

## CHAPTER 1

### THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

#### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

The research question in this study is whether relationships exist between a person's sense of meaning, or his "will to meaning" as defined by Viktor Frankl (Frankl, 1969, 1975, 1984a) and work motivation and work commitment.

Meaning in life is a construct which has central importance in existential psychiatry and psychology. In order to survive in a "chaotic" world, man imposes meaning to find order and purpose in his existence (Reker & Wong, 1988). Meaning serves a number of important functions in human life. First, meaning provides a purpose for people's lives (Frankl, 1992). Second, it furnishes values or standards by which to judge an individual's actions. Third, it gives people a sense of control over the events in their lives (Thompson & Janigian, 1988). Lastly, it provides people with self-worth (Frankl, 1992).

Viktor Frankl developed a theory of personality which deals explicitly with meaning and the role that it plays in human life, especially in the spiritual dimension of a person's life. Frankl's theory is based on a fundamental hypothesis about motivation, and is termed "the will to meaning." It differs from the Freudian pleasure motive and the Adlerian power motive (drive for superiority) in numerous respects. Frankl not only supplanted pleasure and superiority with will, but he replaced "drive" for "will," a pull replaces push. "Will" also implies choice rather than a deterministic drive for pleasure or a drive that one obeys out of necessity (Sahakian, 1985). Frankl's personality theory has been described as a well-developed theory (Sahakian, 1985).

A limited amount of empirical research investigated the propositions advanced by Frankl. These studies have shown that meaning has a central place in a person's successful functioning (Harlow, Newcomb & Bentler, 1986; O'Connor & Chamberlain, 1996; Pearson & Sheffield, 1974; Phillips, 1980; Reker, 1977; Yarnell,

1972; Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). If this is true, then one could speculate that meaning could also have an effect in the workplace. Because work is generally a central part of human existence, much of the spiritual odyssey occurs within the context of the workplace (King & Nicol, 1999). Konz and Ryan (1999) argue that in general, people are searching for a way to connect their working lives with their spiritual lives. Individuals are searching for meaning in their work, a meaning that transcends mere economic gain. Meaning gives the technical job deeper meaning by placing it in the context of a life (Keeva, 1999). Therefore, the work situation also belongs to the realm of "meaning" and spirituality. If personal transformation is to take place, one could expect that some of the transformation is likely to take place at work.

Meaning has been virtually ignored in empirical studies in Organisational Behaviour (OB). Attaining commitment and motivation as a possible result of finding meaning in life, and finding meaning in the work situation, did not receive attention in previous research as far as could be established. This is probably because questions relating to meaning in life have previously been regarded as more philosophical, and not relevant to the reality of the practical world of work. Although much attention has been devoted in previous research to work motivation and work commitment, previous studies failed to provide an answer to the question: "Why are people committed/motivated at all?"

As far as could be established, no systematic attempt has been made to analyse work motivation and commitment through Frankl's theoretical framework, except by Sargent (1973). Although Sargent (1973) found that people with a higher sense of purpose-in-life are more positive about work and tend to be more work motivated, his research was not conclusive due to empirical methodology. The present study builds on the work of Frankl and Sargent (1973). It investigates whether work motivation and work commitment can be regarded as manifestations of having a sense of meaning, or having a higher purpose in one's work life. This study investigates the interrelationships between meaning and work involvement, work motivation, and the facets of work commitment. The facets of work commitment included in this study are work values, job involvement and career commitment.

## 1.2. DEFINITIONS OF CONSTRUCTS

### 1.2.1. The meaning of “meaning”

Several perspectives on meaning can be seen in the literature, especially in the literature covering existential philosophy and existential psychology. It was decided to use Victor Frankl’s work and perspective of meaning as the foundation for the present study.

Frankl does not precisely define what he specifically means with the term "meaning". However, through studying his works (Frankl, 1967, 1969, 1970, 1972, 1975, 1978, 1984a, 1984b, 1992) one concludes that the definition of meaning entails a "significance of being." That is, finding meaning relates to finding or having a reason for “being” and a feeling, experience, or perception that this “being” is of significance. The term also relates to a sense of having, and fulfilling a higher purpose. That is, a purpose that results in a significance that is more than just surviving, but having made, or being able to make, a difference in the world. Meaning therefore includes both the cognitive and emotional experiences of being significant.

