

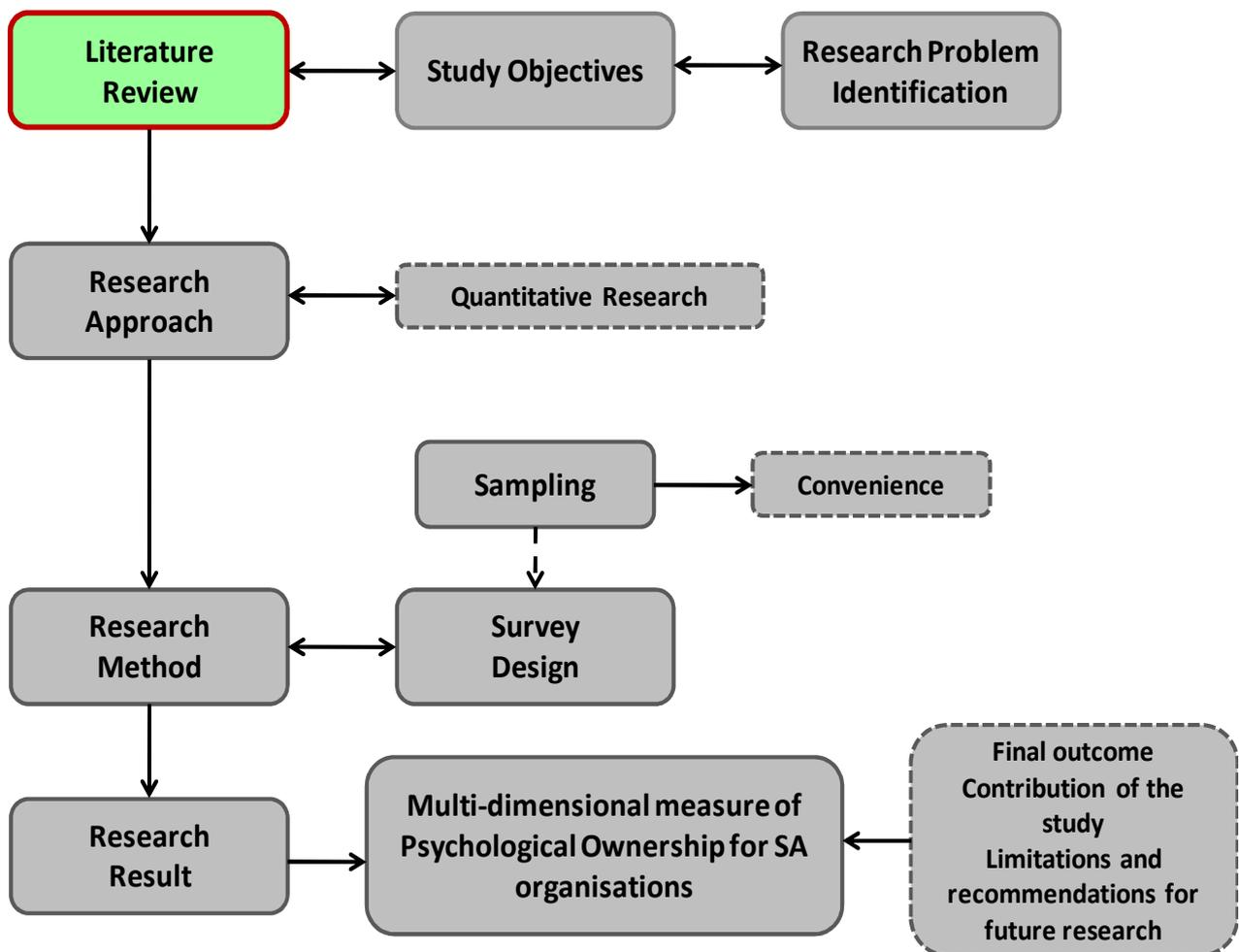
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE STUDY

A man who reviews the old so as to find out the new is qualified to teach others.

- **Confucius**

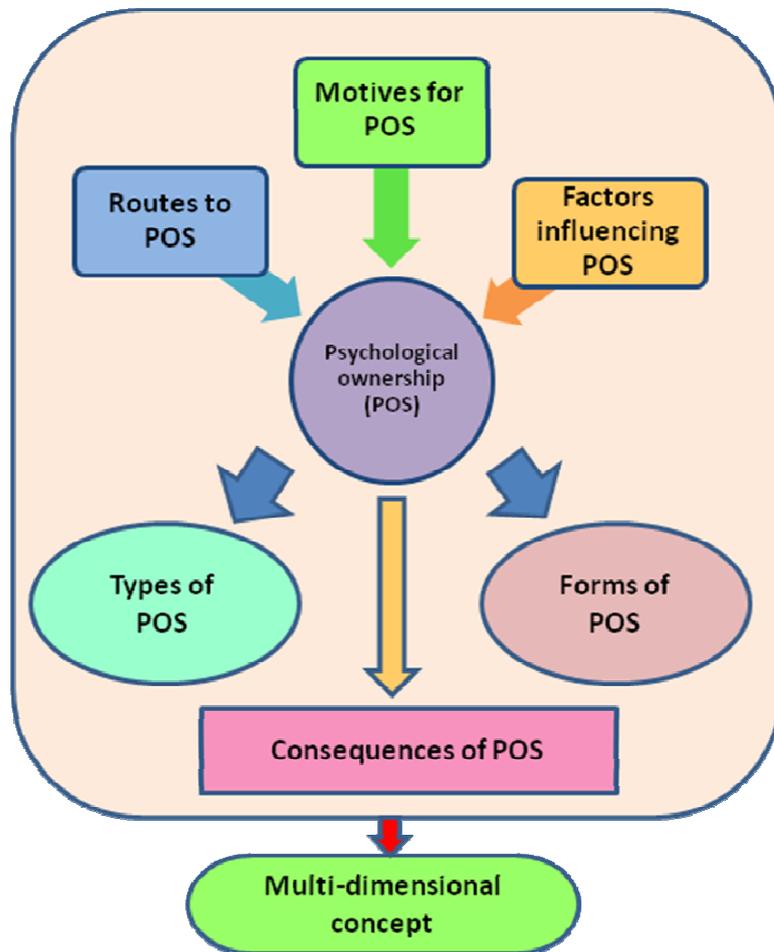
In this chapter...



2.1 INTRODUCTION

The research requires a literature review of the topic and related themes to equip the researcher with a thorough understanding of psychological ownership. Therefore it is necessary to research what it is and how it functions in an organisation. For this reason, the literature review will define and contextualise psychological ownership, emphasising its distinctiveness with regard to other related concepts. This chapter will describe the motives or reasons for, and the “routes to”, psychological ownership. It will discuss the different types and forms of psychological ownership, the factors that influence its emergence and the consequences of psychological ownership. An integrated motivational that could be applied for explaining the state of psychological ownership will be presented. This review will depict psychological ownership as a multi-dimensional construct and discuss the role it plays in employee retention. An outline of all the aspects that will be discussed in this chapter is displayed in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Outline of the literature review



(Author's own)

2.2 OWNERSHIP DEFINED

According to Rousseau (1950 [1762]), civil society probably began when a person fenced off a piece of land and took it into his or her head to claim “This is mine”; while others accepted this declaration. Grunebaum (as cited in Mattila & Ikävalko, 2003) states that ownership is connected to the relationships between human beings and the things and objects they surround themselves with, thus revealing that ownership is a much broader concept than a particular legal regime and the status based on it. In the

development of a model of employee ownership Pierce et al. (1991) propose that under certain conditions formal ownership leads to psychological ownership and an integration of the employee-owner into the ownership experience and that each form (formal and psychological) has its own role in the ownership-employee attitude/behavioural relationship.

- **Ownership form.**

A number of different formal arrangements fall under the general rubric of employee ownership (e.g. social ownership, worker/producer cooperatives, direct ownership, and Employee Stock Ownership Plans [ESOPs]), each consisting of different aspects of employee ownership and employee control. According to Quarrey, Blasi & Rosen (1986) all these different forms essentially share the same purpose: providing a capital ownership stake for workers. Pierce et al. (1991) propose that the actual form of ownership will most likely influence the formal dimensions of the ownership system and the ownership expectations, rights and responsibilities that are often created within the minds of the employee-owners as well as those who manage the system.

- **Attributes of the ownership construct**

Pierce et al. (1991) define formal ownership in terms of three basic rights, each of which may be present in a specific employee ownership milieu. The rights often associated with ownership are: (1) the right to possession of some portion of the owned object's real being and/or financial value; (2) the right to influence control over the owned object; and (3) the right to information about the position of that which is owned. Formal ownership comprising three dimensions: equity, influence, and information operate thus as a multi-dimensional variable.

However, Pierce et al. (1991) suggest that regardless of the type of ownership psychological ownership will lead to the integration of the employee-owner into the organisation and the ownership experience. O'Reilly (2002, p. 19) notes that "when

managers talk about ownership, what they typically want to instil is not financial ownership but psychological ownership – a feeling on the part of the employees that they have a responsibility to make decisions that are in the long term interest of the company”.

2.3 THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE OF OWNERSHIP

The psychology of possession is well rooted in people, and according to Furby (1978) this sense of possession (the feeling that an object, idea, or entity is “*mine*” or “*ours*”) is the core of psychological ownership. Psychologists, anthropologists, philosophers, geographers, and child development specialists, among others, have explored the psychological aspects of ownership in a variety of contexts, including child development (Isaacs, 1933), consumer behaviour (Belk, 1988), house ownership (Porteous, 1976), across different socio-economic strata (Rochberg-Halton, 1980), within the philosophical discussions of “being” (Sartre, 1943) and in the workplace (Pierce et al., 2001; Pratt & Dutton, 1998). They all came to the conclusion that possession and feelings of ownership are a natural part of the human condition (Belk, 1988; Litwinski, 1947; Furby, 1978).

Cram & Paton (1993), for example, referring to a study among the elderly, note that it is common to witness the enervating effects associated with the removal of the elderly from their homes to nursing facilities. They ascribe these effects to the separation of the individuals from their possessions, with which much of the self has become interwoven. Child psychologists suggest that because of the toddler’s innate urge to control objects and to be effectant, feelings of *mine* and the close connection between “me” and “mine” emerge (Furby, 1991). Isaacs (1933) notes that among young children at play, one can often observe strong reactions; for example, this is “*my* car, this is *mine*”, when a child picks up another child’s toy. In sum, people tend to equate feelings of possession with feelings of ownership (Dittmar, 1992; Furby, 1978). Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) link the psychology of possession with attitudes, self-concept and sense of responsibility, as follows:

Attitudes

The psychology of possession literature demonstrates that people feel positively about tangible and intangible targets of ownership. The feelings of ownership toward both material and immaterial objects can not only shape identity (as was mentioned earlier by Belk (1988) and Dittmar (1992)), but can also affect behaviour (Isaacs, 1933). Beggan (1992) and Nuttin (1987) theorise that owned objects appear to be more attractive and are rated more favourably than objects which are not owned, possibly as a result of invested effort, self-enhancing biases, controllability, and social approval. Formanek (1991) states that the growth of possessions can produce a positive and inspiring effect, whereas the loss of possessions leads to feelings of depression and “shrinkage of our personality, a partial conversion of ourselves to nothingness” (James, 1890, p. 178). Feelings of psychological ownership thus lead to positive attitudes about the entity.

Self-concept

The psychology of possession also proposes that feelings of ownership cause people to view tangible and intangible possessions as part of the extended self. Dittmar (1992) believes that it is common for people to experience a psychological connection between the self and various targets of possession, such as homes, motor cars, space, and other people. According to Belk (1988) and Dittmar (1992), possessions become so much a part of our identity that we see them as an extension of ourselves. In his treatise *Being and nothingness*, Sartre (1969 [1943]) notes that “to have” (along with “to do” and “to be”) is one of the three categories of human existence and that “the totality of my possessions reflects the totality of my being ...I am what I have ...What is mine is myself”. Mann (1991, p. 211) supports this, writing, “What I own feels like part of me”. In 1890, psychologist William James commented on the fine line between “me” and “mine”: “We feel and act about certain things that are ours very much as we feel and act about ourselves” (James, 1890, p. 291). Thus, tangible and intangible possessions and feelings of psychological ownership become linked to the self-concept.

Sense of responsibility

Both Beaglehole (1932) and Furby (1978) find that possessions and feelings of ownership trigger a sense of responsibility for the entity. According to Hall (1966), possession causes individuals to protect and defend their ownership rights. Even in the context of property rights, Wilpert (1991) addresses the importance of the protection and enhancement of possessions, which include improvements as well as control of access by others.

Summary

Research on the psychology of possession links feelings of ownership with positive attitudes about the target of ownership, the self-concept, and sense of responsibility for the target. Pierce et al. (2001) further conclude that: (1) the feeling of ownership is innately human; (2) people develop feelings of ownership towards both tangible and intangible objects; and (3) ownership has important emotional, behavioural and attitudinal consequences for those that experience ownership. Many researchers and scholars have recognised and commented on the relationship between feelings of possession and work and organisational contexts. Peters (as cited in Pierce et al., 2004, p. 508) observes, for example, that Harley-Davidson made its successful turnaround due to the emergence of feelings of ownership. Brown (1989) suggests that psychological ownership will be the key to organisational competitiveness during the 21st century, whereas Kubzansky and Druskat (as cited in Pierce et al., 2003) propose that the psychological sense of ownership may be an integral part of the employee's relationship with the organisation. But what is psychological ownership and how can it be defined?

2.4 PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP DEFINED

Pierce and colleagues (2003, p. 86) link feelings of possession with feelings of ownership and define psychological ownership as “that state where an individual feels as though the target of ownership or a piece of that target is ‘theirs’”. As part of their

elaboration of the construct, they highlight a number of distinguishing features.

The concept of ‘mine’

First, they suggest that the sense of ownership manifests itself in the meaning and emotion usually associated with ‘*my*’ or ‘*mine*,’ and ‘*our*.’ The conceptual core of psychological ownership is a feeling of possessiveness (Wilpert, 1991) and of being psychologically tied to a specific object or target (such as the product of one’s labour, home, land, or significant others). Psychological ownership thus answers the question: “What do I feel is mine?”

Relationship with targets

Secondly, psychological ownership reflects a relationship between an individual and a target: objects which are both material (e.g., work, tools) and immaterial in nature (e.g., workspace, ideas), in which the object is experienced as having a close connection with the self (Furby, 1978; Litwinski, 1942), becoming part of the “extended self” (Belk, 1988). Isaacs (1933, p. 225) reports: “... what is mine becomes a part of *me*”.

A cognitive and affective core

Thirdly, Pierce et al. (2003) have noticed that psychological ownership (the feeling that something is “*mine*” or “*ours*”) has many facets and includes a cognitive and affective core. The cognitive aspect reflects individual’s awareness, beliefs and thoughts regarding the target of ownership. Affectively, feelings of ownership are said to be pleasure producing in themselves (Beggan, 1992; Furby, 1978; Porteous, 1976) and give the owner a feeling of efficacy and competence (White, 1959). This affective and cognitive information based on affective judgements and more abstract beliefs is consistent with basic psychological research on attitudes conducted by Breckler and Wiggins (1989) and with the Affective Events Theory of Weiss and Cropanzano’s (1996) that differentiates beliefs about the job from emotional experiences at work. According

to Affective Events Theory different attitudes comprise different proportions of affective and cognitive elements. Extending and applying this idea to psychological ownership, Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) propose that psychological ownership could be differentiated from other work-related attitudes and has unique explanatory power since its conceptual core is feelings of possession that trigger affect-driven behaviours. Psychological ownership consists thus, in part, of an emotional attachment to the organisation that transcends the mere cognitive evaluation of the organisation.

Summary

Psychological ownership can be directed at a variety of objects (targets), including an organisation, a job, or a work project, and is considered to be a sense of possession of an object whereby the object becomes an extension of the self and is closely linked to the individual's identity and consist of affective and cognitive elements (Pierce et al., 2001).

2.5 THE CONCEPTUAL DISTINCTIVENESS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP

According to Pierce et al. (2001), the introduction of the concept of psychological ownership naturally raises the question about its conceptual distinctiveness, because a number of constructs in organisational behaviour theory portray the psychological relationship that individuals develop with organisations. Morrow (1983) states that it is important to differentiate psychological ownership of the organisation from other work-related attitudes (e.g. organisational commitment, organisational identification, internalisation, psychological empowerment and job involvement) to avoid construct proliferation since all involve a sense of attachment to or resonance with the organisation. Three constructs that are of particular interest when psychological ownership is considered, are organisational commitment, organisational identification and internalisation.

Organisational commitment refers to the feelings and/or beliefs concerning the reason an employee wants to maintain his/her membership in a particular organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Organisational identification is defined Mael and Asforth (1992) by as a perceived oneness with an organisation and the experience of the organisation's successes and failures as one's own.

Internalisation refers to the incorporation of values and assumptions within the self as guiding principles (Mael & Asforth. 19900

Although commitment, identification and internalisation describe different types of psychological relationships with organisations, they may co-exist with psychological ownership especially when the ownership target is the organisation. Commitment, identification and internalisation are neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for psychological ownership they are likely to have a reciprocal relationship with psychological ownership.

Pierce et al. (2001) theorise that psychological ownership can be differentiated from other constructs on the basis of such factors as its conceptual core (namely possessiveness), question or focus, motive served, development, type of state, selected consequences and rights and responsibilities, as summarised in Table 2.1. These notions undoubtedly share certain similarities but, fundamentally, the specifics of the definitions involved suggest that the conceptual core differs somewhat from one conceptualisation to the next. In table 2.1 the focus was primarily on the distinctiveness, rather than the similarities and links between psychological ownership and the other constructs. Although their might be an overlap in the observed effects, for example theory indicates that identification and psychological ownership both produce positive (e.g. organisational citizenship behaviour) and negative (e.g. deviance) effects, the processes by which they are proposed to occur are different. Although commitment, identification and internalisation share reference to the self, they differ in their theoretical

anchoring. Psychological ownership is primarily grounded in psychological theories of possession while, for example, identification is anchored in social identity theory, and commitment is anchored in reasons for social membership.

