

In this study, the Cronbach alpha values of the constructs ranged from 0.82 to 0.92. The Cronbach alpha coefficient values in this study are above the suggested level of 0.7; hence, this shows a higher level of internal consistency.

4.5.2 Composite reliability (CR)

This study assessed the internal consistency of the constructs using CR. The following formula was applied to calculate CR.

$$CR\eta = (\sum \lambda_i)^2 / [(\sum \lambda_i)^2 + (\sum \epsilon_i)]$$

$$CR = (\text{square of the summation of the factor loadings}) / [(\text{square of the summation of the factor loadings}) + (\text{summation of error variances})]$$

If the CR is greater than 0.7, it reveals a good consistency of the constructs (Hair, Babin, Anderson and Tatham (2010:334). Analysis of Table 4.14 indicates that all five constructs in this study have composite reliability ranging from 0.82 to 0.99 (> 0.7). As a result, the outcomes demonstrate the existence of good internal reliability of the research constructs.

4.5.3 Average value extracted (AVE)

The average variance extracted from the research constructs should be greater than 0.4 (Anderson & Gerbing 1988:411). The AVE was calculated by using the following formula of Fornell and Lacker (1981:64):

$$V\eta = \frac{\sum \lambda y_i^2}{(\sum \lambda y_i^2 + \sum \epsilon_i)}$$

$$\text{AVE} = \frac{\text{summation of the square of factor loadings}}{[(\text{summation of the square of factor loadings}) + (\text{summation of error variances})]}$$

Analysis of Table 5.14 indicates that the AVE values of the constructs in this study ranged between 0.551 and 0.629. These values are above the suggested threshold of 0.40 (Anderson & Gerbing 1988:411).

4.5.4 Validity tests

A validity test was used to observe whether the items or measurement instrument measured what was intended to be measured. The validity test was conducted by the use of content, construct and convergent validity.

4.5.4.1 Content validity

Content validity was established through a comprehensive and appropriate literature review, examination of prior instruments and consulting academic experts to confirm the relevance of items/ statements covered in the questionnaire.

4.5.4.2 Construct validity

McBurney and White (2009:130) posit that to determine whether the instrument produces data that have construct validity, the instrument should measure the construct it is designed to measure; it should also predict the findings that are related to the theoretical construct it is designed to measure. Construct validity in this study was determined through CFA (refer to Table 4.14). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was also used to test construct validity of the scales. Furthermore, correlation analysis was conducted and the findings confirmed a significant correlation between the constructs, therefore, approving construct validity (refer to Table 4.15).

4.5.4.3 Convergent validity

According to Moutinho and Hutcheson (2011:327), convergent validity is the degree to which items that makes up the scale correlate in the same direction with other instruments measuring the same construct. In principle, an instrument is said to have high convergent validity when it yields comparable findings to other tested instruments that measure the same constructs in the same field (Johnson & Christensen 2010:148). In this study, a correlation analysis was used to establish convergent validity through item-to-total correlation and factor loadings. Item-to-total correlation and factor loadings were assessed using SPSS. For consistency in assessing the items, factor loadings should be greater than 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker 1981:64).

Table 4.15 indicates the factor loadings of five measurement items, which ranged from 0.5 to 0.9. It can be seen from Table 4.15 that all the factor loadings are greater than 0.5. The findings demonstrate that all the items are acceptable and there is a relationship between each construct and each item. Furthermore, item totals were used to measure convergent validity. Table 4.15 shows that the item total values are from 0.500 to 0.834. These values are all exceeding the suggested threshold of 0.50 (Wellner 2015:115) and provide evidence of convergence.

4.5.4.4 Shared variance

Shared variance is conducted to determine if there is discriminant validity among the constructs. Highest shared variance should always be less than the AVE values (Farrel 2010:3). Table 4.14 illustrates that all the highest shared variance values are less than AVE values, which shows that discriminant validity is confirmed.

4.6 CORRELATION ANALYSIS

In this study, correlations were conducted to determine the strength of the relationship between the constructs GB, GA, PP, TS and AX. The findings of the correlation analysis are illustrated in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Correlations between constructs

Research Construct	Construct correlation				AX
	GB	GA	PP	TS	
GB	1.000				
GA	0.419**	1.000			
PP	0.432**	0.108**	1.000		
TS	0.280***	0.102	0.505**	1.000	
AX	0.292***	0.185**	0.362**	0.044	1.000

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

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

Note: GB= General political behaviour; GA= Get ahead; PP= Pay and promotion policies; Time stress= Time stress; AX= Anxiety

Table 4.15 illustrates correlation analysis between the different constructs. The correlation between GA and GB shows a significant relationship ($r=0.419$; $p<0.01$), followed by a correlation between PP and GB ($r=0.432$; $p<0.01$). A significant correlation exists between TS and GB ($r=0.280$; $p<0.01$) and AX and GB ($r=0.292$; $p<0.01$). Moreover, the correlation between PP and GA demonstrates a significant relationship ($r=0.108$; $p<0.01$), followed by a correlation between TS and GA ($r=0.102$; $p<0.01$), which is significant. A significant relationship is evident between TS and PP ($r=0.505$; $p<0.01$), furthermore, another significant association between AX and GB can be seen ($r=0.292$; $p<0.01$). Other correlations with a significant relationship are AX and GA ($r=0.185$; $p<0.01$), AX and PP ($r=0.363$; $p<0.01$) followed by a correlation between AX and TS ($r=0.044$; $p<0.01$).

4.7 MODEL FIT ASSESSMENT FOR CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (CFA)

This study utilised CFA to examine and test that relationships between a set of observed constructs and a set of underlying latent variables exist. The purpose of CFA is to provide evidence and confirmation that all items are properly related with the correct latent variables within the construct being measured (Holtzman & Vezzu 2011:1651).

4.7.1 Model fit assessment index

Table 4.16 illustrates the goodness of fit criteria and the acceptable levels and the interpretation of nine fit indices that have been applied in this study.