Battista and Almond (1973) note that theories of meaning essentially agree on four major issues. When individuals state that their lives are meaningful, it implies that (a) they are positively committed to some concept of purpose, (b) this concept provides them with some framework or goal from which to view their lives, (c) they perceive their lives as related to or fulfilling this concept, and (d) they experience this fulfilment as a feeling of significance. This view of meaning in life respects the fact that people have derived a sense of meaningfulness from various sources of meaning that do not appear to be reducible to one fundamental meaning system (Battista & Almond, 1973).

Meaning has been defined as the cognisance of order, coherence, and purpose in one's existence (Antonovsky, 1979). Meaning includes the pursuit and attainment of worthwhile goals, with an accompanying sense of fulfilment, and a sense of optimism about the future despite the chaos that exists at times in life (Reker & Wong, 1988). Meaning also consists of searching for a purpose or a task with which to define one's

life (Thompson & Janigian, 1988). The search for meaning is a search for meaningfulness, for understanding how events fit into a larger context. An event is meaningful when one understands how it follows in an orderly fashion from one's views and beliefs (Thompson & Janigian, 1988). A person's sense of meaning is believed to be generally stable, undergoing gradual transformations across the life span in conjunction with changing belief and value systems (Reker & Wong, 1988).

An essential aspect in the definition of the construct of meaning is that it relates to meaning *in* life, and not to the meaning *of* life. Meaning has been neglected in empirical research probably because of the erroneous notion that the subject 'meaning *in* life' relates primarily to the philosophical question "what is the meaning *of* life?" This eternal quest, as old as humanity is indeed, ipso facto, out of reach of modern objectivistic scientific methodology (Debats & Drost, 1995). However, the psychological significance of meaning *in* life is revealed when it is rephrased by an individual who asks, "what makes my life worth living?" In a similar way, the subject of meaning *in* life becomes accessible to empirical investigation when the focus is shifted towards the questions "what are the components of an individual's experience of life as being meaningful?", and "what are the conditions under which an individual will experience his life as meaningful?"

Terms that are often used in relation to meaning are purpose, coherence, and meaning formed through experience. "Purpose", a term often used together and synonymously with meaning, refers to having life goals and having a mission in life and having a sense of direction from the past, in the present, and toward the future (Reker, 1994). Having a sense of personal meaning means having a purpose and striving toward a goal or goals (Reker, Peacock, & Wong, 1987). Implicit in purpose is the notion of worthwhileness and what is of central importance in a person's life. "Coherence" refers to having a logically integrated and consistent analytical and intuitive understanding of self, others, and life in general (Reker, 1994).

A person's experiences through the course of his life influences his behaviour. These experiences also have meaning, albeit perhaps unconsciously (Yalom, 1980). For this reason, a distinction is made between meaning and a meaning framework. Meaning, or a meaningful perspective, refers to an experience that may have

affective-cognitive significance to the individual, and a meaning framework refers to meaning that has been constructed actively or consciously by the person (Saari, 1991). Gage (1994) contends that life has meaning when one believes it has. If a person pursues the things in life which have meaning for her, in the end these things will bring meaning to the individual (Gage, 1994). A framework of meaning enables people to reflect upon their experiences of meaning, to look forward to future meanings in new domains, and to process their experiences in deeper ways (O'Connor & Chamberlain, 1996).

For the purpose of this study, meaning is defined as having found or having discovered a reason for “being” and a feeling, experience, or perception that this “being” is of significance. The definition also relates to sense of having found and fulfilling a higher purpose, and having made, or being able to make a difference in the world. Meaning therefore includes both the cognitive and emotional experiences of being significant. This definition is in line with Frankl’s view of meaning as described in the beginning of this section.

