PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF CENTLEC MAINTENANCE EMPLOYEES TOWARDS THEFT OF COPPER CABLES

by

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DECLARATION

I, Lerato S Mathe, student number [redacted], do hereby declare that this research report submitted to the Central University of Technology, Free State, for the Degree MTECH: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION is my own independent work and has not previously been submitted by me at another university/faculty. I furthermore cede copyright of the dissertation in favour of the Central University of Technology, Free State.

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SIGNATURE OF STUDENT DATE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

Research evidence suggests that employee theft as well as the costs associated with it is on the increase in organisations all over the world. Elimination or at least reduction of employee theft of organisational asset has therefore become a major problem facing management of every organisation today.

While, theory and research evidence suggest that employee theft is influenced by a myriad of factors, these causal factors can be classified broadly as individual or organisational. Like causal factors, there are equally numerous approaches to understanding employee theft. One of them, the behavioural approach stands out because stealing is widely acknowledged as a behavioural problem that can emanate from individual or organisational factors and it is believed that by identifying individual and organisational factors that promote thieving behaviour, theft of organisational assets can be minimized.

Centlec (Soc) Limited (hereafter CENTLEC), a South African electricity utility company has been experiencing employee involvement in theft of its electricity coper cables. Since 2012, CENTLEC has been moaning about its profitability being eroded by theft of electricity coper cables. In other words, CENTLEC has suffered financially because of electricity copper cable theft yet, it would appear as though authorities at CENTLEC are unaware of effective methods to mitigate the problem.

Since CENTLEC disciplinary case reports have consistently characterized some of the theft as ‘insider job’, it makes much sense to explore its employees’ perceptions and attitude towards electricity coper cable theft with a view to identifying and influencing this misbehaviour for the better precisely because, theory and empirical findings suggest that behaviour can be influenced and shaped when the cause of misbehaviour and or attitude is understood.

This research was carried out to study the perceptions and attitudes of maintenance employees of CENTLEC towards theft in general and copper cable theft as well as the role of selected individual and organizational factors in this deviant and counterproductive behaviour.

The results are quite revealing. Firstly, the CENTLEC environment appears to be conducive to employee theft. Also, some of the individual and organizational factors investigated do appear to influence both employee perception of theft in general and copper cable theft. These and other findings form the basis of the recommendations provided for mitigating the employee theft of copper cable as well as for further research.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the study. It consists of sections on the problem background; the problem statement; the research questions; objectives of the study; a summary of the research methodology; the theoretical and conceptual frameworks; the study limitations; ethical issues of the research; outline of the study; and chapter summary in that order.

To begin with, it is important to highlight an earlier important observation made by Pretorius (2012:1) which remains relevant to the present study. According to Pretorius (2012:1), there exists very little, if any, published research on economic related crime on organisations how to fight this crime in the South African context especially as it relates to copper cable theft. In fact, up to the time of conducting the current study, the situation had not changed much as the literature search revealed only one other scientific publication about copper cable theft. Consequently, like Pretorius (2012), in this study, the dearth of relevant academic literature has led to reliance on limited available secondary data mostly from media publications and articles that do not strictly belong to mainstream scientific research. However, their value cannot be underestimated.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

CENTLEC is a strategic business unit within the then Mangaung Local Municipality (MLM) now Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality (MMM) that was created as a quasi-autonomous electricity distribution agency to generate revenue on a competitive profit basis.

The mandate of CENTLEC is to procure electricity from the national electricity-generating agency ESKOM, price the electricity, sell it directly to companies and organisations, and to distribute it to retailers who in turn sell it to individual households in the MMM in the Free State province.

Cable theft has however made achievement of the above business purpose very difficult for CENTLEC. Ironically, CENTLEC internal investigations has led to discovery of involvement of its own employees in the theft of electricity coper cables (Dzansi, Rambe & Mathe, 2014).

To comprehend why CENTLEC's own employees are involved in theft of electricity coper cables, this research investigated CENTLEC employees' perceptions and attitudes towards theft in general and of electricity coper cables based on the understanding that the construction of theft, attitudes and perceptions is fundamental to understanding how to eliminate theft of electric cables (Dzansi *et al.*, 2014:179).

Finding ways to eliminate copper cable theft is important due to its adverse social and economic effects (Pretorius, 2012; Peters, 2014). For instance, according to Hi-Tech Security Solutions (2011), copper cable theft costs South Africa over five (5) billion Rands a year in revenue losses, with the damage done amounting to far more than the value of the stolen material. Jooste (2011) also points out that copper cable theft has cost the City of Cape Town more than 10 million Rands in the first six months of 2011. As a result, the City of Cape Town decided to keep certain areas of streetlights flashing during the day to monitor and prevent the occurrence of cable theft.

It is important to mention that South Africa is not the only African country currently plagued by theft of power cables. Namibia Telecoms Report (2012:332) too indicated that Namibia Telecom suffered losses amounting to 760 000 Namibian Dollars in 2012 to vandalism and theft of electricity copper cable.

Theft of electricity copper cables places extra burden on the electricity maintenance staff who must routinely service disrupted and unstable power environments since power utilities must have stolen or damaged parts replaced and repaired after such incidents.

Furthermore, breaks in connections due to electricity copper cable theft compromises overall grid reliability, which in turn can lead to the escalation of expenditure on security or even employee redundancy as well as being disastrous for customer perception of its service quality. In response, disgruntled clients or customers sensing a less than reliable grid will be forced to invest in backup power which places extra financial burden on consumers.

In 2012, CENTLEC senior management bemoaned coper cable theft's negative impact on efficient service delivery to customers (New Age Media, 2012:10) to the extent that the high rate of coper cable theft has negatively impacted CENTLEC's revenue base as its employees are continually assigned to replace and maintain stolen or damaged cables. This also directly contributes to high overhead costs in terms of a bloated employee salary bill due to over time claims.

The heavy economic and social toll of electricity copper cable theft on CENTLEC has compelled it to solicit the cooperation of clients, surrounding neighbourhoods and residents to report any suspicious activities to the police and/ or CENTLEC (CENTLEC, 2012a:11). In response, some customers have lodged reports in which CENTLEC maintenance staff have been implicated (CENTLEC, 2012a:11). In fact, some CENTLEC employees have been subsequently sacked for coper cable theft.

While CENTLEC Case Management Report, CENTLEC (2012a:11) revealed that 30 of its employees were dismissed due to cable theft at substations in 2012, it noted that no forced entry occurred, suggesting that these malpractices were internally perpetrated by CENTLEC staff. Besides, customers often reported seeing CENTLEC vehicles in locations where these illegal activities occurred which suggests that CENTLEC employees could be the culprits.

CENTLEC's Financial and Asset Loss Report, CENTLEC (2012c:17) indicates that there were 118 cases of theft of cables at substations and 2898 cases of house-hold cable theft in 2012. Approximately 3016 electricity coper cables were reportedly vandalised in 2012 and the cost of the replacement of these cables amounted to 1.8 million Rands. According to the CENTLEC's Claims Register, CENTLEC (2012d:21), there were 432 insurance claims by customers whose appliances were damaged due to the high inrush current caused by the theft of power cables at the substations amounting to R 586 795.00 for the year of 2012 alone.

In addition to losing about 1.8 million Rands per year, electricity copper cable theft has also resulted in multiple power outages and disruptions of productions in industrial plants and heavy financial claims on CENTLEC (CENTLEC, 2012d). Furthermore, copper cable theft disrupts or extensively damages telecommunication systems, electric power-driven transport, electricity services, impacts on living standards and drives up the costs of goods and transport (Hi-Tech Security Solutions, 2011).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In South Africa, copper theft is a national problem (Pretorius, 2012). Moreover, as stated earlier, CENTLEC's profitability is being eroded by theft of electricity coper cables. In other words, CENTLEC has suffered financially because of cable theft.

Since the CENTLEC Disciplinary Case Report, CENTLEC (2012a) and subsequent ones characterizes some of the theft as 'insider job', it makes much sense to explore CENTLEC employees' perceptions and attitude towards electricity coper cables theft with a view to identifying and influencing this misbehaviour for the better precisely because, theory and empirical findings that suggest that behaviour can be influenced and shaped when the cause of misbehaviour and or attitude is understood. For instance, Schmidtke (2007:561) found that resentment of Organisational climate is a common motive to steal from the place of employment. Schmidtke's (2007:561) subsequently advised that organizations should pay close attention to work climate

since work climate and culture impact on employee attitude and behaviour. Similarly, Greenberg (2002:172) suggested that addressing employee attitudes and perceptions trigger better results; while Pickens (2005:44) claimed that attitudes and perceptions generate a productive workforce.

Most importantly however, based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1969; 1980) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), this study proposes that establishing CENTLEC employees' perceptions and attitudes towards theft of electric cables might contribute towards finding lasting ways of curbing the rampant cable theft that is undermining CENTLEC's profitability. Briefly, both TRA (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1969;1980) and TPB (Ajzen, 1991) suggest that behaviour is determined by intention to behave in a certain predetermined manner with personal attitude and perception being important components of behaviour and therefore potentially offers the opportunity to understand the problem of cable theft that has largely been attributed to CENTLEC own employees (Dzansi, Rambe & Mathe, 2014:184).

The problem for this study is therefore to understand CENTLEC employees' perceptions and attitudes towards theft of electric cables.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question is: What is CENTLEC employees' perceptions and attitudes towards theft of electric cables?

The following specific research questions are posed.

1. How do CENTLEC maintenance staff perceive the organisational theft climate to be like in CENTLEC?
2. What is CENTLEC maintenance staff perception regarding deterrence/ sanction doctrine?

3. What is CENTLEC maintenance staff perception regarding organisational fairness?
4. What is CENTLEC maintenance staff perception regarding control environment in CENTLEC?
5. What is CENTLEC maintenance staff perception of theft in general?
6. Which personal background factors of CENTLEC employees are related to perceptions of theft in general and what is the nature of that relationship (if any)?
7. What is CENTLEC maintenance staff attitude towards power cable theft?
8. Which personal background factors of CENTLEC employees are related to attitude towards power cable theft and what is the nature of that relationship (if any)?
9. Which of the four organisational factors investigated are related to employee attitude towards power cable theft and what is the nature of that relationship (if any)?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND AIM(S)

The **research objectives** that emanate from the research questions are:

1. To determine the perceptions and attitudes of CENTLEC maintenance staff regarding theft in general and of power cables in particular;
2. To identify personal background factors of employees that significantly discriminate perceptions and attitudes regarding theft in general and theft of power cables in particular;
3. To identify institutional factors at CENTLEC that impact on employee attitudes and perceptions regarding theft of power cables

The **overall research** aims are:

1. To come up with behavioural strategies that can be used by CENTLEC management to positively influence employees' perceptions and behaviour towards vandalism and theft;

2. To find ways in which CENTLEC can build an institutional culture of morally acceptable behaviour in the work place including a culture of restraint / tolerance towards organisational infrastructure.

1.7 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section provides only an overview of the methodology applied to the research since a more detailed discussion of the research methodology is provided in Chapter 3.

1.7.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Due to the nature of the study, the survey research, a quantitative research approach appeared the best option. Russell (2003:2) believes that when surveys are used, the statistical data from survey assists the researcher uncover underlying issues. Further, surveys are important in situations where the intention of the researcher is to collect data on a phenomenon that cannot be directly observed and are used extensively to assess attitudes (Croft, 2008:85). In addition, surveys enable an organisation to collect quantitative data on employee perspectives about a specific organizational dimension like theft.

1.7.2 OVERVIEW OF THE TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLING

Ideally, a target population should be represented as a finite list of all its members (Kitchenham & Lawrence, 2002:17). The total number of CENTLEC maintenance staff is 540 but only 270 employees deal with the replacements and maintenance of cables. As such only they participated in the research.

1.7.3 DATA COLLECTION

Both primary and secondary data were collected. Secondary data include CENTLEC's reports/ documents on terminations due to cable theft, financial loss reports due to cable theft and vandalism, insurance claims by customers due to cable vandalism and relevant literature. In terms of primary data, a custom-made questionnaire was developed and used to collect data to determine the attitudes and perceptions towards theft of electricity coper cables.

1.7.4. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis refers the process of systematically applying statistical and/or logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense and recap, and evaluate data. According to Shamoo and Resnik (2003:32) various analytic procedures provide a way of drawing inferences from data. The data sets from surveys required complicated analysis so the assistance of a statistician was sought. Frequency tables, frequency graphs and pivot tables are used to describe the occurrences of perceptions and attitudes. Relationships and trends between attitudes are explored through co-relation analysis.

1.8 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Recognizing growing awareness of theft in general and electricity copper cable theft by CENTLEC's own employees as both behavioural and attitudinal problem, efforts are needed that engage and reengage CENTLEC employees to reduce this behavioural and attitudinal problems significantly. Moreover, realising that "copper cable theft has become a national crisis, threatening essential supporting services and life preserving assets" (Pretorius & Prinsloo, 2014:101) and the dearth of academic literature on copper cable theft (Pretorius & Prinsloo, 2014:101), efforts need to delineate:

- perceptions and attitudes of CENTLEC maintenance staff regarding theft in general and of electricity copper cables specifically;
- personal background factors of CENTLEC employees that significantly discriminate perceptions and attitudes regarding theft in general and of electricity copper cables specifically;
- institutional factors at CENTLEC that impact on employee attitudes and perceptions regarding theft of electricity copper cables;
- behavioural strategies that can be used by CENTLEC management to positively influence employees' perceptions and behaviour towards theft;
- ways in which CENTLEC can build an institutional culture of morally acceptable behaviour in the work place including a culture of restraint / tolerance towards organisational infrastructure.

This research is important because it helps in achieving the above objectives.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

No research is devoid of shortcomings (Okyere, 2013:22). Critics might point to the following limitations in this study, but these should not undermine the value of the study.

Firstly, this was a case study involving only one unit of only one power utility. This makes the study prone to the usual criticisms directed at case studies.

Secondly, this research does not include all CENTLEC's employees but only a selected group of employees. Specifically, this research only focused on CENTLEC's employees that are responsible for replacing and maintaining stolen cables together with the supervisors and managers of those sections. This means that the views of other employees that are not maintenance sections employees were not be captured. This approach is a deliberate one as the intention of the current study is to understand

the perceptions and attitude of maintenance staff towards theft of power cables, any other perspective is therefore left for future research.

1.9 ETHICAL ISSUES

Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2008:154) indicate that ethics are moral principles, norms and standards of behaviour that guide choices about behaviour towards others. According to Okyere (2013:20), “in research the views of other parties are solicited, and their ideas used. In the process of soliciting these views, the researcher needs to behave in a morally responsible manner so that no one feels embittered”. Further, Okyere (2013:20) quoted Davis (2005) to conclude that “ethics therefore means the proper moral conduct of the various parties involved in the research process”. Bearing in mind this meaning of ethics in research, this research was conducted with due consideration to all possible ethical implications of social research. Particularly, the information obtained was exclusively used for the research only; there was no disclosure of the respondents’ identities; and informed consent was sought from all participants in the research.

1.10 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 of the study provides an overview of the entire research. It includes background to the study including a description of the study area, the problem description, research questions, objectives, summary of the research methodology, definition of key concepts, summary of the main findings of the study, and the delimitation of the study.

Chapter 2 focuses on the literature review including theories, nature and related studies on theft in general; theories, nature and related studies on employee perception; theories, nature and related studies on attitude and behaviour; connecting

theft, attitude and perceptions – theories and empirical evidence; and the conceptual framework.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed account of the research methodology (including field Work); the tools and methods of the data collection and provide the indicators used in the analysis of the data through the conceptual map for data analysis. It also indicates issues of ethical compliance during research process.

Chapter 4 presents and discusses the results of the empirical study.

Chapter 5 provides conclusions and recommendation.

1.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a bird's view of the entire study. It started with a brief introduction followed by background to the study. This was followed by the research problem in general and the specific research questions investigated. Thereafter, the study objectives were stated. The research methodology followed was then clearly articulated including data collection and analysis. Following this, the importance of the study was stated, the study limitations were also stated as well as ethical issues encountered and how they were dealt with were also explained. Finally, the chapter demarcations were provided. The next chapter is devoted to the literature review.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a general introduction to the study where among others, it emerged that internal incident investigation reports by CENTLEC since 2012 point to involvement of CENTLEC's own employees in theft of electricity coper cables - all happening at a time when load shedding often caused by theft of electricity coper cables contributed to a huge (34%) decline in sales in 2014/2015 financial year of the corporation (Smith, 2015). It was also stated in Chapter 1 that this research investigated the attitudes and perceptions of CENTLEC's maintenance employees towards theft of electricity coper cables.

2.2 ATTITUDE, PERCEPTIONS AND CENTLEC EMPLOYEE CABLE THEFT

Considering that: (i) attitudes and perceptions can be linked to organisational processes (Dzansi, Chipunza & Dzansi, 2016), for CENTLEC; (ii) literature (Greenberg, 2002:172; Pickens, 2005:44) acknowledging that psychological orientation (in this case attitudes and perception) shape behaviour towards the organisation; (iii) Greenberg (2002:172) suggesting that addressing employee attitudes and perceptions trigger better results; (iv) Pickens (2005:44) alluding that positive attitudes and perceptions generate productive workforce; as well as Dzansi *et al.* (2016) also arguing that, if left unchecked *negative attitudes* towards an organisation can affect organisational performance, unravelling employees' attitudes towards practices that are not in the best interest of the organisation can assist managers influence positive change thus improving enhancing organisational performance. In the context of this study, it is contended that exploration of CENTLEC employees' attitudes and perceptions is critical to understanding, reducing or even preventing their involvement in cable theft.

Understanding CENTLEC's own employee's attitudes and perceptions towards theft of electric cables is critical due to the centrality of positive dispositions of an institution's members to organisational survival and profitability (Pickens, 2005). Therefore, establishing CENTLEC employees' perceptions and attitudes towards theft of electric coper cables might directly contribute towards finding ways of curbing the involvement of the company's own employees in cable theft, a situation that is apparently undermining this organisation's profitability.

Regarding CENTLEC's profitability being eroded by cable theft by own employees, as far back as 2012, CENTLEC senior management gave a press statement expressing serious concern about electricity copper cable theft where they also bemoaned theft and the associated vandalism's negative impacts on the utility's efficient service delivery to customers due to interruptions in electricity supply (New Age Media, 2012:10).

That the high rate of theft can negatively impact CENTLEC's profitability is understandable as employees must continually be assigned to replace and maintain the cables which most often should imply extra manpower requirements with its attendant costs - a situation that can directly contribute to higher overhead costs in terms of increased salary bill due to over time claims.

From this brief introduction, it becomes quite clear that attitudes, perceptions and theft are the stand out concepts/ constructs underlying this investigation of electricity coper cable theft by CENTLEC employees. Therefore, the literature review is structured around these central and emergent concepts. The review begins with an attempt to comprehend attitude.

2.3 ABOUT ATTITUDE

Definitions of attitude abound with some of the well-known presented and briefly discussed in this section to provide the essence of what the term means at least for this study.

According to Lionel (2009:8), attitude is “a mental or neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence on the individual’s response to all objects and situations to which it is related”. Thus, on the one hand, attitude refers to an individual’s psychological disposition towards a situation based on prior experience (real or imagined), itself a basis for the formation of behavioural intentions. This interpretation though useful fails to acknowledge that people can also be ambivalent towards an issue. That is, the same person might at different times experience both positive and negative attitudes towards the same issue, indicating that individuals can hold multiple attitudes towards the same issue (Tesser & Schwart, 2001:437).

For Susan and Daniel (2010:356), attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating an entity with some degree of favours or disfavours. Since attitudes can be implicated in a complex combination of traits such as personality, beliefs, values, behaviours and motivations (Dzansi *et al.*, 2014:183), this definition allows for one’s evaluation of attitude to vary from extremely negative to extremely positive towards an issue. By the same token, such conceptualisation acknowledges that people can also be ambivalent towards an issue, meaning, they might at different times express both positive and negative attitude towards the same object (Dzansi *et al.,* 2014:183).

It becomes evident from the above definition that CENTLEC employees could have certain attitudes towards the organisation and unlocking whether the attitude is positive or negative is very crucial for the survival of the CENTLEC. Similarly, it is possible that CENTLEC’s employees, who involve themselves in cable theft might have different reasons for engaging in such acts and might even feel that their actions

are justified based on how they perceive the organizational treatment to be towards them (Dzansi, 2014; Dzansi *et al*., 2014; Dzansi *et al.*, 2016).

Typically, when one refers to a person's attitude, the focus is on behaviour (Dzansi *et al.*, 2014:183; Dzansi *et al.*, 2016) which suggests that an employee's perception of organisation's treatment of him or her can lead to such employee behaving in a certain way. This type of behaviour is referred to as organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) or employee citizenship behaviour (ECB) (Dzansi *et al*, 2016). Therefore, from a behavioural perspective, ECB or OCB can be viewed as an attitudinal issue that can account for cable theft by own employees.

Attitude can also be explained according to its components namely Affective, Behavioural and Cognitive (McLeod 2009; Garcıa-Santillan, Moreno-Garcıa, Carlos-Castro, Zamudio-Abdala & Garduno-Trejo, 2012:8) a conceptualisation often referred to as the 'ABC' model of attitudes.

According to McLeod (20009), the ***affective*** component of attitudes has to do with those emotions and feelings that stimulate or evoke subjective reactions of trust and distrust, like and dislike, hate and so on (McLeod 2009). In this respect, CENTLEC employee's might engage in cable theft because of hating the organisation for whatever reason.