From Table 2.1, point 2 it is clear that the question or focus answered by each of these constructs is different. Psychological ownership of the organisation answers the question: “How much do I feel this organisation (workplace) is mine?”, whereas organisational commitment asks “Should I maintain my membership in the organisation?” (because I want to, because I need to, or because I ought to?) (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Organisational identification addresses the question: “Who am I?” (Mael & Tetrick, 1992), while internalisation asks “What do I believe?” (O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Psychological empowerment addresses the question: “Do I feel capable and intrinsically motivated in my work role?” (Spreitzer, 1995) and job involvement asks “How important is the job and job performance to my self-image?” (Lawler & Hall, 1970; Blau & Boal, 1987). Lastly, job satisfaction asks “What evaluative judgments do I make about my job?” (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).

Feeling a sense of ownership of the organisation, the feeling of possessiveness and feeling the organisation is “*mine*” or “*ours*”, thus differs fundamentally from the need, the desire, or obligation to remain in the organisation (organisation commitment: Meyer & Allen, 1997). It differs from using a unique and admired characteristic of the organisation to define the self (organisational identification: Mael & Tetrick, 1992) and it differs from association-based goal equivalence (internalisation: O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Psychological ownership of the organisation is also different from feeling competent and intrinsically motivated at work (psychological empowerment: Spreitzer, 1995). It is different from being consumed by work and having the job as a central life interest (job involvement: Lawler & Hall, 1970; Blau & Boal, 1987). Lastly, the possessive feeling that an object is “*mine*” and “*ours*” differentiates psychological ownership from positive or negative evaluative judgments of the job or job situation (job satisfaction: Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).

Table 2.1: Comparison of Psychological Ownership with Commitment, Identification, Internalisation, Psychological empowerment and Job involvement

Dimensions of Distinctiveness	Psychological Ownership	Commitment	Identification	Internalisation	Psychological Empowerment	Job Involvement
Conceptual core	Possessiveness	Desire to remain affiliated	Use element of organisation's identity to define oneself	Shared goals or values	Active orientation to work role	Identification with one's job
Questions answered for individual	What do I feel is mine?	Should I maintain membership?	Who am I?	What do I believe?	Can I shape my work role and context?	How important is my job to me?
Motivational bases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficacy / effectance Self-identity Need for place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security Belongingness Beliefs and values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attractions Affiliation Self-enhancement Holism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to be right Beliefs and values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaning Competence Self-determination Impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of work to self-concept Satisfy need for self-esteem
Development	Active imposition of self on organisation	Decision to maintain membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affiliation Emulation 	Adoption of organisation's goals or values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People's perception 's about themselves in relation to their work environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychological importance at work Job situation is central to person and his identity
Type of state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affective / cognitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cognitive / affective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cognitive / objective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affective / perceptual Cognitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affective
Select consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rights and responsibilities Promotion of / resistance to change Frustration, stress Refusal to share Worker integration Alienation Stewardship and OCB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OCB Intent to leave Attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intent to remain Frustration / stress Alienation Performance Well-being of individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OCB Intent to leave In-role behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness Innovative behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intrinsic motivation Concern for welfare at organisation Intent to remain Low level of absence
Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right to information Right to voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaningful work Access to information Rewards Recognise individual contribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaningful work Adequate supervision
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burden sharing Active and responsible voice Becoming informed Protecting Caring for and nurturing Growing / enhancing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the status of the admired attribute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal and value protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capability to perform activities with skill 	

Source: Pierce et al. (2001, p. 306) and researchers' own summary

OCB = Organisation Citizenship Behaviour

Pierce et al. (2001) therefore conclude that it is reasonable to suggest that psychological ownership may predict (1) certain effects unaccounted for by existing theoretical models of other constructs; and (2) criterion variance currently unaccounted for by each of the other constructs.

Proof of studies

Mayhew et al. (2007) and Avey et al. (2009) have confirmed a strong association between affective organisational commitment and psychological ownership of the organisation. Affective commitment is based on a sense of identity with the organisation, its values and its goals, and is reflected in feelings of belongingness and wanting to be attached to, and involved in the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) provided discriminant validation evidence examined the relationship between psychological ownership and organisational commitment in two organisations and reported that psychological ownership for the organisation increased variance in commitment. Similarly, in their study, Olzer, Yilmaz and Ozler (2008) found that psychological ownership variables account for 50.1% of the changes in the organisational commitment variables. VandeWalle et al. (1995) reported that organisational commitment mediates the effects of psychological ownership on extra-role behaviour. Therefore, psychological ownership makes a difference because possessive feelings toward the organisation (psychological ownership) lead to an increase in organisational commitment; committed employees will engage in extra-role behaviour; and extra-role behaviour will contribute to higher performance. Prior research has demonstrated a relationship between extra-role behaviour and performance. Organisations that value organisational commitment and extra-role behaviour may want to increase the incidence of these behaviours by increasing psychological ownership.

Summary

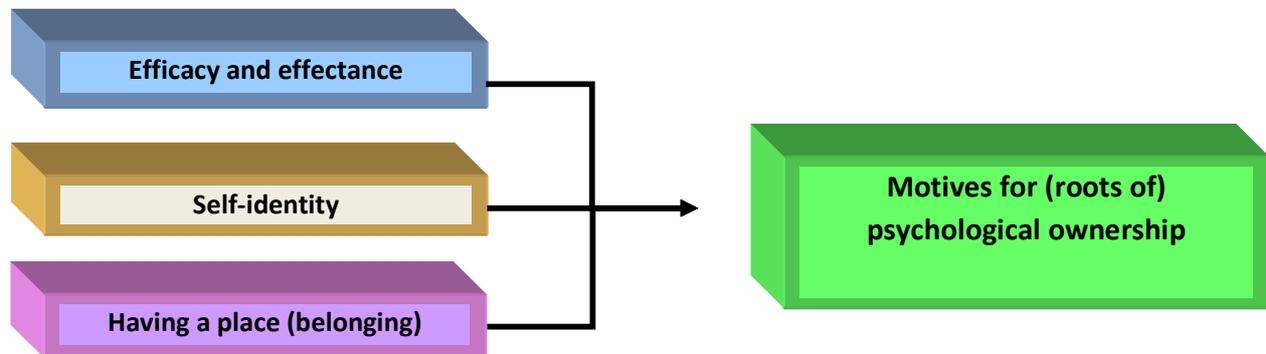
Psychological ownership is conceptually distinct from organisational commitment, identification, internalisation, psychological empowerment, and job satisfaction, for it describes a unique aspect of the human experience in organisations. Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) provided discriminant validity evidence for the distinctiveness of psychological ownership items from those employed to measure commitment, identification, internalisation, job satisfaction and involvement. Their observation of the unique ability of psychological ownership to predict worker attitudes and behaviours over and above the effects of demographic characteristics, affective organisational commitment, organisational identification, internalisation, job involvement and job satisfaction is important because it demonstrates the unique contribution of the psychology of possession to the understanding of the individual-organisation relationship.

We can ask the question: What are the reasons why people develop feelings of psychological ownership? What lies beneath this psychological condition? This answer lies in the motives for psychological ownership.

2.6 THE MOTIVES FOR (“ROOTS OF”) PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP

In 2001, Pierce and his colleagues proposed a framework for a theory of psychological ownership. They defined the “roots of” – in other words, the motives or the reasons why people develop feelings of psychological ownership. They summarised previous research (Dittmar, 1992; Furby, 1978; Porteous, 1976; Seligman, 1975) on the subject by stating that psychological ownership emerges because it satisfies both generic and socially generated motives of individual beings. Pierce et al. (2001; 2003) propose that the roots of’ psychological ownership can be found in three human motives: (1) the motive for efficacy and effectance (White, 1959); (2) self-identity (Dittmar, 1992); and (3) having a place in which to dwell (“home”; Heidegger, 1967).

Figure 2.2: The motives for psychological ownership



(Author's own)

Pierce, Jussila and Cummings (2009) emphasise that each of these motives is hypothesised to *facilitate* the development of the state of psychological ownership, as opposed to being the direct cause of its occurrence. They further state that if feelings of ownership are rooted in this set of motives, it is assumed that individuals can develop feelings of ownership for a variety of objects, as long as these objects allow this set of motives to operate and to be satisfied. Each of the three motives for psychological ownership will be discussed in detail.

2.6.1 Efficacy and effectance

According to Isaacs (1933, p. 225), the motive underlying possession is, in large part, to be in control – having the means to satisfy “my need as *mine*” – and having possessions enables the individual to feel safe when they are “mine to have and to hold”. The work of Furby (1978) postulates that the motivation for possession stems from the individual’s need for effectance and ability to produce desired outcomes in the environment. According to White (1959), “effectance” represents our need to deal effectively with our environment. When we are dissatisfied with elements in our environment, the effectance motive is aroused. When our actions (or the actions of others) produce further sources of dissatisfaction, the motivation continues until the environment has been adjusted to our satisfaction. White believes that this interaction

with the environment, and our ability to control it, gives rise to feelings of pleasure and efficacy, as both stem from our “being the cause” and having adjusted the environment through our own actions.

Furby (1978) is of the opinion that there are both intrinsic and instrumental functions served by possessions. According to her, the control of objects through ownership is pleasure producing per se and leads to perceptions of personal efficacy. Furby concludes that possessions come to be part of the extended self and are therefore important to individuals because they are instrumental in exercising control over the physical environment as well as over people. According to Pierce et al. (2003), the desire to experience causal efficacy in exploring and altering the environment leads to attempts to take possession and to the emergence of ownership feelings; through this process, “possessions and self become intimately related” (Furby, 1991, p. 460).

2.6.2 Self-identity

The second motivational underpinning of psychological ownership is the need for self-identity. In addition to serving an instrumental function (efficacy/effectance motive), numerous scholars (e.g., Dittmar, 1992; Mead, 1934; Porteous, 1976) have suggested that possessions also serve as symbolic expressions of the self, since they are closely connected to with self-identity and individuality. Pierce et al. (2003) propose that people use ownership to define themselves, to express their self-identity to others and to maintain the continuity of the self across time.

As individuals find pleasure and comfort in their interactions with objects, the socially shared meaning ascribed to those objects gets internalised and becomes part of the individual’s self-identity (McCracken, 1986). Dittmar (1992, p. 85) states that “personal possessions come to objectify aspects of self-definition”, and thus through experiencing an object people learn something about the environment and about themselves, as they are closely linked.

Dittmar (1992, p. 86) concludes that it is through our interaction with our possessions, coupled with a reflection upon their meaning, that “our sense of identity, our self-definition, are established, maintained, reproduced and transformed”. According to Kron and Saunders (as cited in Pierce et al., 2003), interacting with their possessions provides people with a space, comfort, autonomy, pleasure, and opportunity that facilitates the development and cultivation of their identity. They are symbols of the self (Cooper, as cited in Pierce et al., 2003).

- **Expression of self-identity to others**

Dittmar (1992) and McCracken (1986) suggest that possessions play an important role in social interaction. In addition to affording power over others, possessions communicate the individual’s identity to others, consequently recognition and social prestige. Objects can thus objectify the self (Dittmar, 1992). Rochberg-Halton (1984) states that in objectively telling who we are, what we do, and who or what we might become, possessions can act as signs of the self and role models for its continued cultivation.

According to Dittmar (1992), people tend to collect and freely present various objects as representational of their self-identity (e.g., location and type of home owned, awards, degrees, and certificates visibly displayed on office walls). Levy (as cited in Pierce et al., 2003) confirms that people convey their personal values, character, attitudes, education, membership and achievements by means of the items they purchase and display. People frequently express their concern with how others will observe them in relation to particular possessions (Munson & Spivey, as cited in Pierce et al., 2003).

- **Maintaining the continuity of self-identity**

Rochberg-Halton (1984) holds that possessions are seen as a way to reach continuity of the self. Cram and Paton (1993, p. 19) suggest that “[P]ossessions are repositories of memories of one’s self-identity in the past”. Possessions thus provide people with feelings of comfort, an emotional connection between themselves and their past.

Rochberg-Halton (1984) and Cram and Paton (1993) give the following example: as people get older, their past, reflected by photographs, letters, diaries, and gifts from others, becomes an increasingly important part of their self-identity.

Dittmar (1992) is of the opinion that possessions may even provide a sense of security. The preserving of possessions allows individuals to maintain a sense of continuity through those objects that have become symbolic extensions of their selves. In contrast, if those possessions are taken away or lost, individuals may experience an erosion of the sense of self (James, 1890). Pierce et al. (2003) therefore propose that the motivation for ownership and thus for psychological ownership is in part grounded in self-identity.

2.6.3 Having a place

To have a “home” in which to dwell, is the third motive that is suggested to serve as a reason for feelings of ownership. According to the French political philosopher Simone Weil (1952, p. 41), to have a place is an important “need of the human soul”. Individuals have a need to own a specific space. “Home” is perceived as “the territorial core”, a desired space and set point of reference around which people organise their everyday lives (Porteous, 1976).

According to Darling (as cited in Pierce et al., 2003), because of people’s territorial need, they dedicate a considerable amount of time, energy, and resources to decorating, protecting, and displaying their homes. The home is an entity of ownership that may serve the human need for having a place – my place, states Duncan (1981) in her discussion of home ownership. According to Porteous (1976), “the home” is essential for the reason that it provides the individual with both spiritual and physical security. Porteous believes that the personification of owned objects (e.g., the home) serves to promote security, identity and identification, each of which is important since it symbolises freedom of self-determination.

Control over space, personalisation of space as an affirmation of identity and stimulation are seen as the three territorial satisfactions that develop from the possession of territory (Porteous, 1976). The home refers not only to a geographical space, but to such concepts as the community or neighbourhood, which also serve as a home or a home base for some individuals, thereby facilitating the fulfilment of their territorial needs. “Home” can also be seen as a permanent point of reference around which the individual organises an important part of his or her reality. Porteous notes that “home” is probably found in those possessions in which the individual has made a significant emotional investment. Therefore Porteous suggests that it is those possessions in which the individual finds an intense sense of identification that come to be considered as “home” – *my* place.

According to Dreyfus (1991, p. 45), “when we inhabit something, it is no longer an object for us, but becomes part of us.” Heidegger (1967) called this “dwelling in” or being “at home in”. Dwelling exists in instances where one has been successful in infusing oneself in time and space, accompanied by the sense that one is “within” and “part of” some particular place. According to Heidegger (1967), home is, in part, achieved as a result of an individual’s interaction with his or her environment and the personalisation of this environment, which enhances familiarity, a sense of being one with, and the discovery of oneself within. People become psychologically attached to a variety of objects of material or immaterial nature as they develop their home base (coming to “feel at home with” one’s language, one’s country, one’s things). Pierce et al. (2003) note that in many of these possessions people may find a special place, one that is “*theirs*,” that is familiar and that provides some kind of personal security. They thus suggest that part of the reward inherent in psychological ownership is having a home, a place that one feels is one’s own.

2.6.4 Summary

Feelings of ownership allow individuals to fulfil three basic human motives: namely efficacy and effectance; self-identity; and having a place (home). These motives,

therefore, are the reason for psychological ownership. Each motive facilitates the development of psychological ownership, rather than directly causing it to occur.

Based on this, Pierce et al. (2003) propose that psychological ownership manifests itself in organisations much as it does in other contexts because, as suggested in organisational behaviour research, the motives of efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and having a place can be satisfied in organisations. Research provides empirical evidence that individuals express feelings of ownership toward their work (Beaglehole, 1932), the products they create (Das, 1993), their jobs (Peters & Austin, 1985), their organisations (Dirks et al., 1996), the practices employed by organisations (Kostova, 1998), and specific issues in their organisations (Pratt & Dutton, 2000). But how can employees come to feel ownership?

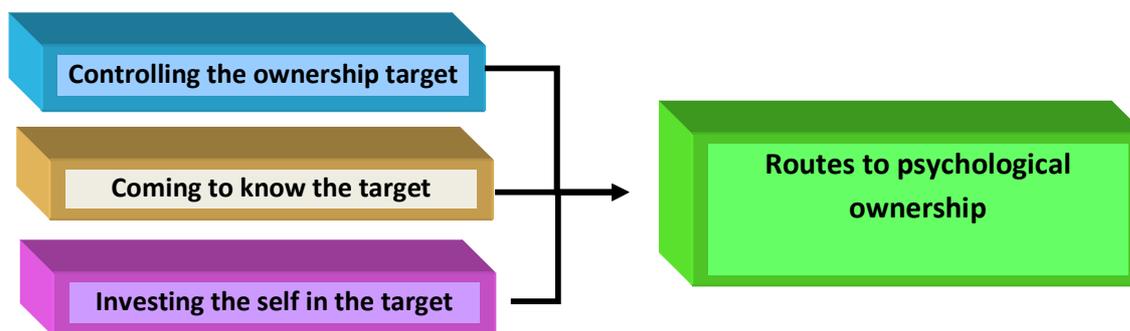
2.7 THE DETERMINANTS OF (“ROUTES TO”) PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP

Pierce and colleagues (2001) proposed that the phenomenon of psychological ownership is rooted in a set of human motives and that individuals can develop feelings of ownership for a variety of objects as long as these objects allow these motives to operate and to be satisfied. They further examined how organisational members come to feel ownership and identified three major routes or paths through which psychological ownership emerges:

- (1) Controlling the ownership target (object)
- (2) Coming to know the target intimately
- (3) Investing the self in the target.

Although the routes are examined separately, they are potentially interrelated. The “routes to” psychological ownership are displayed in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: The “routes to” psychological ownership



(Author's own)

2.7.1 Controlling the ownership target

Control of an object gives rise to feelings of ownership for that object (Furby, 1978; McClelland, 1951; Rochberg-Halton (1984). Furby argues that the greater the amount of control an individual can exercise over certain objects, the more they will be psychologically experienced as part of the self. McClelland also reasons that material objects that can be controlled become regarded as part of the self and that the greater the amount of control, the more the object is experienced as part of the self. In contrast, Seligman (1975) and Lewis and Brook (1974) found that objects that cannot be controlled or that are controlled by others are not perceived as part of the self. Prelinger (1959) discovered that individuals were more likely to identify as part of themselves objects which they could control and manipulate, or objects which could affect them, than objects outside their sphere of control.

Rudmin and Berry (1987), in their studies of ownership semantics, found that ownership equates to being able to use and to control the use of objects. According to Rudmin and Berry, those objects over which individuals exercise control are the ones they are most likely to perceive as theirs.

Ellwood (as cited in Pierce et al., 2003) suggests that objects which are regularly used by an individual become assimilated into the user's self. Furby (1978) mentions that the

use of an object can be perceived as carrying out control over that object. She adds that being admitted to the use of an object provides a person with control over others and their admission to the object.