Table 4.16: Model fit indices and acceptable levels

Goodness of fit criteria measures	Recommended level	Level interpretations
Chi-square (χ^2)	≤ 2	Values close to 1 reflect good model fit, values < 3 reflect acceptable fit.
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	≥ 0.90	Values = or > 0.9 reflect a good fit.
Normed fit index (NFI)	≥ 0.90	Values = or > 0.9 reflect a good fit.
Relative fit index (RFI)	≥ 0.90	Values = or > 0.9 reflect a good fit.
Increment fit index (IFI)	≥ 0.90	Values = or > 0.9 reflect a good fit.
Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)	≥ 0.90	Values = or > 0.9 reflect a good fit.
Comparative fit index (CFI)	≥ 0.90	Values = or > 0.9 reflect a good fit.
Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	≥ 0.90	Values = or > 0.9 reflect a good fit.
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	≤ 0.08	Values < 0.05 reflect a good fit; values between 0.05 and 0.08 reflect an acceptable fit.

Source: Adapted from Bagozzi and Yi (2012:15)

Table 4.17: CFA model fit indices findings

Fit index	Recommended level	Findings
Chi-square (χ^2)	≤ 2	2.955
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.903
NFI	≥ 0.90	0.953
RFI	≥ 0.90	0.974
IFI	≥ 0.90	0.960
TLI	≥ 0.90	0.932
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.909
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.911
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.062

The findings of the model fit assessment as demonstrated in Table 4.17 are further explained as follows: Chi-square value over degree-of-freedom of was 2.955, followed by GFI (0.903), CFI (0.909), IFI (0.960), NFI (0.953) and RMSEA (0.062). The findings indicate that all the indicator

values meet the required threshold of equal or greater than 0.9 for GFI, CFI, IFI, NFI and equal or less than 0.08 for RMSEA. Therefore, it could be concluded that the data fit the model.

4.8 STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING (SEM)

Structural equation modelling was applied to assess the relationships between the constructs. The procedure consists of multiple regression analysis and path model analysis.

4.8.1 Model fit assessment

Table 4.18 illustrates the findings of the model fit assessment.

Table 4.18: SEM model fit indices findings

Fit index	Recommended level	Findings
Chi-square (χ^2)	≤ 3	2.988
GFI	≥ 0.9	0.907
NFI	≥ 0.9	0.945
RFI	≥ 0.9	0.933
IFI	≥ 0.9	0.908
TLI	≥ 0.9	0.911
CFI	≥ 0.9	0.904
AGFI	≥ 0.9	0.900
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.076

In this study, the degrees of freedom/ chi-square value is 2.988. The degrees of freedom/ chi-square is below the recommended threshold of three, therefore, it confirms an acceptable model fit. Furthermore, GFI, CFI, IFI, NFI and RMSEA provide the following values of 0.907, 0.904, 0.908, 0.945 and 0.076. The findings confirm that all the indicators meet the acceptable thresholds of equal to or greater than 0.9 for GFI, CFI, IFI, NFI and equal to or less than 0.08 for RMSEA. For that reason, it could be determined that the data confirms and fits the acceptability of the model.

4.8.2 Hypotheses testing

The findings of the hypotheses tests are reported in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19: Findings of hypotheses testing (path modelling)

Proposed hypothesis relationship	Hypothesis	Path coefficient estimates	p-value	Decision
GB → TS	H1	0.768	***	Accepted
GB → AX	H2	0.695	***	Accepted
GA → TS	H3	0.583	***	Accepted
GA → AX	H4	0.503	***	Accepted
PP → TS	H5	0.493	***	Accepted
PP → AX	H6	0.461	***	Accepted

As illustrated in Table 4.19 and Figure 5.8, the levels of the coefficients of all six hypotheses are significant at a level of $p < 0.01$. The significance levels of $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.001$ are pointers of positive, strong and significant relationships between the constructs.

4.8.3 Conceptual model paths

Integration of all the findings of the study concluded in the conceptual model illustrated in Figure 4.9.