The ***behavioural*** component of attitudes refers to the tendency to act or resolve in a specific way towards something. In other words, what one intended to do may be quite different from what that person ends up doing (McLeod, 2009). This is analogous to saying that, CENTLEC employee's might engage in cable theft or condone it without intending to do it but only because a tempting situation arose.

Lastly, the ***cognitive*** component of attitude refers to the mental process of perception, conceptions and beliefs about the attitudinal object or something. As such, a CENTLEC employee's perception of the organisation's treatment of him or her can

lead to that employee behaving in an acceptable or unacceptable citizenship behaviour.

A related study by Babin and Babin (1996) found that behavioural intentions to shoplift is affected by moral beliefs, with attitude towards shoplifting being a partial mediator of these effects. Extrapolation of this finding to the current study means that CENTLEC employees' intention to steal electricity copper cable could be aggravated by attitude towards theft in general.

2.3.1 EMPLOYEE CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR AND CABLE THEFT

According to Dzansi *et al.* (2016), employees often judge the way that the employer treats them and if they perceive any form of unfairness, they would on their own seek retribution by behaving in a manner that is detrimental to the organisation. In other words, such employees who feel unjustly done by develop negative or anti citizenship behaviour – behaviour that harms the organisation. On the other hand, some employees might feel good towards the organization and believe that acts such as stealing from the employer is neither right nor justifiable and would not hesitate to report theft– a situation described as positive citizenship behaviour. Exploring and trying to understand employees' attitudes could therefore assist CENTLEC management in gaining a better understanding of what it needs to do or change to elicit a positive citizenship behaviour hence positive attitude from employees.

Successive CENTLEC case reports from 2012 up to 2016 inform that many employees who were caught stealing copper cable have worked for the company for a long time. Ironically, long service should be indication of commitment to the organisation and one would not have expected theft from such employees. Therefore, their thieving actions become difficult to explain. What is easy to deduce is however that cable theft by own employees is anti-ECB behaviour that needs attention.

Borrowing from Tesser and Schwart (2001) as well as Dzansi and Dzansi (2010), it is possible that CENTLEC employees' involvement in cable theft can be partially explained ECB tenets. The reason is that, typically, reference to a person's attitudes and behaviours implies their perceptions of their organisation's treatment of them in a fair and humane manner (Tesser & Schwart, 2001). Accordingly, understanding CENTLEC employee perceptions is critical to understanding and influencing their attitudes and behaviours for the better so such as stealing from own company. The next section therefore explores the concept of perception.

2.4 PERCEPTION

Perception is the process by which organisms interpret and organise sensation to produce meaningful experiences of the world (Pickens, 2005:52). This implies that when a person is confronted with a situation or stimuli, the person interprets the stimuli into something meaningful to one based on prior experiences. However, what an individual interprets or perceives may be substantially different from reality. For instance, CENTLEC employees' perceptions and impressions of fairness of the organisation based on their treatment by management, might shape their (the former) future behaviour or inclination towards social behaviour such as to steal or not steal, condone or not condone theft and/or report or not report theft.

Although perceptions can be influenced by misconception, such feeling can easily shape an employee's behaviour (Dzansi *et al.*, 2014). Thus, if a CENTLEC worker was to develop a sense of being prejudiced by say a superior in the work environment, this may shape his or her inclination to confrontational and combative behaviour leading to cable theft, irrespective of whether this employee has really been disadvantaged or prejudiced or not. From this perspective, what matters to the employee is how he or she perceives the organization and not the correctness of that perception (Dzansi *et al*,. 2014).

As Dzansi and Dzansi (2010) and Dzansi (2014) allude to, in most work environment, employees are more concerned about how their organization values their work and to

what extent the organization cares about them and supports them. For Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch and Rhoades (2001:34), perceived organizational support refers means an employee's belief about how much the organisation values his or her contribution and cares about his or her well-being. The belief is that treatment by the employer or the organization impacts on employee perception and it creates an obligation on the employee to treat the organization in a reciprocal manner in return (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2001:34). Accordingly, the obligation on the employee part is work related behaviours that are important for the achievement of organizational goal. It is therefore conceivable that CENTLEC, employees who steal cables, could justify their action for example that they are merely supplementing the less than adequate salary paid by the organization by stealing from the employer. In fact, CENTLEC employees have often blamed management for reducing overtime work.

Employee general perception that the organization cares and thinks about their wellbeing is positively related to the employee commitment and involvement in the organization (Dzansi & Dzansi, 2010; Dzansi 2014). Benson, Finegold, and Mohrman, (2004) allude that when an organization does something that is important in the eyes of the employees (such as support for employee development and appreciation for the work done by the employees), this should affect the mind-set of the employee towards the organization and the effect should be positive. Therefore, in the case of CENTLEC, employees might feel unappreciated or underappreciated by the organisation hence resort to anti organisational behaviour such as theft of electricity copper cables. According to Benson *et al.* (2004), when an employer shows support for work done by an employee, that employee usually reciprocates in a positive manner. In line with this reasoning, CENTLEC employees who feel unfairly treated when they observe that other workers are being promoted before them might resort to anti organisational behaviour such as electricity copper cable theft.

2.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE

Flowing from the discussions on perceptions and attitudes, it is quite clear that attitude and perception are intertwined and almost have the same meaning. However,

perception appears to refer to an idea, perspective, a belief or an image one has because of how they see or understand something. On the other hand, attitude appears to refer to the way that a person thinks and feels about something. Another perspective could be that attitudes are results of an individual's perception. In other words, attitudes depend on perception. So, two people with different perceptions might look at the same situation and think about it differently and end up with different attitudes. It may also mean that perceptions and attitudes are dependent on each other, as the other influences the other in a reciprocal; self-reinforcing way.

Employees' perceptions might have a direct bearing on the attitude they have towards CENTLEC, which might explain why they are involved in stealing electricity coper cables. These perceptions and attitudes might even influence their willingness to blow the whistle or report co-workers involvement in electricity copper cable theft. Understanding CENTLEC employee attitudes and perceptions towards cable theft might therefore help curb employee involvement in theft of electricity copper cable.

Having fully comprehended what attitude and perception means, attention can now be drawn to the core concept of theft. However, before exploring theft, it is equally important to first explore the related issue of vandalism as the two concepts are quite interrelated and addressing one implies dealing with the other.

2.6 VANDALISM

2.6.1 MEANING AND NATURE OF VANDALISM

Interpretations of vandalism has proved rather difficult precisely because the term refers to a variety of socially constructed phenomena, and no clear academic consensus has been established about its scope (Ballatore, 2014:3). As a result, "there are various definitions each taking into account what the caused damage, the motivation of the actor, and/or the context of the incident" (Ballatore, 2014:3). According to Ballatore (2014:3), "vandalism is a ubiquitous and visible social phenomenon, in which intentional damage was performed on a variety of objects". An

earlier definition by Hart (2003) suggests that vandalism consists of three components namely: *intentionality*, *destructiveness* and *property ownership.* Inference from these definitions means vandalism of electricity copper cables would refer to the intentional destruction of cables by self- individuals for various reasons which could include vindictiveness, to communicate grievances, or egoistic expressions.

For CENTLEC, vandalism mostly occurs as result of theft on many of its substations. The financial and asset loss register, CENTLEC (2012) indicates that, while electricity coper cables are stolen from substations, damage to the property occurs due to forced entry to these substations leaving most buildings damaged. The report further informs that when thieves steal electricity coper cables, they damage other equipment such as transformers as they pull out the copper wire from the transformers.

2.6.2 THEORIES ON VANDALISM

Several competing theories have been developed over the years to explain vandalism (Ballatore, 2014:4). However, a useful theory on vandalism in the context of coper cable theft looks at the issue from a behavioural lens. From the behavioural perspective, Muthoni (2011:21) identifies with Cohen (1973:54) that vandalism consists of four behavioural dimensions namely: *acquisitive vandalism* – theft or looting; *tactical or ideological vandalism*- to attract attention around a political or social issue; *vindictive vandalism* –for revenge; and *malicious vandalism* –outpouring of rage. This classification is based on the perpetrators purpose. The next section pays attention to *acquisitive vandalism* and *vindictive vandalism* because they can be linked to theft in general and coper cable theft.

2.6.2.1 Acquisitive vandalism

According to Webster College Dictionary (2005), *acquisitive vandalism* is defined as tending or seeking to acquire and own something often greedily. In acquisitive vandalism, damage is done as in the case of copper cable theft which results in

physical damage (physical vandalism) to power transmission system, costing CENTLEC money to repair the damaged, not forgetting power interruptions to businesses and private homes.

Incidentally, the same act of vandalism has consequences for even the offender. For example, when caught vandalising electricity coper cables, there is a high possibility of loss of employment.

Given that workers who replace these cables are from lower ranks, it is reasonable to assume that vandalism of electricity coper cables may be a consequence of the desire for lowly paid maintenance workers, to earn extra money to supplement their low incomes which makes acquisitive vandalism theory a plausible explanation for CENTLEC employees involvement in company cable theft and vandalism.

2.6.1.2 Vindictive vandalism

Vindictive or retaliatory vandalism is closely linked to theft as the concept is often explained in terms of thieving behaviour. For example, Saucer (2007:13) used vindictive vandalism to explain why good people are involved in bad behaviour, arguing that theft happens when three conditions exist namely: (1) motive, (2) desire and (3) opportunity. Combining all three of these elements into basic terminology connotes that "motive is the reason to steal" but doing so often results in vandalism.

From vandalism point of view, the motive to steal from the employer could include a feeling of resentment because of being overlooked for a promotion or not receiving a scheduled pay raise. Once a *motive* has been established, then the individual starts to build a retaliatory attitude (*desire*). Sauser (2007:13) acknowledged that an employee can imagine the satisfaction, joy and a feeling of gratification that could come from theft or vandalism, which may imply that CENTLEC employees may be engaging in copper cable theft only because they are trying to be vindictive towards the organization or management and stealing may be a way of expressing such a

feeling. The *opportunity* element is when an opportunity presents itself. For example, in line with Sauser (2007:13), during demonstrations, an employee could take advantage of the situation to vent feelings of injustice, anger and resentment on the employer by vandalising or stealing employer property. Extending the theory, the current study argues that vandalism and by implication stealing of electricity coper cables by CENTLEC employees may be pre-conceived intention of seeking revenge. For example, in South Africa, a society polarised by a violent past of apartheid, vandalism has increasingly become internalised as a strategy of conflict resolution among the marginalised groups. So, raised in the violent apartheid climate, CENTLEC workers might have internalised violent forms of responding to perceived or real forms of injustice.

2.7 EMPLOYEE THEFT

To comprehend employee theft, it is considered appropriate to first conceptualise theft bearing in mind the similarities it is claimed above with vandalism.

2.7.1 DEFINING THEFT

Greenburg's (2002) describes theft as "the unauthorized taking, control, or transfer of money and/or property or time theft of the formal work organization that is perpetrated by an employee during occupational activity". This definition explains it perfectly and for CENTLEC employees, engaging in stealing of electricity coper cables is taking what does not belong to you but the organization and then selling it to make money and most of these acts of stealing happen during occupational activity as the CENTLEC (Case file report, 2012) states that the culprits were mostly caught during working hours.

2.7.2 SCOPE/ NATURE OF EMPLOYEE THEFT

Employee theft is the "unauthorized appropriation of company property by employees either for one's own use or for sale to another" (Appelbaum, Cottin, Pare & Shapiro, 2006:175).

Employee theft is a form of deviant (Tolinson & Greenber, 2005) and counterproductive work behaviour (Furnham & Taylor, 2011) including but not limited to stock/ inventory shrinkage and so on.

Furnham and Taylor (2011) suggest that up to 50% of inventory theft in organisations is committed by own employees. The statistics on the CENTLEC experience of employee involvement in the company's copper cable theft signifies escalation of employee theft in South Africa as stated by Pretorius (2012).

In fact, successive CENTLEC internal investigations, for example, CENTLEC Case file reports from 2012 up to 2016 continue to point to possible involvement of CENTLEC employees in theft of electricity coper cables that has affected CENTLEC's profitability.

According to Kulas, Mclnnerney, Demuth and Jawinski (2007), every person possesses some sense of own self-worth; however, if it's perceived that one is not being adequately compensated, then financial pressures can be a determining motive to seek retribution. So, like vandalism, employee theft can be a form of seeking retributive or compensatory justice. However, it is the considered view in the current research that no matter how much employees of CENTLEC may want to justify copper cable theft, there are obvious consequences for both organisation and employees alike.

2.7.3 CONSEQUENCES OF CENTLEC EMPLOYEE CABLE THEFT

Arendse (2010) found that as the price of copper increases so does the theft of copper. Copper theft appears to be increasing and the culprits are becoming bolder and more sophisticated. The severe increase in the cost of copper, coupled with the multiple options for sale of stolen wire, has made theft of copper wire attractive to thieves. Copper wire theft has not been confined to any specific area, as wire has been stolen during shipping, while in storage, and after installation. Vacant buildings and street lighting have been common targets for theft of wire that has been installed (Schoenfelder, 2009:1).

There are many possible adverse consequences of theft of electricity coper cables to the power utilities, families and society at large. Some of the important consequences are discussed next.

2.7.3.1 Cost of cable theft

Makhubu (2013) states that, Eskom, Transnet and Telkom have been identified as the major corporate victims of cable theft. The three entities together lost more than R3.12 billion to copper theft between April 2006 and December 2011, a figure that excludes costs such as those of increasing security. Eskom recorded an estimated loss of R350 million between 2007 and 2011, Telkom lost R2bn over the four years and copper cable theft has cost the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA) and Metrorail R19.5m since 2006.

CENTLEC's financial and asset loss report (CENTLEC, 2012c) indicate that there were 118 cases of theft of cables at substations and 2898 cases of house-hold cable theft. Approximately 3016 electricity coper cables were reportedly stolen for the year 2012 and the cost of the replacement of these cables amounted to R 1.8m. The continuing theft of copper cable has therefore resulted in CENTLEC revenue being affected.

2.7.3.1.1 Cost to power utilities

Some of the South African companies most critically affected by cable theft are CENTLEC (electricity service), Eskom (electricity service), Telkom (telecommunications) and Transnet (transport).

The high rate of theft has negatively impacted CENTLEC's revenue base as CENTLEC's employees are continually assigned to replace and maintain the cables. This also directly contributes to high overhead costs in terms of a bloated salary bill due to over time claims. Similarly, according to Le Cordeur (2015), theft of Eskom's electricity coper cables cost the utility R102m in the year 2014. This figure represents a 30% increase from the previous year's R68m. at the same time, Eskom revealed that its profits decreased by almost 50% for the same period (Smith, 2015).

According to Smith (2015), copper and electricity theft have become a national crisis in South Africa, with serious implications for the country's economy, reliability of electrical supply and security.

But electricity coper cable theft means more than just lost revenue for Eskom and municipalities. It also has a significant disruptive effect on industry and contributes to increased tariffs and prices for ordinary South Africans. Also, besides the cost of replacing stolen cable and damaged equipment, coper cable theft interrupts the flow of traffic on the country's roads and rail systems, interfering with the delivery of other essential services such as health and communication. In short, electricity coper cable theft has serious negative impact on the country's ability to run its infrastructure.

According to Smith (2015), electricity copper cable theft costs South Africa over R5 billion a year in revenue losses with the damage done amounting to far more than the value of the stolen material. Smith (2015) further adds that in 2014 alone, there were 72 533 reported incidents of copper cable theft with more than 10 736 arrests being made.

Jooste (2011) suggests that copper cable theft cost the City of Cape Town more than R10 million in the first six months of 2011, forcing the City of Cape Town to keep certain areas of streetlights burning during the day to help prevent and monitor the occurrence of cable theft. In addition to this, stealing cable from a burning streetlight raises the risk factor, and those wanting to steal cable whilst the power is on run a serious risk of being electrocuted.

South Africa is only one country among a list of African countries plagued by theft of power cables. For example, Namibia Telecoms (2012) reported that Namibia Telecom suffered losses amounting to N$760 000 in 2012 through vandalism of electrical equipment and copper wire theft.

According to the CENTLEC (2012d), the number of insurance claims by customers whose appliances were damaged due to the high inrush current caused by the theft of these power cables amounted to R586 795.00 for the year of 2012.

2.7.3.1.2 Cost to consumers

Cable theft affects consumers' pockets with three main aspects discussed below leading to consumers having to pay more to keep having electricity in their homes.

Generator costs

Firstly, consumers' pockets are affected as alternative means of electricity supply are sourced such as purchasing of generators. According to Hedley (2015), costly generators are bought by both individual households and businesses to deal with Eskom's inability to provide a stable electricity supply. Hedley (2015) reported that Shoprite's electricity costs rose by 17% in the last six months of 2014 partly because of the need to run expensive generators.

Tariffs hikes

No doubt, copper theft also drives up electricity tariffs which has a direct impact on consumers. Flanagan (2012) predicted that Johannesburg electricity bills would go up more than the standard rate because of theft and vandalism. As a result, combating electricity cables became City Power's top priority.

According to Flanagan (2012), City Power lost nearly 20 percent of the electricity it buys, a cost of R1.217bn in 2010/11. The loss is believed to be made up of 10 percent due to theft alone. Partly to recover this costs, tariff increased ranging from 11 percent for poor customers to 15 percent for agriculture while business and industry were charged 12-13 percent increases.

Replacement/ repair costs

Power outages due to theft of electricity coper cables damage equipment such as computers, television sets, appliances forcing customers to replace such appliances on their own since insurance claim from the electricity entities could take a long time to be processed thereby inconveniencing customers.

2.7.3.2 Social implications of cable theft

According to Makhubu (2013), electricity copper theft comes at a great cost to the public purse, affecting service delivery, hurting the economy, with its trickle-down effect on economic growth, productivity and job creation, ultimately hitting poor South Africans the hardest. Given the above implications of copper cable theft, it is hard to not concur with Makhubu (2013) that cable theft is a national crisis with serious socio-economic implications for the country precisely because it can disrupt and delay the delivery of essential services such as health, communication and transport.

2.7.3.2.1 Dangers of power outages

Theft at electrical substations is dangerous for the thieves as well as for the electricity maintenance staff who would be entering unstable power environment. Utilities always must replace and repair after the incident. At the same time, sporadic breaks in connection reduce overall grid reliability, which in turn can lead to increase expenditure on security. Customers sensing a less reliable grid could be forced to invest in backup power that often have their own unintended consequence for personal safety.

2.7.3.2.2 Environmental pollution due to use of small generators

Theft of electricity coper cables can lead to environmental pollution as well as copper theft with its accompanying outages could force household consumers and businesses to invest in generators as alternative means of electricity supply to continue with their day to day tasks. From a scientific point of view, generators have direct impact on the environment due to pollution. But because of power outages, consumers could be forced to utilize them regardless of the environmental harm they cause.

An alarming view by Malik (2011) explains that increasing use of generators at homes and offices is not being regulated, resulting in additional air and noise pollution. Obviously, there is little awareness of the hazards from the proliferation of these fuel-intensive machines. Consequently, many households would have installed generators that emit poisonous matter which add to air pollution without awareness of these harmful externalities (Malik, 2011).

Vanguard (2015) stated that while pollution is associated with all engines that use hydrocarbon energy to operate, the extra risk of generators is because of their popularity among the low-income classes who use them mainly in confined spaces.

On the question of environmental pollution, Vanguard (2015) believes government has not done enough to arrest the situation. In the view of Vanguard (2015), because

successive governments have not provided adequate and reliable public power supply, low income earners, such as traders and artisans, are forced to depend on these cheap generators. Indeed, the amount of smoke these usually poorly maintained generators pump into the atmosphere pose great dangers to health as it can easily lead to carbon monoxide-related deaths as well as sparking off fire outbreaks.

Malik (2011) provides statistics for Pakistan that is quite frightening and can provide a useful lesson to South Africa. According to Malik (2011), generators produce above 95db noise while producing particulate matter (dust) in the air up to 300 mg per litre. According to Malik (2011), the actual levels in residential areas in Lahore in India exceed 500 mg/l and 1,000 mg/l for these substances respectively, meaning that these generators lead to environmental pollution. Therefore, while, generators serve as effective power alternative, their environmental hazards are very high more so when there are no laws regulating their use.

Having dwelt on the matter of cable theft with regards to its nature and consequences, the next section examines the issue of employee theft. Examining employee theft is important partly because it has been suggested to account for a third of business failures (Furnham & Taylor, 2011:23).

2.8 FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH EMPLOYEE THEFT

A simple question to be asked is do employees steal simply because they “need” or want something they can’t afford? Alternatively, one may ask, is employee theft more complicated than simply to satisfy a need or want that they can’t afford? To answer these lingering questions, the relevant literature was reviewed to identify possible personal and organisational factors that shape individuals to steal company property. The following section presents summary of the literature findings starting with motivation to steal.

2.8.1 MOTIVATION TO STEAL

A useful approach to understanding employee theft has to do with what motivates employees to steal from own employer. This approach resonates well with the motive to vandalise theory discussed earlier.

Various empirical and normative assertions exist on the matter. For example, based on research data, Kulas *et al*. (2007) concluded that employees committing theft from the employer has nothing to do with the opportunity to steal. Rather, it has more to do with motivation to steal. According to these authors, the more dissatisfied the employee becomes with the workplace situation, the more likely the employee would be susceptible to steal.