According to Pierce et al. (2001), organisations can provide members with numerous opportunities to exercise varying degrees of control over a number of factors, each of which is a potential target of psychological ownership. For example, job design is such a factor (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). More complex tasks and jobs that provide greater autonomy imply higher levels of control and thus increase the likelihood that feelings of ownership toward the target will emerge (Pierce et al., 2009). In contrast, some organisational factors such as centralisation and formalisation decrease the possibility for individuals to exert control and hence may impede the development of psychological ownership. In such a situation, individuals learn that nothing is “theirs”, because power is placed in the structure and people have limited control over the organisation or any part of it (Pierce et al., 2001).

2.7.2 Coming to intimately know the target

James (1890) suggested that individuals come to develop feelings of ownership for certain objects through a living relationship with that object. Beaglehole (1932) supports this notion by arguing that through intimate knowledge of an object, person, or place, a union of the self with the object takes place. Weil (1952, p. 33) illustrates this with an example of a gardener, who, “after a certain time, feels that the garden belongs to him”. People, thus, come to find themselves psychologically tied to things because of their active participation in or association with those things.

According to Beggan and Brown (1994), association with an object is so central to ownership that ownership is frequently framed in terms of association. Sartre (1943) stated that there is in fact, a causal relationship between the two, in that an individual’s association with an object gives rise to feelings of ownership. The more information and the better knowledge an individual has about an object, the deeper the relationship

between the object and the self, therefore the stronger the feeling of ownership toward it.

Pierce et al. (2001) propose that by various processes of association, organisations can provide their members with a number of opportunities for getting to know potential targets of ownership, such as work, job, projects, and teams. For example, when organisational members are given information about potential organisational targets of ownership (e.g., the mission of the organisation, its goals, and performance), they will feel that they know the organisation better and, consequently, may develop psychological ownership toward it. Information alone, though, may not be sufficient to create a sense of ownership. The outcome will be influenced by the intensity of the association, such as the number of interactions of the individual with the target. A longer association with a target (e.g., long tenure) will probably lead to perceptions of knowing the target better and as a result to a sense of ownership. Intimate knowledge can also be promoted by making information more accessible and less costly to acquire.

2.7.3 Investing the self in the target

Studies done by Sartre (1943) and Rochberg-Halton (1984), among others, provide insight into the relationship between work and psychological ownership. Locke (as cited in Pierce et al., 2001) argues that people own their labour and themselves and, therefore, often feel that they own that which they create, shape, or produce. Marx (cited in *The Marx-Engels reader*, 1976) stated that through people's labour they invest psychic energy in the products that they create; consequently, these products become representations of the self, much like their thoughts, words, and emotions. Therefore, according to Durkheim (1957), individuals own the objects they have created in much the same way that they own themselves. The investment of an individual's energy, effort, time, and attention in objects causes the self to become one with the object and to develop feelings of ownership toward the object (Rochberg-Halton, 1984).

Pierce et al. (2001) note that organisations provide a wealth of opportunities for their members to invest themselves in different aspects such as their job, projects, products, assignments, or work teams and, therefore, to feel ownership toward those targets. According to Beaglehole (1932), workers can develop a sense of ownership toward their work, their machines, and the product of their labour. The investment of the self comes in several forms, including investment of one's own time; skills; ideas; and psychological, physical, and intellectual energies. As a result, the individual may possibly begin to experience that the target of ownership emerges from the self. Pierce et al. (2001) suggest that individuals' psychological ownership of a target will be stronger the more they invest themselves in the target.

Several activities in organisations may require different levels of self-investment. This could be illustrated by the following example: non-routine technologies and jobs that are more complex will allow individuals to use their own judgement, where they will probably invest more of their own thought, personal style, and distinctive knowledge. Creating objects is one of the most apparent and powerful means by which individuals invest themselves in objects (Pierce et al., 2001). Creation involves investing one's values and identity as well as one's time and energy. Pierce and colleagues illustrate this by the following examples: engineers may feel ownership toward the manufactured goods they design, politicians toward the bills they write, and entrepreneurs toward the organisations they establish. Academics, for example, may perhaps feel strong ownership toward the outcome of their academic pursuits.

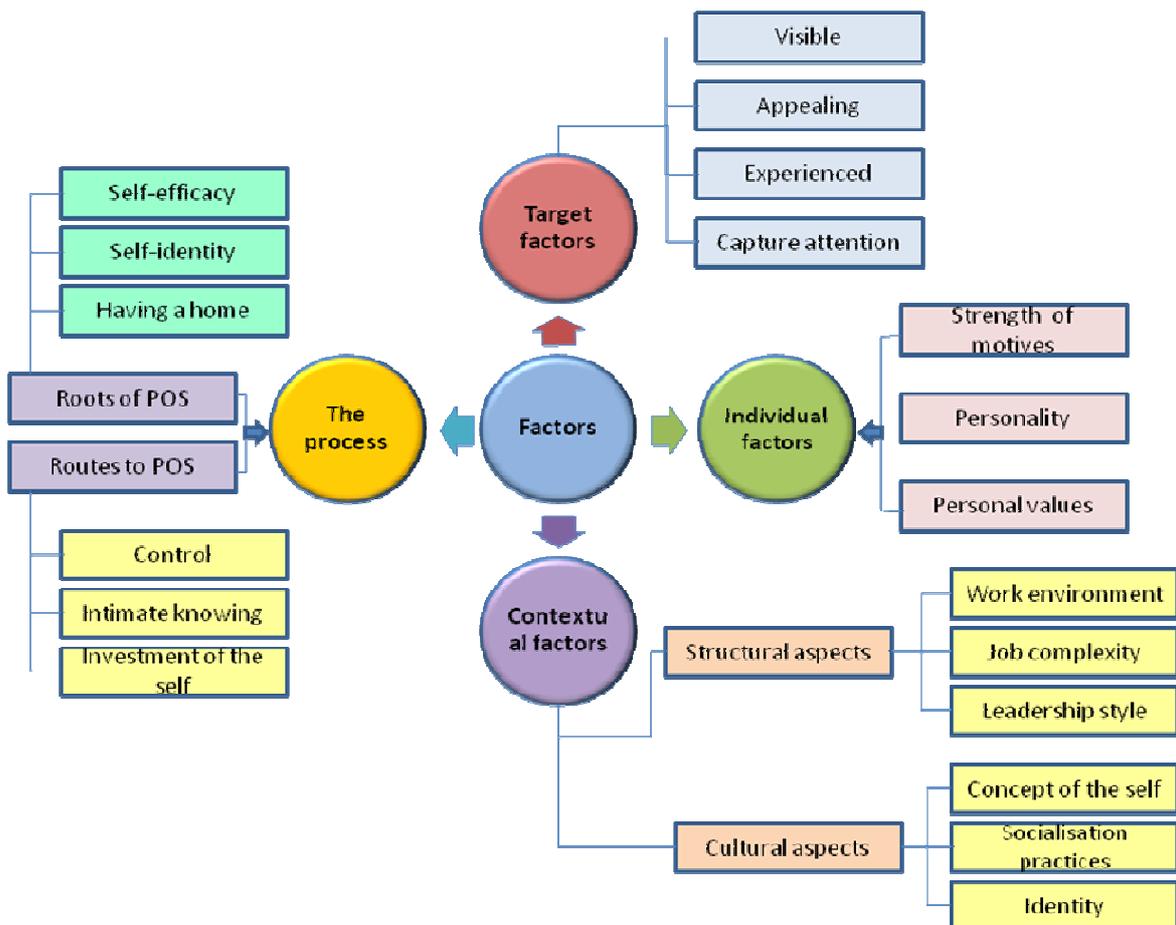
2.7.4 Summary

Pierce et al. (2001) propose that there is a positive and underlying relationship between the amount of control an employee has over a specific organisational factor; the extent to which an employee intimately knows a specific organisational factor; and the extent to which an individual employee devotes himself or herself to the potential target of ownership, and the degree of ownership the employee feels toward that target.

2.8 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE EMERGENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP

According to Pierce et al. (2001), there are a number of factors that influence the emergence of psychological ownership. They suggest that it is likely that the development of psychological ownership exists in both the target and the individual and that its appearance and manifestation is also strongly influenced by situational forces. The different factors that influence the emergence of psychological ownership are displayed in Figure 2.4

Figure 2.4: Factors that influence the emergence of psychological ownership



(Author's own)

2.8.1 Target factors

Although there have been several efforts to find the targets to which individuals become psychologically tied (Kamptner, 1991; Rudmin & Berry, 1987), there does not seem to be a "theory of ownership targets", nor widespread agreement of a specific classification scheme of ownership targets. Some conclusions have, however, become apparent from this work. According to Furby (1978), an individual's culture and personal values shape what can and cannot be owned; Kamptner found that the nature and character of nearly all valued possessions changes throughout the individual's life-span; Kamptner and Rochberg-Halton (1984) observe that females tend to be inclined to associate with more thoughtful, expressive and symbolic objects, while males tend to identify with objects that involve physical interaction and activity; and Pierce et al. (2003) suggest that those items that are controlled, known intimately, and/or flow from one's self are likely to be items for which a psychology of "*mine*" emerges. Ownership appears to attach itself to a wide variety of targets: material objects (Dittmar, 1989; Isaacs, 1933); relationships and people, space or territory, body parts and creations (Rudmin & Berry, 1987); ideas (Isaacs, 1933); work (Holmes, 1967); tools (Ellis, 1985); and sounds heard, like nursery rhymes (Isaacs, 1933).

Building on their "roots of" and "routes to" theory of psychological ownership, Pierce and colleagues (2003) suggest that the degree to which an individual will in fact develop feelings of ownership for a target (object) will be influenced by definite target features that will influence: (1) the potential of the target (object) to comply with the three motives serving as foundations of psychological ownership and (2) the ability of the target (object) to facilitate or impede the "routes" through which the feelings of ownership emerge. The target must have the following characteristics: it must be visible and appealing to the individual, the individual must experience it and, lastly, it must capture the attention or interest of the individual. Feelings of psychological ownership will be enhanced by targets that satisfy the motives of efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and/or having a place (i.e., the "roots" of psychological ownership). In order to serve the need for efficacy and effectance the target must be manipulable. If the individual is going to employ the target to serve the self-identity motive, it must be attractive, socially

appreciated, and self-revealing; and lastly, only if the target is available and receptive to the individual will it be possible for the individual to find a home in it.

Pierce et al. (2003) further propose that possible targets of ownership are those whose characteristics can make it possible for individuals to control, come to know, and/or invest the self in them (i.e., follow the “routes” to psychological ownership). Pierce et al. (2003, p. 19) illustrate this with the following example:

[F]rom the “control” perspective, it may be more difficult for an academic to develop feelings of ownership for the entire university than for one’s research program, as the latter is more subject to one’s control. Similarly, it is unlikely that professors will feel the same level of psychological ownership for undergraduate versus doctoral students, simply because of the different degree to which they come to know these two groups of students and the amount of themselves invested in them.

2.8.2 Individual factors

- **Strength of the motive**

Pierce et al. (2003) therefore argue that the innate motives of efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and having a place to dwell will prepare the individual for psychological ownership. Although these motives are universal, the authors anticipate that there will be individual differences in the process. Firstly, there will be differences in the strength of the motives, both across individuals and within an individual over time. This means there is a varying likelihood of developing feelings of ownership in different individuals, or even within one individual at different points in time.

- **Personality**

Secondly, personality will also have an influence. Winter, Steward, Klohen, and Duncan (1998) point out that personality traits will affect how motives are expressed in behaviour. Pierce and colleagues suggest that traits will affect how an individual goes

about selecting ownership objects, and how the individual behaves towards the objects. For instance, extroverts may prefer to pursue targets through social means, while authoritarian individuals may choose to approach targets through exercising power and control, rather than through developing close relationships or through investing themselves in an object. Kasser and Ryan (1993) confirm that people with a high self-esteem may pursue intrinsic targets, while those with a weaker self-concept may be more prone to seek materialistic targets.

- **Personal values**

Pelham (1991) states that personal values make certain objects more or less esteemed. Pierce et al. (2003) support this by stating that different attributes are important to different people and that different types of object are “sought” by individuals. To enhance their self-concept, individuals may strive to increase feelings of self-worth by attempting to possess, psychologically or legally, objects of greatest importance to them. Ownership is one means of boosting an individual’s self-esteem and that is why individuals are probably prone to feel ownership over those objects considered most important to them according to their personal values. Pierce et al. (2003, p. 20) illustrate this with the following example: “individuals whose perceptions of self-worth are predicated on intellect, or who are part of cultures that value intellect, may seek to feel ownership over targets that reinforce this attribute (e.g., books, pieces of art)”. On the other hand, as noted earlier, it is possible that an individual may legally own some object, yet never claim the possession as his or her own. This could be the case when the object is not a source of efficacy and effectance, and is not associated with the individual’s self-identity, and/or a place within which to dwell, even though, according to Pierce and colleagues (2003, p. 20) “it might have been earned with hard cash and is controlled and known”.

2.8.3 The process

The process of psychological ownership emerges because of a complex interaction

between the “roots”, the “routes”, target factors, and individual factors (Pierce et al., 2003). According to Pierce et al., the three “roots” of psychological ownership, namely efficacy and effectance, identity and having a home, are not totally detached from one another. Ownership may possibly emerge as the result of any one or any subset of these needs. However, when two or more of the “roots” are involved and served, a stronger and more secure sense of ownership will probably become apparent (Pierce et al., 2003).

Similarly, the three “routes” to psychological ownership, namely control, intimate knowing, and investment of the self, are all complementary, additive and distinct in nature. Feelings of ownership can emerge through any single route, independent of the others, but feelings of ownership for a specific object (target) will be stronger when more than one route is followed (e.g., intimate knowing and controlling).

There is no clarity on whether some “routes” are more effective at generating psychological ownership than others. Pierce et al. (2003) speculate that the routes of control and investing one’s self in the target have the potential to be most effective, for the following two reasons: (1) theory and research reviewed earlier indicate that these routes tend to be most effective at bringing the target within the region of the self; (2) along with other effects, controlling and investing the self have the potential to also result in coming to know intimately. For example, the crafting of a sculpture, the designing of a house, or the writing of a manuscript will probably result in a detailed and in-depth understanding of the product of the individual’s creation. On the other hand, an individual can come to know a target intimately without either controlling or creating it. Therefore, Pierce and colleagues believe that because investing one’s self and controlling can lead to the third route, and because they hypothesise that the routes have additive effects, the first two may have greater overall effect than simply coming to have intimate knowledge of the target.

Matilla and Ikävalko (2003) suggest that ownership is long lasting by its nature and that it usually (in real life) does not occur as a phenomenon of short duration. However, Pierce et al. (2003) suggest that at the cognitive level an individual may come rather

quickly to recognise that a particular target is “*mine*”, although, for the feeling to come to the point where it manifests itself as a complete cognitive/affective state integrated into the self-concept, the process may well be lengthy, dynamic, and reiterative in nature.

As noted earlier, Pierce et al. (2003) declare that psychological ownership is distinct from legal ownership. Individuals become legal owners of a piece of property at the very moment they obtain it, but it may take some time before they begin to feel this property as theirs. Although there may be some exceptions, it is unlikely that sufficient control, intimate knowing, and/or investment of the self will emerge quickly. The investing of the self into the target will *in due course* give rise to feelings of ownership for that target (object). Pierce et al. speculate that stronger feelings of ownership will be generated when such feelings lead the individual to make personal sacrifices on behalf of the target.

2.8.4 Contextual factors

Pierce et al. (2003) anticipate that although a wide variety of contextual elements will have an effect on the emergence of psychological ownership, the main focus will be on two aspects: structural and cultural aspects.

- **Structural factors**

Individuals’ feelings of ownership may also be influenced by structural aspects of the situation, for example, norms, rules, laws, and hierarchy. According to Mischel (1973), the appearance and demonstration of individual differences and attitudes could be influenced by structural factors which create “weak” or “strong” situations. A “strong” or tightly controlled structure will obviously limit the freedom of individuals to express their dispositional tendencies, such as the extent to which they develop psychological ownership. A “weak” structure, on the other hand, will give freer rein to individuals’ ability to react to events, generate spontaneous responses, and to engage in behaviours such as psychological ownership. Therefore Pierce et al. (2003) conclude

that psychological ownership is less likely to emerge under strong (highly structured) than under weak situations.

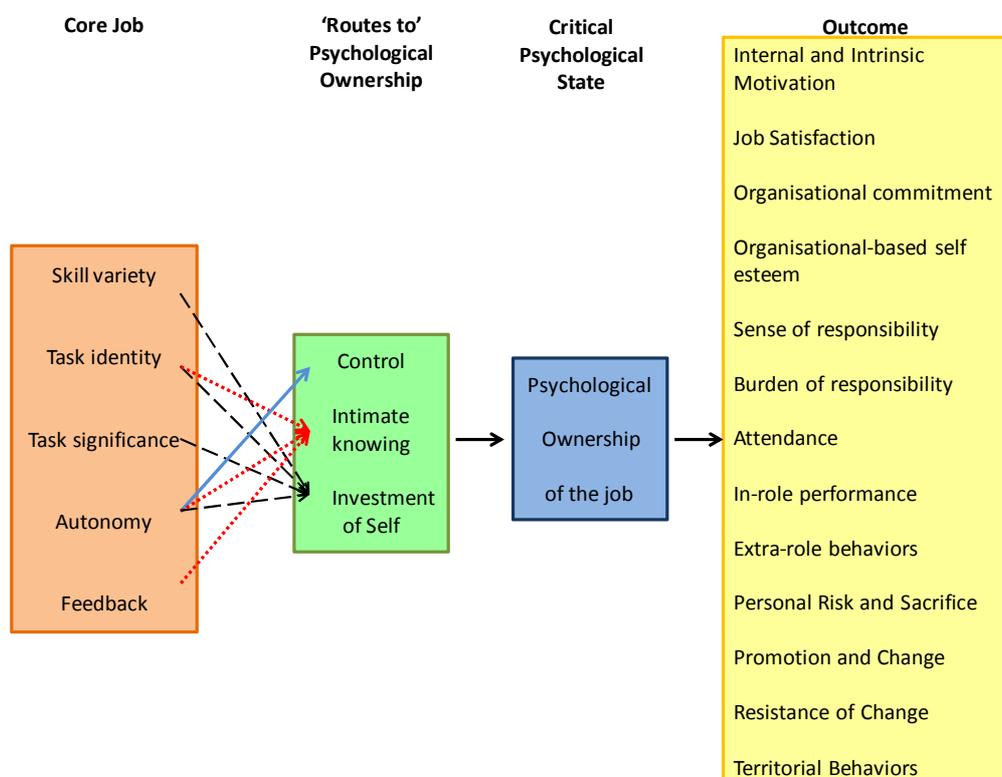
Different types of boundary that are placed around objects that stand between the individual and a potential target of ownership may also limit the opportunity for individuals to engage in key behaviours that lead to psychological ownership (controlling, coming to know, and investing the self). Structural factors or “fences”, such as boundaries, government structures, laws, customs, and mores of society, prevent the control, coming-to-know, and the investment-in-the-self routes, thus blocking the fulfilment of one or more of the motives for ownership by “fencing in” the object.