### **1.2.2. Work as a sociological construct**

Work is a basic social process and is found in all societies, although the social concept of work does not necessarily exist in all of them. In simple societies, work may consist of mere specialisation of function and be so completely integrated into the general fabric of social life that it is simply part of the experience of total existence. In such a society work is not articulated as a separate and distinct category of social behaviour and exists therefore as a value-free activity (Bryant, 1972a). Neff (1965), on the other hand, contrasts work and play in defining the term *work*. The concept of playing means that what is done, is done for its own sake; gratification lies in the activity itself. The construct of work is seen as instrumental to gratification, and is not the gratification as such (Firth, 1972; Neff, 1965).

Work is often identified with employment, i.e. with activities undertaken for others on a contractual basis. This entails an exchange relationship whereby people put their talents at the disposal of an employer in return for rewards (Shimmin, 1980). In

nearly all the scientific literature on work, the term is understood to mean paid work (Hoff, 1986). This includes all clearly defined occupational activities, regulated through employing institutions, for securing the material necessities of life. Hoff (1986) defines work as an activity for a purpose beyond the pleasure of its own execution. Modern economists view work as merely providing purchasing power. Although many economists agree that there is a great deal more to work, they nonetheless feel comfortable with this narrow description (Gill, 1999).

For the purpose of this study, the term “work” will be regarded as *paid* work. In other words, work is any activity that involves an exchange relationship of effort, knowledge, or other contributions for financial rewards, whether in direct employment or not.

### **1.2.3. Work centrality (work involvement)**

Kanungo (1979, 1982) developed the concept of work involvement, as a synonym and a measure of work centrality. The fact that individual differences in attitudes toward work are consistent and related to work behaviour raises the question of the origin of the attitudes. Consideration of this question requires that one distinguishes the importance an individual attaches to work in general (work centrality or work involvement), from specific beliefs that a person holds about his present job (job involvement). Kanungo (1982) emphasises the difference between work involvement and job involvement. Work centrality, or work involvement, is defined as the beliefs that individuals have regarding the degree of importance that work in general plays in their lives (Kanungo, 1982; Paullay, Alliger, & Stone-Romero, 1994).

Work centrality is seen as being shaped by the socialisation of the individual. People learn to value work from their families, friends, religion, or culture. However, Kanungo (1982) emphasises that work involvement should be distinguished from the Protestant work ethic (hereafter PWE). He argues that belief in the centrality of work may result from Protestant-ethic-type socialisation, but the two are not identical. PWE may not even be a necessary condition for work involvement to develop. Kanungo (1982) argues that work involvement may result from socialisation that is

not of the Protestant ethic type (Kanungo, 1982). Contrary to Kanungo (1982), Morrow (1993) notes that the construct of work involvement represents work ethic measures. She argues that PWE is a multidimensional construct entailing the importance of work itself and a rejection of leisure. Morrow (1993) comments that Kanungo's (1982) work involvement distinction has not been made adequately, and that the work involvement concept can be seen as a narrower conceptualisation of the PWE.

Notwithstanding Morrow's (1993) comments on work involvement being similar to PWE, this study will treat them as two separate constructs as per Kanungo (1982). As both of these constructs are dependent variables in this study, it should not be a problem even if the factor analysis should reveal them to be one construct. Kanungo's (1982) definition of work involvement, i.e., the beliefs that individuals have regarding the degree of importance that work in general plays in their lives (Kanungo, 1982) is used in this study.

#### **1.2.4. Work commitment, and the facets of work commitment**

Because people play a variety of roles in life, they make choices about the relative importance of work (Loscocco, 1989). To the extent that non-work roles compete with work and work-roles, not all individuals are equally committed to the work role. Those individuals who have been socialised to identify with work, report stronger commitment (Loscocco, 1989). Work commitment is defined as the relative importance of work to one's sense of self (Loscocco, 1989). Work involvement, work commitment and work motivation are three closely related constructs.