Kulas *et al*. (2007) relied on the concept of *retributive justice* to suggest that although everyone has a sense of own self-worth, if it's perceived that one is not being adequately compensated, then financial pressures can be a determining motive to seek retribution through stealing. Sauser (2007) points out that in line with retributive justice, individuals engage in theft because they perceive their actions to be socially acceptable in the sense that they are getting even with the employer with fellow employees in support of such actions. From this perspective, the case of CENTLEC, employee involvement in electricity copper cable theft may be that, the employees feel that they are not compensated adequately, or the employees feel a sense of injustice by the management of the organization and stealing electricity copper cable may be a way of punishing the management of the organization.

Comprehending counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) or negative organisational citizenship behaviour (NOCB) is also one of the keys to understanding why employees steal or are motivated to steal form their own employer. Tomlinson and Greenberg (2005); Furnham and Taylor (2011); as well as Dzansi *et al.* (2014) suggest that employee theft is a counterproductive work behaviour or negative organisational citizenship behaviour. According to these authors, CWB or NOCB can be because of

both situational (organisational) and individual factors. The next section examines the literature related to both organisational and personal factors that have been linked to employee theft that may help ones understanding of electricity copper cable theft by CENTLEC employees.

2.8.2 ORGANISATIONAL THEFT CLIMATE

Behaviour can be influenced and shaped by work environment (Furnham & Taylor, 2011; Dzansi *et al.*, 2014). For instance, Schmidtke (2007:561) found resentment of organizational climate as a common motive to steal from employer. Thus, understanding employee perceptions is critical to unravelling employees' dispositions to engage in illegal behaviour, providing mitigatory measures to curb the rate of theft internally. This finding led Schmidtke (2007:561) to advise organizations to pay close attention to work climate since it impacts on employee attitude and behaviour.

Kulas *et al.* (2007:389) view employee theft as a form of workplace behaviour that revolves around the "climate for theft" (the opportunity to steal based on the employee's attitude). This invokes the view that if employees are subjected or exposed to working conditions that are unacceptable to them, this could create the conditions and dispositions to engage in counter productive work behaviours (Tomlinson & Greenberg, 2005).

The CENTLEC case could also be an organisational environment that is perceived by employees as unjust hence promoting employee theft as a response to workplace injustice (Tomlinson & Greenberg, 2005:219). According to this perspective, perception of workplace justice is a determinant of deviant workplace. Thus, any perception of injustice will motivate CENTLEC employees to try to restore parity and to communicate to management their frustrations of injustice through the retaliatory act of stealing the company's electricity coper cable. That is, the absence of constructive response from CENTLEC management towards employee concerns about workplace fairness could trigger electricity copper cable theft to respond to unfair

treatment (Tomlinson & Greenberg, 2005:219). Worst still, in line with Tomlinson and Greenberg (2005:219), other employees who might witness these thefts might act contrary to traditional ideology which views employee theft as immoral and not report such activities.

Last but not the least, as far as organisational theft climate is concerned, like any organisation, CENTLEC employees play vital roles in their organization. Thus, it is of utmost importance that management is very much abreast with the feelings of the employees, their motivation, satisfaction and level of commitment, conditions that are important criteria for organizational survival and ultimate growth.

2.8.3 ORGANISATIONAL DETERRENCE OR SANCTION DOCTRINE

> "The preferred way of minimising fraud and theft is to *deter* individuals from trying to perpetrate a fraud or theft in the first place" with the main deterrence being "the risk of being caught and the severity of the consequences".

(Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority [HFEA], 2010:3).

The above profound statement derives from the concept of *organisational deterrence doctrine* also known as *organisational sanction doctrine.* The **organisational deterrence*/* sanction doctrine** provides another view on why own employees steal concerns the 'anti-theft' or security orientation existing in the organisation. According to Tomlinson and Greenberg (2005:219) and Sandberg (2003), employee theft is largely opportunistic, or they steal because they can - meaning the consequences of being caught stealing do not discourage perpetrators or it can also mean that social norms within the organisation do not deter employees enough from stealing. In other words, preventing the opportunity for theft from ever arising, can serve as a powerful deterrent for CENTLEC employees engaging in electricity coper cable theft. This assumption can be defended from several theoretical positions.

Firstly, from the social control theory (see Clark & Hollinger, 1983), shared formal and informal social structure within an organization influences whether theft persists or not. This theory emphasizes the role of group norms in deterring or encouraging workplace theft. According to Clark and Hollinger (1983), the mere threat of negative social sanctions from co-workers can affect the amount of theft in an organization. From this position, employees can logically be expected to be more likely to steal if they perceive the threat of co-worker admonishment for this behaviour to be weak or non-existent. Therefore, co-worker admonishment can serve as a powerful deterrent for CENTLEC employees engaging in electricity coper cable theft.

Secondly, closely linked to the *social control theory* is the *consequence* perspective. Clark and Hollinger (1983) further argue that the threat of harsh sanctions or punishment from the organisation can affect the amount of theft in an organization. The argument here is that, employees will be more likely to steal if they perceive the threat of punishment for this behaviour to be weak or non-existent. Therefore, like co-worker admonishment, sever punishment/ sanction can serve as a powerful deterrent for CENTLEC employees engaging in electricity coper cable theft. According to Makhubu (2013), copper cable theft offences should not be treated as petty crimes and that harsher penalties will apply. Ironically, as indicated earlier, CENTLEC case report for 2012 alone indicates that 10 employees were caught stealing cable for the year but only 3 were dismissed. This low conviction rate means that CENTLEC can be classified as an organisational environment that does not deter employee theft.

2.8.3 PERCEPTION OF ORGANISATIONAL FAIRNESS

Organisational *fairness theory* of why own employees steal employer property is closely linked to organisational *theft climate* discussed earlier. From this perspective, it is argued that if an employee feels that his/her psychological contract has been breached by perceived or actual unfair treatment, that employee more is likely to show harmful behaviour directed to the company.

So, in line with Muthoni (2011:21) who developed the *equity-controlled model*, the thieving employee might be giving expression to the saying: “if I don’t get any respect from you, I won’t respect your rules’’ – a kind of *retributive justice*, wherein the thieving employee’s perception of unfair treatment hence a sense of injustice becomes an underlying motive to steal organisational property. So, as implied by Furnham and Taylor (2011:15), theft of electricity coper cables by CENTLEC employees can be viewed from the *retributive justice* perspective – a situation where an individual employee believing that he or she is unfairly treated may resort to theft just to punish or get even with CENTLEC.

Another view is that, the perceived fairness of employee treatment by the employer or the organization impacts employee perception of the organisation as a *preferred employer* or *employer of choice* which create an obligation on the employee to treat the organization well in return (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2001:34). This assumption stems from the belief that employees are always concerned about how their organization values them and to what extent the organization cares about them or supports them (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2001:34).

To conclude this section, it can be surmised that employee perception of the fairness or otherwise of the organisation is critical to their engagement in thieving behaviour because fairness perception affects the mind-set (thieving behaviour) of the employee towards the organization (Benson *et al.*, 2004). CENTLEC will therefore do well to ensure that its employees perceive it as fair and *preferred employer* or *employer of choice*.

2.8.4 ORGANISATIONAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

To comprehend organisational control environment, one needs to first comprehend what is meant by internal control in the first place.

2.8.4.1 Internal control

Literature concurs that internal controls are systems, policies and procedures of an organisation which among others safeguard assets (Reed, 2014; CPA Australia, 2011).

According to Reed (2014), implementing effective internal controls can lead to reduction in employee theft of organisational assets. For HFEA (2010), effective controls are needed to minimise the opportunity for theft with the belief that with sound internal controls, more efficient and effective management of resources and operations can be achieved (CPA Australia, 2011:3). As CPA Australia (2011:3) alludes to, with sound internal controls in place the organisation's assets are protected from theft. As an employee of CENTLEC, one can vouch that CENTLEC's current means of control are cameras and security guards. An alarm system is also fitted in most of the distribution centres.

According to CPA Australia (2011), when establishing internal controls, a key area that the organisation should consider is the control environment.

2.8.4.2 control environment

According to CPA Australia (2011), the control environment: (a) is a kind of organisational culture (including anti-theft culture) whereby, thieving is understood as unacceptable (HFEA, 2010); (b) is underpinned by clear systems, policies and procedures; and (c) whose "tone" is set from top level of management and communicated to all staff.

Bearing in mind that the ultimate operational responsibility for internal control is with top management (CPA Australia, 2011:3), it is expected that CENTLEC top management will ensure that systems and procedures are in place to create awareness among all employees that all the organisation's property including

electricity copper cables are protected from theft and that any theft will be detected, punished in accordance to Makhubu (2013) who sees copper cable theft as not a petty crime hence must attract harsher penalty.

Having examined the various literature including theories related to the general problems of vandalism, theft, perception and attitudes, it is now possible to present the conceptual framework for the current study (see Figure 2.1). It is again reiterated that vandalism was not considered in the current study.

2.9 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In the conceptual framework, it is suggested that both organisational factors and personal background factors can influence employee perceptions hence attitudes towards theft in general. It is further argued that employee perceptions and attitudes will in turn influence the decision to stay aloof to, engage in or condone theft of electrical electricity coper cables. Based on the framework, it is reasonable to expect employees who perceive theft as unacceptable under any circumstance to frown upon theft of CENTLEC's electricity coper cables hence report the so called 'inside' work. On the other hand, one can also reasonably expect those who perceive theft as acceptable under certain circumstance to stay aloof to, engage in or condone theft of CENTLEC's electrical electricity coper cables. But, even if employees do not themselves engage in theft of copper cable, it is reasonable to expect that being aloof to any such occurrence will mean CENTLEC will find it harder to bring perpetrators to book. Thus, this study offers another insight into the problem of theft of electricity coper cables at CENTLEC.

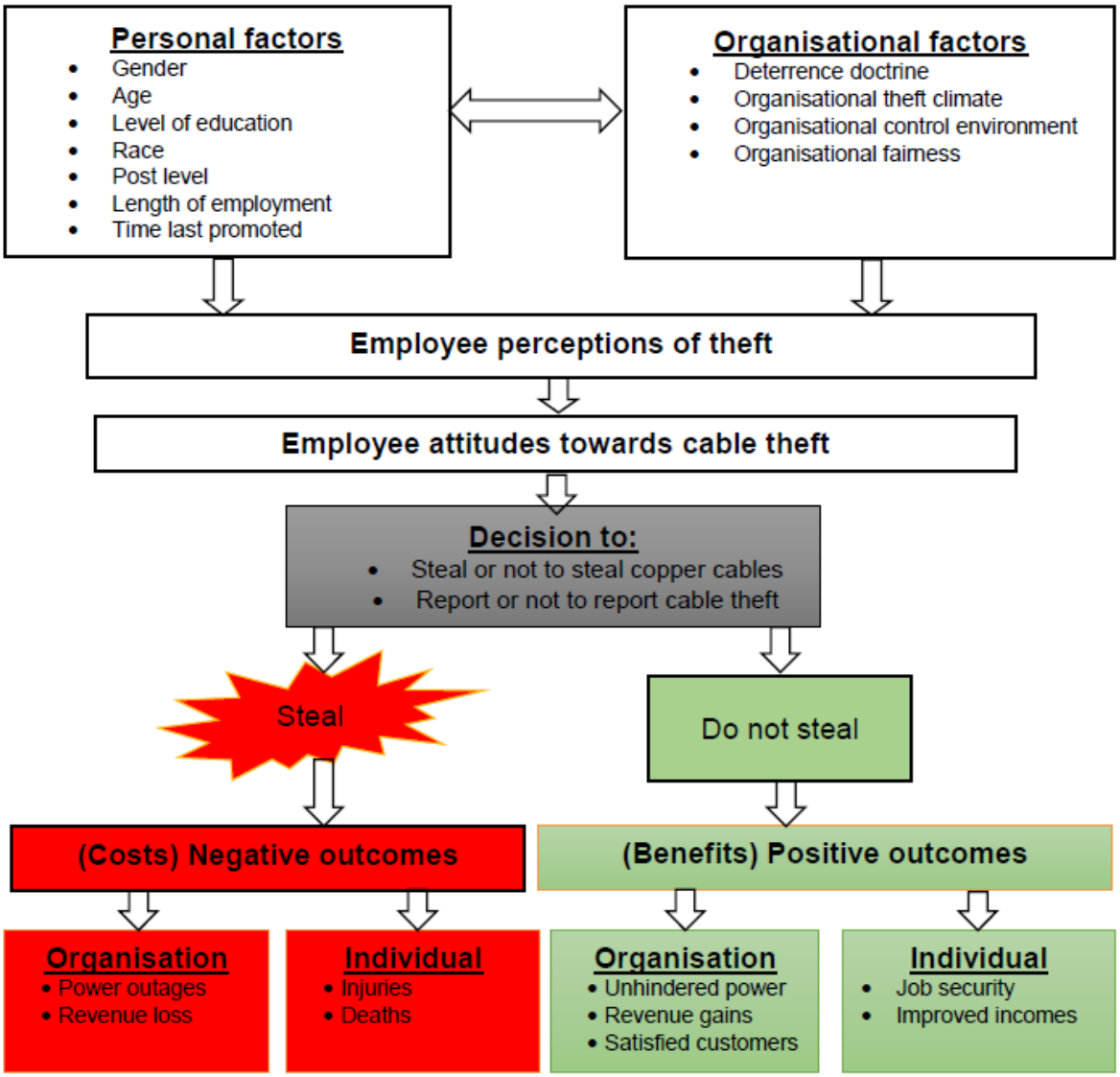

Figure 1: A conceptual framework for cable theft at CENTLEC

2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has provided insight into employee theft and how best to deal with it. Several theoretical views on the matter of employee theft were considered.

For starters, it can be argued that employee theft is largely an ethical issue (Chen & Sandino, 2012:974) because ethical working environment among co-workers and social norms influence among co-workers influence the thieving behaviour of employees. This view is interesting and very applicable to electricity coper cable theft by CENTLEC employees because it is easier for co-workers to detect employee theft

than for managers. It must however be cautioned that the effect of co-worker presence on employee theft can be ambiguous because it is unclear what kind of social norms, if any, are more likely to develop. For example, the presence of co-workers may decrease employee theft if co-workers monitor each other and promote integrity in the workplace. However, it may increase theft if co-workers collude against the firm and/or if co-worker presence makes the identification of thieves more challenging, thus providing greater opportunity for dishonest employees to steal.

As Charness (2010:5) suggests, it also became clear that acts of theft is a manifestation of feelings of mistreatment. However, it is also possible to interpret these thefts as attempts to correct the unfair treatment by the organisation.

The overriding motivation of the part of management should therefore be to take steps to prevent employee theft that always lead to loss of revenue. While there are many possible ways to deal with the employee theft problem, the it became clear that creating a healthier and more functional work environment and the development of social norms that consider the interests of the organization and the workforce might meet the needs of the workforce in an equitable fashion that does not cause resentment, alienation or send the individual employee on the path to seek retribution because he/she feels they're not appreciated.

Also, the literature review indicates that to reduce the motive for employees to steal from their place of employment, employee perception of organisational fairness is paramount because it makes employees to be more productive through personal sense of loyalty to the organization as opposed to oppressive atmosphere that breeds employee resentment including employee theft which minimizes or erodes bottom line. The fact is, treatment by the employer has a great impact on employee perception and it creates an obligation on the employee to treat the organization well in return (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2001:34).

Last but not the least, it is quite clear from the literature that the exploration of employees' attitudes towards theft of electricity coper cables may unearth some of the

perceivably glaring injustices and inadequacies of the CENTLEC work environment. Perhaps, theft might be closely associated with employee dissatisfactions about salaries and recognition.

The next chapter provides a description of the research methodology applied to the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented and discussed the literature related to the study. This chapter discusses the methodology that was used to explore CENTLEC staff attitudes and perceptions towards theft of electrical cables.

To recap, the main thesis for this study is that both organisational and personal background factors underpin and shape employee behaviour. This approach is consistent with literature which indicates that inherent in organisational behaviour is the extent to which employees value their organisations to be acting in their best interest (Bagraim, 2007; Dzansi & Dzansi, 2010), which inevitably shape their perceptions of what they conceive as morally acceptable behaviour at work and towards the organisation. Furthermore, personal factors and organisational factors influence feelings towards the organisation and this shapes attitudes and perceptions of employees towards theft, which in turn could influence the decision of CENTLEC employees to engage in or condone theft of electricity coper cables. It is therefore expected that employees who perceive theft as unacceptable under any circumstance will desist from theft of CENTLEC electricity coper cables and are likely to report such behaviour to authorities. On the other hand, CENTLEC employees who perceive theft as morally acceptable or rewarding could potentially condone theft of CENTLEC electricity coper cables or engage in such criminal activities with impunity (Dzansi *et al.*, 2014). So, even if employees do not themselves engage in theft of copper cable, it reasonable to expect that being aloof to such occurrence will mean CENTLEC will find it harder to bring perpetrators to book. Thus, this study offers another insight into the problem of theft of electricity coper cables at CENTLEC.

Based on the above reasoning, the current research investigated the attitude and perceptions of CENTLEC employees towards theft in general and electric coper cables

specifically to comprehend why own employees engage in this act. The following sections presents and discusses the specific related methodological issues. The discussion starts with discussion of the philosophical foundations of the empirical research for the critical reader to understand why particular methodologies, methods, procedures and techniques were chosen or applied over other competing ones.

3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Research philosophy or the 'theory of science' is the pillar on which social science stands when conducting research (Jakobsen, 2013). While several and sometimes rather complicated or not so easy to understand definitions of research philosophy exist, Jakobsen (2013) provides a useful and quite easy to comprehend conceptualisation of research philosophy by identifying its two components as *ontology* – the study of reality or the nature of knowledge (either *objective* or *subjective* reality) and *epistemology* – the nature and scope of knowledge (broadly classified as either *positivism* or *constructivism*).

This study is founded largely on the *objectivist ontology* and by default *positivism* precisely because given the complexity of understanding attitudes and perceptions towards criminal activities within organisations, a rigorous paradigmatic approach, is necessary to put this complex phenomenon of theft into its correct perspective and to make generalizations about it (Jakobsen, 2013). But given the positivist approach's preoccupation with objectivity and following rules which makes possible only gaining broad understanding at the expense of gaining deeper understanding hence unravelling the subjective dispositions of employees towards potentially emotive issues of theft, it became imperative in a few instances to also fall on constructivism where necessary. This does not in any way detract from the fact that the research is mostly *objectivist* in nature. In any case, as pointed out by Trochim and Donnelly (2008:17), research is never purely one way. For example, no research is ever purely deductive or inductive (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008:17).

The implications of the philosophical approach has bearing on the research design adopted which is described and discussed next.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

While Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:34) describe research design as the roadmap or the plan that specifies how a research is going to be carried out or executed, Bryman and Bell (2011:40) view it as the framework for the collection and analysis of data. Barring semantic differences, careful examination of these and other definitions leads one to agree with Mosweunyane (2013:55) that research design is "the road map guiding a research endeavour from beginning to the end of the research project".

Research design can be placed under two broad categories namely quantitative and qualitative. While quantitative design implies positivism and the collection of numerical data and analysing it with statistical techniques, qualitative design aligns with the constructivist approach and deals with collection of data in the form of words and analysing it by own subjective interpretations (Bryman & Bell, 2011:40). From another perspective, Pretorius (2012:2) agrees with Fouche (2005:106) that any social science research can be designed to be any one or more in nature including explorative, descriptive, explanatory, correlation, evaluative, intervention and participatory action research.

Mindful of the study's interest in unravelling CENTLEC employee's attitudes and perceptions towards **theft of electric copper cable** - an issue that has not received much research attention (Pretorius, 2012:2), this study was exploratory in nature (Babbie, 2010:268). Also, considering the strengths and shortcomings of positivist paradigm the study employed mainly quantitative methods in the data collection and analysis. The survey approach was used in the data collection. However, as suggested by Johnson and Turner (2003), semi-structured interviews – a qualitative approach was used for the sole purpose of identifying questionnaire elements.

3.3.1 THE SURVEY

A survey usually encompasses any measurement procedures that involve posing structured questions to respondents (Babbie, 2010). Surveys are important in situations where the intention of the researcher is to collect data on a phenomenon that cannot be directly observed. Surveys are used extensively to assess attitudes (Russell, 2003; Croft, 2008:85). Surveys enable an organisation to collect quantitative data on employee perspective about a specific organisational dimension. The survey allowed the researcher to collect information on these discrete dimensions from a section of CENTLEC employee population. Analysis of the statistical data assisted in uncovering underlying issues and to discover different employee's perceptions.

3.3.2 THE POPULATION AND SAMPLING

In research, a study population refers to a group of individuals on whom the study is conducted; the sample refers to those individuals participate in the study; while the target population refers to the finite list of all population elements available (Kitchenham & Lawrence, 2002:17). In this study, the study population as is all CENTLEC employees while the sample is all the maintenance staff (blue colour staff, supervisors and manager) in the distribution sections of CENTLEC. Out of this staff a sample of 270 participants were considered.

This specific sample ideally suits this investigation because it deals with the replacement and maintenance of stolen electricity coper cables. That is, the employees, supervisors and managers of the section have insight into the magnitude of cable theft. In this case, the sample included information rich employees on the issue of copper cable theft. It is therefore clear that in this research, purposeful sampling was adopted since the sampling involved selecting participants for a specific reason or purpose, the purpose being the deliberate choice of CENTLEC employees who could and are willing to provide the information because of knowledge or experience of cable theft.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary data were collected from CENTLEC's reports/ documents on terminations due to cable theft, financial loss reports due to cable theft, insurance claims by customers due to cable theft and relevant literature.