Structured work environment As mentioned earlier, the study conducted by O’Driscoll et al. (2006) found that a less rigid and structured work environment would generally provide individuals with greater autonomy and control over their job and work environment, thus promoting greater feelings of ownership of the job and the organisation. They suggest that organisations wishing to enhance the feeling of ownership experienced by their employees, along with increasing citizenship activities, might modify the work environment to increase levels of participation, control, and autonomy and reduce the extent of system control over employees’ job performance. Another study done by Pierce, O’Driscoll et al. (2004), found a positive relationship between low levels of work environment structure, job design autonomy, participative decision making and experienced control, and a negative relationship between technology routinisation and experienced control. According to them, organisational members will develop feelings of ownership for their job and for the employing organisation through the exercising of personal control over these important organisational affairs.

Complex job designs Work done by Pierce et al. (2009) suggests that organisations should focus on designing complex jobs rather than jobs that are characterised by standardisation, simplification, and a short time cycle. According to them, increasing job complexity provides job incumbents with the opportunity to customise their work, personalise it, and to find a place within it to dwell, and as a result

job complexity contributes to the satisfaction of the motives of efficacy and effectance, self-identity and having a place. Work that is designed in such a manner that it creates feelings of ownership satisfies the motives that underpin psychological ownership and is pleasure per se. Work that is pleasure producing contributes to work attendance and high quality of work performance, has strong and positive motivational consequences, reduces turnover, and produces frequent acts of good organisational citizenship behaviour (Pierce et al., 2009). According to Pierce et al., the Job Characteristics Model of Hackman and Oldham (1975) should be modified. They suggest that the job design-employee response relationship could be better mediated by the formerly recommended psychological states (i.e., experienced meaningfulness of work, experienced responsibility for work outcomes, and knowledge of results). Their proposed psychological ownership-based revision of the Job Characteristics Model is illustrated in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5: A psychological ownership-based revision of the Job Characteristics model



Source: Pierce et al. (2009, p. 485)

According to the model depicted in Figure 2.5, Pierce et al. (2009) propose that employees who have more control over their job are likely to develop job-based psychological ownership. Feedback, identifying with the task and autonomy will lead to intimate knowledge of the job and probably give rise to feelings of job-based psychological ownership. Similarly, identifying with the task and feeling that it has significance, combined with autonomy and the use of varied skills will help the employee to invest in the job, leading to a feeling of ownership. Complex job design will give employees psychological empowerment, which in turn will increase their intrinsic motivation, work satisfaction, organisational commitment, and voluntary and constructive work-related behaviours.

Leadership styles Yukl (1989) defined transformational leadership as leadership behaviour that transforms the norms and values of the employees, motivating them to perform beyond their own expectations. Shamir, House and Arthur (1993) state that employee's feelings of involvement, cohesiveness, commitment, potency and performance are enhanced by the transformational leadership style. A climate of self-determination, wherein employees receive support for training, recognition for hard work, and participative management practices is associated with beliefs and behaviours reflecting a sense of possession of the organisation (Wagner et al., 2003). Avey et al. (2009) found a positive relationship between psychological ownership and transformational leadership, which suggests that transformational leaders may be able to create conditions to enhance psychological ownership.

- **Cultural aspects**

The cultural aspects of a social context will also have a significant influence on the phenomenon of psychological ownership. Hofstede (1980, p. 25) defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes members of one human group from another”. Pierce et al. (2003) theorise that there are two theoretical reasons why they believe culture will have an effect on psychological ownership.

Concept of the self Firstly, according to Erez and Early (1993), there is a tight connection between psychological ownership and the concept of self. The concept of self is in part socially imposed and influenced by culture. The following examples from research in cross-cultural psychology illustrate the fact that there are various conceptualisations of the self that are the product of cultural values and beliefs: dominating nature versus submissive nature (Kroeber & Kluckholm, 1952); independent versus interdependent self (Triandis, 1994); “doing” versus “being” (Kroeber & Kluckholm, 1952); and ascriptive- versus achievement-orientated (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

Socialisation practices Secondly, psychological ownership is partially “learnt” through socialisation practices, which again are culturally determined. Culture is thus an important aspect that needs to be examined to better understand the phenomenon of psychological ownership. Culture, which is reflected in customs, norms, traditions and beliefs in society, shapes the individual’s self-concept and values with regard to control, self-expression, self-identity, property, and ownership.

Pierce et al. (2003) propose that culture will have an influence on all the elements of their framework of psychological ownership: on the construct itself, the motives, the “routes”, targets, individuals, and the process. Although possessive feelings are universal, it is possible that individuals from different cultural groups assign different meaning to possessions in terms of viewing them as part of their extended selves. Possessions may play a more significant role in the self-definition in some cultures than in others. Therefore, Pierce et al. suggest that feelings of ownership may be present in different cultures to a different extent.

Identity motive There could be a difference in cultures with respect to the salience of the various ownership motives (roots). According to Hofstede (1980), the “efficacy and effectance” motive might be more prominent than the “having a place” motive in individualistic rather than in collectivistic cultures, and according to Kroeber and Kluckholm (1952), this also applies to cultures characterised by a “doing” versus “being” orientation, and in more deterministic cultures, which generally assume

dominance of people over nature. The “identity” motive, especially the expression of self-identity to others, will be more significant in collectivistic cultures (because people care about how others perceive them), as well as in cultures with an ascription versus achievement orientation (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). The other aspects of the self-identity motive, particularly those aspects of it that relate to the continuity of the self, are expected to be more important in cultures with a longer-term “past-future” orientation (e.g., South Korea, Hong Kong) than in cultures that have a more “present” orientation (e.g., the US). Pierce et al. (2003) also suggest cross-cultural differences with regard to the “routes” to psychological ownership. There will be a shift from the “control” and “investment of self” route to the “getting to intimately know” route if a person moves from a more deterministic and “doing” cultural orientation to a more fatalistic and “being” orientation.

According to Pierce et al. (2003), both the kind of target and the expression of feelings of ownership towards that target will vary greatly according to the culture and country in which the individual operates, and the locus of the self-concept in that society. Individualistic societies would place more emphasis on personal successes and achievements, and would focus ownership more on their material possessions and work that addresses these achievements. Other cultures are more collectivistic and place high value on the community, family and relationships; individuals from these cultures will probably develop feelings of ownership primarily towards social targets like the community and family. Pierce and colleagues therefore suggest three contextual influences on the development of psychological ownership: culture, the time-orientation of the culture and the importance of legal ownership.

Firstly, culture will have an influence on the time it takes for psychological ownership to develop. Cultures with a shorter-term orientation will probably develop feelings of ownership more quickly than cultures with a longer-term orientation. Cultures with a longer-term orientation will need a longer time to interact with the potential target (through controlling, coming to know, and investing the self).

Secondly, Pierce et al. (2003) suspect that it will be more difficult and painful for the individual to decouple from targets for which he or she felt ownership with a longer-term orientation. On the other hand, in shorter-term oriented cultures it will be much easier and less painful for individuals to get in and out of these psychological ownership relationships.

Thirdly, the relationship between legal ownership and psychological ownership may also vary across contexts. In settings where property rights are less respected and enforced, legal ownership will be less important. However, in environments where possession and property rights are strongly backed and reinforced by law and cultural values, legal ownership is more likely to be important.

According to Pierce et al. (2003), the level at which the feeling for psychological ownership resides, defined as individual versus collective, is a very important aspect of the construct. They theorise that in individualistic cultures (e.g. the US and Australia), the feeling of ownership will tend to be experienced at the individual level. In contrast, the more the self-concept is tied to the collective entity (as in collectivistic cultures like those of China and Japan), the more psychological ownership will be defined as a shared, collective feeling. There is very limited empirical evidence in support of such propositions. In a study involving ten countries, Kostova (1996) found that people from countries with a strong collective bias (such as Portugal) made a very clear distinction between two sets of words that described ownership – “we” and “our,” on the one hand, and “I” and “mine,” on the other. The levels of collective psychological ownership captured by the “we” items were markedly higher than those captured by the “I” items. This distinction was insignificant in other countries like France and the US, which are characterised as more individualistic.

2.8.5 Summary

The emergence of psychological ownership could be influenced by three groups of moderating factors, namely individual characteristics, the potential ownership target,

and the context. Therefore, the state of psychological ownership, while probably latent within each individual, does not necessarily always occur and is not equally strong across individuals, targets and situations. Psychological ownership is determined by a complex interaction of a number of intra-individual, object-related, and contextual factors.

2.9 THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP

Individual's goals are influenced by their self-regulatory focus. Self-regulation refers to “the process by which people seek to align themselves (i.e., their behaviours and self-conceptions) with appropriate goals or standards” (Brockner & Higgins, as cited in Kark & Van Dijk, 2007, p. 502). According to Higgins (1997), people have two basic self-regulation systems. The one system regulates the achievement of rewards and focuses individuals on *promotion* goals, while the other system regulates the avoidance of punishment and focuses individuals on *prevention* goals. Promotion goals include wishes, hopes, and aspirations and represent the “ideal self”, whereas prevention goals include obligations, duties, and responsibilities and represent the “ought self”.

The main differences between a promotion-orientated focus and a prevention-orientated focus are displayed in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Differences between promotion-orientated and prevention-orientated focus

Promotion-orientated focus	Prevention-orientated focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees are sensitive to the presence/absence of rewards • Concerned with accomplishments and aspirations • Use approach as a goal-attainment strategy • Experience emotions ranging from elation and happiness to dejection • Associated with a risk bias • More open to change – approach change as a potential advancement • More creative in problem-solving processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees are sensitive to the presence/absence of punishments • Concerned with duties and obligations • Use avoidance as a goal-attainment strategy • Experience emotions ranging from anxiety to calmness • Associated with a conservative bias • Less open to change (stick with the already-known) – follow an avoidance or conservative strategy
<p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wishes • Hopes • Aspirations • Represent the “ideal self” 	<p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obligations • Duties • Responsibilities • Represent the “ought self”
<p>Needed to pursue development and change and to explore the advantage of creative behaviours</p>	<p>Needed where employees seek to ensure safety, stability, and predictability</p>

Source: Adapted from Kark and Van Dijk (2007) and Liberman, Idson, Camacho, and Higgins (1999)

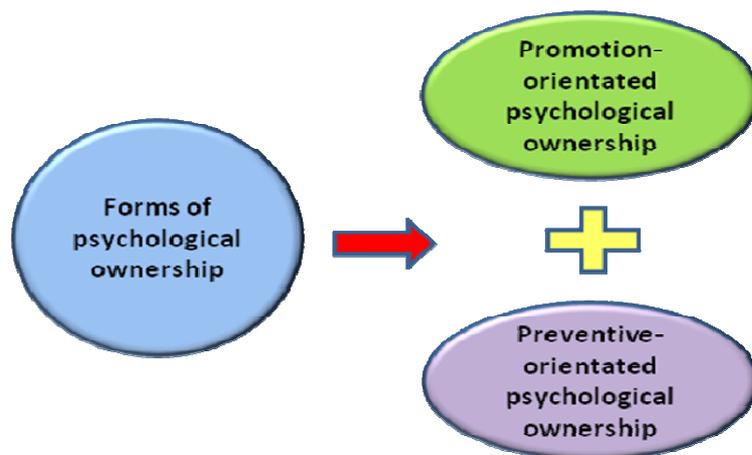
According to Klugel, Stephan, Ganzach, and HersHKovitz (2004), these two conflicting motivations can be described as the motivational source in pursuing all goals. Both promotion and prevention motivations are important for survival of the human being and the one approach is not necessarily more desirable than the other. In certain contexts, the promotion focus is necessary to pursue development and change and to explore the advantage of novel and creative behaviour, whereas in other contexts, a more preventative focus is needed where individuals seek to ensure safety, stability, and predictability (Higgins, 1997).

Avey et al. (2009) applied the promotion and prevention approaches to examining psychological ownership. According to them, individuals who are more promotion orientated may experience quite different feelings toward targets of ownership from those who are prevention orientated. Avey and colleagues illustrate this by means of the following example (2009, p. 175):

[I]n a scenario where sharing information may lead to change and improvement within a company, a manager processing promotive psychological ownership with a successfully completed project may decide to share information he “owns” with a cohort or team in a different division of the company because he sees improvement in the company as personally fulfilling. In contrast, those with a more preventative focus may carefully monitor and withhold information from others because they seek to avoid change and maintain stability.

According to Avey et al. (2009) thus, there are two independent forms of psychological ownership: *promotion-oriented* and *prevention-oriented*. The two independent forms of psychological ownership are displayed in Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6: Two independent forms of psychological ownership



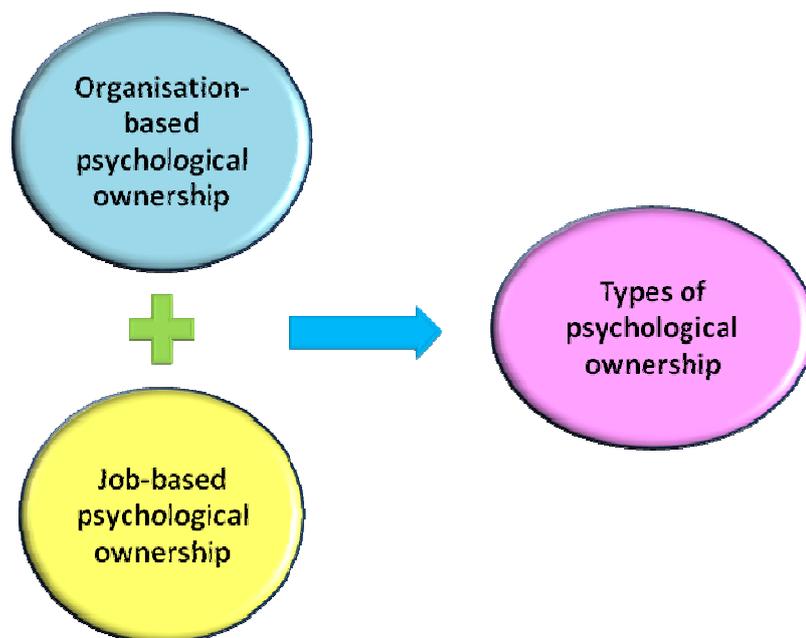
(Author's own)

2.10 THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP

An organisational manifestation of psychological ownership has been suggested by several managerial practitioners such as Brown (1989); Kostova (1998); Peters (1988) and scholars such as Pierce and colleagues (2001). Rudmin and Berry (1987), as well as Van Dyne and Pierce (2004), explain that in view of the ever-present nature of feelings of possession and ownership, it can be expected that individuals might develop feelings of psychological ownership toward various organisational targets, such as organisations themselves, jobs, work space, work tasks, work tools and equipment, ideas or suggestions, and even team members.

Two distinct types of psychological ownership: *organisation-based psychological ownership* and *job-based psychological ownership* have been identified (Mayhew et al., 2007), as displayed in Figure 2.7.

Figure 2.7: Types of psychological ownership



(Author's own)

Organisation-based psychological ownership is associated with an individual's feelings of possession of and psychological relation to the entire organisation. According to Mayhew et al. (2007) this state could be affected by a number of characteristics, including company goals and vision, company policies and procedures, organisational culture and climate, status of the organisation, and attitudes of senior management.

Job-based psychological ownership is concerned with individuals' feelings of possession toward their particular jobs (Mayhew et al., 2007). Researchers (e.g., Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004) consider both types of psychological ownership as attitudinal rather than enduring personality traits. According to Mayhew et al., psychological ownership is context specific and reflects the individual's current position concerning both the present organisation and the existing job.

In their study, Mayhew et al. (2007) found that job-based psychological ownership is related to job satisfaction, whereas organisation-based psychological ownership is related to affective organisational commitment and job satisfaction. This finding provides support for *psychological ownership* as a distinct construct that has relationships with the work attitudes of organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Mayhew et al. also found that autonomy had direct and indirect effects on psychological ownership and work attitudes. According to Mayhew et al., organisation-based psychological ownership partially mediates the relationship between autonomy and organisational commitment, whereas job-based psychological ownership partially mediates the relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction.

According to O'Driscoll et al. (2006), a less structured work environment will provide employees with the opportunity to exercise control over their actions. These feelings of increased control will be associated with a greater sense of ownership for both the job and the organisation. In their study, O'Driscoll et al. found that lower levels of structure in the work environment were positively related with higher levels of employee-felt ownership for both the job and the organisation. Each of the work environment-structuring variables, namely autonomy, technology, and participative decision-making,

had a positive and significant relationship with both dimensions of psychological ownership. They further found that job- and organisation-based psychological ownership had a positive association with affective commitment to the organisation.