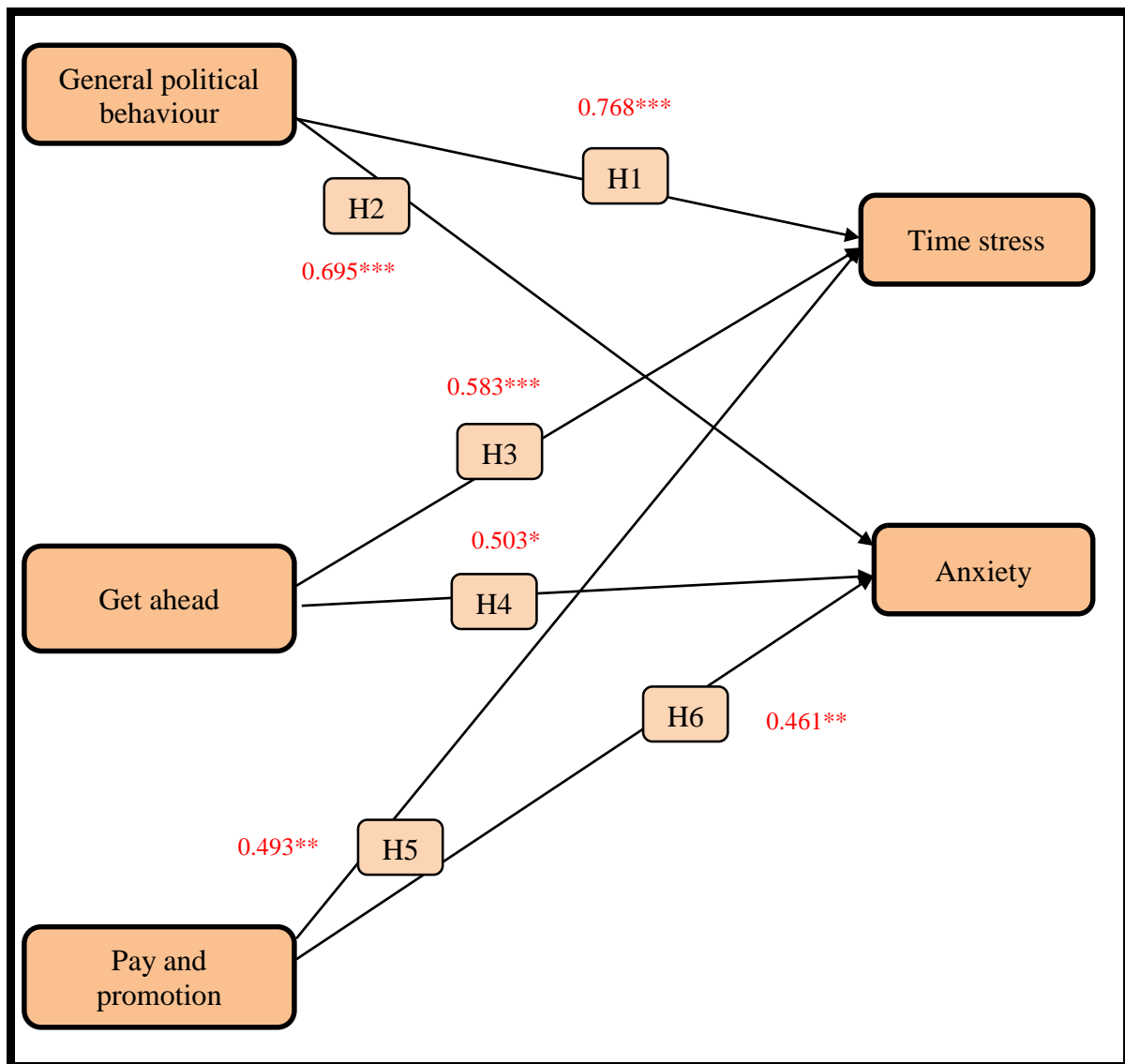


Figure 4.9: Resultant conceptual model

4.8.4 Discussion of findings

The findings of the hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, H5 and H6 are significant and supported ($p < 0.01$). The discussions of the hypotheses as illustrated in Table 4.19 and Figure 4.10 are as follows:

4.8.4.1 Findings for hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that there is a significant influence between employees' perceptions of general political behaviour and time stress. The value of path coefficient for H1 is at 0.768, the result of the hypothesis indicates that there is a positive relationship between employees' perceptions of general political behaviour and time stress in the SMEs. Therefore, the p-value is significant at 99% ($r = 0.01$), which means that this hypothesis is supported. The findings resonate with the findings obtained by studies undertaken by Evans and Qureshi (2013:39) who found that political behaviours in organisations could result in stress and have undesirable effects on the employee

and organisational environment. In the same view, Gove (2011:18) affirms that political behaviour can weaken employee motivation and waste the resources of the organisation, thus contributing on job stress levels experienced by employees. Moreover, Cacciattolo (2015:124) suggests that political behaviour is the cause of conflict and stress in the organisation. In support of the findings, Haq (2011:292) offers that general political behaviour as a dimension of perception of organisational politics can be one of the motives of job stress suffered by employees. A research conducted by Olorunleke (2015:9) emphasises that political behaviour is a significant component within the workplace; therefore, it must be considered cautiously since it influences job stress. This study confirms that general political behaviour exists in the SMEs and influences job stress experienced by the employees.

4.8.4.2 Findings for hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that there is a significant influence between employees' perceptions of general political behaviour and anxiety. Table 4.19 revealed that H2 was found to be supported and acceptable ($r=0.695$; $p<0.01$). The findings indicate that the employees' perceptions of general political behaviour are positively related with anxiety. In support of the findings, a previous study suggested that organisational politics might function as a possible job stressor for employees that can lead to anxiety (Delle 2013:151). These findings are in line with a study conducted by Rashid *et al.* (2013:351), who found that the relationship between political behaviour and job stress shows a significant positive relationship. The authors further confirm that the findings clearly show that if the workplace were politically infused, the employees would face anxiety at their job, leading to adverse effects on both employees and organisation. Haq (2011:292) studied organisational politics in relation to job stress associated features like fatigue, somatic stress and anxiety and revealed a significantly positive relationship between organisational politics and job stress related variables such as job tension and anxiety. Thus, the findings of this study reveal that general political behaviour as a perception of organisational politics has an effect on anxiety.

4.8.4.3 Findings for hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 stated that there is a significant influence between employees' perceptions of get ahead in the organisation and time stress. As stated in Table 4.19, there was a positive correlation between perceptions of get ahead and time stress ($r=0.583$; $p<0.01$). The findings further confirm that perceptions of getting ahead have a significant influence on time stress in the SME sector. These findings are confirmed by Abbas and Raja (2014:159) that employees who observe get ahead practices in their organisational environment to be politically motivated, they experience job stress. In view of the stated findings, a study by Zhang and Lee (2010:272) presented that

higher perceptions of get ahead originating from politics in the workplace have caused feelings of job stress by employees and showed that employees functioning in a perceived politically-charged environment experienced general fatigue and job stress. Goodman *et al.* (2011:67) further reveal that employees' perceptions of get ahead in the organisation might have an effect upon employee behaviours and job stress. In support of the findings for this study, research conducted by Swartz and Potgieter (2017:3) indicates that employees' perceptions of getting ahead can function as a potential stressor that can result in job stress. Therefore, the findings confirm that employee perceptions of get ahead in the SME sector can result in time stress.

4.8.4.4 Findings for hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 stated that there is a significant influence between employees' perceptions of get ahead in the organisation and anxiety. The findings of H4 present that there is positive significant correlation between perceptions of get ahead and anxiety ($r= 0.503$; $p< 0.01$). The findings reveal that perceptions of get ahead are positively related to anxiety. In support of the findings, Rashid *et al.* (2013:349) reveal that employees who face high pressure on the job emanating from perceptions of get ahead in the workplace could experience high levels of anxiety and show nervous behaviour. Moreover, get ahead actions arising from perceptions of organisational politics have been found to have harmful effects on employee work-related outcomes like, turnover intentions, absenteeism and anxiety (Goodman *et al.* 2011:67). Zhang and Lee (2010:272) confirm that employee perceptions of get ahead arising from the political nature of the workplace might result in provoking anxiety and that organisational politics could signify a job-related stressor. This study confirms that perceptions of get ahead in SMEs could result in anxiety for employees.