The concept of work commitment has received growing attention from researchers and practitioners, covering specific commitment facets such as the organisation, work group, occupation, and one's job (Cohen, 1999, 2000; Morrow, 1993; Randall & Cote, 1991). Many research studies have attempted to clarify the facets of work commitment. The common themes from most of the studies on work commitment describe work commitment with four facets: work values, job involvement, organisational commitment, and career commitment (Blau, Paul & St John, 1993;

Cohen, 1999, 2000; Hoole, 1997; Morrow, Eastman & McElroy, 1991; Randall & Cote, 1991). These four facets will be used to operationalise work commitment in this study.

#### **1.2.4.1 Work values and work ethic**

Values lay the foundation for motivation and attitudes, and values influence perceptions (Elizur, 1984). Elizur (1984) describes values as those principles that one regards as conducive to one's welfare. Values are normative standards to judge and to choose among alternative modes of behaviour, and are therefore different from goals or attitudes. Elizur (1984, 1996) explains that values suggest an estimation of the degree of importance of behaviour in a life area.

Super and Sverko (1995) describe values as organised sets of general beliefs, opinions and attitudes about what is right and preferable. George and Jones (1997) define a value system as a generalised knowledge structure or framework about what is good or desirable. George and Jones (1997) are of the opinion that an individual's personal set of values determines which types of actions and events are desirable or undesirable. Unlike goals, values are never fully attained but rather are more permanent guides of behaviour (George & Jones, 1997).

Sagie, Elizur and Koslowsky (1996) distinguish between general values and work values. They comment that work values do not equate to norms. Work values refer to the importance of work outcomes while norms refer to what should be done (i.e. what others expect from someone and what he expects from others) in a given context. Ros, Schwartz and Surkiss (1999) note that work values, like basic values, are beliefs pertaining to desirable end-states or behaviour. Because work values refer only to the work setting, they are more specific than the general values that the individual has.

Notwithstanding Elizur's (1984, 1996) and George and Jones (1997) comments on values not being goals, some authors do link values to goals. Super and Sverko (1995) describe work values as general and relatively stable goals that people try to

reach through their work. Furthermore, Ros et al. (1999) define individual values as desirable, trans-situational goals that vary in importance, acting as guiding principles in people's lives. These inconsistencies on the meaning of the term "values" were further emphasised by Bumpus and Munchus (1996) who concluded that the conceptualisation of the values contained in the value system is particular to each individual, as a result of the way in which values are acquired.

Most modern studies equate work values with the PWE. Max Weber defined PWE to suggest that an individual's worth is seen as a function of how well the individual performs in his job (Furnham, 1990a). The PWE represents the degree to which individuals place work at or near the centre of their lives (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999). Furnham (1990a) states that the broader meaning of the PWE typically refers to the belief that people have a normal and religious obligation to fill their lives with physical work. For some, this means that hard work and effort are to be valued for their own sake. In practice this means that people are expected to spend long hours at work, with little or no time for personal recreation and leisure (Furnham, 1990b). Ho and Lloyd (1984) comment that although the validity of Weber's hypothesis on the existence of a Protestant work ethic has been energetically debated, few would argue against the accuracy of his specifications or the modes of conduct and goals dictated by the Protestant ethic (e.g. asceticism, hard work, salvation).

Work values are seen, for the purpose of the present study, to be closely related to the definition of PWE, the belief that people have an obligation to fill their lives with hard work and effort. This manifests as a dedication to work which manifests as long hours at work, with little time for recreation and leisure.

#### **1.2.4.2 Job involvement**

Kanungo (1982) describes job involvement as a belief about one's present job, a cognitive or belief state of psychological identification with that job. An individual's psychological identification with a particular job depends on the saliency of his needs (both extrinsic and intrinsic) and the perceptions he has about the need-satisfying potentialities of the job (Kanungo, 1982). Kanungo (1982) notes that job involvement

tends to be a function of a person's situation, how much the present job can satisfy the individual's present needs.

Blau (1985a) defines job involvement in terms of the degree to which an employee is participating in his job and meeting such needs as prestige and autonomy. Morrow (1983) notes that job involvement is the degree of daily absorption that an individual experiences in a work activity. Pinder (1998) adds that a person is said to be involved in his job if he actively participates in it, holds it as a central life interest, perceives performance as central to his self-esteem, and sees performance in it as consistent with his self-concept.