The core differences between organisation-based and job-based psychological ownership are summarised in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Differences between organisation-based and job-based psychological ownership

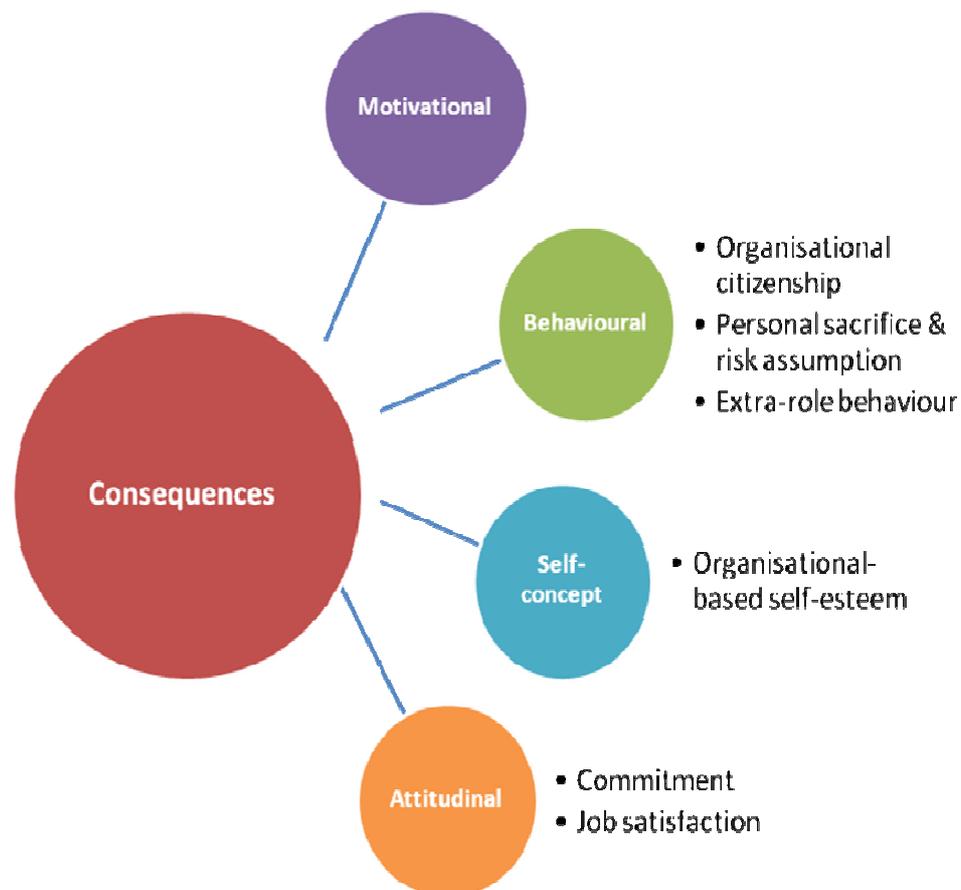
Organisation-based psychological ownership	Job-based psychological ownership
Employees' feelings of possession and psychological connection to the organisation as a whole	Employees' feelings of possession toward their particular jobs
Influenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate goals and vision • Policies and procedures • Organisational culture and climate • Reputation of the organisation • Attitudes of senior management • Autonomy • Technology • Participative decision making 	Influenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomy • Technology • Participative decision making
Related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affective organisational commitment • Job satisfaction 	Related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affective organisational commitment • Job satisfaction
Partially mediate the relationship between autonomy and organisational commitment	Partially mediate the relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction

Organisations can increase the link between job-based and organisation-based ownership by ensuring that employees understand the importance of their roles and jobs within the organisation. Trevor-Roberts and McAlpine (2008, p. 33) state that “creating a sense of ownership among employees for the organisation and their jobs has the potential to increase staff retention and productivity”. In this study the focus is on psychological ownership for the organisation.

2.11 THE CONSEQUENCES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP

Positive attitudes toward the target, enhanced self-concept, and a sense of responsibility are the three fundamental outcomes associated with feelings of possession (Furby, 1978). Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) suggest that this sense of possession (which allows individuals to satisfy their basic needs for efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and place) is key to work-related attitudes, self-concept, and behaviours. Psychological ownership, thus, are associated with positive motivational, attitudinal and behavioural consequences. The consequences of psychological ownership that will be discussed are depicted in Figure 2.8.

Figure 2.8 Consequences of psychological ownership



(Author's own)

2.11.1 A positive side to psychological ownership

Pierce et al. (1991) have theorised that psychological ownership has positive consequences regardless of the organisational member's financial ownership and the member's legal status as owner or non-owner. Pierce and his colleagues propose that psychological ownership would be associated with positive behavioural and psychological consequences, and that these relationships would hold even for members without an equity ownership position.

2.11.1.1 Motivational consequences

Many scholars (Long, 1978; Webb, 1912) illustrated that motivational consequences are associated with ownership. Based upon empirical evidence, Pierce et al. (1991) employ expectancy theory to make a connection between ownership and social-psychological and behavioural effects. The growth, success and survival of the organisation will logically enhance the value of an employee's ownership share. Decline and failure of the organisation will put the employee-owner in a position of risk. Therefore, the growth, success and survival of the organisation will most likely become critical and valued outcomes for the employee-owner. The employee's perception of gain and losses associated with his/her current or future equity, as well as the employee's influence and personal rights, may have a motivational effect. Employee motivation will be enhanced by the combined impact of ownership on expectancy perceptions, cooperative behaviour, work group norms, and peer pressure as Bernstein (1979, p19) found in his study of the plywood cooperatives: "When the mill is your own, you really work hard to make a go for it." "Everyone digs right in – and wants the others to do the same. If they see anybody trying to get a free ride, they get on his back right quick". Pierce et al. (1991) argued that the more the employee-owner identifies with the organisation and becomes integrated in the ownership experience, the level of experienced meaningfulness of work and an enhanced sense of responsibility for work and organisational outcomes will increase, which in turn will effect motivation in a positive manner.

Koironen (2007) notes that intrinsic motivation may be either consumptive or investive. If ownership in itself brings immediate satisfaction, it is consumptive. If ownership will contribute to future satisfaction, it is investive. According to her, intrinsic motivation can play an important role in psychological ownership. Koironen adds that the motivation for ownership is the value attached to what its outcome brings. The outcome may be both financial and emotional in nature. The ownership as such, with its responsibilities, duties and risks, is not necessarily regarded as motivating, but the outcomes of ownership, extrinsic or emotional rewards create motivation.

2.11.1.2 Behavioural consequences

- **Organisational citizenship behaviour**

Organ (1988) defines citizenship behaviour as behaviour that contributes to the community's or organisation's well-being, is voluntary and is intended to be positive in nature, but is not part of formal job expectations. Burke and Reitzes (1991) state that behaviour is, in part, a function of the individual's self-identity, as people create and maintain their sense of self by initiating stable patterns of behaviour that infuse roles with personal meaning. Therefore, when individuals feel ownership for a social entity (e.g., group, family, organisation), they will probably engage in citizenship behaviours towards that entity. Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) suggest that when employees feel that the organisation contributes to their basic needs, they reciprocate by making positive, proactive contributions to the organisation.

In their study, Van Dyne and Pierce found that psychological ownership of the organisation predicts organisational citizenship over and above the two most commonly researched predictors of citizenship, namely commitment and satisfaction. Olzer et al. (2008) reported that in their study, psychological ownership variables account for 31.8% of the changes in the organisational citizenship behaviours. VandeWalle et al. (1995) found a positive link between psychological ownership of the job and organisational commitment and citizenship behaviours. Avey et al. (2009) have found empirical

evidence between both types of organisational citizenship behaviours (individual and organisational) and psychological ownership.

Managerial implications

Pierce et al. (2001) suggest that organisations that want to encourage attitudes of job-related ownership among their employees should consider altering their working conditions, relaxing rigid supervision and control and promoting more employee participation, autonomy and personal control over their job performance.

- **Personal sacrifice and the assumption of risk**

According to Pierce et al. (2003), an important outcome of psychological ownership is that individuals are prepared to take personal risks or make personal sacrifice for a social entity. Normally these types of behaviour are typical of people employed in fire-fighting organisations, the military, police and rescue teams, but in that case they are necessary and also take place in situations where they are not compulsory. Members who are willing to come forward and “blow the whistle” (e.g., report illegal acts and unethical behaviour) are taking personal risks and making a sacrifice for the well-being of their organisations. Pierce et al. propose that this type of behaviour will be caused by feelings of ownership for the target (e.g., the organisation). According to Pierce et al. (2003, p. 29) “it is, after all, the situation where the target has been brought into the citadel of the self, and its impairment results in a diminution of the self”. Therefore, individuals will take on the risk of “blowing the whistle” when they become aware of events that are harmful to the welfare of their organisation.

- **Extra-role behaviour**

Extra-role behaviour is discretionary behaviour that is external to formal employment conditions and is undertaken with the belief that such behaviour will result in positive outcomes for the organisation (VandeWalle et al., 1995).

According to Mayhew et al. (2007), researchers have found evidence that psychological ownership produces increases in extra-role behaviours. The study conducted by VandeWalle et al. (1995) indicates that psychological ownership is a more potent antecedent of extra-role behaviour (constructive work efforts that benefit the organisation and go beyond the required work activities) than is satisfaction. According to them, the differential strengths of the relationship between psychological ownership and extra-role behaviour compared with those of satisfaction and extra-role behaviour suggest that managers might benefit by paying more attention to creating a sense of psychological ownership than trying to increase employee satisfaction.

On the basis of Van Dyne et al.'s (1995) typology of extra-role behaviour, Mayhew et al. (2007) propose that it is important to examine two specific dimensions of extra-role behaviour rather than a single global measure. Instead of focusing on prohibitive behaviours such as stewardship and whistle-blowing, Mayhew et al. (2007) decided to rather focus on the two types of positive behaviour, namely helping and voice, because they were more interested in the positive consequences of psychological ownership than the negative.

According to Van Dyne and LePine (1998), helping extra-role behaviour on the one hand refers to promotive behaviour that is supportive and facilitates working relationships, while voice extra-role behaviour on the other hand consists of constructive expression aimed at continuous organisational improvement. Mayhew et al. (2007) speculate that employees that feel ownership towards the organisation and their job might feel motivated to sustain cordial relationships and they might feel that they have the right to offer suggestions for change to make overall performance possible. Mayhew et al., however, found no relationship between job-based or organisation-based psychological ownership and helping or voice extra-role behaviour. Although previous research (VandeWalle et al., 1995) supported the relationship between organisation-based psychological ownership and general extra-role behaviour, Mayhew and colleagues found that the effects were not consistent when they examined the specific types of promotive discretionary behaviour of helping and voice extra-role behaviour.

According to Bernstein (1976), ownership encourages a sense of pride in employees and acts as a motivator for better performance. Numerous scholars have explored the effects of ownership on organisational performance, and contradictory results have been provided. For example, neither Conte and Tannenbaum (1978) nor Tannenbaum, Cook, and Lohmann (as cited in Pierce et al., 1991) found significant positive relationships between ownership and profitability. In contrast, Wagner and Rosen (as cited in Pierce et al., 1991, p. 136) found that “employee-owned companies did substantially better than similar non-employee-owned companies in terms of sales growth, operating margin, return and equity, and book value per share growth”. Marsh and McAllister (1981) and Rosen and Klein (1983) reported that organisations with employee stock ownership systems grew more quickly than their industrial averages. Berman (as cited in Pierce et al., 1991, p. 136) states that “the basis for cooperative success is the superior productivity of member-workers ... [in terms of] physical volume of output per man-hour, quality (grade and value of product), and economy of material and equipment used”. Although the existing literature offers mixed results, Blasi (1988, p. 231) points out that “there is no evidence that employee ownership hurts companies”.

Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) propose that when the three basic human motives (efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and having a place) are fulfilled in an organisational context, employees will be proactive in protecting and enhancing the target of their feelings of ownership. As a result, employees should be proactive in making behavioural contributions to the organisation. According to Gouldner (as cited in Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004), employees will be motivated to reciprocate when organisations provide them with a valued sense of efficacy and effectance, sense of self-identity, and sense of belonging. Van Dyne and Pierce found a significant positive relationship between organisational ownership and employee performance. Mayhew et al. (2007) also expected that psychological ownership would encourage employees to perform at high levels. According to Wagner et al. (2003), ownership beliefs are positively related to employees’ attitudes toward the organisation. On the basis of data from a large retail organisation, they found a positive correlation between ownership behaviours and financial performance. Thus it seems likely that employee ownership plans encourage employees to think and act like owners, and this enhances

organisational performance.

2.11.1.3 Self-concept

- **Organisation-based self esteem**

According to Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, and Dunham (1989), an important self-construct in organisations is organisation-based self-esteem. Organisation-based self-esteem is an individual's self-concept as a member of the work organisation. Pierce et al. (1989) state that it is a special sense of self that emerges from organisational experiences and that reflects employee evaluations of personal adequacy and self-worth within the organisational context.

The psychology of possession suggests that when individuals develop a sense of ownership of the organisation, these feelings of ownership become an extension of the self (Furby, 1978). According to Dittmar (1992) and Porteous (1976), possessions can symbolise the self and can show core values. Korman (2001) proposes that both tangible and intangible psychologically experienced possessions become positive expressions of the self and serve the basic needs for self-identity and self-enhancement. Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) hypothesise that when employees feel that the organisation is their personal psychological property, they will have positive self-assessments of themselves as members of the organisation. They empirically found that psychological ownership for the organisation significantly improved to the prediction of organisation-based self-esteem beyond the effects of organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

2.11.1.4 Attitudinal consequences

- **Organisational commitment**

Pierce et al. (2001) argue that feelings of ownership are pleasure-producing in and of

themselves, and as a result, organisational members will want to maintain their relationship with that which produces this positive affect. They further propose that as employee-owners develop feelings of ownership of the organisation, they become more and more integrated into the organisation. This integration reveals itself, in part, through an attachment to the organisation and the desire to maintain that relationship (VandeWalle et al., 1995).

O’Driscoll et al. (2006) suggest that psychological ownership leads to the type of organisational attachment that Meyer and Allen (1991) refer to as affective commitment. Affective commitment is based on a sense of identity with the organisation, its values and its goals, and is reflected in feelings of belongingness and wanting to be attached to the organisation.

VandeWalle et al. (1995) found a positive link between psychological ownership and organisational commitment. Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) examined the relationship between psychological ownership and organisational commitment in two organisations and reported that psychological ownership for the organisation increased variance in commitment. O’Driscoll et al. (2006), Mayhew et al. (2007) and Avey et al. (2009) have confirmed a strong association between affective organisational commitment and psychological ownership of the organisation. VandeWalle et al. (1995) reported that organisational commitment mediates the effects of psychological ownership on extra-role behaviour. Therefore, psychological ownership makes a difference because possessive feelings toward the organisation (psychological ownership) lead to an increase in organisational commitment; committed employees will engage in extra-role behaviour; and extra-role behaviour will contribute to higher performance

- **Job satisfaction**

Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) state that general satisfaction refers to the overall situation in the workplace, while job satisfaction is a more specific evaluation of a particular job. Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) propose that feelings of being an important

part of the organisation, thus psychological ownership, enhance general satisfaction and provide a context for job satisfaction. An employee who has a positive attitude towards the organisation and work experiences is more likely to report positive job satisfaction.

As we have seen, according to the theory of psychological ownership, a sense of possession directed toward the organisation satisfies three basic human motives, namely efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and having a place ('home') and produces positive evaluative judgments (Pierce et al., 2003). This is supported by possession research that demonstrates that people develop favourable evaluations of their possessions (Beggan, 1992) and judge owned objects more favourably than similar, un-owned objects (Nuttin, 1987). Therefore, Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) argue that when employees feel possessive toward the organisation (they have influence and control at work, intimate knowledge about the organisation, and feel they have invested themselves in their organisational roles), they should experience high levels of satisfaction, which in turn should influence job satisfaction. Pierce et al. (1991), Buchko (1993), VandeWalle et al. (1995), Van Dyne and Pierce (2004), Mayhew et al. (2007) and Avey et al. (2009) have provided empirical evidence of a positive relationship between psychological ownership and job satisfaction.

In their study, VandeWalle et al. (1995) proofed that psychological ownership is a more potent antecedent of extra-role behaviour than satisfaction and that psychological ownership therefore be considered as an important antecedent of extra-role behaviour. The differential strength between psychological ownership and extra-role behaviour and satisfaction and extra-role behaviour suggest that it might benefit managers more to pay more attention to creating a sense of psychological ownership than trying to increase satisfaction. The difference is consistent with the theoretical position of Pierce et al. (1991) that possession and the resulting sense of responsibility are core characteristics of psychological ownership that differentiates it from other constructs that concern the relationship between organisations and their members.

Managerial implications

Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) suggest that managers pay special attention to employee feelings of ownership when employee attitudes (commitment, job satisfaction, organisation-based self-esteem), and discretionary behaviours (such as organisational citizenship) are critical to work effectiveness. For example, a sense of ownership may be essential for supervisory employees with unrestricted responsibility for decision making and for service employees with direct customer contact. In these situations, managers may want to design work that allows employees the opportunity to exercise control, acquire knowledge, and personally invest in their work (Pendleton, Wilson & Wright, 1998; Pierce et al., 1991), hence facilitating positive feelings of possession.

2.11.1.4 Mixed effects

Feelings of ownership might have a number of negative as well as positive effects. For instance, they may lead to either promotion of or resistance to change.

- **Organisational change**

Dirks et al. (1996), in their psychological theory of change, argue that psychological ownership provides insight into why, and the conditions under which, individuals both promote and resist change. According to Dirks et al., there are three categorisations of change: self-initiated versus imposed; evolutionary versus revolutionary; and additive versus subtractive, each of which has different psychological implications. Depending on the strength of their feelings of ownership for the target of change, individuals may feel positive about some types of change and resist other types. When the change is self-initiated (because it supports the individual's need for control and efficacy), evolutionary (because it strengthens the individual's sense of self-continuity), and additive (because it contributes to the individual's need for control, self-enhancement, and feelings of personal efficacy), individuals will very probably promote change in a target towards which they feel ownership. However, individuals will almost certainly

resist change of a target of psychological ownership when the change is imposed (because it is seen as threatening the individual's sense of control), revolutionary (because it is a threat to self-continuity), and subtractive (because it takes away from or diminishes the core of that to which the individual has attached him/herself).

In sum, Pierce et al. (2001) propose that when change is self-initiated, evolutionary, and additive, employees' psychological ownership toward the organisation or organisational factors results in promotion of change; when change is imposed, revolutionary, and subtractive, employees' psychological ownership results in resistance to change.

Managerial implications

As proposed by Dirks et al. (1996), exceptionally high psychological ownership can instigate resistance to change and lead to low cooperation. Van Dyne and Pierce (2004), warned that during changeovers managers should be especially aware of psychological ownership and should put emphasis on overall shared ownership rather than individual feelings of possession for a specific job. Their research further suggests that managers should be aware that low psychological ownership can decrease discretionary behaviour. This may be particularly applicable to supervisory employees and service employees with direct customer contact and decision-making responsibility, since low psychological ownership may have negative repercussions for quality and customer satisfaction. In circumstances like this, managers may need to engage and relocate employees to different jobs, redesign jobs to place less emphasis on discretionary behaviour, or try to arrange the work in such a manner that there will be increased opportunities for employees to exercise control over different targets, to create intimate knowledge of the targets, to be in regular and close association with the targets, and to be able to make significant personal investments in the targets.