4.8.4.5 Findings for hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 stated that there is a significant influence between employees' perceptions of pay and promotion in the organisation and time stress. Table 4.19 shows a path coefficient value of ($r=0.493$) ($p<0.01$) for H5 and it means the findings are significant and confident at 99%. The outcome confirms that perceptions of pay and promotion are positively related to time stress. The positive relationship established between employees' perceptions of pay and promotion and time stress is consistent with the findings provided by Cacciattolo (2014:240) who found that employees are expected to participate in organisational politics when there is uncertainty involved in pay and promotion procedures and as a result, they might experience job stress. In support of the findings, Rashid *et al.* (2013:351) discovered that pay and promotion policies in organisations are found to be political in nature and consequently might result in job stress to employees. Furthermore, job stress is also believed to stem from the unfairness related with pay and promotion

policies and is likely to be perceived as a threat (Goodman *et al.* 2018:68). From the findings of this study, it can be revealed that employees' perceptions of pay and promotion policies have an influence on job stress within the SME sector.

4.8.4.6 Findings for hypothesis 6

Hypothesis 6 stated that there is a significant influence between employees' perceptions of pay and promotion in the organisation and anxiety. The findings of hypothesis 6 present that there was a positive and significant relationship ($r=0.461$; $p<0.01$) between perceptions of pay and promotion and anxiety. The findings are consistent with the study of Enyinna, Lazarus and Ukpai (2014:104), which found that pay and promotion policies have negative impact on employees who are not politically involved in organisations. Therefore, employees who observe unfairness concerning rewards might experience job anxiety (Haq 2011:292). In addition to the findings of this study, Rashid *et al.* (2013:349) conclude that anxiety is an employee's reaction to work related stressors, of which might be inequality on pay and promotion policies. The authors further described those employees who perceive unfairness in pay and promotion decisions within the workplace due to organisational politics might also experience high levels of job stress and exhibit nervous behaviour. Akanbi and Ofoegbu (2013:164) discovered that in the work environment where employees are politically involved in pay and promotional policies, it could result in anxiety. The findings of this study indicate that SMEs employee's perception of pay and promotion policies have impact on anxiety.

4.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study. It provided the analysis and interpretation on the demographic profile of the respondents including their perceptions of organisational politics and job stress in SMEs. The reliability of the findings was assessed through Cronbach's alpha and CR. This was followed by assessment of the validity through content, construct and convergent validity tests. The CFA was conducted to test and confirm that relationships exist between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs. Additionally, the structural equation modelling evaluated the relationship between the theoretical constructs through path coefficients. The assessment confirmed that the findings are reliable and valid; therefore, the hypotheses in this study were positive and significant. The findings of this study confirm that perceptions of organisational politics influenced job stress among SME employees in Matlosana Local District.

The following chapter will elaborate on the conclusions, implications, recommendations and the limitations of this study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the conclusions from the findings obtained from the previous chapters, concerning the influence of organisational politics on job stress among SME employees in Matlosana Local District. The first section provides a summary of the dissertation chapters. The second section draws conclusions based on the theoretical objectives of the study. The third section draws empirical conclusions based on the findings obtained. The fourth section presents recommendations to the SME owners/managers and employees on how to manage and function within a work environment that is infused with organisational politics. Lastly, the chapter describes the limitations that have been encountered throughout the completion of this study as well as the implications for future research, based on the identified limitations.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION CHAPTERS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of organisational politics on job stress among SME employees in Matlosana Local District. This study was organised into five chapters. Chapter 1 provided the introduction and overview of the study, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, research objectives and hypotheses, followed by research methodology under which the study was conducted and ethical considerations. Chapter 2 reviewed the literature concerning the research context of the study by providing a background on the significance and the part played by the SMEs in South Africa and the literature of the variables, SET, organisational politics and job stress. The conceptual framework of the study was provided and the hypotheses were examined in this chapter. Chapter 3 outlined the research design and the methodology applied in this study. The research paradigm, research approach, the method of sampling and data collection were also discussed. Moreover, this chapter described the method of data analysis and the statistical techniques, such as CFA and structural equation modelling (SEM) through the application of SPSS and AMOS. Chapter 4 presented and interpreted the research findings obtained in this study. Chapter 5, as the last chapter of this study, provided conclusions drawn based on the findings obtained, recommendations, limitations and implications for future studies.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THEORETICAL OBJECTIVES

This section discusses conclusions arising from the following theoretical objectives set in Chapter 1 of this study:

- to review the literature on SMEs in South Africa;
- to review the literature on organisational politics and the dimensions of organisational politics;
- to undertake a literature synthesis on job stressors and the dimensions of job stress.

5.3.1 To review the literature on small and medium enterprises (SMEs)

The first theoretical objective of this study was realised in Chapter 2. The significant role played by the SMEs in contributing to the economic progress of South Africa and on the global economy has been described in detail in Chapter 2 of this study. The main strategy of the present South African government is to utilise the SMEs as the mainstream medium of creating employment, encouraging economic growth and reducing poverty. To achieve this goal, the government should foster growth among SMEs (Visser & Chiloane-Tsoka 2014:427). It is through growth that SMEs can grow into large organisations and growth is closely associated to job creation, which is essential for the success of the economy. It is also found that SME owners/managers are usually more worried about their survival instead of growth (Neneh & Van Zyl 2014:173). The literature revealed that there are many causes for the failure of SMEs with both internal and external factors (Fatoki 2014:993). Internal factors are factors that are manageable by the organisation and include lack of management experience, lack of functional skills (planning, organising, leading and controlling) and poor staff training and development and poor attitudes towards customers. External factors are factors mostly uncontrollable by the organisation and include non-availability of a logistics chain and a high cost of distribution, competition, rising costs of doing business, lack of finance and crime (Fatoki 2014:993). There is a need for personal development by the owners/managers of SMEs especially in the area of business management and human resource management skills through training (Smit 2012:170). SMEs contribute to the economy at a social level as well, through ensuring the distribution of income, supporting monetary stability and encouraging innovation (Cant, Wiid & Kailler 2015:622).