According to Mason (2007:65), primary data requires that in cases where epistemological assumptions favour contextual, situational and interactional knowledge and evidence gathering, semi-structured interviewing are most appropriate. As a result, preliminary interviews were held with 20 maintenance staff, 12 supervisors and 8 managers of Low voltage, Transmission and Medium Voltage sections, just to provide inputs into the questionnaire construction.

As stated above, the survey approach was the main strategy of data collection and 270 questionnaires were distributed to maintenance staff, their supervisors and line managers of the relevant sections. The questions were in the Likert-type scale.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis describes the process of systematically applying statistical and/or logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense and recap, and evaluate data. According to Shamoo and Resnik (2003:32), there are various analytic tools for drawing inductive inferences from data. In this study, frequency tables, frequency graphs and pivot tables were used to describe the occurrences of perceptions and attitudes while relationships between attitudes and various demographic variables were explored through co-relation analysis.

3.6 ENSURING VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity and reliability are the benchmark criteria for assessing the quality of measurement instruments (Rama, 2007). Therefore, ensuring validity and reliability of the instruments is an important aspect of instrument development (Rama, 2007). A pilot survey was conducted on 20 maintenance staff in another electricity distribution agency before the instrument was administered to the target population to ensure the dependability of the research instrument. Further, towards ensuring validity of the instrument, seasoned researchers reviewed the instruments. Once reviewed, a revision of the instrument was done according to the experts' comments.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research was conducted bearing in mind all possible ethical implications of social research. Particularly, participants were assured that the data collected from them would be used exclusively for the research and there would be no disclosure of respondents' identities. Further all participants were informed of the purpose of the research and only consenting individuals participated in the research.

3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter explored in detail the methodology applied to the study. The chapter presented and discussed the philosophical foundations of the research, the research design including data collection and analysis as well as ethical issues encountered and how they were dealt with. The next chapter presents and discusses the results of the data analysis.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explored in detail the methodology applied to the study. This chapter presents and discusses the results of the data analysis. Firstly, the results are presented as is, with limited discussion in relation to the extant literature. Thereafter, a separate section is devoted to integration (discussion of the findings) with the literature.

To recap, this research investigated the problem of electric copper cable theft by own employees of the power utility CENTLEC. Except for Pretorius (2012), no related previous studies could be found on the topic in the South African context making this or any research on copper cable theft highly topical to the South African society in general, academics and executives of industry and business.

As stated in Chapter 1, three research objectives guided the study and these are to: (i) determine the perceptions and attitudes of CENTLEC maintenance staff regarding theft in general and of power cables in particular; (2) identify personal background factors of employees that significantly discriminate perceptions and attitudes regarding theft in general and theft of power cables in particular; and (3) identify institutional factors at CENTLEC that impact on employee attitudes and perceptions regarding theft of electricity coper cables with the overall aim being to: (1) come up with behavioural strategies that can be used by management of CENTLEC and similar organisations to: (1) positively influence employees' perceptions and behaviour towards theft; and (2) find ways in which CENTLEC and similar organisations can build an institutional culture of morally acceptable behaviour in the work place including a culture of restraint / tolerance towards organisational infrastructure. The findings related to the above objectives are reported below.

4.2 RESPONSE RATE

Out of the 270 questionnaires served on respondents, 220 were returned meaning an 88% response rate. However, out of the 220, only 215 were found usable.

4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE STUDY SAMPLE

Table 4.1 represents a summary of the demographic distribution of the study sample.

Table 4.1: Demographic summary

Demographic Variables		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	139	72.0%
	Female	54	28.0%
Age Group	Up to 25 years	13	6.1%
	26 - 35 years	42	19.8%
	36 - 45 years	60	28.3%
	46 - 55 years	46	21.7%
	56+ years	51	24.1%
Racial Group	Black	148	81.8%
	White	33	18.2%
Educational Level	Below Matric	42	20.0%
	Matric Equivalent	52	24.8%
	Trade Certificate up to Matric Level	12	5.7%
	Trade Certificate above Matric Level but below Diploma	19	9.0%
	Degree/Diploma	36	17.1%
	Post Grad Diploma or Equivalent	22	10.5%
	Honours/BTech Degree	25	11.9%
	Master's Degree and Upwards	2	1.0%
Length of Employment	Up to 1 Year	30	14%
	2 - 5 Years	61	29%
	6 - 10 Years	53	25%
	Over 10 Years	70	33%
Post Level (Position)	Grade: 001 - 003	19	9.0%
	Grade: 004 - 007	41	19.3%
	Grade: 008 - 011	29	13.7%
	Grade: 012 - 015	31	14.6%
	Grade: 016 - 018	92	43.4%
Time last promoted	Never	135	62.8%
	1 - 3 years ago	49	22.8%
	4 - 6 years ago	19	8.8%
	7 or More years ago	12	5.6%

4.3.1 GENDER

Figure 4.1 shows a bigger representation of males (72%) than females (28%) in the study sample. Although this situation is not entirely surprising given that maintenance work is traditionally regarded as a man's work, it shows a lack of gender equity in the maintenance section which authorities of CENTLEC will do well to attend to, given the country's emphasis on gender equity as dictated by the Employment Equity Act (RSA, 1998) more so for a public institution such as CENTLEC. The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) in its equality report 2012 had observed that: "poor compliance and enforcement of relevant internal policies, programmes and processes to promote gender equality in the workplace have resulted in the failure to achieve significant progress" (SAHRC, 2012).

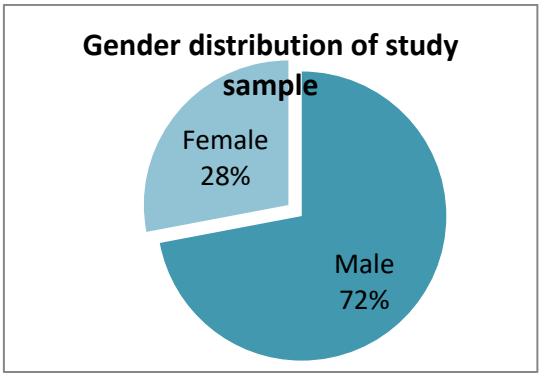

Figure 4.1: Gender distribution

4.3.2 AGE

As far as ages of research participants is concerned, there is an even distribution in the age groups ranging from 26 years to over 56 years (see Figure 2) while those younger than 26 years were very few. However, the largest percentage of participants fall under the age group of 45 years and below; meaning, quite a youthful workforce at CENTLEC.

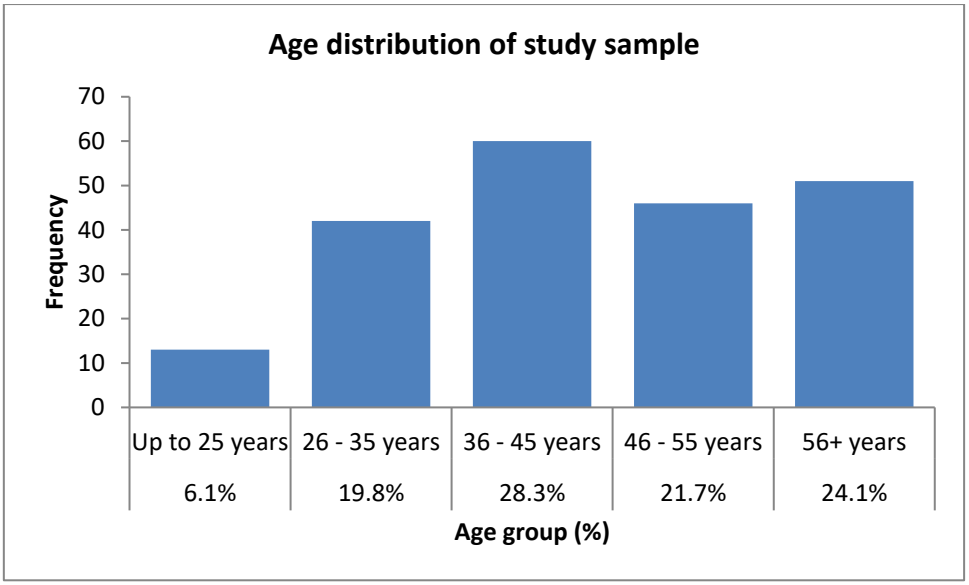

Figure 4.2: Age distribution

4.3.3 RACE

Table 4.1 and Figure 4.3 show that there are two racial groups in the study sample of which blacks (81.8%) dominate while the other racial group, whites, make up only 18.2%. The results thus reflect mostly the perceptions of blacks. However, whites, who are fairly represented, also have made their perceptions known.

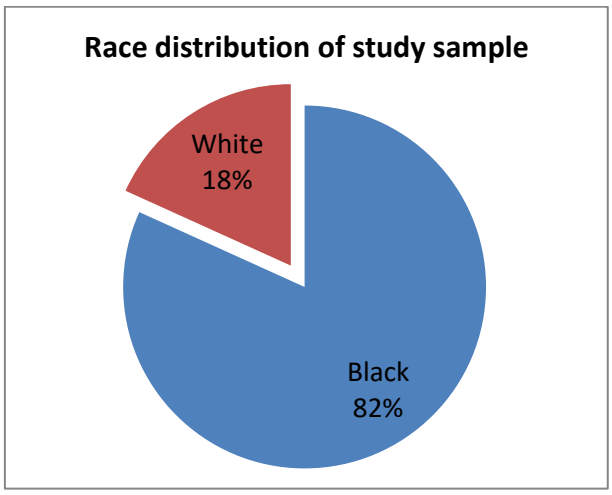

Figure 4.3: Racial composition

4.3.4 EDUCATION

The educational levels of participants vary from below matric to Honours/BTech degree with very few (1%) having a Masters degree or higher (Figure 4). This variation is not surprising because one would expect lower level employees such as maintenance workers to have lower qualifications while supervisors and managers should be expected to possess higher qualifications.

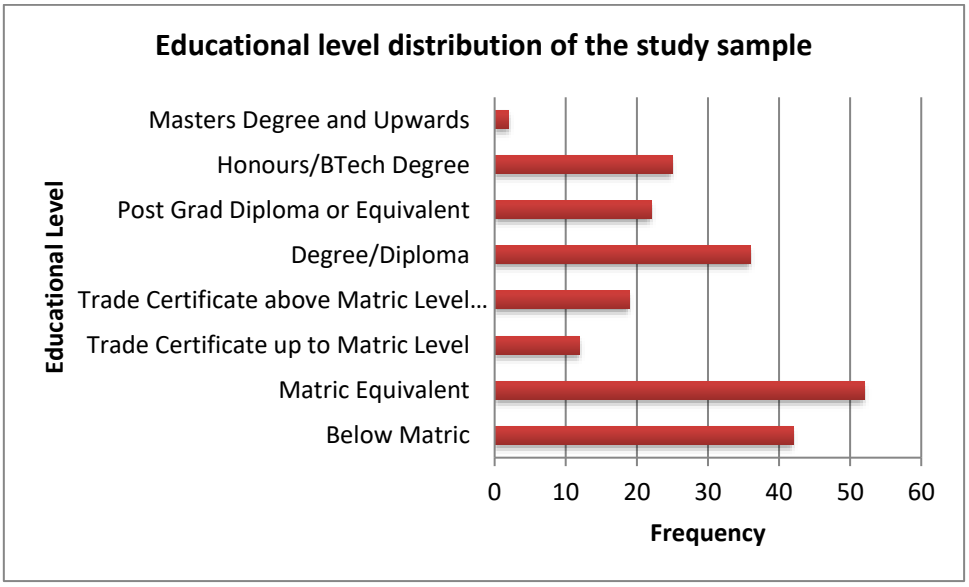

Figure 4.4: Educational level

4.3.5 LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT

Figure 4.5 shows that most of the study participants have been employed for more than 2 years hence they are expected to have fair knowledge of the occurrence of theft in the organization.

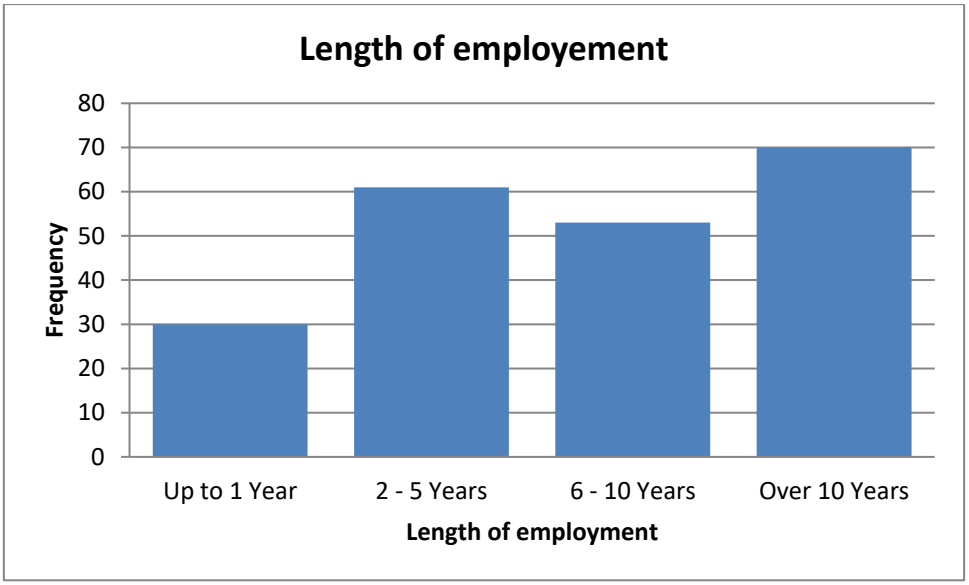

Figure 4.5: Length of employment

4.3.6 POSITION/ RANK

According to Figure 4.6, the employee lower grade of 016-018 (43.4%) is the most represented in the sample with the 001-003 grades having the smallest representation of 9%.

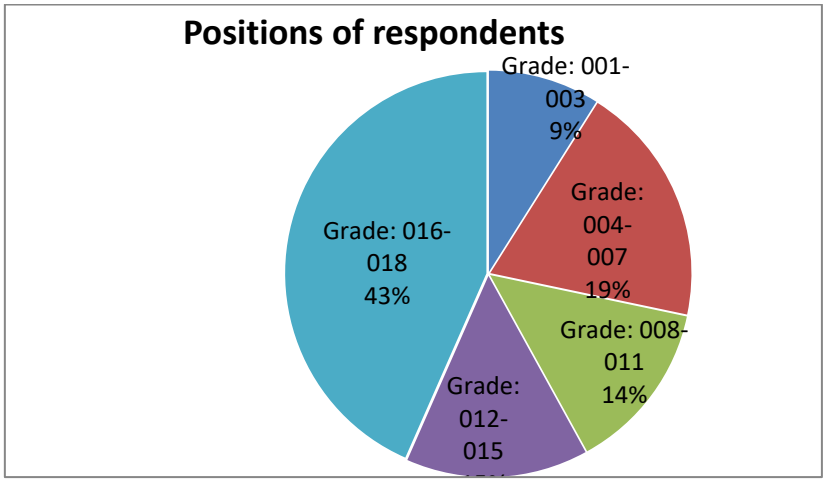

Figure 4.6: Employment position

4.3.7 PROMOTION

As can be seen from Figure 4.7, most (62.8%) of the respondents have never been promoted with 5.6% having had their last promotion more than seven years ago. It would be interesting to find out if lack of promotion affects attitudes towards theft. As was alluded to in the literature review, from a behavioural perspective, thieving behaviour can be viewed as an attitudinal issue due to unfair treatment such as denial of promotional opportunities that can account for cable theft by own employees (Dzansi *et al.*, 2016).

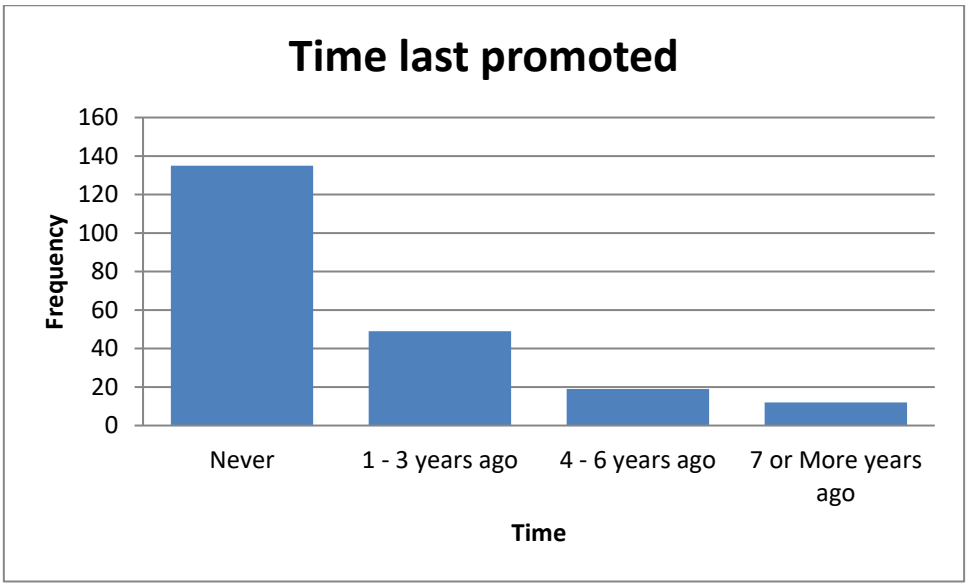

Figure 4.7: Time last promoted

4.4 QUESTIONNAIRE RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

The questionnaire had 29 items that fell under six constructs. A reliability analysis was carried on these 29 items using the Chronbach's Alpha coefficient.

The sub-constructs that addressed the objectives of the study were also tested for the reliability of the questionnaire items that fell under them. The 29 questionnaire items that were assessed for reliability were all measured on a five-point Likert scale.

A Chronbach's Alpha value of at least 0.700 would indicate a reliable research instrument or sub-construct of the questionnaire. The results in Table 4.2 show that the questionnaire is reliable (Chronbach's Alpha statistic=0.919). The construct for Perceived Organisational Theft Climate (ORGTHCL) was also very reliable (Chronbach's Alpha statistic=0.847) and so was Perceived Deterrence/ Sanction Doctrine (DETSANDOC) (Chronbach's Alpha statistic=0.915), Perceived Organisational Fairness (ORGFAI) (Chronbach's Alpha statistic=0.953), Attitude Regarding Theft in General (ATTTG) (Chronbach's Alpha statistic=0.944) and Attitudes Towards Power Cable Theft (ATTPCT) (Chronbach's Alpha statistic=0.947). The only construct which needs a bit of attention is Perceived Control Environment (CONENV) (Chronbach's Alpha statistic=0.628) which did not meet the minimum Chronbach's Alpha statistic of 0.700. therefore, in general the research tool is of very high reliability and the results that follow from the data collected with its usage can be relied upon.

Table 4.2: Questionnaire reliability

Section	N	Number of questionnaire items	Chronbach's Alpha	Comment
Perceived Organisational Theft Climate (ORGTHCL)	211	3	0.847	High internal consistency
Perceived Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine (DETSANDOC)	206	2	0.915	High internal consistency
Perceived Organisational Fairness (ORGFAI)	210	5	953	High internal consistency
Perceived Control Environment (CONENV)	214	3	0.628	Close to adequate internal consistency
Attitude Regarding Theft in General (ATTTG)	198	12	0.944	High internal consistency
Attitudes Towards Power Cable Theft (ATTPCT)	216	4	0.947	High internal consistency
Overall Questionnaire	**182**	**29**	**0.919**	**High internal consistency**

4.5 FINDINGS RELATED TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

4.5.1 PERCEPTION OF ORGANISATIONAL THEFT CLIMATE AT CENTLEC

The overall maintenance staff perception of organisational theft climate (ORGTHCL) was calculated using principal component analysis (Table 4.3) and equation (1).

4.5.1.1 Staff perception of organisational theft climate

Results of this section helped to answer research questions 1 which is how do CENTLEC maintenance staff perceive the organisational theft climate to be like in CENTLEC?

Firstly, the maintenance staff's perception on organisational theft climate was captured by the first construct in the questionnaire that is made up of questions 8 to 10, the summary of which is presented in Table 4.3. The construct of Perceived Organisational Theft Climate is given the acronym ORGTHCL in this discussion.

As a measure of overall organizational theft climate an overall index (Latent factor) is developed from the three items that measure organizational theft clime using a **principal component**. A principal component will give a higher weighting to the questionnaire item which will discriminate research subjects the most. In this case the inaction of immediate supervisors against subordinates caught stealing has the highest weight of 0.917 which means it contributes the most in determining organizational theft climate. The other questions are equally important as their weights are both above 0.800. The overall measure of organizational theft climate is calculated as:

$$\textbf{ORGTHCL} = 0.847 \times \textbf{Q8} + 0.917 \times \textbf{Q9} + 0.863 \times \textbf{Q10} \qquad (1)$$

Table 4.3: Perceived organisational theft climate (ORGTHCL)

PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL THEFT CLIMATE (ORGTHCL)		Frequency Distribution					Descriptives		Latent Factor (Principal Component)
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree and Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev	Coefficient
Q8. Management deals leniently with employees who are caught for theft of company asset	*Freq*	28	40	61	88	68.7%	2.96	1.05	0.847
	%	12.9%	18.4%	28.1%	40.6%				
Q9. Immediate supervisors do not always act against subordinates caught stealing	*Freq*	19	58	60	79	64.4%	2.92	0.99	0.917
	%	8.8%	26.9%	27.8%	36.6%				
Q10. Co-workers are reluctant to report theft	*Freq*	16	36	64	96	75.5%	3.13	0.95	0.863
	%	7.5%	17.0%	30.2%	45.3%				
			Chronbach's Alpha % of total variation accounted for						0.847 76.75%

This however gives a scale which is outside the 1 to 4 scale as the coefficients' total is greater than 1. To bring the scale to the 1 to 4 scale used in the original four-point Likert scale, ORGTHCL was divided by the total of the coefficients of the latent factor.