2.11.2 The dark side of psychological ownership

Unfortunately, psychological ownership may lead to other dysfunctional organisational

behaviours. According to Pierce et al. (2001), rather like an over-possessive child, an employee may resist sharing or be unwilling to share the target of ownership (tools, computers, work-space) with co-workers, or may want to retain exclusive control over the target. This type of behaviour, in turn, will probably impede teamwork and cooperation. Similarly, managers, for example, may resist interventions that empower their subordinates because they feel a high degree of ownership toward the management of the work unit. This may inhibit the implementation of employee involvement programmes, such as self-managed work teams or quality circles that require managers to delegate authority and to share information and control.

According to Robinson and Bennett (1995), deviant behaviours are another possible outcome of psychological ownership. This type of behaviour leads to violation of organisational norms and puts the well-being of the organisation and its members at risk. Individuals who are separated against their will from that for which they feel strong ownership (e.g., due to a restraining order, lay-offs, divorce), may engage in destructive acts such as sabotage, stalking, destruction, or physical harm to prevent others from gaining control, coming to know, or immersing themselves in the target of ownership. They further propose that psychological ownership may also be associated with personal functioning difficulties.

At times the feelings of ownership can cause an individual to feel devastated by the burden of responsibility. Bartunek (1993) suggests that when people witness extreme change in targets toward which they feel strong ownership, they may come to feel personal loss, frustration, and stress. According to James (1890, p. 178), the loss of possessions can lead to “the shrinkage of our personality,” or even to sickness and giving up the will to live in extreme cases (Cram & Paton, 1993).

According to Pierce et al. (2003), psychological ownership will not necessarily lead to dysfunctional effects, but it may lead to such effects, if certain conditions are in place. They also foresee that some of these conditions will be related to certain personality characteristics (e.g., high need for personal control, authoritarian personality), as well as to the combination of the particular motives and “routes” that have led to the feelings of ownership. Consider, for example, the attitudes held by an employee who feels

ownership for the organisation arrived at through involvement in the organisation's participative management system. Pierce et al. (2003) suggest that these attitudes will be more negative (dysfunctional) when the primary motive for experiencing ownership has been efficacy and effectance and the "route" to ownership has been control, than when the primary motive has been identity and the primary "route" has been intimate knowing (association).

2.11.3 Summary

Pierce and colleagues (2001) admit that in certain circumstances psychological ownership can work to the detriment of organisational goals. Possessive employees may, for instance hold onto authority to the extent of refusing to delegate and share information; obstruct moves towards participative management, teamwork, and cooperation, or even employ sabotage or show other deviant behaviour. The employees themselves may suffer from frustration, stress and alienation.

Management can probably in part forestall the expression of the "dark side" of psychological ownership by, according to Pierce et al. (2009), encouraging a possessive employee to "share" feelings of ownership jointly with a group of colleagues whom the individual trusts and with whom he or she has a close and mutually dependent working relationship. This shared ownership among interdependent co-workers may, according to Pierce et al.: (1) promote sharing of the owned object, thereby reducing "selfish and controlling behaviour"; (2) decrease an individual's fear that others will infringe on the owned target, and the jealousy and anger resulting from this fear; (3) cushion the individual from the disturbing effects of any loss, destruction, or change imposed upon the owned object; and (4) relieve the possessive individual of the burden of carrying assumed exclusive personal responsibility for the target of ownership.

2.12 AN INTEGRATED MOTIVATIONAL MODEL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP

A baseline motivational model as proposed by Roodt (2004) has been applied to this study for explaining the state of psychological ownership. According to this model, action (behaviour) is triggered by salient needs, followed by salient values and then by salient goals. All the components are moderated by cognitive processes (including instrumental perceptions), while goals and intentions are specifically influenced by emotional (affective) content. Therefore, specific instrumental actions would lead to salient need satisfaction and if successful, also to a positive emotional state. Positive emotions would act as feedback to assess future values and goals for their need satisfaction potential. All these will lead to a specific state/level of psychological ownership that will result in either positive or negative behaviours. The proposed model is displayed in Figure 2.9 and will be discussed briefly.

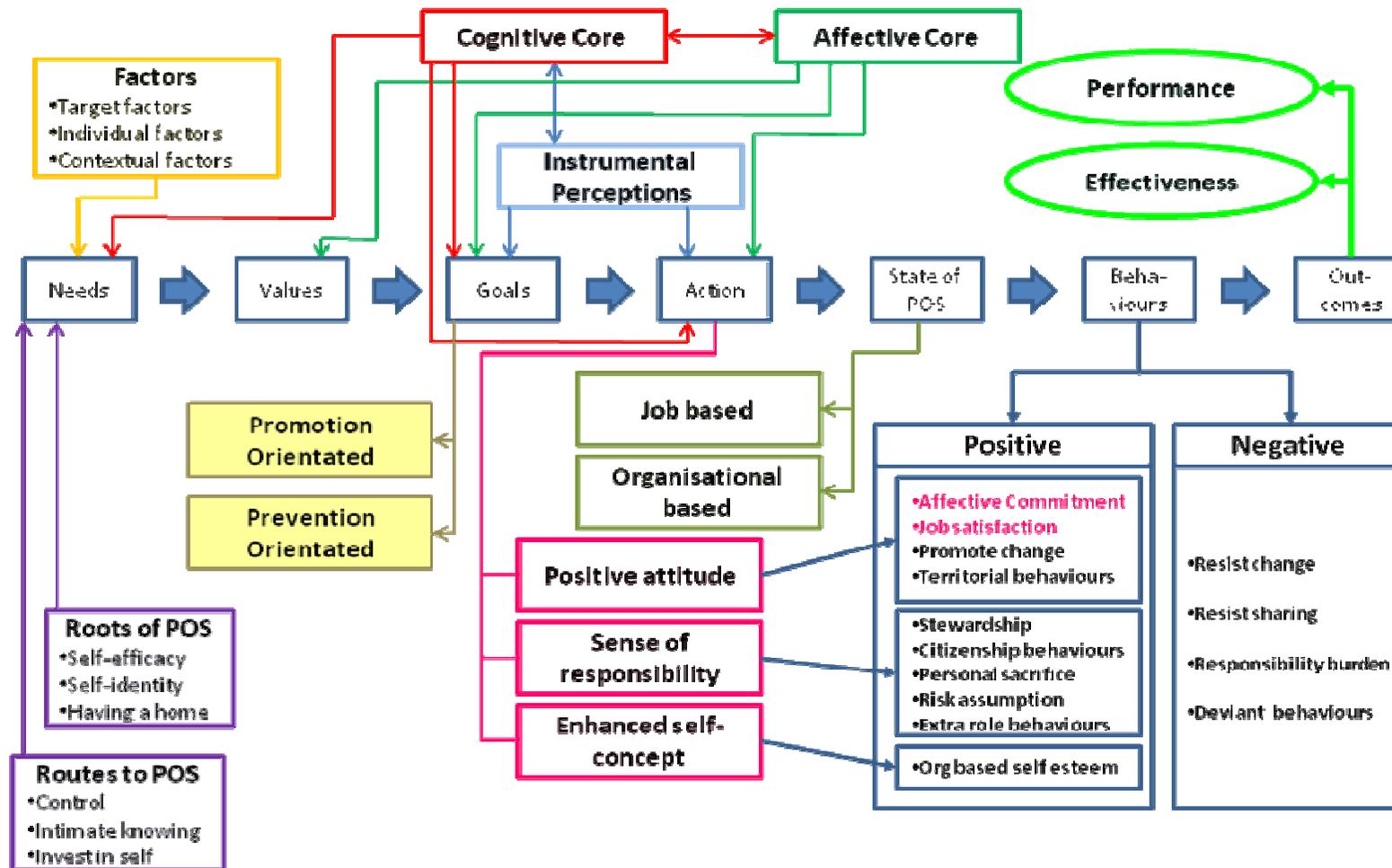
2.12.1 Needs

Psychological ownership exists because it satisfies three basic human needs: *efficacy and effectance*, *self-identity*, and *having a place*. Individuals can develop feelings of ownership for a variety of objects as long as these objects allow these motives to operate and be satisfied. These motives have been discussed in detail in paragraph 2.6.

2.12.2 Routes to psychological ownership

There are three major routes or paths through which feelings of ownership for a particular object emerge: *control over the target*, *intimate knowing of the target* and *investment of the self into the target*. Thus, when employees exercise greater amounts of control, intimately come to know, and invest themselves in the target of ownership a sense of responsibility takes root and possessive feelings develop. These “routes to” psychological ownership have been discussed in detail in paragraph 2.7.

Figure 2.9: Motivational Model for Psychological Ownership



(Author's own, based on Roodt, 2004)

2.12.3 The cognitive and affective core of psychological ownership

Pierce et al. (2003) have noticed that psychological ownership (the feeling that something is “*mine*” or “*ours*”) comprised of a cognitive and affective core. The cognitive aspect reflects individual’s awareness, beliefs and thoughts regarding the target of ownership. This cognitive state is coupled with an emotional or affective sensation. Feelings of ownership are said to be pleasure producing in themselves (Beggan, 1992; Furby, 1978; Porteous, 1976) and give the owner a feeling of efficacy and competence (White, 1959). Psychological ownership consists thus, in part, of an emotional attachment to the organisation that transcends the mere cognitive evaluation of the organisation.

2.12.4 Factors influencing psychological ownership

There are several factors that influence the emergence of psychological ownership. The potential for the development of psychological ownership resides in both the target and the individual, and its emergence and manifestation is also strongly influenced by situational forces. These factors have been discussed in detail in paragraph 2.8.

Target factors Viable targets whose attributes can facilitate the acts of controlling, coming to know, and or investing the self in the target (i.e., the “routes to” psychological ownership) will influence the degree to which an individual develops feelings of ownership of that target. Targets with characteristics such that they satisfy the motives of efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and/or having a place (i.e., the “roots of” psychological ownership) will also enhance feelings of psychological ownership.

Individual factors There will be differences as to the strength of the motives, both across individuals and within an individual over time, and personality will have an influence as well. Personality traits will affect how motives are expressed in behaviour. Personal values make certain objects more-or-less esteemed. Individuals are likely to

feel ownership over those objects considered to be most important according to their values.

Process factors The process by which psychological ownership emerges is thus associated with a complex interaction between the “roots”, the “routes”, target factors, and individual factors. The three roots of psychological ownership (i.e., efficacy and effectance, identity, and having a home) are not totally independent of one another. Ownership may emerge as the result of any one, or any subset, of these needs. The three routes to psychological ownership (i.e., control, intimate knowing, and investment of self) are also complementary, additive and distinct in nature. Any single route may result in feelings of ownership independently of the others.

Contextual factors Although a wide variety of contextual elements will have an effect on the emergence of psychological ownership, the main focus in this review was on two aspects namely, structural and cultural aspects. It was found that *structural aspects* of the context such as norms, rules, laws, and hierarchy may promote or prevent individuals from developing feelings of ownership, and that *cultural aspects* also have a significant influence on the phenomenon.

Therefore, the state of psychological ownership, while potentially latent within each individual, does not necessarily always occur and is not equally strong across individuals, targets and situations. Psychological ownership is determined by a complex interaction of a number of intra-individual, object-related, and contextual factors.

2.12.5 Goals

According to Liberman et al. (1999) theory distinguishes between two major categories of desired goals: those related to advancement and growth and those related to safety and security. People thus have two self-regulatory systems that are concerned with acquiring either nurturance or security. Individual’s self-regulation in relation to their hopes and aspirations (ideals) satisfies nurturance needs. The goal is accomplishment,

and the regulatory focus is promotion. On the other hand, Individual's self-regulation in relation to duties and obligations (oughts) satisfies security needs. The goal is safety, and the regulatory focus is prevention. Both promotion and prevention motivations are important for survival of the human being and the one approach is not necessarily more desirable than the other. These two approaches have been applied to examining psychological ownership by Avey et al. (2009). Psychological ownership comprise thus two forms: promotion-orientated and prevention-orientated psychological ownership. This has been discussed in more detail in paragraph 2.9.

2.12.6 Action (behaviours).

Positive attitudes toward the target, enhanced self-concept, and a sense of responsibility are the three fundamental outcomes associated with feelings of possession (Furby, 1978). Ownership is also frequently defined and experienced in terms of a "bundle of rights". Ownership is associated with the right to information about the target of ownership and the right to have a voice in decisions that impact the target. However, for every right of ownership, there is a balancing responsibility.

Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) suggest that this sense of possession (which allows individuals to satisfy their basic needs for efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and place) is key to work-related attitudes, self-concept, and behaviours. Psychological ownership, thus are associated with positive motivational, attitudinal and behavioural consequences.

2.12.7 State of Psychological ownership

Specific instrumental actions would lead to salient need satisfaction and if successful, also to a positive emotional state. Positive emotions would act as feedback to assess future values and goals for their need satisfaction potential. However, the inability of a particular focus to satisfy salient needs will result in low psychological ownership. Psychological ownership can be conceptualised as different levels on a continuum,

ranging from alienation to extreme psychological ownership that will result in either positive or negative behaviours.

Individuals might develop feelings of psychological ownership toward various organisational targets, such as organisations themselves, jobs, work space, work tasks, work tools and equipment, ideas or suggestions, and even team members. Two distinct types of psychological ownership: *organisation-based psychological ownership* and *job-based psychological ownership* have been identified (Mayhew et al., 2007). These two distinctive types have been discussed in detail in paragraph 2.10. The focus of this study will be on organisational psychological ownership.

2.12.8 Consequences of Psychological ownership

The outcomes of psychological ownership will result in either positive or negative behaviours. Psychological ownership has been associated with:

- greater commitment to the organisation (VandeWalle et al., 1995);
- greater accountability (VandeWalle et al.);
- greater job satisfaction (Avey et al., 2009; Buchko, 1993; Mayhew, et al., 2007; Pierce et al., 1991; VandeWalle et al.; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004);
- better organisational performance (Van Dyne & Pierce; Wagner et al., 2003);
- better organisation-based self-esteem (Avey et al. ; VandeWalle et al.; Van Dyne & Pierce)
- more effort on the part of the individual to engage in organisational citizenship behaviours (Avey et al. ; VandeWalle et al.; Van Dyne & Pierce).
- increase in extra-role behaviour (VandeWalle, et al.) – meaning that individuals with higher levels of psychological ownership are more likely to engage in extra-role behaviour (constructive work efforts that benefit the organisation and go beyond the required work activities).
- intention to stay in the organisation (Avey et al., Buchko)

Scholars (e.g., Dirks, Cummings & Pierce, 1996; Kostova, 1998; Pierce et al., 2001) have further discussed the causal relationship between psychological ownership and resistance to organisational change, feeling of responsibility, and willingness to take personal risks and make personal sacrifices. Unfortunately, psychological ownership may lead to other dysfunctional organisational behaviours. Deviant behaviours are another possible outcome of psychological ownership that will lead to violation of organisational norms. However, according to Pierce et al. (2003) psychological ownership will not necessarily lead to dysfunctional effects, but it may lead to such effects, if certain conditions are in place. The consequences of psychological ownership have been discussed in detail in paragraph 2.11.

2.12.9 Outcomes

It is likely that employee ownership will encourage employees to think and act like owners and this will enhance organisational performance and effectiveness.

2.12.10 Summary

This baseline motivational model can therefore be applied for explaining psychological ownership because the model clearly distinguishes between the antecedents, the consequences of psychological ownership and the state of psychological ownership itself.

In order to develop a measuring instrument, the dimensions needed to define the construct of psychological ownership need to be identified. This will be discussed in the following section.

2.13 PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP AS A MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONSTRUCT

2.13.1 Defining a multidimensional construct

According to Law et al. (1998, p. 741), a construct is multidimensional when it “consists of a number of interrelated attributes or dimensions and exists in multidimensional domains”. Thus, the dimensions of a multidimensional construct can be conceptualised under an overall concept. It is therefore theoretically meaningful and parsimonious to use this overall concept as a representation of the dimensions. A necessary condition for a concept to be defined as multidimensional in nature is that the relations between the overall construct and its dimensions must be clearly specified (Law et al., 1998). If these relations cannot be defined, the various dimensions are simply seen as a collection of related variables, and therefore there would be no need to label them as components of a multidimensional construct.

Law et al. (1998) propose a taxonomy of multidimensional constructs. They define three models of multidimensional construct: a *latent model*, an *aggregate model* and a *profile model*. Law and colleagues argue that these three models of multidimensional constructs should theoretically be determined by two evaluation criteria, namely *relational level* and *relational form*.

Relational level indicates whether the multidimensional construct exists at the same level as its dimensions, as a combination of its dimensions or whether it exists at a deeper level than its dimensions. Each dimension of the multidimensional construct is a different manifestation of the construct, which implies that the overall construct leads to the dimensions. Under this condition the multidimensional construct is classified as a higher-level construct underlying its dimensions. Multidimensional constructs in this category are labelled *latent models*.

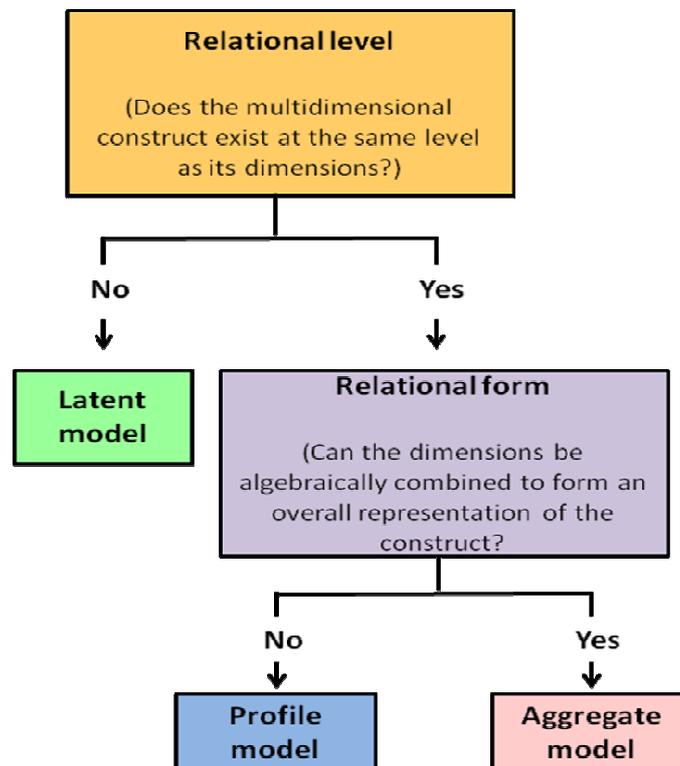
Relational form indicates whether the dimensions of the multidimensional construct can be algebraically combined to form an overall representation of the construct. The overall

construct is thus formed from its dimensions. Under this condition the multidimensional construct does not exist at a deeper conceptual level than its dimensions. Constructs that belong to this category are labelled *aggregate models*.