5.3.2 To review the literature on organisational politics and the dimensions of organisational politics

The second theoretical objective of this study was to review the literature focusing on organisational politics. The literature on organisational politics has revealed that this construct is considered the social element of any organisation. Organisational politics can be observed in two ways: either as a symptom of social influence processes that benefit the organisation, which is a positive implication, or as a self-serving effect that goes against the organisational goals, in which case, it presents a negative implication (Cacciattollo 2015:121). This study provided various definitions of organisational politics and made use of the definition by Danish *et al.* (2014:44), which describes organisational politics as the study of individual exercise of power or control and how it impacts on the activities of the work environment such as resource allocation, decision making and pay and promotion. The literature review on organisational politics has shown that the organisational politics is conceptualised in a three-dimensional construct; general political behaviour, go along to get ahead and pay and promotion policies (Mensah 2013:28). This study accentuated the impact of organisational politics on an organisation. The literature provided that the organisational politics contain detrimental outcomes, which influence the effectiveness of the organisation as a whole (Abbas & Raja 2014:158). Moreover, the factors contributing to the organisational politics and inducing workers to be involved in political activities were emphasised. When organisational politics are evident in the work environment, the outcomes of such politics will manifest in the organisation, affecting the employees and the entire workplace.

5.3.3 To undertake a literature synthesis on job stressors and the dimensions of job stress

The third theoretical objective of this study was to review the literature focusing on job stress. A literature review on job stress provided various definitions and in an organisational environment, job stress is referred to as work stress and/or occupational stress. The literature explains that job stress is not the same as stress in the sense that it is job-related mental stress (Wu & Shih 2010:76). Jamal (2011:20) explains job stress as an employee's response to features of the job setting that appear mentally and physically upsetting. Job stress possesses two major dimensions: psychological stress and physiological stress. Additionally, from the literature, Goodman *et al.* (2011:67) describe that job stress can manifest in four dimensions, namely responsibility pressures, role conflict, quality concerns and job vs non-job conflict. As a result of various internal and external cues of the workplace, stress is generated and it produces a scuffle of personalities and influence between workers, which might be resolved through conflict management (Danish

et al. 2014:45). Sibisi (2012:10) mentions that job stress has two major types: eustress (positive stress) and distress (negative stress). The literature reveals that the transactional model of stress in Figure 1 of Chapter 3 presents different sources of job stress as they stem from organisational and individual characteristics (Maxwell 2012:25). The organisational symptoms of job stress may consist of poor performance, absenteeism, low organisational citizenship and behaviour and turnover (Qureshi *et al.* 2013:764). The literature emphasised that job stress is the major source of challenges in the health and performance of employees within the organisational setting, resulting in consequences for the workplace. Job stress consequences could be examined with reference to individual and organisational characteristics (Nouri & Soltani 2017:103). For the purpose of reducing the effects of job stress, a sense of balance concerning the personal and organisational life have to be generated. Once the balance is in place, the employee's life and mental state could be maintained.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON EMPIRICAL OBJECTIVES

5.4.1 To determine the influence between employees' perceptions of general political behaviour and time stress

The first empirical objective was to examine the relationship of employees' perceptions of general political behaviour with time stress. The findings demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between employees' perceptions of general political behaviour and time stress in the SMEs. In view of these findings, it could be concluded that where general political behaviour is evident within the organisation, employees could suffer the consequences of political behaviour and experience time stress. Political behaviour has effects on employees' attitudes, behaviour and performance and when such behaviour escalates to a certain extent it can lead employees to suffer from time stress in the workplace (Ugwu & Onyishi 2013:3568). General political behaviour is responsible for negative consequences like time stress and burnout and time stress probably changes towards some dimensions of work place nonconformity (Haq 2011:293). General political behaviour flourishes in the workplace where prescribed standard operating procedures are not available to guide behaviour of employees. It could be concluded, therefore, that general political behaviour can be managed and tolerated in such a way that it does not subject employees to job stress.

5.4.2 To explore the influence of employees' perceptions of general political behaviour with anxiety

The second empirical objective was to examine the relationship of employees' perceptions of general political behaviour with anxiety. The findings of the analysis demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between employees' perceptions of general political behaviour and anxiety in the SMEs. In support of the findings, Cho and Yang (2018:62) found a significantly positive relationship between general political behaviour and anxiety. The findings present that if an employee perceives the work atmosphere to be political, the employee experiences high levels of anxiety and lower levels of general health. General political behaviour of employees within the organisations has been found to have a negative effect on a number of job outcomes, including job anxiety (Delle 2013:151). Amongst the various sources of anxiety experienced by employees in the workplace, Wangui and Mauthe (2014:160) identify the informal nature of making decisions, especially where there is uncertainty involved, it presents employees with an opportunity to engage in political behaviour. This study presents that general political behaviour within the work setting poses a serious risk for both employees and the organisation.

5.4.3 To examine the influence of employees' perceptions of get ahead in the organisation with time stress

The third empirical objective was to examine the relationship of employees' perceptions of get ahead in the organisation with time stress. The findings attained after analysis indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between employees' perceptions of get ahead in the organisation and time stress. This view finds support in the study by Abbas and Raja (2014:158) that get ahead is commonly positively related to time stress. This assessment is supported by study conducted by Swartz and Potgieter (2017:3) who intensively examined the relationship between get ahead and individual-based stressors such as time stress, somatic stress and general exhaustion. Their findings revealed a positive relationship between get ahead and the abovementioned variables. In this view, it can be posited that get ahead within work environment has been observed to have unfavourable effects on employees and job outcomes. It is expected that the main damaging effect of get ahead is time stress since time stress can have short and long-term effects on both the health of the employee and productivity at work (Ofori 2014:91). In support of the findings, it can be stated that get ahead plays a substantial role in the organisational change process and that structural factors like ambiguity and resource management in the process of change in an organisation may result in employees experiencing time stress (Wangui & Mauthe 2014:162). It

could be concluded, therefore, that employees who perceive get ahead in their organisation and its practices to be politically driven, feel time stress.