As can be inferred from Table 4.3, the overall organisational theft climate at CENTLEC is that of softly-softly approach towards fighting theft. The shocking part of it is that even management is indecisive in dealing with theft. It is also evident from Table 4.3 that there is a general feeling that management deals leniently with employees who are caught stealing company asset as indicated by 68.7% who agreed or strongly agreed to question 8. Even immediate supervisors do not seem to always act against subordinates caught stealing (64.4% agreed to question 9). In general, there is lack of definitive action against offenders at all stakeholder levels from co-workers to management. On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), the means for questions 8 to 10 were all close to 3 which is on the agreeing side. This attests to the inaction of stakeholders in fighting theft. In addition to the above, there is an

overwhelming concurrence that co-workers are reluctant to report theft as indicated by 75.5% of the respondents who agreed or strongly agreed to the statement in Question 10 of the questionnaire. This is evidence of a conspiracy of silence among fellow workers as far as reporting theft is concerned. This might be out of fear of being targeted by fellow workers if it is known that they “grassed” on others. This fear might be different among different demographic groups. This finding is explored further in a later section as it would be interesting to understand why co-workers are reluctant to report theft.

The above findings of apparent "conducive climate for theft" (the opportunity to steal) at CENTLEC are profound as they have serious and detrimental implications for employee attitude towards cable theft and their eventual involvement in cable theft. For instance, as stated in Chapter 2, Section 2.3, perceptions can easily shape an employee’s behaviour (Dzansi *et al.*, 2014) while behaviour can be influenced and shaped by work environment (Kulas *et al*, 2007; Furnham & Taylor, 2011; Dzansi *et al.*, 2014). In addition, perception - the process by which interpret and organise a situation (Pickens, 2005:52) can easily lead employees to misinterpret CENTLEC’s softly-softly approach towards fighting theft management indecisiveness in dealing with theft as “an invitation to steal cables” knowing well that the consequence (if any) of doing so, will not be dire.

4.5.1.2 Personal factors versus organisational theft climate (ORGTHCL)

Perceptions of organisational theft climate was probed further. Specifically, perceptions were analysed based on personal background factors of employees to determine if demographic variables are related in any way to perceptions of theft climate in CENTLEC.

4.5.1.2.1 Effects of gender on ORGTHCL

Results in Table 4.4 show that there is no significant difference between males (mean=3.07) and females (mean=2.95) in the way they perceive organisational theft climate (F=1.319, df1=1, df2=184, p-value=0.368). On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), with scores close to 3, both males and females believe that there is a relaxed attitude towards dealing with theft.

Table 4.4: Demographics versus organisational theft climate

Test for effects of Demographic Variables on ORGTHCL		N	Mean	Std. Dev	ANOVA F	ANOVA df1, df2	ANOVA p-value
Gender	Male	134	3.07	0.86	1.319	1, 184	0.368
	Female	52	2.95	0.85			
Age Group	Up to 25 years	12	2.78^{ab}	1.02	10.786	4, 200	0.000
	26 - 35 years	39	2.30^{a}	0.69			
	36 - 45 years	59	3.08^{bc}	0.88			
	46 - 55 years	45	3.13b^{c}	0.75			
	56+ years	50	3.37^{c}	0.79			
Racial Group	Black	143	3.05	0.87	1.045	1, 174	0.308
	White	33	3.21	0.68			
Educational Level	Up to Matric	91	3.17^{ab}	0.91	4.296	3, 199	0.006
	Trade Certificate	30	3.13^{ab}	0.67			
	Degree/Diploma	55	2.68^{a}	0.83			
	Honours/BTech Degree and above	27	3.18^{b}	0.81			
Length of Employment	Up to 1 Year	29	2.73	0.97	1.510	3, 203	0.213
	2 - 5 Years	58	2.98	0.87			
	6 - 10 Years	53	3.12	0.88			
	Over 10 Years	67	3.09	0.80			
Post Level (Position)	Grade: 001-003	19	3.07	0.91	2.159	4, 201	0.075
	Grade: 004-007	41	2.77	0.77			
	Grade: 008-011	26	3.01	0.70			
	Grade: 012-015	31	2.82	0.83			
	Grade: 016-018	89	3.19	0.96			
Time last promoted	Never	130	2.96	0.95	0.767	3, 204	0.514
	1 - 3 years ago	48	3.09	0.72			
	4 - 6 years ago	19	3.07	0.79			
	7 or More years ago	11	3.33	0.65			

4.5.1.2.2 Effects of age group on ORGTHCL

There are significant differences between different age groups in the way they perceive organisational theft climate (Table 4.4: F=10.786, df1=4, df2=200, p-

value=0.000). The age groups of “Up to 25 years” (mean=2.78) and “26 - 35 years” (mean=2.30) have the lowest means which indicates that they have a more positive perception of the organisational theft climate. Groups which are indicated with the same superscript (^{a}, ^{b} or ^{c}) are not significantly different in their perceptions of organisational theft climate. If any two groups do not have the same superscript, then they are significantly different. The age groups of “46-55 years” and “55 years and above” have the same superscript of ^{c} hence they are not significantly different, and they also have the highest means which points to the fact that they hold the most negative perceptions towards organisational theft climate.

4.5.1.2.3 Effects of racial group on ORGTHCL

Table 4.4 shows that there is no significant difference between blacks (mean=3.05) and whites (mean=3.21) in the way they perceive organisational theft climate (F=1.045, df1=1, df2=174, p-value=0.308). Both blacks and whites believe that there is a relaxed attitude towards dealing with theft.

4.5.1.2.4 Effects of educational level on ORGTHCL

According to Table 4.4, there are significant differences between different levels of education in the way they perceive the organisational theft climate at CENTLEC (F=4.296, df1=3, df2=199, p-value=0.006). Those with “Degrees and Diplomas” (mean=2.68) have the most positive perception and are significantly different from those with “Honours, BTech Degrees and above” (mean=3.18) who have the most negative perception. The other educational levels are in between these two levels and are not significantly different from either. This means there is no definite pattern in the effect of education on the perception on organisational theft climate. It is not a case of “the more educated, the more positive” as we have the two highest levels of educations being poles apart and the other groups levels falling in between.

4.5.1.2.5 Effects of length of employment on ORGTHCL

As can be seen from Table 4.4, length of Employment has no significant effect on the perception of the organisational theft climate (F=1.510, df1=3, df2=203, p-value=0.213). All the four levels of length of employment have means that are close 3.00.

4.5.1.2.6 Effects of post level on ORGTHCL

Post level has no significant effect on the perception of the organisational theft climate (F=2.159, df1=4, df2=201, p-value=0.075). All the five levels of post level have means that are close 3.00.

4.5.1.2.7 Effects of time last promoted on ORGTHCL

Time last promoted has no significant effect on the perception of the organisational theft climate (F=0.767, df1=3, df2=204, p-value=0.514). All the five levels of Time last promoted have means that are close 3.00. In general there is a negative perception of the organisational theft climate.

4.5.1.3 Reluctance to report co-workers by demographic variables

As stated in Section 4.5.1.2, it might be revealing to explore why co-workers are reluctant to report theft. In this respect, it might be of interest to check which employment grades are reluctant to report co-workers.

Table 4.5: Reluctance to report co-workers by position

	10: Co-workers are reluctant to report theft				
Post Level (Position)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree/ strongly agree
001 - 003	1	4	7	7	73.7%
004 - 007	3	11	12	15	65.9%
008 - 011	1	4	11	10	80.8%
012 - 015	1	5	11	14	80.6%
016 - 018	10	10	22	48	77.8%

Chi-square test	Chi-square	df	p-value (Exact)
	12.658	12	0.394

Results in Table 4.5 show that post levels 008-011 (80.8%), 012-015 (80.6%) and 016-018 (77.8%) have higher rates of reluctance to report co-workers. However the Chi-square test shows that there is no significant association between post level and reluctance to report co-workers (Chi-square=12.658, df=12, p-value=0.394).

Similarly, Table 4.6 shows that race is not a significant factor in determining reluctance to report co-workers as indicated by the percentages (77.15 for blacks and 78.8% for whites) of each race who indicated that co-workers are reluctant to report theft. The chi-square test also shows that there is no significant difference between the two races as far as reluctance to report co-workers is concerned (Chi-square=8.557, df=3, p-value=0.080).

Table 4.6: Reluctance to report co-workers by race

	10: Co-workers are reluctant to report theft				
Racial Group	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree/ strongly agree
Black	9	24	40	71	77.1%
White	0	7	15	11	78.8%

Chi-square test	Chi-square	df	p-value (Exact)
	8.557	3	0.080

As shown in Table 4.7, the age group 26-35 years have the lowest percentage of those who say co-workers are reluctant to report theft (53.8%). This looks like the group with more people eager to take action if their perception can be taken to mean their attitude towards theft. The 46-55 years age group has the highest percentage of those who believe than co-workers are reluctant to report on theft (82.6%). The chi-square test shows that there is an association between age and reluctance to report theft (Chi-square=30.340, df=12, p-value=0.002).

Table 4.7: Reluctance to report co-workers by age

Age Group	10: Co-workers are reluctant to report theft				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree/ strongly agree
Up to 25 Years	2	1	5	4	75.0%
26 - 35 Years	5	13	15	6	53.8%
36 - 45 Years	6	6	15	32	79.7%
46 - 55 Years	2	6	18	20	82.6%
56 Or more Years	1	10	10	29	78.0%

Chi-square test	Chi-square	df	p-value (Exact)
	30.34	12	0.002

Results in Table 4.8 show that gender is not a significant factor affecting the reluctance to report co-workers (Chi-square=0.510, df=3, p-value=0.917). The percentages of males who feels there is reluctance to report co-workers (77.0%) is basically not significantly different from the percentage of females who feel the same (73.1%).

Table 4.8: Reluctance to report co-workers by gender

Gender	10: Co-workers are reluctant to report theft				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree/ strongly agree
Male	8	23	41	63	77.0%
Female	3	11	16	22	73.1%

Chi-square test	Chi-square	df	p-value (Exact)
	0.510	3	0.917

Results in Table 4.9 show that education is a significant factor affecting Reluctance to report co-workers (Chi-square=22.424, df=9, p-value=0.008). It is evident that those with Degrees/Diplomas have the lowest level of reluctance to report theft (only 61.8% said co-workers are reluctant to report theft). According to the results, people with Degrees or Diplomas are less reluctant to report theft.

Table 4.9: Reluctance to report co-workers by educational level

Educational Level	10: Co-workers are reluctant to report theft				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree/ strongly agree
Up to Matric	9	9	24	50	80.4%
Trade Certificate	0	8	11	11	73.3%
Degree/Diploma	4	17	18	16	61.8%
Honours/BTech Degree and above	1	2	9	15	88.9%

Chi-square test	Chi-square	df	p-value (Exact)
	22.424	9	0.008

According to Table 4.10, length of employment is not a significant factor affecting Reluctance to report co-workers (Table 9: Chi-square=9.501, df=9, p-value=0.392). This means that length of service does not change employees attitude towards reporting theft.

Table 4.10: Reluctance to report co-workers by length of employment

Length of Employment	10: Co-workers are reluctant to report theft				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree/ strongly agree
Up to 1 Year	3	6	9	11	69.0%
2 - 5 Years	4	9	24	21	77.6%
6 - 10 Years	6	8	12	27	73.6%
Over 10 Years	2	13	19	34	77.9%

Chi-square test	Chi-square	df	p-value (Exact)
	9.501	9	0.392

4.5.2 STAFF PERCEPTION OF DETERRENCE DOCTRINE (DETSANDOC)

This section assists in answering research question 2 which is: *What is CENTLEC maintenance staff perception regarding deterrence/ sanction doctrine?*

The construct of Perceived Deterrence/ Sanction Doctrine (DETSANDOC) had two questionnaire items which are summarised in Table 10 below. The majority (64.6%) of the maintenance staff at CENTLEC believe that employees who steal are never caught and 56.3% believe that, even if some are caught stealing, they still go unpunished. The deterrence mechanism at the organisation needs a special review if the employee attitudes are to be corrected.

Table 4.11: Perceived deterrence/sanction doctrine (DETSANDOC)

PERCEIVED DETERRENCE/SANCTION DOCTRINE (DETSANDOC)		Frequency Distribution					Descriptives		Latent Factor (Principal Component)
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree and Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev	Coefficient
Q11. Majority of our employees who steal are never caught	*Freq*	29	45	70	65	64.6%	2.82	1.03	0.960
	%	13.9%	21.5%	33.5%	31.1%				
Q12. Even when employees are caught stealing, they often go unpunished	*Freq*	28	65	58	62	56.3%	2.72	1.02	0.960
	%	13.1%	30.5%	27.2%	29.1%				
			Chronbach's Alpha % of total variation accounted for						0.915 92.18%

The overall maintenance staff's perception of Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine is calculated using equation (2) which is based on principal component analysis.

$$\textbf{DETSANDOC} = 0.960\times\textbf{Q11} + 0.960\times\textbf{Q12} \quad (2)$$

The overall measure of Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine was adjusted by dividing by the sum of the two principal components coefficients so that the scale is from 1 (strongly

disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Test of how different demographic groups differ in their perceptions of the Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine are presented in the following sections.

Table 4.12: Personal demographics versus deterrence doctrine (DETSANDOC)

Test for effects of Demographic Variables on DETSANDOC		Descriptives			ANOVA		
		N	Mean	Std. Dev	F	df1, df2	p-value
Gender	Male	131	2.88	0.97	0.998	1, 180	0.319
	Female	51	2.72	1.02			
Age Group	Up to 25 years	12	2.29[a]	0.96	5.457	4, 195	0.000
	26 - 35 years	40	2.23[a]	0.83			
	36 - 45 years	57	2.87[ab]	1.01			
	46 - 55 years	43	2.98[b]	0.88			
	56+ years	48	3.09[b]	0.94			
Racial Group	Black	141	2.87	0.95	1.190	1, 171	0.277
	White	32	3.06	0.77			
Educational Level	Up to Matric	87	2.90	1.04	1.967	3, 194	0.099
	Trade Certificate	29	2.86	0.81			
	Degree/Diploma	56	2.54	0.95			
	Honours/BTech Degree and above	26	3.02	0.88			
Length of Employment	Up to 1 Year	28	2.43	1.02	1.876	3, 198	0.135
	2 - 5 Years	58	2.78	0.98			
	6 - 10 Years	52	2.86	1.05			
	Over 10 Years	64	2.94	0.86			
Post Level (Position)	Grade: 001-003	19	3.05	0.80	1.468	4, 196	0.213
	Grade: 004-007	40	2.56	0.86			
	Grade: 008-011	27	2.81	0.76			
	Grade: 012-015	30	2.62	1.07			
	Grade: 016-018	85	2.92	1.09			
Time last promoted	Never	125	2.74	1.02	1.327	3, 199	0.267
	1 - 3 years ago	48	2.80	0.96			
	4 - 6 years ago	19	2.95	0.85			
	7 or More years ago	11	3.32	0.60			

According to Table 4.12, except for age, no other demographic variable examined has significant effect on employee's perceptions on Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine.

It would appear like that the older the employee, the more negative they are of the Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine. The means off the different groups as shown in Table 12 seem to be increasing with age as shown in Figure 8 below.

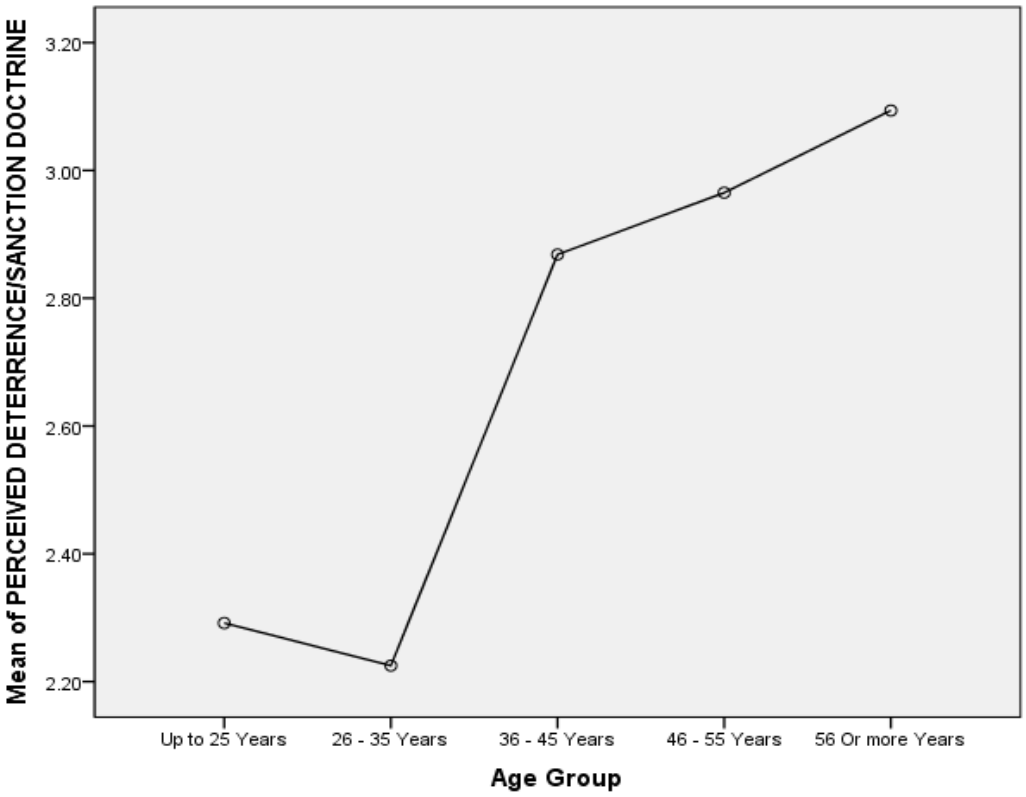

Figure 4.8: Perception of deterrence/sanction doctrine by age

In terms of non-significant effect, results in Table 12 show that gender has no significant effect on the employees' perception of the Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine at CENTLEC (F=0.998, df1=1, df2=180, p-value=0.319). Both males (mean=2.88) and females (mean=2.72) feel that the Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine is not well placed to deal with cases of theft and sanction thereof. Similarly, racial grouping has no significant effect on the employees' perception of the Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine at CENTLEC (F=1.190, df1=1, df2=171, p-value=0.277). Both blacks (mean=2.87) and whites (mean=3.06) feel that the Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine is a bit relaxed. Likewise, level of education has no significant effect on the employee's perception of the Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine at CENTLEC (F=1.967, df1=3, df2=194, p-value=0.099). Length of employment also has no significant effect on the employee's perception of the Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine at CENTLEC (F=1.876, df1=3, df2=198, p-value=0.135). furthermore, post Level has no significant effect on employee perception of the Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine (F=1.468, df1=4, df2=196, p-value=0.213). Finally, time last promoted has no significant effect on the employee's perception of the Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine (F=1.327, df1=3, df2=199, p-

value=0.267). The means for all categories of time last promoted are above 2.7 which is tilted more on the perception that the doctrine is not sound.

4.5.3 STAFF PERCEPTION OF ORGANISATIONAL FAIRNESS (ORGFAI)

Organisational fairness is a measure that might fight theft. If employees are treated fairly, it is reasonable to expect that they would work to protect the assets of the organisation. This section provides summaries of issues around employees' perceptions of organizational fairness. Table 4.13 gives a summary of the five items that make up the construct of organisational fairness. Perceptions on organisational fairness are split in the middle. The percentages of those who believe that the organisation is fair, range from 47.0% to 52.1%. The means of the five items are all close to 2.5 which is halfway between agreeing and disagreeing. This means that, generally, 50 of the workforce is not happy with the organisations level of fairness to its employees.

According to the coefficients of the overall measure of organisational fairness (latent factor), all five items that make up the construct of organisational fairness are of similar importance to the determination of this construct (all coefficients are very close to 0.9).

The overall maintenance staff's perception of Organisational Fairness (ORGFAI) is calculated using equation (3) below which is based on principal component analysis.

ORGFAI = 0.885×**Q13** + 0.935×**Q14** + 0.951×**Q15** + 0.926×**Q16**+ 0.894×**Q17** (3)

The overall measure of Organisational Fairness was adjusted so that the scale is from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicate higher approval ratings as the questionnaire items on this sections are positively worded.