If levels of the multidimensional construct are determined by profiling levels of each of the dimensions, the constructs are labelled *profile models*. A profile multidimensional construct is not a single theoretical overall construct that summarises and represents all the dimensions, but it can be interpreted only as a set of profiled characteristics of the dimensions.

A diagrammatic representation of the two criteria and the three resulting models of multidimensional constructs are shown in Figure 2.10.

Figure 2.10 Proposed taxonomy of a multidimensional construct



Source: Law et al., 1998, p. 743

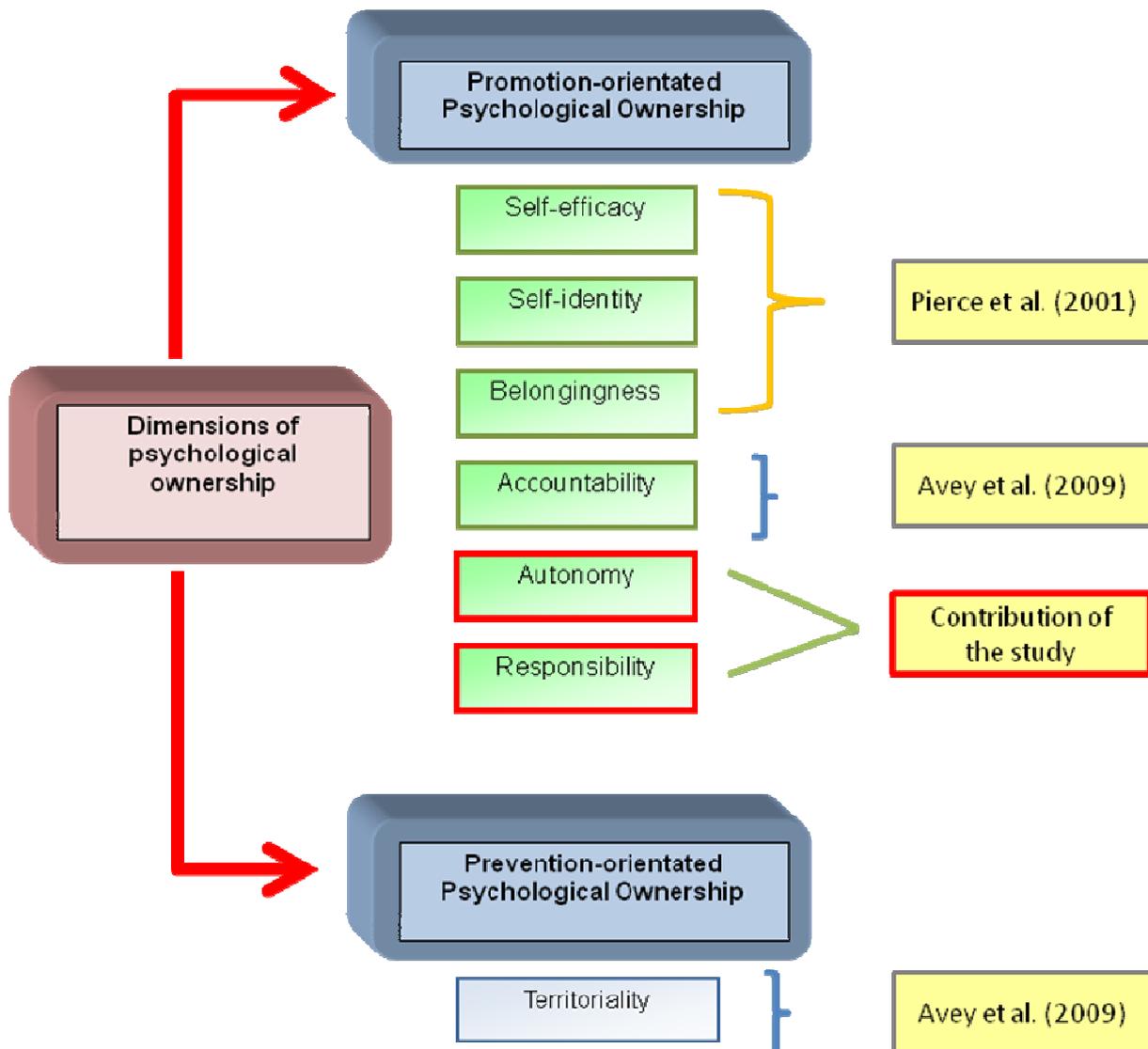
2.13.2 Psychological ownership as a multi-dimensional construct

Building on the three recognised dimensions of psychological ownership: *self-efficacy*, *self-identity* and *having a place* (belonging) of Pierce et al. (2001), Avey and colleagues (2009) posited two additional concepts of psychological ownership, *territoriality* and *accountability*, and developed a five-dimensional measure of psychological ownership. Avey et al. admit that a limitation of their instrument may be the comprehensiveness of the dimensions used to represent psychological ownership, and therefore the concepts of *responsibility* and *autonomy* are posited as additional aspects of psychological ownership.

Avey et al. (2009) also distinguish between two forms of psychological ownership, namely *promotion-orientated* and *prevention-orientated* psychological ownership. Promotion-orientated psychological ownership consists of four theory-driven components: self-efficacy, sense of belonging, self-identity with the target, and accountability. Territoriality was identified as a dimension of a preventative form of psychological ownership.

The multi-dimensional construct of psychological ownership and its proposed dimensions are displayed in Figure 2.11 and will be discussed in more detail.

Figure 2.11: Psychological and its proposed dimensions



(Author's own)

- **Promotion-orientated psychological ownership**

Self-efficacy, self-identity and sense of belonging Psychological ownership emerge because it satisfies both generic and socially generated motives of individual human beings. These motives are as follows:

(1) *Self-efficacy*: this means that it is important for an individual to be in control. The possibility of being in control, being able to do something with regard to the environment and being able to effect a desirable outcome of actions; these are important factors in creating psychological ownership.

(2) *Self-identity*: people use ownership for the purpose of defining and expressing their self-identity to others, which includes coming to know oneself, expressing the self to others, and maintaining continuity in the self.

(3) *Sense of belonging*: this motive arises from the need to have a certain own area, “a home”. This includes both actual places and objects. This familiar “area” of known targets becomes a part of the object’s identity.

These motives have been discussed in detail in paragraph 2.6.

Accountability A close relationship exists between experienced responsibility and feelings of stewardship, where individuals feel responsible as the caretakers of a property, even though they are not legal owners. Davis, Schoorman, and Donaldson (1997) propose that in certain situations where individuals feel like stewards, they will be motivated to act in the best interest of the principals rather than in their personal interests. Therefore, Pierce et al. (2003) suggest that when individuals feel psychological ownership, they may feel as though they are the “psychological principals” or stewards and may act accordingly. According to Fairholm (2001), accountability has been defined metaphorically as stewardship.

Lerner and Tetlock (1999, p. 255) define accountability as “the implicit or explicit expectation that one may be called on to justify one’s beliefs, feelings and actions to others”. Being prepared to account for one’s actions implies also the right to hold others accountable for theirs, which is consistent with Pierce et al.’s (2003) description of expected rights and responsibilities. According to Pierce et al., a side benefit that organisations experience from psychological ownership is that a member with high levels of such ownership will act as the conscience of others, so that all team members

make the required contribution in order to achieve their targets of ownership. Empirical evidence for this was found by VandeWalle et al. (1995).

According to Wood and Winston (2007), being “responsible” involves liability to be called to account as the primary cause, motive, or agent of a relationship or duty, or being the cause of or explanation for a given result. Accountability, on the other hand, has to do with accepting responsibility and showing voluntary transparency and answerability. Wood and Winston (2007) point out that it is possible for someone to be responsible without being accountable, because responsibility may be assigned, enforced, or even mistakenly applied to an individual or group by external force.

Autonomy According to Deci and Ryan (as cited in Chirkov et al., 2003), individuals are autonomous when their behaviour is experienced as willingly enacted and when they fully endorse the actions in which they are engaged. People are thus most autonomous when they act in accordance with their authentic interests or integrated values and desires. People who feel they have a measure of control over their working environment can achieve self-determination. In the work context, perceived control relates to employees’ belief that they have autonomy in their job and are allowed to play a part in making decisions on issues that affect their sphere of work (Ashforth & Saks, 2000). Organisations that wish to promote a sense of ownership in their employees should create a working environment that empowers individuals and enables them to exercise control over important aspects of their work (Pierce et al., 2004).

According to Ryan and Deci (2006, p. 1557), the term autonomy literally refers to “regulation by the self.” In 1967, Pfander provided a foundational phenomenology of autonomy. He distinguished self-determined acts (which he described as those reflecting the individual’s will) from other forms of striving or motivation. According to Pfander (1967, p. 20), acts of will are exclusively those experienced “precisely not as an occurrence caused by a different agent but as an initial act of the ego-centre itself”. Ricoeur (1966) supports this by arguing that such acts are those fully endorsed by the

self and therefore in accord with enduring values and interests. Ekstrom (2005) and Kernis and Goldman (2005), in their analyses of autonomy, state that an action is not autonomous unless the self completely identifies with the act and “owns” it. They stress that there must be some underlying unity and congruency to an individual’s actions if they are to be autonomous; they must emerge from the whole self. Finally, these authors state that autonomous acts are not necessarily free from external influences; the key is that the individual must agree to such influences or inputs. Ryan (as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2006) concludes that autonomy is not equivalent to independence.

According to self-determination theory (SDT), people are autonomous when their behaviour is experienced as willingly enacted and when they fully endorse the actions in which they are engaged and/or the values expressed by them (Deci and Ryan (as cited in Chirkov et al., 2003). People are thus most autonomous when the act is in accord with their authentic interests or integrated values and desires. Chirkov et al. state that people often experience a lack of autonomy when they are pressured to do something they do not believe in or to follow social norms with which they do not identify.

Autonomy has several implications. Amabile (1983) and Utman (1997) point out that undermining of autonomy results in a drop in performance, especially when such performance requires flexible, creative, or complex abilities. Promotion of autonomy, on the other hand, frees individuals to experience attachment and intimacy. Knee, Lonsbary, Canevello and Patrick (as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2006) found that the higher the autonomy in a relationship, the greater the satisfaction, relationship stability, and well-being for both partners. According to Ryan and Deci (2006), self determination theory considers autonomy to be a basic psychological need, one with pervasive effects on well-being. In their study, comparing culturally diverse samples from Turkey, South Korea, North America, and Russia, Chirkov et al. (2003) found that autonomous or volitional enactment of cultural practices was equally important in predicting well-being in these culturally diverse samples. Similarly, other studies done by Deci et al. (2001) and Downie, Koestner, ElGeledi and Cree (2004), among non-Western samples, showed the beneficial impact of autonomous motivation on well-being and adjustment outcomes.

Prelinger (1959) provides practical support for the proposition that control is coupled to the behaviour of bringing the controlled object into the domain of the self. He found that the more an individual feels that he or she has control over and can influence an object, the more likely it is that that object will be perceived as part of the self. As we have seen, Pierce et al. (2001) claim there are three major routes (controlling the target, coming to know the target intimately, and investing the self in the target) through which this psychological category is important within the organisational context.

Furthermore, as mentioned before, Deci and Ryan (as cited in Chirkov et al., 2003) argue that people have an intrinsic requirement for self-determination in the working environment, that is, the experience of choice in refusing others. In order to be self-determining, people must perceive that they have control in the working environment. In the work context, according to Ashforth and Saks (2000, p. 313, perceived control refers to “employees’ belief about the extent to which they have autonomy in their job (e.g., freedom to schedule work and determine how it is done) and are allowed to participate in making decisions on issues that affect their task domain”. Researchers (e.g., Parker, 1998; Spector, 1986; Yoon, Han, & Seo, 1996; O’Driscoll & Beehr, 2000) found that the extent to which employees believe they have control is a major determinant of their effective responses such as job satisfaction, work involvement and organisational commitment.

Empirical evidence supports the relationship between autonomy and control, control and psychological ownership, and autonomy and psychological ownership. For example, Brass (1985) observed that employees who were allowed high job-design autonomy felt that they exercised more influence and control than did their counterparts working with low autonomy. In their studies of self-regulated learning strategies, both Tanaka and Yamauchi (2000) and Yamauchi, Kumagai, and Kawasaki (1999) observed a linkage between autonomy and perceived control. Pierce, O’Driscoll et al. (2004) found a positive relationship between job design autonomy and experienced control and between experienced control and psychological ownership. Thus there is a positive relationship between autonomy and psychological ownership. Mayhew et al. (2007)

found that autonomy had both direct and indirect effects on psychological ownership. In accord with the findings of Pierce, O'Driscoll et al., Mayhew et al. (2007) found that because autonomy influences all work attitudes and behaviours, it is regarded as a significant factor in job-related psychological ownership. The unique ability of autonomy to predict organisational commitment, job satisfaction, in-role behaviour, and extra-role behaviour above any mediation effects accentuates the importance of considering autonomy when investigating employees in organisations.

Mayhew et al. (2007) also found that autonomy had direct and indirect effects on psychological ownership and work attitudes. According to Mayhew et al., organisation-based psychological ownership partially mediates the relationship between autonomy and organisational commitment, whereas job-based psychological ownership partially mediates the relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction.

According to O'Driscoll et al. (2006), a less structured work environment will provide employees with the opportunity to exercise control over their actions. These feelings of increased control will be associated with a greater sense of ownership for both the job and the organisation. In their study, O'Driscoll et al. found that lower levels of structure in the work environment were positively related with higher levels of employee-felt ownership for both the job and the organisation. Each of the work environment-structuring variables, namely autonomy, technology, and participative decision-making, had a positive and significant relationship with both dimensions of psychological ownership. They further found that job- and organisation-based psychological ownership had a positive association with affective commitment to the organisation. Therefore, *autonomy* is also posited as a promotion-orientated form of psychological ownership.

Managerial implications

According to Pierce, O'Driscoll et al. (2004), employees' sense of ownership might be improved by creating and maintaining work settings that empower individuals and allow

them to exercise control over important aspects of their work arrangements, which might promote the manifestation of work-related attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction, organisation-based self-esteem) and behaviours (e.g., nurturing, protecting). Pierce and Gardner (2004) confirm a positive relationship between autonomy at work and positive attitudes and behaviours on the part of the employees.

Responsibility Beaglehole (1932) and Furby (1978) theorise that feelings of possession create a sense of responsibility that influences behaviour. Similarly, Pierce et al. (2001) theorise that feelings of ownership are accompanied by a felt responsibility for the target of ownership and further argue that the implicit right to control associated with ownership leads to a sense of responsibility.

According to Hall (1966), feelings of responsibility will include a responsibility to invest time and energy to advance the cause of the organisation, therefore being protective, caring and nurturing. When an individual's self is closely linked to the organisation, as in the case of psychological ownership, a desire to maintain, enhance and protect that identity results in an enhanced sense of responsibility for work outputs (Kubzansky & Druskat, as cited in Pierce et al., 2003). According to Pierce et al. (2001), several organisational effects, including stewardship, citizenship behaviours, personal sacrifice, and the assumption of risk on behalf of the target are seen as responsibilities and as the outgrowth of psychological ownership. According to Rogers and Freundlich (1998), employees who feel like owners of the organisation believe that they have the right to influence the direction of the organisation and that they have a "deeper responsibility" than those who do not feel ownership. Therefore, *responsibility* is posited as a promotion-orientated form of psychological ownership.

Pierce, Van Dyne and Cummings (as cited in Pierce et al., 2003) found a positive relationship between psychological ownership and experienced responsibility. Coghlan (as cited in Li, 2008) emphasises a positive association between felt responsibility and psychological ownership of the job. In their study, Paré, Sicotte and Jacques (2006) found that responsibility activities related positively to psychological ownership.

- **Prevention-orientated psychological ownership**

Territorial behaviours Organisational members can and do become territorial over tangibles such as physical space and possessions; intangibles, such as ideas, roles, and responsibilities; and social entities, such as people and groups. Brown, Lawrence and Robinson (2005, p. 578) define territoriality as “an individual’s behavioural expression of his or her feelings of ownership toward a physical or social object”. This definition of theirs includes behaviours for constructing, communicating, maintaining and, restoring territories around those objects in the organisation toward which individuals feel proprietary attachment.

This territorial model of Brown et al. (2005) is closely linked to the concept of psychological ownership. As they point out, the concept of territoriality complements the study of psychological ownership by demonstrating the social and behavioural dynamics to which it can lead. Psychological ownership refers to feelings of possessiveness toward a target (object), whereas territoriality refers to behaviours that often arise from such feelings, in order to construct, communicate, maintain or restore the individual’s attachment to such an object. The greater the individual’s psychological attachment to an object, the more the object fulfils the basic needs of efficacy, self-identity and having a place. The fulfilment of these needs means that the territory in question has stronger psychological value to the individual, motivating him or her to communicate it to others (through marking: placing, for example, physical symbols such as a nameplate on the door, pictures of his or her children on a computer screen, and using social markers such as titles or social rituals that convey belonging and access).

The individual will also seek to protect and keep the territory as his or her own (through defending it, by for example using anticipatory defences such as a “private” sign, locking a door, having a large security guard with a gun; and using reactionary defences such as glaring, expressing irritation, yelling and slamming doors, writing a letter of protest). Therefore, Brown and colleagues (2005, p. 580) suggest that “the stronger an

individual's psychological ownership of an object, the greater the likelihood he or she will engage in territorial behaviour toward that object”.