5.4.4 To determine the influence of employees' perceptions of get ahead in the organisation with anxiety

The fourth empirical objective was to examine the relationship of employees' perceptions of get ahead in the organisation with anxiety. The findings showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between employees' perceptions of get ahead in the organisation and anxiety. In support of the findings, a study by Zhang and Lee (2010:272) finds a positive relationship between get ahead and job anxiety. They further describe that get ahead in the organisation has been characterised as a source of job-related stress and it is related with outcomes like anxiety. Makhdoom *et al.* (2015:402) propose that when employees have to perform in a workplace that is high in perceptions of get ahead and irrational tactics, such perceptions create dissatisfaction between employees, which lead to a depletion of emotions and them to suffer from anxiety. It has been suggested that workplace features such as high employees' perceptions of get ahead in the organisation are responsible for outcomes, which breed negative effects about the workplace and result in employees suffering from job anxiety (Makhdoom *et al.* 2015:405). Employees' perceptions of get ahead are responsible for decreasing the production of an organisation and possibly destabilising the organisation's ability to operate at the most basic levels (Schneider 2016:2). It can be concluded that employees' perceptions of get ahead in the SMEs affect the wellbeing of both employees and work environment and could result in job anxiety to employees.

5.4.5 To assess the influence of employees' perceptions of pay and promotion in the organisation with time stress

The fifth empirical objective was to examine the relationship of employees' perceptions of pay and promotion in the organisation with time stress. The findings acquired after analysis revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between employees' perceptions of pay and promotion in the organisation and time stress. This study finds support in the work of Ene (2014:94) who found that a pursuit for fair pay, promotion policies and power struggle in organisations continue to be the main factors that nurture time stress in the workplace. Organisations usually have limited resources like pay and promotion that must be distributed to the employees. In such cases employees pursue attaining those resources for themselves or for their interest groups, which gives rise to time stress (Ahmad, Akhtar, ur Rahman, Imran & ul Ain 2017:376). According to Ene (2014:96), pay and promotion decisions have constantly been found

to be the source of time stress in organisations. The prospect for pay increase and promotion inspires employees to contend for limited resources and attempt to influence positively the decision outcome. In that regard, individuals who are not politically skilled might experience time stress. Ram and Prabhabar (2010:48) supplement the findings that the employees who perceive politics concerning pay and promotions policies are at risk of becoming emotionally drained and might suffer from time stress. It is concluded that pay and promotion policies are also the source of negative job outcomes like time stress in the SMEs.

5.4.6 To explore the influence of employees' perceptions of pay and promotion in the organisation with anxiety

The sixth empirical objective was to examine the relationship of employees' perceptions of pay and promotion in the organisation with anxiety. The findings described in Chapter 4, show that there is a significant relationship between employees' perceptions of pay and promotion in the organisation and anxiety. In support of the findings, Cacciattolo (2015:124) proposes that employees' perceptions of pay and promotion are a source of conflict and anxiety at the workplace. As a result, unfair pay and promotion policies might cause an employee to withdraw either physically or psychologically from the workplace. Pay and promotion policies can result in myriad negative organisational outcomes that can lead to the ultimate demise of the organisation by decreasing productivity, profits and resulting in employees experiencing anxiety (Schneider 2016:3). When employees perceive themselves as being highly accountable in the workplace, however, pay and promotion policies are observed to be highly political and anxiety is also reported to be high (Goodman *et al.* 2011:75). Additionally, in general, pay increases and promotions are considered to be based upon employee's achievements and efforts. When employees perceive that they are not remunerated on the basis of their achievements and efforts, rather, a particular unfair, political measure dictates how they will be promoted, they begin to feel anxiety at work. Thus, this study concludes that pay and promotion policies in the SMEs are responsible for generating undesirable work outcomes like anxiety.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.5.1 Recommendations on the relationship between general political behaviour and time stress

The findings revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between general political behaviour and time stress in the SMEs. Based on the findings acquired from the study, it is recommended that employees should endeavour to understand and respond strategically to

political behaviour in their organisations to maximise their job satisfaction and minimise incidence of time stress. The owners/managers of the SMEs should concede that political behaviour is the social life of almost every organisation. In order to curb and eliminate political behaviour resulting in time stress in the SMEs, the owners/managers of the enterprise are encouraged to implement the following recommendations:

- Owners/managers must apply good governance and strong leadership in curbing the general political behaviour.
- Management of the SMEs should make employees aware of the objectives of their work and establish clear and planned goals of where they want to see the enterprise in future.
- Communication channels in the enterprise should be clear and reliable for employees to receive updates.
- Leadership styles could be utilised in the enterprise where necessary to give guidance.
- Managers need to be aware and understand the personalities of employees, which might encourage political behaviour within the enterprise.
- Management must organise team building activities to improve and promote good working relationships among employees.

5.5.2 Recommendations on the relationship between general political behaviour and anxiety

The findings indicated that there is a positive significant relationship between general political behaviour and anxiety in the SMEs. In order to control and eradicate political behaviour resulting in anxiety for SME employees, the owners/managers of the enterprise are encouraged to implement the following recommendations:

- To manage general political behaviour in the SMEs, owners/managers may use their emotional intelligence to become “politically savvy.”
- Employees should be provided with a supportive work environment, in order for anxiety levels to be less intense.
- Management should recognise that some political behaviour may be essential to the functioning of work groups.
- Owners/managers are compelled to focus on social context when attempting to understand employee attitudes and motivation towards political behaviour.

- It is recommended that human resource departments should actively produce competency models that integrate the goals of discouraging political activities and providing incentives to managers for creating work environments that are not political.
- The owners/managers of the SMEs need to update and include employees in the decision-making process as their contribution leads to low levels of general political behaviour. Inclusion of employees in decision-making processes will ensure teamwork, positive relations among employees and probably lead to a work environment that is free of politics.

5.5.3 Recommendations on the relationship between get ahead and time stress

The findings have shown that there is a positive significant relationship between get ahead and time stress in the SMEs. For the purpose of dealing with get ahead conduct in the enterprise, owners/managers are encouraged to implement the following recommendations:

- To control getting ahead in the organisation, the management must be aware of its causes and practices.
- Management should lead by example as it can help reduce the frequency and intensity of getting ahead behaviour.
- Organisational psychologists should be involved to identify and handle the challenges arising from getting ahead actions in the organisation.
- Organisations should train and develop managers periodically in behavioural studies to better understand getting ahead behaviour of employees and enable them to implement remedial actions.
- Management should establish a collegial organisational climate that can aid in mitigating the negative effects of getting ahead in the organisation.
- Employees must be encouraged to work as a team to avoid conflicts and unnecessary competition.