Table 4.13: Perceptions of organisational fairness (ORGFAI)

PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL FAIRNESS (ORGFAI)		Frequency Distribution					Descriptives		Latent Factor (Principal Component)
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree and Strongly	Mean	Std. Dev	Coefficient
Q13. Good job done by employees always get rewarded	Freq	45	64	50	55	49.1%	2.54	1.09	0.885
	%	21.0%	29.9%	23.4%	25.7%				
Q14. Employees are paid at levels appropriate for their qualifications	Freq	50	60	51	54	48.8%	2.51	1.11	0.935
	%	23.3%	27.9%	23.7%	25.1%				
Q15. Employees are paid at levels appropriate for their skills	Freq	49	60	60	46	49.3%	2.48	1.07	0.951
	%	22.8%	27.9%	27.9%	21.4%				
Q16. Employees are paid at levels appropriate for their work-related experience	Freq	42	61	69	43	52.1%	2.53	1.02	0.926
	%	19.5%	28.4%	32.1%	20.0%				
Q17. Employees are paid adequately for their responsibilities	Freq	52	63	64	38	47.0%	2.41	1.04	0.894
	%	24.0%	29.0%	29.5%	17.5%				
			Chronbach's Alpha % of total variation accounted for						0.953 84.36%

Table 4.14: Demographics versus perceived organisational fairness (ORGFAI)

Test for effects of Demographic Variables on ORGFAI		Descriptives			ANOVA		
		N	Mean	Std. Dev	F	df1, df2	p-value
Gender	Male	134	2.60	1.00	0.967	1, 183	0.327
	Female	51	2.44	0.99			
Age Group	Up to 25 years	12	2.77[b]	0.80	4.873	4, 200	0.001
	26 - 35 years	41	2.00[a]	0.71			
	36 - 45 years	58	2.45[ab]	1.06			
	46 - 55 years	46	2.51[ab]	0.99			
	56+ years	48	2.86[b]	0.95			
Racial Group	Black	144	2.57	1.01	1.574	1, 174	0.211
	White	32	2.81	0.78			
Educational Level	Up to Matric	89	2.57	1.05	0.200	3, 198	0.896
	Trade Certificate	30	2.50	0.87			
	Degree/Diploma	57	2.45	0.88			
	Honours/BTech Degree and above	26	2.55	1.14			
Length of Employment	Up to 1 Year	26	2.64	0.83	1.382	3, 202	0.249
	2 - 5 Years	60	2.67	0.94			
	6 - 10 Years	52	2.33	1.05			
	Over 10 Years	68	2.45	0.99			
Post Level (Position)	Grade: 001-003	19	2.99[b]	0.78	4.071	4, 199	0.003
	Grade: 004-007	40	2.09[a]	0.88			
	Grade: 008-011	29	2.32[a]	0.93			
	Grade: 012-015	30	2.46[ab]	1.06			
	Grade: 016-018	86	2.67[ab]	1.01			
Time last promoted	Never	128	2.54	0.99	1.257	3, 203	0.290
	1 - 3 years ago	49	2.31	0.92			
	4 - 6 years ago	19	2.79	0.86			
	7 or More years ago	11	2.56	1.37			

4.5.3.1 Effects of gender on organisational fairness

Results in Table 4.14 show that gender has no significant effect on employees perception of Organisational Fairness at CENTLEC (F=0.967, df1=1, df2=183, p-value=0.327). Both males (mean=2.60) and females (mean=2.44), are divided between negative and positive perceptions of organisational fairness and the means are not significantly different between males and females. This means that the level of satisfaction with organisational fairness is the same for both males and females.

4.5.3.2 Effects of age group on organisational fairness

According to Table 4.14, there are some age groups which are significantly different in their perceptions of organisational fairness (F=4.873, df1=4, df2=200, p-value=0.001). Those age groups that are not significantly different are indicated by the same superscript in Table 4.14. Those in the age group 26-35 years (mean=2.00) are the most sceptical about organisational fairness while those in the age group 56 or more years (mean=2.86) are the most positive about organisational fairness. Those who are up to 25 years (mean=2.77) are also positive about organisational fairness and they belong with those who are 56 or more years old. These two differ the most from those who are in the 26-35 years old group and significantly so as they do not share the same superscript. The other age groups are in between, and they do not significantly differ from the three extreme groups.

4.5.3.3 Effects of racial group on organisational fairness

From Table 4.14, race has no significant effect on employee perception of organisational fairness at CENTLEC (F=1.574, df1=1, df2=174, p-value=0.211). Both blacks (mean=2.57) and whites (mean=2.81) are not strongly satisfied with the level of organisational fairness.

4.5.3.4 Effects of educational level on organisational fairness

Educational level has no significant effect on employee perception of organisational fairness at CENTLEC (F=0.200, df1=3, df2=198, p-value=0.896) (see Table 4.14). All levels of education have means close to 2.50 which is an indication that the all levels are unanimous in their perception that the organisation's level of fairness is neither good nor bad.

4.5.3.5 Effects of length of employment on organisational fairness

According to Table 4.14, length of employment has no significant effect on employee perception of organisational fairness at CENTLEC (F=0.200, df1=3, df2=198, p-value=0.896). All length of employment has means close to 2.50 which is an indication that the all respondents regardless of length of service are unanimous in their perception that the organisation's level of fairness is neither good nor bad.

4.5.3.6 Effects of post level (position) on organisational fairness

Post Level or Position is a significant factor affecting employee perception of Organisational Fairness (F=4.071, df1=4, df2=199, p-value=0.003). Grades 004-007 (mean=2.09) and 008-011 (mean=2.32) have the most negative perception of organisational fairness and are not significantly different, but both are significantly different from grade 001-003 (mean=2.99) which has the most positive perception of organisational fairness.

4.5.3.7 Effects of time last promoted on organisational fairness

Time Last Promoted has no significant effect on employee perception of organisational fairness at CENTLEC (F=1.257, df1=3, df2=203, p-value=0.290). All levels of time last promoted have means close to 2.50 which is an indication that their perception on organisational fairness is neither good nor bad.

4.5.4 STAFF PERCEPTION OF CONTROL ENVIRONMENT (CONENV)

The construct of control environment is positively worded which means that a score of 4 (strongly agree) is an indication of a good control environment. While most of the employees believe that the organisation implements secure internal control system (59.9%) there is lower levels of appraisals as far as theft detection (only 48.4% agree

that thefts will be detected) and monitoring (only 48.1% believe that managers closely monitor individual activities) (see Table 4.15).

Table 4.15: Perceptions of control environment (CONENV)

PERCEIVED CONTROL ENVIRONMENT (CONENV)		Frequency Distribution					Descriptives		Latent Factor (Principal Component)
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree and Strongly	Mean	Std. Dev	Coefficient
Q18. The organisation implements secure internal control system	Freq	31	56	86	44	59.9%	2.66	0.96	0.789
	%	14.3%	25.8%	39.6%	20.3%				
Q19. It is **NOT** possible for employees to commit theft without being ever discovered by the organisation	Freq	44	67	72	32	48.4%	2.43	0.98	0.641
	%	20.5%	31.2%	33.5%	14.9%				
Q20. Management closely monitor individual's activities within the organisation.	Freq	37	75	67	37	48.1%	2.48	0.97	0.836
	%	17.1%	34.7%	31.0%	17.1%				
		Chronbach's Alpha							0.628
		% of total variation accounted for							57.78%

The overall perception of the Control Environment (CONENV) is calculated using equation (4) below which is based on principal component analysis.

$$\textbf{CONENV} = 0.789 \times \textbf{Q18} + 0.641 \times \textbf{Q19} + 0.836 \times \textbf{Q20} \qquad (4)$$

Higher scores indicate higher approval ratings as the questionnaire items for this construct are positively worded.

Table 4.16: Demographics versus perceived control environment (CONENV)

Test for effects of Demographic Variables on CONENV		Descriptives			ANOVA		
		N	Mean	Std. Dev	F	df1, df2	p-value
Gender	Male	135	2.67[b]	0.76	4.358	1, 187	0.038
	Female	54	2.42[a]	0.64			
Age Group	Up to 25 years	12	2.48	0.65	1.392	4, 203	0.238
	26 - 35 years	40	2.41	0.57			
	36 - 45 years	59	2.50	0.71			
	46 - 55 years	46	2.66	0.79			
	56+ years	51	2.72	0.83			
Racial Group	Black	145	2.67	0.71	2.911	1, 176	0.090
	White	33	2.44	0.64			
Educational Level	Up to Matric	92	2.54	0.83	0.469	3, 203	0.704
	Trade Certificate	31	2.72	0.79			
	Degree/Diploma	57	2.56	0.58			
	Honours/BTech Degree and above	27	2.59	0.64			
Length of Employment	Up to 1 Year	28	2.51	0.67	1.275	3, 203	0.284
	2 - 5 Years	60	2.59	0.67			
	6 - 10 Years	52	2.45	0.79			
	Over 10 Years	70	2.70	0.75			
Post Level (Position)	Grade: 001-003	19	2.60	0.68	0.451	4, 203	0.771
	Grade: 004-007	41	2.61	0.60			
	Grade: 008-011	28	2.46	0.58			
	Grade: 012-015	29	2.71	0.75			
	Grade: 016-018	91	2.56	0.85			
Time last promoted	Never	131	2.58	0.78	0.246	3, 207	0.864
	1 - 3 years ago	49	2.53	0.65			
	4 - 6 years ago	19	2.56	0.67			
	7 or More years ago	12	2.73	0.82			

4.5.4.1 Effects of gender on perceived control environment

Results in Table 4.16 show that gender significant effect on employees perception of Control Environment (F=4.358, df1=1, df2=187, p-value=0.038). Males (mean=2.67) are more positive than females (mean=2.42) in their perception of the control.

4.5.4.2 Effects of age on perceived control environment

As can be seen in Table 4.16, age also has no significant effect on employee perception of the Control Environment (F=1.392, df1=4, df2=203, p-value=0.238). The

means for all age groups are between 2.41 and 2.72 which is not a high appraisal of the control environment.

4.5.4.3 Effects of race on perceived control environment

Table 4.16 reveals that Race has no significant effect on employee perception of the Control Environment (F=2.911, df1=1, df2=176, p-value=0.090). Both blacks (mean=2.67) and whites (mean=2.44) rate the Control Environment similarly with means above 2.4, which is not an overwhelming approval of the control environment. In a way, the control environment leaves a lot to be desired according to both blacks and whites (mean is nowhere close to 4).

4.5.4.4 Effects of education on perceived control environment

Educational level has no significant effect on employee perception of the Control Environment (F=0.469, df1=3, df2=203, p-value=0.704) (see Table 4.16). Though the different educational levels are not significantly different, it is worth noting that those with trade certificates (mean=2.72) have the highest approval rating of the control environment.

4.5.4.5 Effects of length of employment on perceived control environment

From Table 4.16, Length of Employment has no significant effect on employee perception of the Control Environment (F=1.275, df1=3, df2=203, p-value=0.284). However those who have been employed for over 10 years have a more positive perception of the overall control environment (mean=2.7).

4.5.4.6 Effects of post level (position) on perceived control environment

As can be seen form Table 4.16, Post Level has no significant effect on employee perception of the Control Environment (F=0.451, df1=4, df2=203, p-value=0.771). Grade 012-015 (mean=2.71) has the highest approval rating of the control environment while Grade 008-011 (mean=2.46) has the lowest.

4.5.4.7 Effects of time last promoted on perceived control environment

Lastly, according to Table 4.16, there are no significant differences among employees with different periods since last promotion (F=0.246, df1=3, df2=207, p-value=0.864). However, people who haven't been promoted lately(7+ years: mean=2.73), seem to be rating the control environment higher than the other groups.

4.5.5 STAFF PERCEPTION OF THEFT IN GENERAL (ATTTG)

Twelve general types of thefts/ dishonesty are listed in Table 4.17 below. These are also ranked and displayed in Figure 4.9. The most prevalent form of theft is over-claiming on overtime with 51.4% of the employees agreeing that they would practice this form of theft if they get the chance. The least form of theft is absenteeism.

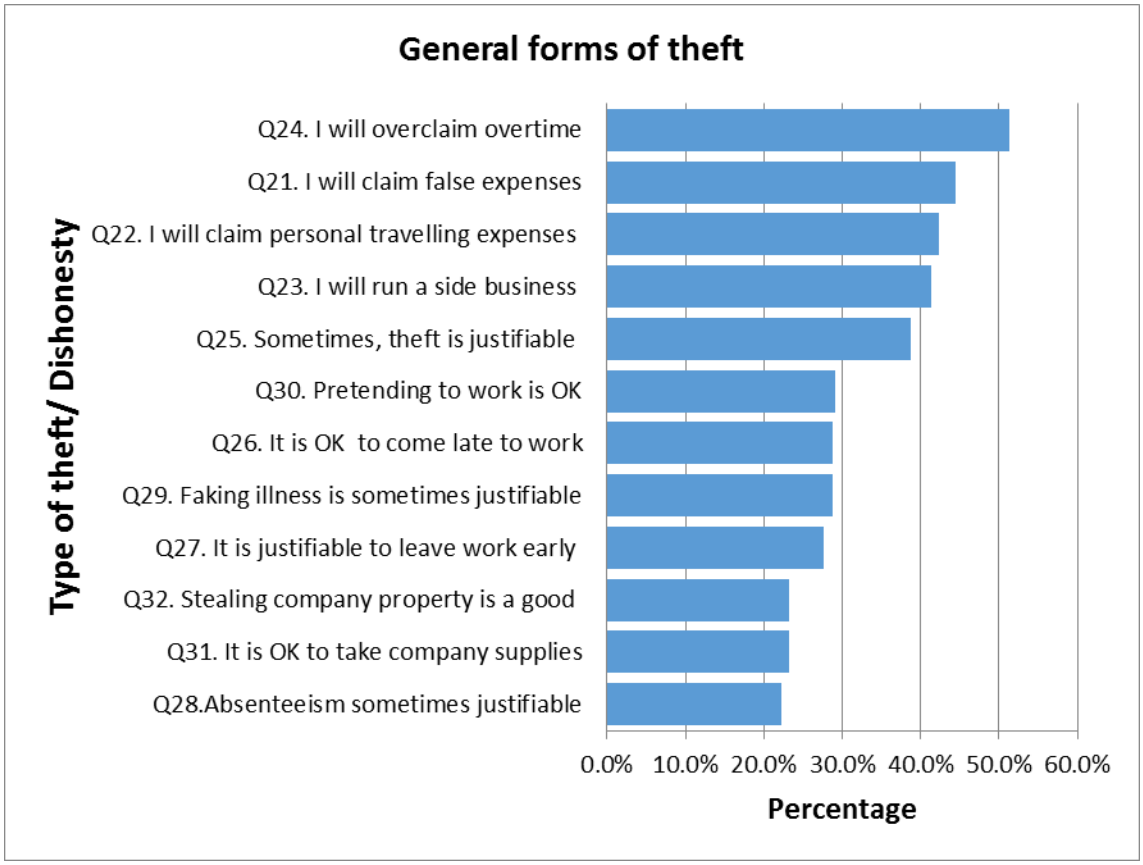

Figure 4.9: Ranking of forms of general theft

The summary of the general forms of theft is presented in Table 4.17 below with the overall measure of the propensity to commit such forms of theft calculated using principal components in the form of equation (5).

The overall attitude regarding theft in general (ATTTG) is calculated using equation (5).

$$\textbf{ATTTG} = 0.713\times\textbf{Q21} + 0.754\times\textbf{Q22} + 0.768\times\textbf{Q23} + 0.661\times\textbf{Q24} + 0.847\times\textbf{Q25} + 0.812\times\textbf{Q26} + 0.781\times\textbf{Q27} + 0.844\times\textbf{Q28} + 0.839\times\textbf{Q29} + 0.831\times\textbf{Q30} + 0.807\times\textbf{Q31} + 0.807\times\textbf{Q32} \quad (5)$$

Table 4.17: Perceptions regarding theft in general (ATTTG)

ATTITUDE REGARDING THEFT IN GENERAL (ATTTG)		Frequency Distribution					Descriptives		Latent Factor (Principal Component)
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree/ Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev	Coefficient
Q21. If I ever get the opportunity I will claim expenses that I actually did not incur	*Freq*	53	66	61	34	44.4%	2.36	1.02	0.713
	%	24.8%	30.8%	28.5%	15.9%				
Q22. If I ever get the opportunity I will claim travelling expense that are personal	*Freq*	53	72	64	28	42.4%	2.31	0.98	0.754
	%	24.4%	33.2%	29.5%	12.9%				
Q23. If I have the means, I will run a side business that may compete with employer's business	*Freq*	50	76	53	36	41.4%	2.35	1.02	0.768
	%	23.3%	35.3%	24.7%	16.7%				
Q24. If I ever get the opportunity I will claim overtime hours than I actually worked for	*Freq*	43	61	66	44	51.4%	2.52	1.03	0.661
	%	20.1%	28.5%	30.8%	20.6%				
Q25. Sometimes, theft is justifiable	*Freq*	56	75	51	32	38.8%	2.28	1.01	0.847
	%	26.2%	35.0%	23.8%	15.0%				
Q26. It is sometimes justifiable to come late to work and not report it	*Freq*	69	84	43	19	28.8%	2.06	0.94	0.812
	%	32.1%	39.1%	20.0%	8.8%				
Q27. It is sometimes justifiable to leave work early without permission	*Freq*	69	86	40	19	27.6%	2.04	0.93	0.781
	%	32.2%	40.2%	18.7%	8.9%				
Q28. It is sometimes justifiable to be absent with no excuse	*Freq*	81	87	30	18	22.2%	1.93	0.92	0.844
	%	37.5%	40.3%	13.9%	8.3%				
Q29. Faking illness is sometimes justifiable	*Freq*	75	79	37	25	28.7%	2.06	0.99	0.839
	%	34.7%	36.6%	17.1%	11.6%				
Q30. Pretending to work to avoid being allocated new work is sometimes justifiable	*Freq*	69	84	38	25	29.2%	2.09	0.98	0.831
	%	31.9%	38.9%	17.6%	11.6%				
Q31. I see nothing wrong with taking company supplies for personal use	*Freq*	84	81	25	25	23.3%	1.96	0.99	0.807
	%	39.1%	37.7%	11.6%	11.6%				
Q32. Stealing company property is a good way of getting back at an employer who exploits employees	*Freq*	89	76	28	22	23.3%	1.92	0.98	0.807
	%	41.4%	35.3%	13.0%	10.2%				
TOTAL						362.734	25.88		
AVERAGE %						30.23	2.16		
		Chronbach's Alpha							0.944
		% of total variation accounted for							62.49%

Higher scores indicate higher chance of committing any of the 12 theft practices listed in Table 4.17. It is clear from Table 4.17 that only a small percentage (30.23%) do not see anything wrong with the above thieving behaviours meaning the majority (almost 70%) view stealing under any circumstance as wrong.

Table 4.18: Demographics versus attitude regarding theft in general

Test for effects of Demographic Variables on ATTTG		Descriptives			ANOVA		
		N	Mean	Std. Dev	F	df1, df2	p-value
Gender	Male	131	2.24	0.79	11.32	1, 176	0.001
	Female	47	1.83	0.52			
Age Group	Up to 25 years	12	1.78[ab]	0.84	4.887	4, 188	0.001
	26 - 35 years	37	1.71[a]	0.50			
	36 - 45 years	54	2.16[ab]	0.79			
	46 - 55 years	41	2.30[b]	0.70			
	56+ years	49	2.28[b]	0.79			
Racial Group	Black	137	2.19	0.78	5.442	1, 167	0.021
	White	32	1.85	0.54			
Educational Level	Up to Matric	86	2.21	0.78	2.272	3, 187	0.082
	Trade Certificate	28	2.33	0.71			
	Degree/Diploma	55	1.93	0.76			
	Honours/BTech Degree and above	22	2.06	0.68			
Length of Employment	Up to 1 Year	25	1.73[a]	0.59	3.667	3, 190	0.013
	2 - 5 Years	56	2.07[ab]	0.79			
	6 - 10 Years	47	2.17[b]	0.81			
	Over 10 Years	66	2.31[b]	0.73			
Post Level (Position)	Grade: 001-003	18	2.01	0.62	0.733	4, 187	0.571
	Grade: 004-007	37	2.02	0.62			
	Grade: 008-011	26	2.16	0.84			
	Grade: 012-015	25	2.33	0.98			
	Grade: 016-018	86	2.16	0.77			
Time last promoted	Never	122	2.10	0.77	0.237	3, 192	0.871
	1 - 3 years ago	44	2.19	0.81			
	4 - 6 years ago	18	2.21	0.66			
	7 or More years ago	12	2.17	0.74			

4.5.5.1 Effects of gender on attitude regarding theft in general

Results in Table 4.18 show that attitude towards theft in general differ significantly between males and females (F=11.32, df1=1, df2=176, p-value=0.001). Males (mean=2.24) show a higher propensity than females (mean=1.83), to commit any of the twelve forms of theft summarised in Table 4.17.

4.5.5.2 Effects of age on attitude regarding theft in general

There are significant differences in the attitudes of different age groups towards theft in general. There is a general upward trend in the propensity to commit any form of theft with older age. Figure 4.10 demonstrates the general movement of attitude towards theft in general. The trend suggests that the older one gets the more untrustworthy they become except for the 26-35 years age group which has the lowest propensity to commit any of the theft practices.