Brown et al. (2005) argue that territoriality has important positive consequences for organisational commitment and the reduction of process conflict. They also, however, note the potential for territoriality to affect organisations negatively by detracting from in-role performance and increasing the isolation among individual members.

Managerial implications

Territoriality is an inherent, inevitable, and prevalent element of organisational life. Brown et al. (2005) in fact suggest that managers, far from discouraging the expression of territoriality, should promote behaviour like marking (to make the boundaries of possession clear to others) and staking claim through personalisation, as these help the employees to feel they have a place in the organisation. This can reduce conflict and help employees to be willing to share resources more efficiently and remain focused on the job. The design and arrangement of physical space in organisations also has implications for territoriality. The recent trend towards open-plan offices with few partitions and little personal space or privacy may appear to save costs. However, the change may cost the organisation more in the end, through a lessening of employee commitment or a potential increase in conflict when employees feel that their personal space is threatened, usurped, or nonexistent. Finally, organisations might consider their policy with regard to workspace personalisation. Some organisations fear that allowing personal displays will compete with organisational identity. Organisations must recognise, however, according to Hogg and Terry (2000), that people will do their best to find a balance between inclusion in the group and individuality. Through marking, employees express themselves in territories and this enables them to participate in and belong to the organisation while maintaining their individuality. Wells (2000) supports this, stating that employees are generally happier if they are allowed to personalise. Therefore, according to Brown et al. (2005), norms and policies that suppress identity-orientated marking may lead to frustration and dissatisfaction of some employees.

2.13.3 Summary

Psychological ownership is therefore a multi-dimensional construct because it exists out of a number of interrelated dimensions. Psychological ownership is thus formed from its dimensions and is therefore labelled as an aggregate model.

2.14 PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP AND RETENTION

Another contribution of this study is the role that psychological ownership will play in staff retention. Creating a sense of ownership among employees for the organisation has the potential to increase staff retention.

2.14.1 Retention defined

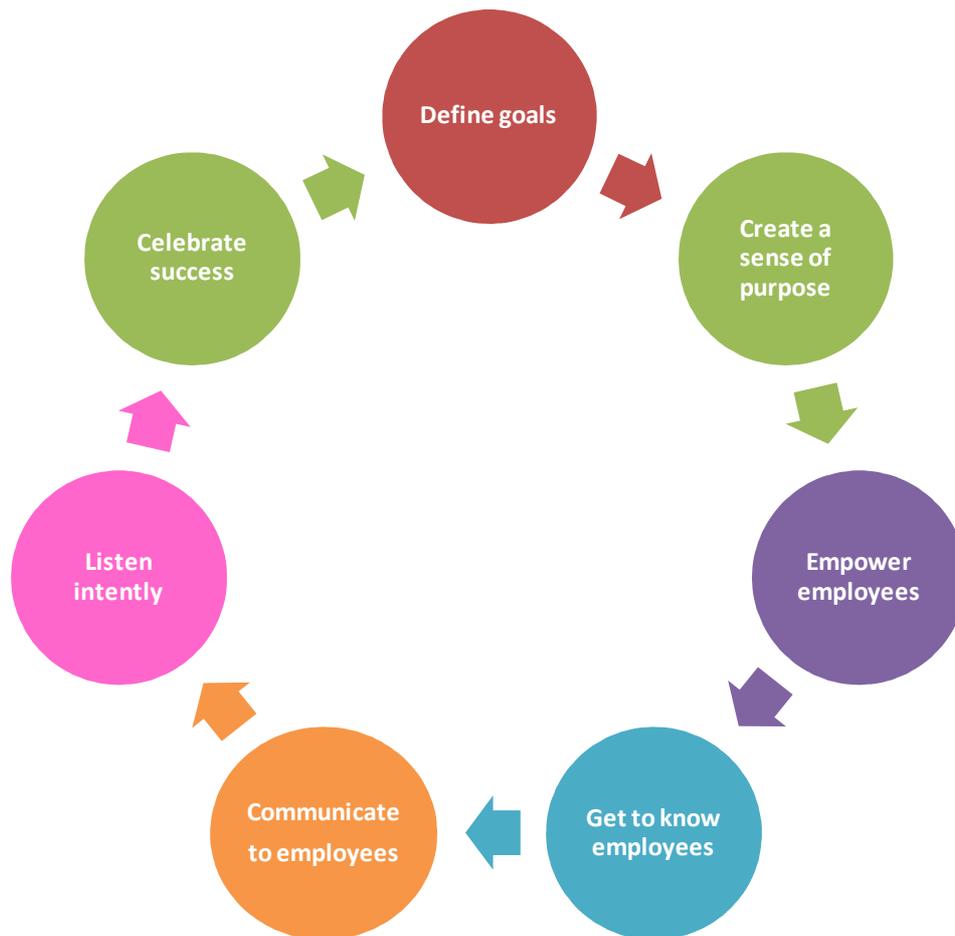
Bernthal and Wellins (2001) define retention as the organisation's ability to keep the employees it has already hired. Rossi (2000) suggests that the best method of filling vacancies in an organisation is to ensure that the current qualified employees remain in the organisation. The current employees are, after all, a known factor and they are familiar with the internal workings of the organisation. The current employees have already established the informal and formal networks that are required to help them to remain productive within the context of the organisation. Further, they have been trained in the use of the many systems and methods used by the organisation. There is also no recruitment costs associated with retaining a current employee. The role that retention has to play within organisations and the impact thereof have been discussed in detail in the background of this study in paragraph 1.1

There are plenty, of simple, cost-effective steps that an organisation can take in order to keep its talented employees and to avoid the costly recruitment and training expenses associated with hiring new employees. These tactics will be discussed, together with an indication of the role psychological ownership has to play within each scenario.

2.14.2 Retention strategies

The various retention strategies that will be discussed are illustrated in Figure 2.12.

Figure 2.12: Retention strategies



(Author's own)

2.14.2.1 Defining goals

According to Gupta-Sunderji (2004), all employees need well-defined goals that they can understand and accept. All employees need to know exactly what is expected of them. Goals and responsibilities should be constantly visible, and progress against

targets should be regularly tracked so that the employees can see what they are aiming at and how far they need to go to reach the goal. This is in line with what Pierce et al. (2001) suggest, namely that the ownership target must be visible and attractive to the individual so as to capture the individual's interest and attention. The target must also possess certain characteristics which fulfil the motives for efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and/or need for a place. To accomplish this, organisations could publish goals and expectations in the organisation's newsletter and display them on posters on corkboards in break rooms; exhibit the mission statement at every workstation; and regularly talk to employees on this subject. This will result in a dual benefit: when goals are established and monitored, employees see visible achievements and feel acknowledged and recognised.

Sartre (1943) states that the more information and the better knowledge an individual has about an object, the deeper the relationship between the object and the self, therefore the stronger the feeling of ownership toward it. Rousseau (1998) has noted that individuals establish, maintain, reproduce and transform their self-identity through interactions with intangibles such as an organisation, mission or purpose.

2.14.2.2 Creating a sense of purpose

Another characteristic of good leadership practices is helping employees to understand their significance in the big picture (Gupta-Sunderji, 2004). Any and all jobs have negative components to them; unless people have a sense of purpose, the negative components can be overwhelming, leading to de-motivation. Creating a sense of purpose promotes teamwork and instils a sense of pride. Gupta-Sunderji emphasises that it is important to help employees to understand the purpose of their jobs and why their positions are important to the organisation. Leaders (whether a formal supervisor or manager, informal mentor, head of a division or department) can start by asking employees such questions, and then help them to develop answers themselves. Once employees understand the purpose of their jobs and how the entire organisational structure works towards accomplishing the organisation's mission, not only will de-

motivators be reduced, but also motivators will be created. Pierce et al., (2001) suggest that the more individuals invest themselves in a target (investment of their own time; skills; ideas, and psychological, physical, and intellectual energies), the stronger their psychological ownership for that target will be and the more it will satisfy their motives for efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and having a place (home).

2.14.2.3 Empowering employees

When an organisation empowers its employees (Gupta-Sunderji, 2004), it will develop better relationships with them, and will allow them to take ownership for streamlining the organisation's operation and administration. When employees are authorised to take action, it gives them a sense of pride and ownership. Organisations should assign employees ownership of a task and attach all the responsibilities that go with getting the job done.

Gupta-Sunderji proposes another idea: when a problem is bothering an organisation or department, an e-mail could be sent to all the employees asking for suggestions on how to solve the problem. This involvement will give employees the feeling that they are part of a team and that their opinions are valued. An even better solution might be to let the person or department that comes up with the best solution implement it, offering them the freedom and resources needed to get the job done. Autonomy inspires self-motivation and reinforces self-worth. Allowing employees the opportunity to follow through on their ideas will give them a strong sense of accomplishment and will enhance job satisfaction.

Feelings of responsibility will include the responsibility of investing energy and time to advance the cause of the organisation, therefore being protective, caring, and nurturing. As has been noted, when an individual's self is closely linked to the organisation, as in the case of psychological ownership, a desire to maintain, enhance and protect that identity results in an enhanced sense of responsibility for work outputs (Kubzansky & Druskat, cited in Pierce et al. 2003). Pierce et al. and Coghlan (1997) found a positive

relationship between psychological ownership and experienced responsibility.

Researchers (e.g., O’Driscoll & Beehr, 2000; Parker, 1993; Spector, 1986; Yoon, Han, & Seo, 1996) found that the extent to which employees believe they have control is a major determinant of their effective responses such as job satisfaction, work involvement and organisational commitment. Empirical evidence (Brass, 1985; Pierce et al., 2004; Tanaka & Yamauchi, 2000; Yamauchi et al., 1999) supports the relationship between autonomy and control, control and psychological ownership, and autonomy and psychological ownership.

2.14.2.4 Getting to know employees

To build sound relationships with employees, leaders should get to know their employees in more depth than is obvious in the work environment. Employers need to take note about employees’ lives outside work – who they really are, the names and ages of their children, their hobbies, their interests when they are not at work. This does not mean that employers develop a relationship with their employees, but that they simply acquire more knowledge about them. Employers will not only understand their employees better, but will also build upon their self-esteem and self-worth, thus enhancing the feeling that they belong in the organisation. For example, one senior executive keeps a notebook in which he makes personal notes about each of his over 300 employees – when he sees the foreman on the shop floor, he can make an instant connection, remembering to ask how his son performed in the last hockey tournament. His over 300 employees are very fond of him, and even though they may not always agree with his decisions, they still respect him, since their relationships with him are based on more than just work.

Having a home or a place to dwell is a fundamental human need that goes beyond mere physical concerns and satisfies the pressing psychological need to belong (Porteous, 1976). Belongingness in terms of psychological ownership in organisations may be best understood as a feeling that one belongs *in* the organisation. According to

Avey et al. (2009), when employees feel like owners of the organisation, their need for belongingness is met by “having a place” in terms of their social and socio-emotional needs being met.

2.14.2.5 Communicating with employees

According to Gupta-Sunderji (2004), the reason why people view actions such as putting procedures in place to manage legitimate business functions as “red tape” is because they often do not understand the logic behind the decision and, just as often, this is because no one thought to communicate this information to them. It is important that each manager take the time to explain the reasons behind new rules to employees, because if managers do this, and if employees at least know why, irritation levels with this new rule will diminish.

When employers take the time to communicate and consult with employees, they will build better relationships with their employees. Another aspect of communication that generates positive results is offering timely and constructive feedback to employees (Gupta-Sunderji, 2004). People need to know how they are doing and they need to hear it more frequently than once or twice a year in the obligatory performance review meeting. Gupta-Sunderji suggests that an employee should get feedback (either positive or negative) within 24 hours of the event having occurred. Communication contributes to improved supervision, better relationships, and more streamlined administrative procedures. In other words, it decreases extrinsic de-motivators, while also increasing intrinsic motivators.

James (1890) suggested that individuals come to develop feelings of ownership for an object through a living relationship with that object. Beaglehole (1932) supports this by arguing that through intimate knowledge of an object, person, or place, a union of the self with the object takes place. Pierce et al. (2001) propose that by various processes of association, organisations can provide their members with a number of opportunities for getting to know potential targets of ownership, such as work, job, projects, and

teams. For example, when organisational members are given information about potential organisational targets of ownership (e.g., the mission of the organisation, its goals, and performance), they will feel that they know the organisation better and, consequently, may develop psychological ownership toward it. This will also satisfy their motive for self-identity (Rousseau, 1998).

2.14.2.6 Listening intently

Nothing builds rapport in relationships more than listening, in life and in dealings with employees. Therefore, “the reason you have two ears and one mouth is because you should listen twice as much as you speak” (Gupta-Sunderji, 2004, p. 40). In accordance with human nature, people often respond to what someone says (usually with the good intention of assisting); unfortunately, they would be better off if they just listened. Usually the individual is not looking for a solution to the problem or dilemma but merely seeking a responsive ear.

It is important for employers to listen intently. They should open their minds to their employees’ suggestions and, more importantly, encourage input from all areas. In this way employers will not only build relationships, but will also get valuable information about what is working or not, and what could work better within their department or organisation. When employers listen attentively, they will also get to know their employees better. Dittmar (1992, p. 86) states that it is through people’s interaction with their possessions (either tangible or intangible), coupled with a reflection upon their meaning that “our sense of identity, our self-definition, are established, maintained, reproduced and transformed”.

2.13.2.7 Celebrating success

Gupta-Sunderji (2004) suggests that it is very important for employers to celebrate the accomplishments in their organisations, because this creates positive workplace relationships. It is a good management practice, and if employers celebrate the

elimination of unnecessary work, it will encourage other people to come forward and make similar suggestions. It will reduce extrinsic de-motivators (e.g., poor quality of supervision, relationship with the supervisor, working conditions) and is also an intrinsic motivator, because it recognises employees' achievements. This could be done as simply as by saying "thank you", either verbally or in writing. At a team meeting, people could be given a one- or two-minute "brag moment" in which they can tell everyone one work-related thing that they are particularly proud of having accomplished. Other examples may include the following: create a celebration wall: a cork-board with pictures and goofy captions that celebrate something worth celebrating; order a pizza or sandwich lunch; bring muffins and doughnuts to celebrate the halfway point of an ongoing project. Celebrating does not have to involve a big budget.

The feelings of ownership toward both material (e.g., a reward) and immaterial (e.g., recognition) objects can not only shape identity (Belk, 1988; Dittmar, 1992), but can also affect behaviour (e.g., commitment and job satisfaction) (Isaacs, 1933).

In his study, Buchko (1993) found that ownership may influence employee behaviours, mainly through its effect on the intention of an employee to remain in the organisation. This effect is both direct and indirect, working through increased organisational commitment to tie the employee to the organisation and decrease the effect of turnover. Consistent with much of the previous research on turnover (Mobley, 1982), Buchko (1993) found that the effects of commitment on turnover are mediated by the intention to turn over. According to him, the direct and indirect effect of ownership is significant, since much previous research (French & Rosenstein, 1984; Klein, 1987; Long, 1989) has suggested that the effects of attitudinal variables on ownership are strong enough to influence turnover independently of the effect on turnover intention.

It is evident from the above that psychological ownership can form a key element of retention strategies in organisations. Creating a sense of psychological ownership among employees of the organisation and their jobs/work has the potential to increase staff retention and productivity.

2.15 CONCLUSION

In the literature review psychological ownership as a concept has been defined as a state in which individuals feel as though the target of ownership (material or immaterial in nature) or piece of it is “theirs”; the phenomenon exists regardless of whether or not there is legal ownership. Psychological ownership was differentiated from other work-related attitudes such as organisational commitment, organisational identification, internalisation, psychological empowerment, and job involvement because it describes a unique aspect of human experience in organisations. The feeling of possession is the core that differentiates psychological ownership from these other work-related attitudes.

The review discussed the motives or reasons for psychological ownership: *efficacy and effectance*, *self-identity*, and *having a place*. Efficacy and effectance means that it is important for an individual to be in control, and the possibility of being in control is an important factor in creating psychological ownership. People use ownership for the purpose of defining and expressing their self-identity to others, while the motive “having a place” arises from the need to have a certain area of one’s own, “a home”.

The review also identified the major routes or paths through which feelings of ownership for a particular object emerge, namely *controlling the target*, *coming to know the target intimately*, and *investing the self in the target*. Thus, when employees exercise greater amounts of control, intimately come to know, and invest themselves in the target of ownership a sense of responsibility takes root and possessive feelings develop.

The several factors that influence the emergence of psychological ownership have been discussed. The potential for the development of psychological ownership resides in both the target and the individual, and its emergence and manifestation is also strongly influenced by situational resources. The process by which psychological emerges is associated with a complex interaction between the “roots”, the “routes”, target factors, and individual factors. Psychological ownership is thus determined by a complex interaction of a number of intra-individual, object-related, and contextual factors.

Moreover, the review discussed two independent forms of psychological ownership: *promotion-orientated* and *prevention-orientated* psychological ownership. Individuals operating primarily within the promotion focus tend to be sensitive to the presence or absence of reward, are more concerned with accomplishments and aspirations and show more willingness to take risks, whereas individuals who operate primarily within the prevention focus tend to be more sensitive to the presence or absence of punishment and are more concerned with duties and obligations.

The chapter described two distinct types of psychological ownership: *organisation-based* and *job-based psychological ownership*. Organisation-based psychological ownership is related to individual's feelings of possession and psychological connection to the organisation as a whole, whereas job-based psychological ownership is concerned with individuals' feelings of possession toward their particular job.

Psychological ownership was associated with several positive behavioural and social-psychological consequences. It has been associated with greater commitment to the organisation, greater accountability; greater job satisfaction; better organisation-based self-esteem and more effort by the individual to engage in organisational citizenship behaviour. Psychological ownership was also positively related to extra-role behaviour. The chapter discussed the causal relationship between psychological ownership and attitude to organisation change, feelings of responsibility and willingness to take personal risks and make personal sacrifices.

A baseline motivational model has been applied to this study for explaining the state of psychological ownership.

It was argued that psychological ownership is a multidimensional construct consisting of promotion-orientated psychological ownership comprising six theory-defined dimensions: self-efficacy, self-identity, belongingness, accountability, autonomy and responsibility. Territoriality was defined as a preventative dimension of psychological ownership.

University of Pretoria – C Olckers (2011)

The discussion highlighted the role that psychological ownership can play in staff retention, suggesting that creating a sense of ownership of the organisation among employees has the potential to increase staff retention.

The following chapter will discuss the research methodology and strategy that were followed in the study.