5.5.4 Recommendations on the relationship between get ahead and anxiety

The findings revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between get ahead and anxiety in the SMEs. In order to manage and regulate get ahead actions resulting in anxiety, the owners/managers of the enterprise are encouraged to implement the following recommendations:

- Owners/managers must regularly reward desired behaviours and disregard or reprimand bad behaviour.

- Management of the enterprise should encourage their employees to voice their concerns regarding the work environment.
- It is essential for both SME owners/managers and employees to be conscious of the potentially destructive features of getting ahead behaviour in order to reduce its negative effect in the work environment.
- It is recommended that both management and employees of the SMEs should set aside their personal interests at the work place.
- Management and employees should have good interpersonal relationships in order to create a peaceful environment and prevent division and conflict among management and employees.
- In extreme situations, it may be advantageous for the organisation to target key political players whose actions are especially salient and damaging. If these individuals are not willing to reduce their political activities, then they should be removed from the organisation.

5.5.5 Recommendations on the relationship between pay and promotion policies and time stress

The findings presented that there is a positive significant relationship between pay and promotion policies and time stress in the SMEs. In order for the owners/managers to have comprehensive pay and promotion policies, they are encouraged to implement the following recommendations:

- Organisations should establish committees to conduct research before making important organisational decisions regarding pay and promotion policies.
- Favouritism should be avoided within the work groups when implementing pay and promotion policies.
- Owners/managers should make pay and promotion policies transparent and well understood by employees and then implement them fairly to decrease perceptions of unfair policies.
- Owners/managers must understand that organisations need active players who are eager to engage in political behaviour that drives implementation of new policies forward.
- Management should openly acknowledge and compensate employees for achieving genuine outcomes without political games.

- Management should discuss ambiguous information about policies in a public meeting as it could also guard against a threat of politics.

5.5.6 Recommendations on the relationship between pay and promotion policies and anxiety

The findings revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between pay and promotion policies and anxiety in the SMEs. In order for the owners/managers to have inclusive pay and promotion policies, they are encouraged to implement the following recommendations:

- Managers should build trust and social support among employees to help reduce the detrimental effects of organisational politics.
- Pay and promotion policies should be consistent and fair towards all the employees.
- Resources must be sufficient for employees in the enterprise to be satisfied with their work.
- It is important for management to make resolutions that balance the costs and benefits of pay and promotion that may be perceived as political.
- Owners/managers should formulate official procedures for resolving complaints and handling conflicts related to pay and promotion policies.
- Management should establish open and transparent management systems.

5.6 THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

This study provides the theoretical and practical contributions. The theoretical contribution is made to the current literature on SMEs in South Africa, particularly in the context of developing nations that was considered to be limited. Efforts were made to relate the SET for the purpose of describing the interrelations of the constructs. A cross examination of the existing theory reveals that the theory has been mostly applied in large enterprises and the findings of this study will fill in the current gap in the academic literature.

Despite the fact that organisational politics and job stress have been considerably investigated in different disciplines such as human resources management and organisational behaviour, research on organisational politics and job stress has remained limited in developing nations. This study is one of the pioneering efforts to investigate the influence of organisational politics and job stress. Moreover, this research has contributed new literature and empirical findings of organisational politics and job stress in the SMEs context and it is a valuable source for future research. An effort has been taken in this study to formulate a conceptual framework illustrating the dimensions of

the constructs. This conceptual framework would be useful for further empirical studies in various research backgrounds. Additionally, the framework makes a huge contribution in current academic literature on human resources management particularly in the SME sector.

Lastly, this study contributes by providing management implications for SME owners/managers. The management of the SMEs should concede that organisational politics are part of the organisational environment; therefore, policies and procedures must be in place to control such political behaviour. Since there are positive and negative implications of organisational politics, the management should make use of the positive impact to attain organisational objectives and encourage change management. The negative implications of the politics should be curbed and eradicated since they affect job outcomes of employees within the organisation.

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although this study contributes to the organisational politics and job stress literature in a number of ways, it has some limitations.

This study was restricted to the SME employees in Matlosana Local District. Therefore, the findings of the study should be interpreted with caution because they may only be generalised to the sample that was chosen for the research and may not be generalised to other SME employees in other local districts within South Africa. Additionally, this study is limited in scope since there may be other factors such as employee motivation, engagement and retention that could affect the influence of organisational politics on job stress. The researcher distributed questionnaires physically to the respondents and had no control over how respondents completed the questionnaires and had to rely on data provided by the respondents. This study sampled a total of 431 SME employees from a target of 550. A larger sample size of 550 may have produced better findings and only a quantitative approach was followed, which limits the depth of information collected.

5.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of organisational politics on job stress among SME employees in Matlosana Local District. The scope of this research could be extended to other local districts within the province and the country in order to determine similarities and difference. In that regard, the maximum participation of employees within the entire organisation could yield better findings for the purpose of generalisation. The quantitative approach was used in this study; therefore, the researcher believes that better accuracy and understanding may be attained if future studies utilise the mixed method, which combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Additionally, a comprehensive assessment on the mixed method might offer more insight to the knowledge of organisational politics and job stress; therefore, future studies need to examine the relationship between demographic features of employees, organisational politics and job stress.

5.9 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of organisational politics on job stress among SME employees in Matlosana Local District. This chapter provided the summary of the chapters included in this study, followed by the conclusions based on theoretical and empirical objectives. Moreover, recommendations to be implemented by owners/managers in order to establish a conducive work environment for employees were provided. Lastly, limitations of the study and implications for future research were presented. The findings of this study indicate that there is a positive significant relationship between organisational politics and job stress. In this view, if the organisational politics dominate SMEs there could be job outcomes resulting from the organisational politics experienced by employees, other than job stress.

As a result, it is the duty and responsibility of the SME owners/managers to engender good working relationships between their employees in order to achieve the objectives of the organisation. Political behaviour should be managed in such a way that it does not subject employees to job stress. In order to achieve this, the management should implement their human resource policies to curb and eliminate behaviour that could affect the collegial atmosphere of the organisation.