Involvement in a specific job is not the same as involvement with work in general (Kanungo, 1982). Job involvement is a belief descriptive of the present job and tends to be a function of how much the job can satisfy one's present needs. However, involvement with work in general is a normative belief about the value of work in one's life, and it is more a function of one's past cultural conditioning or socialisation (Kanungo, 1982). Thus, job involvement is a descriptive belief that is contemporaneously caused whereas work involvement is a normative belief that is historically caused (Cohen, 2000).

Kanungo's (1982) definition of job involvement, as a psychological identification with one's present job will be used in this study.

#### **1.2.4.3 Career, career salience and career commitment**

The notion of career commitment originated from the work of Gouldner (1957) who identified two latent identities in organisations which he named cosmopolitans and locals. Cosmopolitans refer to those individuals low on loyalty to the organisation, high on commitment to specialised role skills, and likely to have an outside reference group orientation. Locals refer to those individuals high on loyalty to the organisation, low on commitment to specialised role skills, and likely to have an inside reference group orientation (Gouldner, 1957). These two sets of orientations represent two quite different approaches to management of one's work career.

Greenhaus and Callanan (1994) define a career as the pattern of work-related experiences that span the course of a person's life. This definition includes objective events or situations such as a series of job positions, and subjective interpretations of work-related events, for instance, work aspirations, expectations and needs. Greenhaus and Callanan (1994) further note that a person's work roles do not have to be of a professional nature, stable within a single occupation, or characterised by upward mobility in order to be seen as representing a career.

Career salience, defined by Greenhaus (1971) as the importance of a career in one's life, is often used synonymously with career commitment. Blau (1985b) conceptualises career commitment as one's attitude towards one's profession or vocation. Blau (1985b) comments that although the referents of profession and vocation are somewhat restricting, they are necessary. Blau (1985b) argues that it is important to anchor the career commitment concept in more specific terminology than "work in general", while also using broader referents than "job" and "organisation", to prevent making career commitment redundant with other work commitment facets. In his later work, Blau (1988a) suggests that the definition of career commitment should be revised as one's attitude towards one's vocation, *including* a profession, since a profession is a special type of vocation.

Morrow (1993) emphasises that a person's commitment to his career field or role is to be distinguished from commitment to one's job (i.e. job involvement), or to one's organisation (i.e. organisational commitment). These three forms of commitment are often correlated, but they are theoretically distinct and may often have different causes and consequences (Morrow, 1993).

Carson and Bedeian (1994) defined career commitment as one's motivation to work in a chosen vocation or in a chosen career role. Building on the work of London (1985), Carson and Bedeian (1994) describe career commitment as a multidimensional construct composed of three components: career identity (establishing a close emotional association with one's career), career planning (determining one's developmental needs and setting career goals), and career resilience (resisting career disruption in the face of adversity).

Carson and Bedeian's (1994) definition of career commitment, as one's motivation to work in a chosen vocation or career role, will be used in this study.

#### **1.2.4.4 Organisational commitment**

Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) define organisational commitment as the relative strength of an individual's identification with, and involvement in, a particular organisation. Mowday et al. (1979) suggest that organisational commitment can be characterised by three related factors: (1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation's goals and values; (2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation; and (3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organisation. Randall and Cote (1991) define organisational commitment as the extent to which a person has a strong desire to remain a member of a specific organisation, is willing to exert high levels of effort for the organisation, and believes and accepts the values and goals of the organisation.

Allen and Meyer (1996) identified four types of organisational commitment:

- Affective commitment (attitudinal approach), originated in the work of Buchanan (1974). Affective commitment attests that the individual wants to be associated with the organisation because of identification with the goals and values of the organisation, and loyalty and attachment to the organisation.
- Continuance commitment (Behavioural approach) has its roots in the work of Becker (1960). Continuance commitment describes an individual's belief to be associated with the organisation in order to minimise negative affects (Meyer & Allen, 1984).
- Normative commitment: The belief that a person has a responsibility to the organisation in which he is employed (Brown, 1996a).
- Alienative commitment: Individuals might be members of an organisation without any possibility to leave.