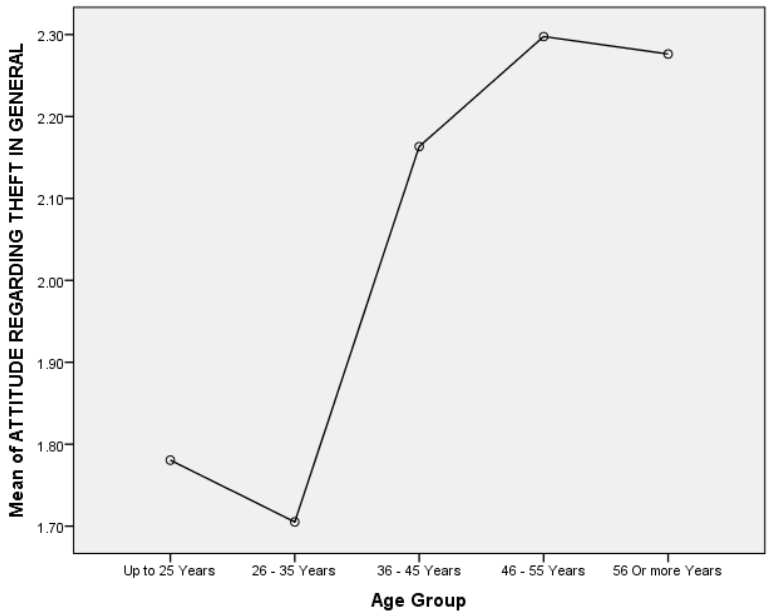

Figure 4.10: Attitude towards theft in general by age group

4.5.5.3 Effects of race on attitude regarding theft in general

Blacks and whites significantly differ in their attitudes towards theft in general (F=5.442, df1=1, df2=167, p-value=0.021). Blacks (mean=2.19) have a significantly higher propensity than whites (mean=1.85) to engage in any of the 12 theft practices listed in Table 4.17.

4.5.5.4 Effects of education on attitude regarding theft in general (ATTTG)

Education has no significant effect on the attitudes towards theft in general (F=2.272, df1=3, df2=187, p-value=0.082). The mean attitudes are all very close to 2.00 which is indicative of the fact that propensity to commit any form of theft practices is low across all groups of employees.

4.5.5.6 Effects of length of employment on attitude regarding theft in general

According to Table 4.18, Length of employment is a significant factor affecting attitude towards theft in general (F=3.667, df1=3, df2=190, p-value=0.013). There is a general upward trend in propensity to steal as the years of employment increase. Figure 4.11 illustrates the general trend in attitude regarding theft in general as years of employment increase. Those who have been employed for up to 1 year (mean=1.73) re significantly different from those who have been employed for more than ten years (mean=2.31).

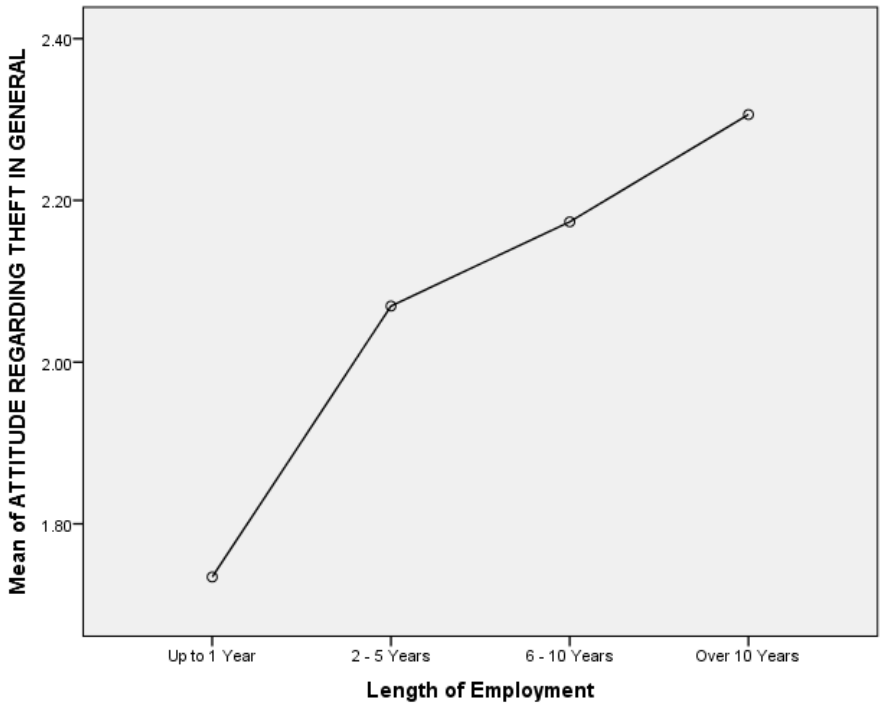

Figure 4.11: Attitude towards theft in general by years of employment.

4.5.5.7 Effects of position on attitude regarding theft in general

Position has no significant effect on the attitudes towards theft in general (F=0.733, df1=3, df2=192, p-value=0.571) (see Table 4.18).

4.5.5.8 Effects of time last promoted on attitude regarding theft in general

From Table 4.18, Time last promoted has no significant effect on the attitudes towards theft in general (F=0.237, df1=4, df2=187, p-value=0.871).

4.5.6 STAFF ATTITUDE TOWARDS POWER CABLE THEFT (ATTPCT)

The questionnaire items covering this construct are positively worded such that a high score of mean is indicative of a worker with a positive attitude toward dealing with the problem of cable theft. Table 4.19 shows that the percentages of those who agree/strongly agree to positive action on issues pertaining to cable theft, range from 45.6% to 53%. This means that about half of the employees have attitudes that promote the theft of power cables. Only 45.6% of the employees indicated that if that saw a co-worker stealing electric power cable they will report it. This means that the other 54.4% will not report co-workers who steal power cables.

The overall attitude regarding theft of power cables in general (ATTPCT) is calculated using equation (6).

$$\textbf{ATTPCT} = 0.909\times\textbf{Q33} + 0.931\times\textbf{Q34} + 0.957\times\textbf{Q35} + 0.921\times\textbf{Q36} \qquad (6)$$

Table 4.19: Attitude towards power cable theft

ATTITUDES TOWARDS POWER CABLE THEFT (ATTPCT)		Frequency Distribution					Descriptives		Latent Factor (Principal Component)
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree/ Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev	Coefficient
Q33. When I see a co-worker stealing electric power cable I will report it	Freq	50	68	52	47	45.6%	2.44	1.07	0.909
	%	23.0%	31.3%	24.0%	21.7%				
Q34. When I see a person who is not a co-worker and whom I do not know, or I am not related to me stealing electric power cable I will report it	Freq	40	62	56	59	53.0%	2.62	1.07	0.931
	%	18.4%	28.6%	25.8%	27.2%				
Q35. When I see a person who is not a co-worker but who I know or is related to me stealing electric power cable I will report it	Freq	47	65	57	47	48.1%	2.48	1.06	0.957
	%	21.8%	30.1%	26.4%	21.8%				
Q36. In my opinion anyone caught stealing power cables should be given stiff penalty even if he/she is a first offender	Freq	43	66	54	54	49.8%	2.55	1.07	0.921
	%	19.8%	30.4%	24.9%	24.9%				
			Chronbach's Alpha						0.947
			% of total variation accounted for						86.43%

Table 4.20: Demographics versus attitude toward power cable theft (ATTPCT)

Test for effects of Demographic Variables on ATTPCT		Descriptives			ANOVA		
		N	Mean	Std. Dev	F	df1, df2	p-value
Gender	Male	138	2.47	0.96	0.123	1, 189	0.726
	Female	53	2.41	1.06			
Age Group	Up to 25 years	12	2.90^{c}	1.17	10.041	4, 205	0.000
	26 - 35 years	41	3.06^{c}	0.90			
	36 - 45 years	60	2.76^{bc}	0.90			
	46 - 55 years	46	2.24^{ab}	0.98			
	56+ years	51	2.01^{a}	0.82			
Racial Group	Black	147	2.66	0.98	10.804	1, 178	0.001
	White	33	2.05	0.86			
Educational Level	Up to Matric	93	2.16^{a}	0.99	8.536	3, 204	0.000
	Trade Certificate	31	2.57^{ab}	0.89			
	Degree/Diploma	57	2.94^{b}	0.88			
	Honours/BTech Degree and above	27	2.84^{b}	0.96			
Length of Employment	Up to 1 Year	28	2.86	1.04	1.623	3, 208	0.185
	2 - 5 Years	61	2.55	1.00			
	6 - 10 Years	53	2.35	1.06			
	Over 10 Years	70	2.53	0.90			
Post Level (Position)	Grade: 001-003	19	2.33^{ab}	0.73	9.627	4, 205	0.000
	Grade: 004-007	41	3.01^{c}	0.76			
	Grade: 008-011	29	2.94^{bc}	0.88			
	Grade: 012-015	30	2.70^{abc}	1.04			
	Grade: 016-018	91	2.10^{a}	0.98			
Time last promoted	Never	134	2.48	1.06	2.397	3, 210	0.069
	1 - 3 years ago	49	2.70	0.88			
	4 - 6 years ago	19	2.12	0.73			
	7 or More years ago	12	2.94	0.82			

4.5.6.1 Effects of gender on attitude regarding theft of power cable

Results in Table 4.20 show that gender has no significant effect on the attitude power cable theft (F=0.123, df1=1, df2=189, p-value=0.726).

4.5.6.2 Effects of age on attitude towards theft of power cable

Results in Table 4.20 show that age is a significant factor affecting attitude towards the theft of power cables. Those who are over 56 years (mean=2.01) have the most negative attitude on issues around prevention and control of cable theft with those in the age groups 26-35 having the most positive attitude (mean=3.06). The trend in

attitude towards power cable theft deteriorates with age. The older the employee, the less eager to help combat cable theft they become. Figure 4.12 illustrates this trend.

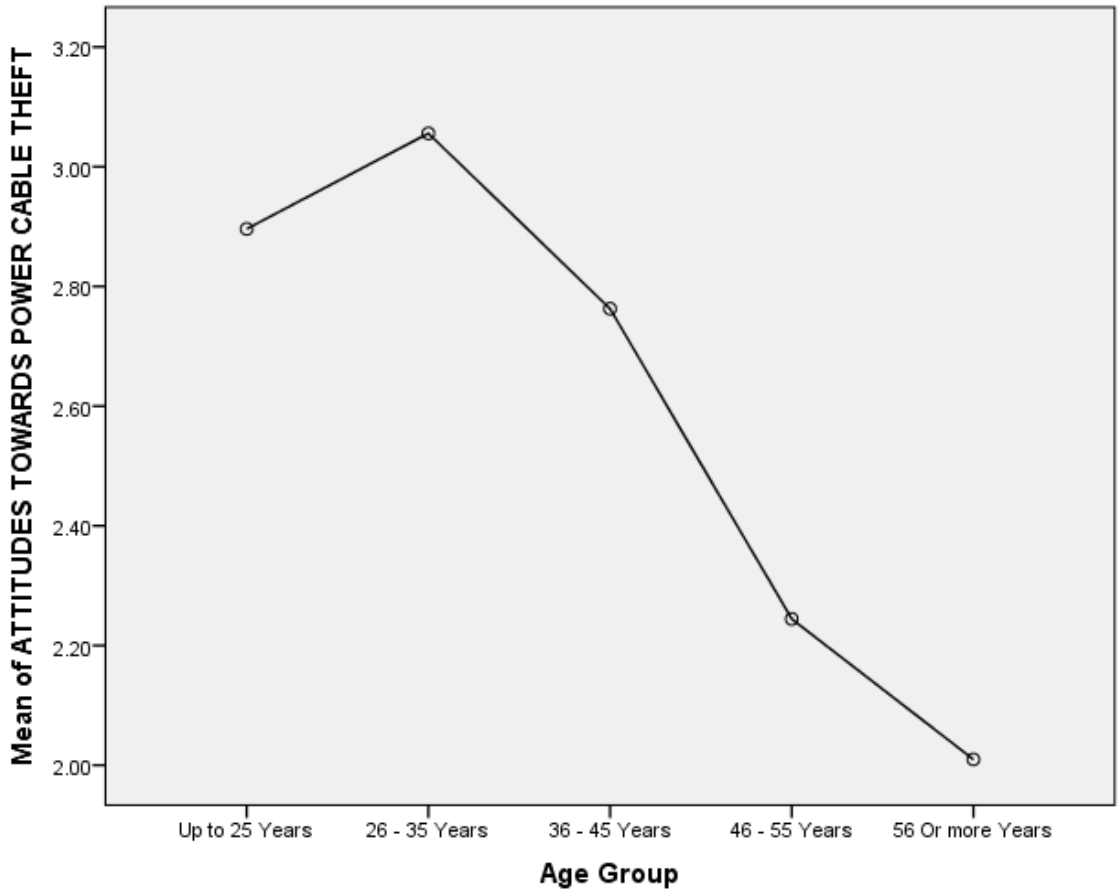

Figure 4.12: Attitude towards power cable theft by age group.

4.5.6.3 Effects of race on attitude regarding theft of power cable

There is a significant difference in attitude towards cable theft between blacks (mean=2.66) and whites (mean=2.05) (F=10.804, df1=1, df2=178 p-value=0.001). The results show that blacks are more likely to take positive action again cable theft than whites.

4.5.6.4 Effects of education on attitude regarding theft of power cable

Level of education is a significant factor affecting attitude towards theft of power cables (F=8.536, df1=3, df2=204 p-value=0.000). The results show that the more educated one is the more positive his attitude is towards dealing with issues around cable theft. Figure 4.13 demonstrates this general trend.

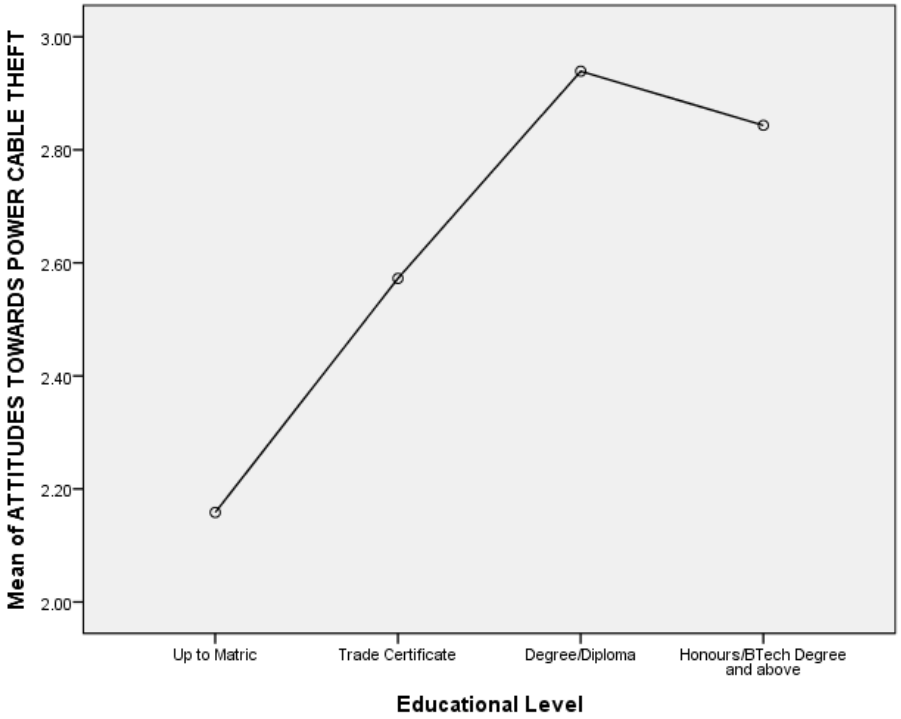

Figure 4.13: Attitude towards power cable theft by level of education.

4.5.6.5 Effects of employment length on attitude towards theft of power cable

Length of Employment has no significant effect on attitude towards theft of power cables (F=1.623, df1=3, df2=208 p-value=0.185). Although the different levels of length of employment are not significantly different, it is interesting to note that those who have been employed for less than a year, who have a mean of 2.86, have the most positive attitude towards fighting cable theft.

4.5.6.6 Effects of position on attitude regarding theft of power cable

Position is a significant factor affecting attitude towards power cable theft (F=9.627, df1=4, df2=205, p-value=0.000). The middle grades 004-015 (means ranging from 2.70 to 3.01) seem to have a more positive attitude towards fighting cable theft than the 001-003 (mean=2.33) and the 016-018 (mean=2.10) grades. Figure 4.14 show the trajectory of attitude towards cable theft with post level.

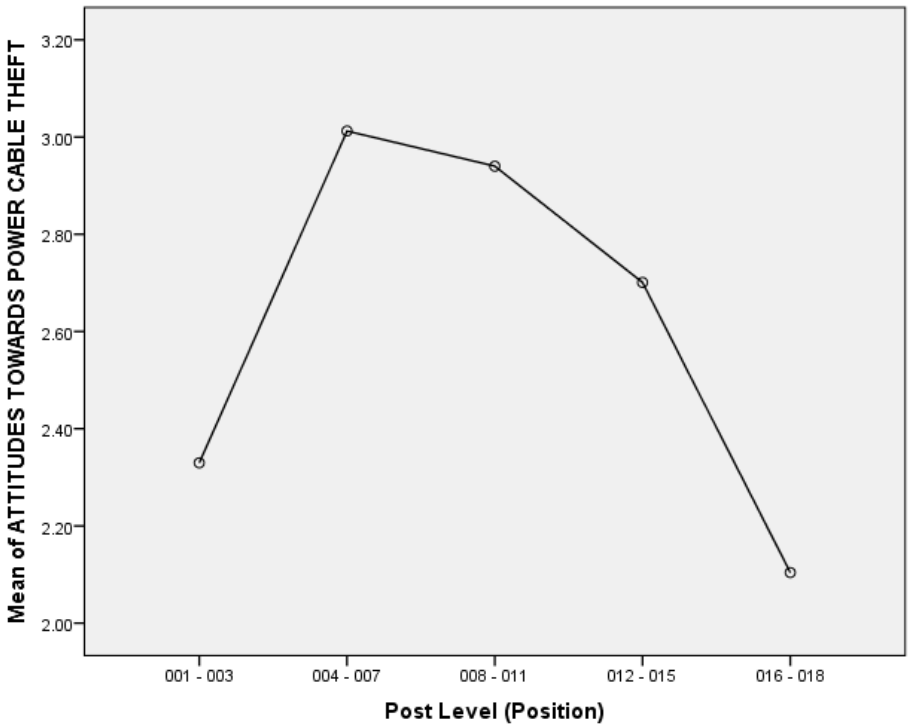

Figure 4.14: Attitude towards power cable theft by post level

4.5.6.7 Effects of time last promoted on attitude regarding theft of power cable

Time last promoted has no significant effect on the attitude towards theft of power cable (F=2.397, df1=3, df2=210, p-value=0.069). However those who were promoted a more than 7 years ago seem to have the most positive attitude (2.94) although this is not significantly higher than the other categories.

4.5.7 ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS IMPLICATED IN THE CABLE THEFT

Another area of interest in this research was to investigate organisational factors that could possibly influence employee cable theft at CENTLEC. This is related to research question 2 that states: Which organisational factors are implicated in cable theft climate at CENTLEC? To investigate this research question, a correlational analysis was carried out on employee perceptions of*: deterrence doctrine; organisational fairness; control environment;* and *attitude towards cable theft*. The results in Table 4.21 provides insight into addressing this research question.

Table 4.21: Organisational factors and attitude towards cable theft

Pearson's Correlations		Perceived Organisational Theft Climate	Perceived Deterrence/ Sanction Doctrine	Perceived Organisational Fairness	Perceived Control Environment	Attitude Regarding Theft In General
Perceived Deterrence/ Sanction Doctrine	Correlation	0.781**				
	p-value	0.000				
	N	204				
Perceived Organisational Fairness	Correlation	0.543**	0.561**			
	p-value	0.000	0.000			
	N	205	200			
Perceived Control Environment	Correlation	0.321**	0.347**	0.646**		
	p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000		
	N	208	203	207		
Attitude Regarding Theft In General	Correlation	0.310**	0.331**	0.251**	0.492**	
	p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	194	190	194	196	
Attitudes Towards Power Cable Theft	Correlation	-0.292**	-0.250**	-0.221**	0.152*	0.099
	p-value	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.026	0.164
	N	210	205	209	213	198

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

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

Firstly, the results in Table 4.21 show that there is significant and negative correlation between *Attitudes Towards Power Cable Theft* and *Perceived Organisational Theft Climate* (correlation=-0.292, n=210, p-value=0.000). This means that positive attitudes towards Power Cable Theft move in opposite directions with Perceived Organisational

Theft Climate. If the theft climate is high, then there will be more negative attitudes towards power cable thefts. If there is a high Organisational theft climate then this will result in people not being worried or even abating power cable theft. Organisational theft climate must decline to have people being proactive in the fight against theft of power cable.

The results also show that there is significant and negative correlation between Attitudes Towards Power Cable Theft and Perceived Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine (correlation=-0.250, n=205, p-value=0.000). In order to interpret this negative correlation, one needs to look at the way the items of the construct of Perceived Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine were measured. Both questions that fell under this construct were such that a high score (5) would be indicating lack of control. Therefore, negative correlation means that the higher the lack of Perceived Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine the lower, or more negative, the Attitudes Towards Power Cable Theft. There is need to cultivate more positive Deterrence/Sanction Doctrine to have more positive attitude towards fighting power cable theft.

The results further show that there is significant and negative correlation between Attitudes Towards Power Cable Theft and Perceived Organisational Fairness (correlation=-0.221, n=209, p-value=0.001). This is a surprising result as it is expected that employees who are treated fairly would generally have a more positive attitude towards the prevention of power cable theft. This does not seem to be the case as it appears like those employees who perceive higher levels of Organisational fairness seem to be the ones not scoring high on attitudes towards the prevention of power cable theft.

The results also show that there is significant and positive correlation between Attitudes Towards Power Cable Theft and Perceived Control Environment (correlation=0.152, n=213, p-value=0.026). This is an expected result since high levels of control are expected to lead to reduced power cable thefts.

Another interesting result is that there is that there is no significant correlation between Attitudes Towards Power Cable Theft and Attitude Regarding Theft In General (correlation=0.099, n=198, p-value=0.164). This means that the things that drive people to steal in general are not necessarily the same that drive them to steal cable theft. This might mean that those who steal power cable are probably those who would not be involved in petty theft. This points to power cable thieves as a special class of its own.