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APPENDIX 1: CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING

Ms Linda Scott
English language editing
SATI membership number: 1002595
Tel: 083 654 4156
E-mail: lindascott1984@gmail.com

10 January 2019

To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that I, the undersigned, have language edited the dissertation
(excluding references) of

RALEBITSO KENNETH LETSHABA

for the degree

Magister Technologiae: Business Administration

entitled:

***THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS ON JOB STRESS AMONG
SMEs EMPLOYEES IN MATLOSANA LOCAL DISTRICT***

The responsibility of implementing the recommended language changes rests with the
author of the dissertation.

Yours truly,



Linda Scott

APPENDIX 2: COVER LETTER FOR DATA COLLECTION



**Vaal University of Technology
Private Bag X021
Vanderbijlpark
1900
South Africa**

Dear Respondents

I am a Masters Degree student in the Human Resources Department at Vaal University of Technology. In fulfilment of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting a study of **Influence of organisational politics on job stress among SMEs employees in Matlosana Local Municipality**. The objective of this dissertation is to gain a better understanding of the Influence of organisational politics on job stress among SMEs employees in Matlosana Local Municipality. The findings of this study will provide recommendations that may assist in improving the effectiveness of SMEs.

Enclosed with this letter is a questionnaire that requires you to respond to a series of statements. The items in the questionnaire focus on your demographic information, general political behaviour, go along go ahead, pay and promotion policies, time stress and anxiety. In case you need to know the findings of the study please feel free to contact me so that I can provide them to you.

May I emphasise that your participation is voluntary and confidential.

After completing the questionnaire may you please send it back to me. If you have any problems or concerns about completing the questionnaire, please contact me on contacts indicated below.

Thank you in advance for your valuable time and effort taken in completing this questionnaire.

Yours sincerely

**Kenneth Letshaba
0838000060
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APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS ON JOB STRESS AMONG SMEs EMPLOYEES IN MATLOSANA LOCAL DISTRICT.

This questionnaire consists of six sections: Section A consists of demographic information, Section B evaluates general political behaviour, Section C measures get ahead, Section D evaluates pay and promotion policies, Section E measures time stress and Section F evaluates anxiety. Kindly choose the response for each statement that best describes your situation. There is no right or wrong answer. Your honest opinion is needed.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Kindly choose the single answer that best describes your status by crossing (x) in the relevant block.

A1	Gender	Male	Female
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A2	Marital status	Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed
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A3	Age	Under 30 years	30-39 years	40-49 years	50-59 years	60 years and over
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A4	Race	Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Other (specify)
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A5	Language	English	Tswana	Afrikaans	Sotho	Xhosa	Pedi	Zulu	Other
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A6	Sector	Agriculture	1	Manufacturing	7
		Catering, Accommodation and other Trade	2	Mining and Quarrying	8
		Community, Social and Personal Services	3	Retail and Motor and Repair Services	9
		Construction	4	Transport, Storage and Communications	10
		Electricity, Gas and Water	5	Wholesale Trade, Commercial Agents and Allied Services	11
		Finance and Business Services	6	Other	12

A7	Number of employees	<5	<20	<50	<200
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SECTION B: GENERAL POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR

The following statements describe the general political behaviour in your company. Please use the rating scale below to express the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree). Choosing a single answer that best describes the perception you have by crossing (x) in the relevant block.

GENERAL POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Moderately agree	Agree	Strongly agree
GB 1	There is one group that always gets their way	1	2	3	4	5
GB 2	There is one influential group no one crosses	1	2	3	4	5
GB 3	Policy changes help only a few	1	2	3	4	5
GB 4	Employees build themselves up by tearing others down	1	2	3	4	5
GB 5	Favoritism not merit gets people ahead	1	2	3	4	5
GB 6	Employees don't speak up for fear of retaliation	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C: GET AHEAD

Below are statements about get ahead within the company. Please use the rating scale below to express the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree). Choosing a single answer that best describes the perception you have by crossing (x) in the relevant block.

GET AHEAD		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Moderately agree	Agree	Strongly agree
GA 1	Promotions go to top performers	1	2	3	4	5
GA 2	Rewards come to hard workers	1	2	3	4	5
GA 3	Employees are encouraged to speak out	1	2	3	4	5
GA 4	There is no place for 'yes men' here	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION D: PAY AND PROMOTION POLICIES

Below are statements about pay and promotion policies within the company. Please use the rating scale below to express the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree). Choosing a single answer that best describes the perception you have by crossing (x) in the relevant block.

PAY AND PROMOTION POLICIES		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Moderately agree	Agree	Strongly agree
PP 1	Pay and promotion policies are not politically applied	1	2	3	4	5
PP 2	Pay and promotion decisions are consistent with policies	1	2	3	4	5
PP 3	Pay and promotion policies are applied to certain employees only	1	2	3	4	5
PP 4	Pay and promotion policies are fairly applied to employees	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION E: TIME STRESS

The following statements relate to time stress. Please use the rating scale below to express the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree). Choosing a single answer that best describes the perception you have by crossing (x) in the relevant block.

TIME STRESS		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Moderately agree	Agree	Strongly agree
TS 1	Working here makes it hard to spend enough time with my family	1	2	3	4	5
TS 2	I spend so much time at work, I can't see the forest for the trees	1	2	3	4	5
TS 3	Working here leaves little time for other activities	1	2	3	4	5
TS 4	I frequently get the feeling I am married to the company	1	2	3	4	5
TS 5	I have too much work and too little time to do it in	1	2	3	4	5
TS 6	I sometimes dread the telephone ringing at home because the call might be job related	1	2	3	4	5
TS 7	I feel like I never have a day off	1	2	3	4	5
TS 8	Too many people at my level in the company get burned out by job demands	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION F: ANXIETY

The following statements relate to anxiety. Please use the rating scale below to express the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree). Choosing a single answer that best describes the perception you have by crossing (x) in the relevant block.

ANXIETY		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Moderately agree	Agree	Strongly agree
AX 1	I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job	1	2	3	4	5
AX 2	My job gets to me more than it should	1	2	3	4	5
AX 3	There are many times when my job drives me right up the wall	1	2	3	4	5
AX 4	Sometimes when I think about my job I get a tight feeling in my chest	1	2	3	4	5
AX 5	I feel guilty when I take time off from job	1	2	3	4	5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.