Although organisational commitment forms part of the discussion on work commitment, it will not be measured in this study and therefore not be discussed in detail (see the arguments in section 2.5.2).

### **1.2.5. Work motivation**

The origin of the term *motivation* lies in the noun *motion* which implies movement or changing of position (Hawkins, 1989). Action is the beginning of everything, and in business, as in every other human activity, nothing of any consequence happens until an individual wants to act (Gellerman, 1963). What a person accomplishes depends to a considerable extent on how much, and on why he wants to act. Motivation theory attempts to explain how behaviour gets started, is energised, sustained, directed, stopped, and the kind of subjective reaction present in the organism (Lawler, 1969).

Work motivation is the concept used to describe the forces acting on, or within an organism, to initiate and direct behaviour in relation to work (Petri, 1991). Work motivation is defined as that which (1) energises human behaviour; (2) directs or channels such behaviour; and (3) maintains or sustains this behaviour (Allscheid & Cellar, 1996; Muchinsky, 1987). Pinder (1998) describes work motivation as the set of internal and external forces that initiates work-related behaviour, and determines its form, direction, intensity, and duration. These conceptualisations point to energetic forces within individuals that influence or drive them to behave in certain ways, and environmental forces that trigger these drives.

Other variables often mentioned in association with the activating properties of motivation are effort (Wallbank, 1980) and persistence (Petri, 1991). The strength of motivation also explains differences in the intensity of behaviour. More intense behaviours are considered to be the result of higher levels of motivation and less intense behaviours are considered to be the result of lower levels of motivation (Steers & Porter, 1979).

A problem in studying motivation is that motivation is an invisible, internal hypothetical construct, it cannot be seen or be measured directly (Pinder, 1998). Its existence and intensity has therefore to be inferred from observation (Muchinsky, 1987). There are several reasons why it is difficult to infer motives from observed behaviour: behaviour is multi-determined, in other words, there is never only one cause for behaviour (Saari, 1991). Furthermore, a single act may express several motives, motives may appear in disguised forms, and cultural and personal variations may significantly moderate the modes of expression of certain motives (Steers & Porter, 1979). An individual usually has a host of needs, desires, and expectations. Not only are these motives in a constant state of flux and do they change, but they may also be in conflict with each other. Considerable differences can exist among individuals concerning the manner in which they select certain motives over others and the intensity with which they pursue such motives (Steers & Porter, 1979). It is therefore not sufficient to think in terms of simple causation as many of the earlier personality theories and theories of motivation do. Problems in human functioning most often have multiple roots and causes (Saari, 1991).

The view of work motivation in this study will be taken from Muchinsky's (1987) description of motivation, namely that which energises behaviour, directs such behaviour, and maintains or sustains this behaviour in relation to work.

### **1.3. RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES**

The problem focused on in the present study is whether significant relationships exist between a person's "will to meaning" as defined by Frankl (Frankl, 1969, 1975, 1984a), and work commitment and work motivation. This study will also investigate the relationships between meaning and various work related biographical and demographic variables. An investigation will be done on potential relationships between meaning and various variables that imply certain work and life orientations. The objective of this research is to clarify constructs and hypothesised relationships and theory.

Much attention has been devoted to work commitment and motivation to work. However, except for the study by Sargent (1973), no systematic attempt has been made to analyse it through Frankl's theoretical framework. Sargent (1973) found that people with a higher sense of personal meaning tend to be more work motivated. However, his study had certain shortcomings. For instance, he did not investigate whether work was central to these people's lives, or whether there was congruence between the sense of meaning and the careers they were following. The present study builds on the work of Victor Frankl, and on Sargent's (1973) research.

Victor Frankl (1969) called the "will to meaning" the primary motivational force in man. If this is true, and if this will to meaning is being fulfilled, then people with a high sense of personal meaning is expected to be committed and motivated to work. This argument is mediated by the centrality of work in the person's life. This proposition is represented in Figure 1, which was developed by the author of the present study.