In all cases discussed above, the correlations are of low effect size (all are less than 0.300). This means that, for those correlations that are significant, the causal effects of the factors are not very strong, that is the factors are not strong drivers of power cable theft. This can be interpreted to mean that

4.5.8 DISCUSSION

In the broadest sense, this study is about stealing from own employer. Stealing from one's employer is an ethical decision-making issue. Therefore, copper cable theft by employees of CENTLEC is an ethical decision-making issue that CENTLEC management needs to comprehend and manage appropriately. The discussion therefore commences from an ethical decision-making perspective on cable theft by CENTLEC employees. Because, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985), an extension of the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), is often used to explain ethical decision making, TPB provides a useful framework for comprehending the results of this study on CENTLEC employee thieving behaviour (cable theft).

In addition to TPB, several other lenses can be used to analyse hence comprehend employee theft in general and cable theft by CENTLEC's own employees. Notwithstanding the existence of this myriad of theoretical lenses experts (Kulas *et al*, 2007) suggest that the behavioural approach stands out because stealing is widely acknowledged as a behavioural problem that can emanate from individual or

organisational factors that motivate employees to deviate from norm and steal from own employer. Consequently, it is believed that by identifying individual and organisational factors that promote thieving behaviour, theft will be minimal (Kulas *et al*, 2007).

In terms of organisational factors, the literature review focused on four highly interrelated theoretical lenses that are: the organisational theft climate perspective; organisational deterrence or sanction doctrine perspective; organisational fairness perspective; and the organisational control environment perspective, all of which on their own or collectively serve to understanding *employee motivation to steal* from own employer (Kulas *et al*, 2007). One is therefore also obliged to discuss the findings of this study on these four factors in relation to theory and previous research.

In respect of individual factors, for this study, the personal demographic variable age, gender, level of education, length of service, promotional opportunities and position in the organisation were considered.

The discussion below begins with examination of the findings from the TPB perspective followed by the organisational motivation to steal perspective and ends with discussion of personal variables implicated in the cable theft.

4.5.8.1 Discussion of the results from TPB perspective

According to Ajzen's (1985) TPB, an individual's behaviour can be influenced among others by attitudes, norms and perceived control. It is quite evident from the results (see Table 4.3) that CENTLEC employee behaviour in terms of stealing company cables is related to employee belief that stealing can be justified in certain circumstances thus making this deviant and counterproductive behaviour an attitudinal problem. Secondly, a norm in CENTLEC appears to a conspiracy of silence towards co-worker involvement in cable theft. In other words an organisational norm appears to be condonation of employee thieving behaviour as employees are reluctant to report

co-workers for stealing electricity coper cables (see Table 4.3). Third, the managerial norm in CENTLEC has been reported in Chapter 4 (see Table 4.11) to be that of "softly-softly" approach and indecisiveness towards theft. Notwithstanding that CENTLEC appears to have good internal controls (see Table 4.15), not dealing with theft decisively and swiftly (see Table 4.15) shows that CENTLEC management lack a good understanding and the implications thereof of TPB and its ramifications for cable theft.

4.5.8.2 Organisational motivation to steal electric cables

A compelling key to combating employee theft involves understanding organisational factors that motivate employees to steal (Dzansi *et al*, 2014; Furnham & Taylor, 2011; Tomlinson & Greenberg, 2005). There are a number of compelling arguments for this assertion. For example, the argument is often made that organisational factors can motivate employees to steal from the company regardless of whether or not such an action is perceived by the employee as socially unacceptable (Sauser, 2007). Furnham and Taylor (2011) also opine that behaviour can be influenced and shaped by work environment. For Schmidtke (2007:561), resentment of organizational environment is a common motive to steal from the place of employment.

The study results seem to confirm these notions because with the exception of the control environment, the other three organisational factors namely the theft climate, sanction doctrine, fairness appear to have contrived to motivate employees towards cable theft.

For example, the results in Table 4.3 shows a management culture of softly-softly approach towards fighting theft, indecisive in dealing with theft and leniency with employees who are caught stealing company asset coupled with the culture of employee unwillingness to report co-worker theft, all of which are evidences of a theft climate at CENTLEC that is conducive to thieving behaviour.

In addition to the softly-softly approach towards fighting theft, and the culture of employee unwillingness to report co-worker, the majority (64.6%) of the maintenance staff believing that employees who steal are never caught and 56.3% believing that even if some are caught stealing, they still go unpunished means a low level of deterrence doctrine also known as sanction doctrine.

Also, as can be seen from Table 4.13, the five items that make up the construct of organisational fairness, perceptions on organisational fairness are split in the middle as the means of the five items are all close to 2.5 which is halfway between agreeing and disagreeing meaning that as many as half the employees view CENTLEC as un unfair organisation. Even if half (50%) of the workforce view the organisation as being fair, the fact that as many as half the workforce, 50 percent of the workforce is not happy with CENTLEC's level of fairness to its employees is enough motivation to engage in this counterproductive action of stealing organisational property. It is therefore not surprising that CENTLEC employees have been involved in electricity cable; a view that resonates with Kulas *et al* (2007) who found that the more dissatisfied the employee becomes with the workplace situation, the more likely the employee would be susceptible to steal. It is therefore possible that CENTLEC employee involvement in copper cable theft may be a sense of injustice or unfairness by the management and stealing copper cable may be a way of punishing CENTLEC.

To appreciate the implications of maintenance staff perception regarding control environment in CENTLEC, one can turn to the results depicted in Table 4.15. Notwithstanding that according to Table 4.15, there are low levels of appraisals as far as theft detection (only 48.4% agree that thefts will be detected) and monitoring (only 48.1% believe that managers closely monitor individual activities), since the same Table 4.15 shows that most (59.9%) of the employees believe that the organisation implements secure internal control system.

4.5.8.3 Personal factors implicated in cable theft at CENTLEC

The results in Table 4.18 show that while there are no significant differences in employee perceptions of theft in general based on employee position, lack of promotion and educational level, meaning that these personal factors do not influence attitude towards theft, significant differences were observed in employee perception of theft in general based on gender, age, race and length of employment meaning that employee gender, age, race and length of employment influence their perception of theft.

Concerning personal background factors of CENTLEC employees and attitude towards power cable theft, the results in Table 4.20 shows that gender and promotional opportunities are not significant discriminators meaning these variables do not influence employee attitude towards cable theft. On the other hand, significant differences are observable based on age, race, level of education and post level are significant discriminators meaning that these personal factors influence employee attitude towards cable theft.

4.5.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Electricity copper cable theft has become a national crisis as it not only threatens the bottom line of organisations but equally threatens essential supporting services and life preserving assets as well as private homes, to mention a few of the negative impacts it has. Yet as noted by Pretorius and Prinsloo (2014), very little, if any scientific academic research has so far been conducted concerning the phenomenon. The current research was carried out to comprehend the phenomenon.

Firstly, the results of this study have shown that both organisational and personal factors at CENTLEC appear to motivate CENTLEC employees to be involved in cable theft. Secondly, the results show that that employee gender, age, race and length of employment influence their perception of theft. Thirdly, age, race, level of education

and post level appear to influence employee attitude towards cable theft. These findings have helped in the understanding of copper cable theft by CENTLEC employees. This understanding is now used to derive conclusions and provide recommendations for practice and research in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented and discussed the results of the study. This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of this research.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results, the following conclusions were arrived at in relation to the various research questions investigated.

5.2.1 STAFF PERCEPTION OF ORGANISATIONAL THEFT CLIMATE

The first (1st) research question was, how do CENTLEC maintenance staff perceive the organisational theft climate to be like in CENTLEC? To conclude on this question, the analysis results in Table 4.3 indicated that the overall organisational theft climate is that of softly-softly approach towards fighting theft and even management is indecisive in dealing with theft with a general feeling that management deals leniently with employees who are caught stealing company asset. Furthermore, there is an overwhelming concurrence that co-workers are reluctant to report theft (Table 4.3) - evidence of a conspiracy of silence among fellow workers as far as reporting theft is concerned. **Therefore, it can be concluded that the organisational climate of CENTLEC unfortunately promotes (is conducive to) employee theft.**

5.2.2 STAFF PERCEPTION OF DETERRENCE DOCTRINE

The second (2nd) research question probed CENTLEC maintenance staff perception regarding deterrence also known as sanction doctrine. As found in Chapter 4 (see Table 4.11), the majority (64.6%) of the maintenance staff at CENTLEC believe that employees who steal are never caught while 56.3% believe that even if some are caught stealing, they still go unpunished. Based on this finding, i**t is therefore concluded that the CENTLEC environment does not deter employees from cable theft.**

5.2.3 STAFF PERCEPTION OF ORGANISATIONAL FAIRNESS

The third (3rd) research question investigated was what is CENTLEC maintenance staff perception regarding organisational fairness? As can be seen from Table 4.13, the five items that make up the construct of organisational fairness, perceptions on organisational fairness are split in the middle as the means of the five items are all close to 2.5 which is halfway between agreeing and disagreeing. Even if half (50%) of the workforce view the organisation as being fair, the fact that as many as half the workforce, 50 percent of the workforce is not happy with CENTLEC's level of fairness to its employees **leads one to conclude that employees view CENTLEC as an unfair organisation**.

5.2.4 PERCEPTIONS ORGANISATIONAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

To conclude on research question four (4) which is intended to assess maintenance staff perception regarding control environment in CENTLEC, one can turn to the results depicted in Table 4.15. Notwithstanding that according to Table 4.15, there are low levels of appraisals as far as theft detection (only 48.4% agree that thefts will be detected) and monitoring (only 48.1% believe that managers closely monitor individual activities), since the same Table 4.15 shows the majority of the employees

believe that the organisation implements secure internal control system (59.9%), **one can safely conclude that CENTLEC implements secure internal control system.**

5.2.5 STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF THEFT IN GENERAL

The next conclusion is on research question five (5): what is CENTLEC maintenance staff perceptions regarding theft in general? Table 4.17 provides guidance in this respect. Table 4.17. it is clear from Table 4.17 that only a small percentage (30.23%) do not see anything wrong with the above thieving behaviours meaning the majority (almost 70%) view stealing under any circumstance as wrong.

5.2.6 DEMOGRAPHICS VERSUS PERCEPTIONS OF THEFT IN GENERAL

The research also sought to answer **the question (6)**, which personal background factors of CENTLEC employees are related to perceptions of theft in general and what is the nature of that relationship (if any)? The results in Table 4.18 in Chapter 4 show that there are no significant differences in employee perceptions of theft in general based on employee position, lack of promotion and educational level while significant differences were observed in employee perception of theft in general based on gender, age, race and length of employment. **It can therefore be concluded that employee gender, age, race and length of employment influence their perception of theft but position, lack of promotion and educational level do not.**

5.2.7 STAFF ATTITUDE TOWARDS CABLE THEFT

The seventh (7th) research question was what is CENTLEC maintenance staff attitude towards power cable theft? Table 4.19 shows that only a minority (49%) of respondents detest cable theft (agree/strongly agree to positive action on issues

pertaining to cable theft). This could be interpreted to mean that more than half (51%) of the employees have attitudes that promote the theft of power cables. **It is therefore concluded that based on the results of this study, CENTLEC employees appear to support or condone cable theft.**

5.2.8 DEMOGRAPHICS VERSUS ATTITUDE TOWARDS CABLE THEFT

Concerning **research question eight (8)** which has to do with the relationship between personal background factors of CENTLEC employees and attitude towards power cable theft, the results in Table 4.20 shows that gender and promotional opportunities are not significant discriminators while, significant differences are observable based on age, race, level of education and post level are significant discriminators at the 0.01 level of significance. Based on this result, **one can conclude that age, race, level of education and post level influence CENTLEC employee's attitude towards cable theft.**

5.2.9 ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS VS. ATTITUDE TOWARDS CABLE THEFT

The final research **question (9)** for this study was, which of the four organisational factors (Theft Climate; Deterrence/ Sanction Doctrine; Organisational Fairness; and Control Environment) investigated are related to employee attitude towards power cable theft and what is the nature of that relationship (if any)?

The results in Table 4.21 show that there is significant relationship between attitude towards cable theft and all organisational factors considered. It is therefore concluded that the organisational factors: **Theft Climate; Deterrence/ Sanction Doctrine; Organisational Fairness; and Control Environment influence CENTLEC employees attitude towards cable theft.**

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the literature review, the empirical research findings from this study and the conclusions drawn based on the findings, the following recommendations are made to guide practice and further research.

5.3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

As stated in Chapters 1 and 4, the overarching aim of the study is twofold. The first is to come up with behavioural strategies that can be used by management of CENTLEC and similar organisations to positively influence employees' perceptions and behaviour towards vandalism and theft and the second one is to find ways in which CENTLEC and similar organisations can build an institutional culture of morally acceptable behaviour in the work place including a culture of restraint / tolerance towards organisational infrastructure. The recommendations for practice are directed at achieving these aims.

Agreeing that CWB or NOCB can be because of both situational (organisational) and individual factors (Furnham & Taylor, 2011; Dzansi *et al*, 2014), the recommendations for practice focus on individual employee measures on the one and organisational measures that can help CENTLEC to fight employee involvement in cable theft.

The second recommendation is aimed at enabling CENTLEC to improve upon its prevailing organisational theft climate which was found to be a "softly-softly" approach towards fighting theft; the reported management indecisiveness in dealing with theft; the general feeling that management deals leniently with employees who are caught stealing company asset; as well as co-workers reluctance to report theft (evidence of a conspiracy of silence among fellow workers as far as reporting theft is concerned). In the first place, one is tempted to believe that management is unaware of the harm being caused by the apparent leniency in dealing with employee theft. However, one

of the keys to combating employee theft involves understanding why employees steal or are motivated to steal (Furnham & Taylor, 2011; Tomlinson & Greenberg, 2005). Therefore, management education needs to make CENTLEC appreciate the concept of organisational theft climate and how such leniency and indecisiveness can encourage employee thieving behaviour.

Still on organisational theft climate, the observed conducive climate for theft raises many other questions and possibilities besides leniency in dealing with employee theft that CENTLEC management needs to confront head on. Deplorable work environment and employees' perceptions of management unfairness towards them could trigger retaliatory acts such as theft. In other words, employee behaviour can be influenced and shaped by work environment (Furnham & Taylor, 2011; Dzansi *et al* 2014). Could it be that employees are simply expressing resentment towards CENTLEC in line with Schmidtke (2007:561) because they work under deplorable or unfair working conditions? In other words, are CENTLEC employees trying to restore some parity? Or, are they trying to communicate to management about their frustrations through this retaliatory act of cable theft? These are pertinent questions whose answers can assist CENTLEC management in addressing its employee involvement in cable theft. To get answers, CENTLEC will have to take stock of its work environment. Once that is done, management can then take informed corrective measures where needed.

The reluctance of employees to report co-worker theft is an indictment on the 'anti-theft' or deterrence doctrine existing in CENTLEC. Given that employee theft is largely opportunistic, or they steal because they can (Tomlinson & Greenberg, 2005; Sandberg 2003) with impunity knowing that little or no sanctions will happen and that co-workers are not going to report.

Stealing from one's employer is an ethical decision-making issue. Therefore, copper cable theft by employees of CENTLEC is an ethical decision-making issue that CENTLEC management needs to comprehend and manage appropriately. The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985), an extension of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), is often used to explain ethical decision making hence

provides a useful framework for addressing CENTLEC employee thieving behaviour (cable theft). According to Ajzen's (1985) theory of planned behaviour, an individual's behaviour can be influenced among others by attitudes, norms and perceived control. As can be seen from the results in Chapter 4, it is clear that CENTLEC employee behaviour in terms of stealing company cables is related to the majority believing that stealing on certain circumstances – an attitudinal problem. Secondly, the norm (as far as employees are concerned) in CENTLEC appears to condone employee thieving behaviour as employees are reluctant to report co-workers for stealing electricity coper cables. Third, the managerial norm in CENTLEC has been reported in Chapter 4 to be that of "softly-softly" approach and indecisiveness towards theft. Notwithstanding that CENTLEC appears to have good internal controls, not dealing with theft decisively and swiftly shows that CENTLEC management lack a good understanding of the theory of reasoned action and its ramifications for CENTLEC in terms of cable theft.

Besides the above, the observed bigger representation of males (72%) than females (28%) in the study (see Figure 4.1) is a challenge for a public-sector institution like CENTLEC in terms of promoting and ensuring gender equity. Given the imperatives of the Employment Equity Act no. 55 of 1998 (RSA, 1998), CENTLEC will in line with SAHRC (2012) must jerk up its "internal processes, policies, practices, procedures and mechanisms so as to promote and ensure gender equity in the workplace" especially through a recruitment policy that targets females.

5.3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is need to investigate why CENTLEC employees are reluctant to report co-worker theft. Could it be that such "whistle blowers" feel unprotected?

Also, since employee behaviour can be influenced and shaped by work environment (Furnham & Taylor, 2011; Dzansi *et al* 2014) research on CENTLEC employee involvement in cable theft can focus on answering the questions:

- Are employees simply expressing resentment towards CENTLEC in line with Schmidtke (2007:561) because they work under deplorable or unfair working conditions?
- Are CENTLEC employees trying to restore some parity by resorting to cable theft of own employer?
- Are CENTLEC employees trying to communicate to management about some frustrations through this retaliatory act of cable theft?

5.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The result of this research indicates that electric copper cable theft by CENTLEC employees can be attributed to both organisational factors. It is therefore imperative that management of CENTLEC take necessary steps to address organisational factors that create the opportunity for own employees to get involved in this criminal and anti-organisational act. It is also clear that because prevention is always better than finding a cure, every organisation including CENTLEC will benefit from proper screening of employees so that potential employees with predisposition to thieving behaviour can be identified and not employed in the first place.

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ANNEXURE A

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: PLEASE PROVIDE THE ANSWER THAT BEST APPLIES TO YOUR PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCE													
1.	Gender	1 Male						2 Female					
2.	Age group	Up to 25 years 1		(26-35) years 2		(36-45) years 4		(46-55) years 5		56 or more years 6			
3.	Racial group	1 Black						2 White					
4.	Education level	Below Matric 1		Matric or equivalent 2		Trade certificate up to matric level 3		Trade certificate above matric level but below Diploma 4					
		Degree/ Diploma or equivalent 5		Post grad. Dip or equivalent 6				Honours/ BTech degree 7		Masters degree and upwards 8			
5.	Length of employment	Over 10 years 4			6-10 years 3			2-5 years 2		Up to 1 year 1			
6.	Post level (position)	(001-003) 1	(004-007) 2		(008-011) 3			(012-015) 4		(016-018) 5			
7.	Time last promoted	7 or more years ago 4			(4-6) years ago 3			(1-3) years ago 2		Never 1			
SECTION B: Please state your agreement/ disagreement with the following statements								4 Strongly agree		3 Agree		2 Disagree	1 Strongly disagree
PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL THEFT CLIMATE													
8.	Management deals leniently with employees who are caught for theft of company asset							4		3		2	1
9.	Immediate supervisors do not always take action against subordinates caught stealing							4		3		2	1
10	Co-workers are reluctant to report theft							4		3		2	1
PERCEIVED DETERRENCE/SANCTION DOCTRINE													
11	Majority of our employees who steal are never caught							4		3		2	1
12	Even when employees are caught stealing, they often go unpunished							4		3		2	1
PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL FAIRNESS													
13	Good job done by employees always get rewarded							4		3		2	1
14	Employees are paid at levels appropriate for their qualifications							4		3		2	1
15	Employees are paid at levels appropriate for their skills							4		3		2	1
16	Employees are paid at levels appropriate for their work-related experience							4		3		2	1
17	Employees are paid adequately for their responsibilities							4		3		2	1
PERCEIVED CONTROL ENVIRONMENT													
18	The organisation implements secure internal control system							4		3		2	1
19	It is possible for employees to commit theft without being ever discovered by the organisation 4.							4		3		2	1
20	Management closely monitor individual's activities within the organisation.							4		3		2	1
ATTITUDE REGARDING THEFT IN GENERAL													
21	If I ever get the opportunity I will claim expenses that I actually did not incur							4		3		2	1
22	If I ever get the opportunity I will claim travelling expense that are personal							4		3		2	1
23	If I have the means, I will run a side business that may compete with employer's business 4.9.3							4		3		2	1
24	If I ever get the opportunity I will claim overtime hours than I actually worked for							4		3		2	1
25	Sometimes, theft is justifiable							4		3		2	1
26	It is sometimes justifiable to come late to work and not report it							4		3		2	1
27	It is sometimes justifiable to leave work early without permission							4		3		2	1
28	It is sometimes justifiable to be absent with no excuse							4		3		2	1
29	Faking illness is sometimes justifiable							4		3		2	1
30	Pretending to work to avoid being allocated new work is sometimes justifiable							4		3		2	1
31	I see nothing wrong with taking company supplies for personal use							4		3		2	1
32	Stealing company property is a good way of getting back at an employer who exploits employees							4		3		2	1
ATTITUDES TOWARDS POWER CABLE THEFT													
33	When I see a co-worker stealing electric power cable I will report it							4		3		2	1
34	When I see a person who is not a co-worker and whom I do not know or I am not related to me stealing electric power cable I will report it							4		3		2	1
35	When I see a person who is not a co-worker but who I know or is related to me stealing electric power cable I will report it							4		3		2	1
36	In my opinion anyone caught stealing power cables should be given stiff penalty even if he/she is a first offender							4		3		2	1