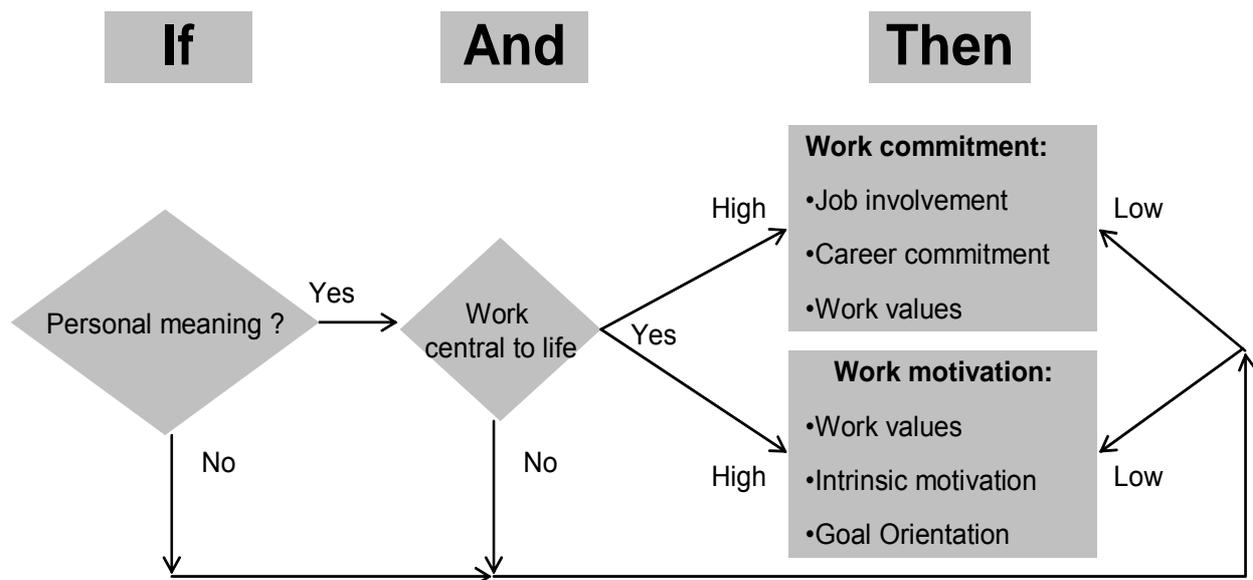


Figure 1. The argumentative flow chart as a research model

This model implies that people with a high sense of meaning and fulfilment should be more committed and motivated to work than those who experience relative high levels of meaninglessness. However, this statement is postulated to be true as long as work is central to people's lives and there is congruence between their source of

meaning and their work careers. The theoretical background for this model is explained in section 2.8.

The procedure to be followed in this study is to test the proposition as illustrated in Figure 1 by means of a survey questionnaire followed by factor analysis, correlation analyses and multiple regression analyses. Firstly, the sense of personal meaning of the subjects will be determined by using Battista and Almond's (1973) Life Regard Index. The sense of personal meaning in life is the independent variable in this research. The other constructs in this study are all dependent variables. Secondly, the centrality of work in the subjects' lives will be measured by using Kanungo's (1982) Work Involvement Questionnaire. The rationale for using this test is because not every person finds meaning in his work, and unless work is central to his life, it is unlikely that the person will find meaning in his work. Work involvement is therefore a moderating variable in the study. Thirdly, the level of work commitment will be measured by measuring the facets of work commitment, namely work values (Ho & Lloyd, 1984), job involvement (Kanungo's (1982) Job Involvement Questionnaire), and Carson and Bedeian's (1994) Career Commitment Scale. According to Cohen (2000), these facets are primary antecedents of organisational commitment, the remaining facet of work commitment that is not included in this study. Two aspects of work motivation will be measured, namely intrinsic motivation and goal orientation. Intrinsic motivation will be measured by using Warr, Cook and Wall's (1979) Intrinsic Motivation Scale, and goal orientation will be determined by using the Goal Orientation Measure of Vandewalle (1997). These scales support the definition of work motivation as defined in the previous section.

The aim of this research is to investigate whether the origins and sources of work commitment and work motivation are more intrinsic, and on a deeper psychological and emotional level (the spiritual level), than previously postulated in motivation and commitment theories. In this research it is postulated that an essential source for work commitment and work motivation originates from the noögenic (spiritual) dimension of a person because of his will to meaning, whereas most existing theories rely on sources from the psychological and somatic dimensions of commitment and motivation.

The intention is not to try to discredit any of the established work commitment and work motivation theories, or to imply that this proposition based on man's will to meaning as a source of work commitment and work motivation, is the only valid explanation. It is rather postulated that this notion is complementary to the already established theories. However, these relationships, and man's will to meaning as such, have been neglected in previous work commitment and work motivation research.

#### **1.4. DISSERTATION STRUCTURE**

In order to investigate whether work commitment and work motivation are related to a sense of personal meaning in life, it was essential to cover and study a wide range of relevant focus areas and subjects in the fields of Organisational Behaviour, Psychiatry, and Clinical Psychology. The main topics covered in the thesis are: (1) Victor Frankl's theory of man's will to meaning; (2) other theories on motives of human behaviour; (3) meaning in life as a scientific construct; (4) the role that work plays in the human life from a sociological point of view; (5) theories and perspectives on work commitment; and (6) theories and perspectives on work motivation.

The study covers literature on the relevant topics, current theories and previous research on these topics. However, as this dissertation integrates six different fields of study, it is impossible to discuss all the research that this study was based on in detail. Much attention was given in the current study to the integration of different theories that relate to the various constructs measured in this study.

The fields of study were selected because of their potential individual and collective roles and contributions in relationship to meaning. The literature study introduces the reader to Victor Frankl's theory of man's will to meaning, which was chosen as the basis of the present study. This is an analysis of Frankl's theory with respect to man's search for meaning in the workplace and provides the basic argument to establish whether meaning in life can be investigated as a potential source for work

motivation and work commitment. Meaning in life, based on Frankl's theories, forms the independent variable in this research.

Theories of motivation and commitment are based on theories of human behaviour, personality theories, and some assumptions about human nature. This study area therefore focuses on motives of human behaviour, and discusses Frankl's views in relation to other theories of behaviour and personality in psychology.

The section that focuses on meaning as a scientific construct, investigates whether meaning in life can be seen as a scientific construct, rather than merely an interesting philosophical notion. Previous research on this subject confirmed that meaning is indeed a scientific construct and that it has a significant influence on successful functioning. The discussions in the first three sections provide the foundation and background of the first block in the research model (Figure 1).

The study of the role of work in human life was deemed as being essential. Literature suggests that "paid work" or "employment" has become a central and inseparable part of man's existence. The importance and role of work in human life should therefore have an effect on the experiencing of meaning, and the search for meaning in the workplace. Work centrality is one of the dependent variables in this research, acting as a moderating variable.

Work motivation and work commitment, and the various facets of these two constructs, are investigated in this study as the dependent variables. The sections on work commitment and work motivation, mainly focus on the reasoning and conceptualisations that formed these theories and their relationships with meaning. The reason for this approach is that the present study does not evaluate these theories or their underlying assumptions, but rather attempts to add new insights to these theories, especially to a possible source of work motivation and work commitment.

The structure of the literature study follows the argument of the flow chart (Figure 1). It therefore commences with a study of meaning, which consists of a study of Frankl's will to meaning as a theory of behaviour, an investigation of motives of

behaviour, and an attempt to establish whether meaning can be regarded as a scientific construct in the work place. The exposition of meaning is followed by an overview study of the role of work in human life, and studies of work motivation and work commitment as possible dependent variables of a sense of meaning. The literature study is followed by discussions of the research methodology, research results and conclusions.

An approach was taken to refer either to the masculine or the feminine gender in a specific discussion, but not to both simultaneously. The gender related terms used are therefore representative of any person without gender connotation. The only exceptions are where explicit reference is made to a specific sex, especially if differences do exist in the behaviour or attitudes of the different sexes. Similarly, the term 'man' is often used in the text as an abbreviation to depict the human species, or *Homo sapiens*; it therefore has no gender connotation.