



**THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ON
ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY: CASE STUDY OF UVS**

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beautiful daughters Yazı and Ziza who through their innocent eyes encourage me to be the best version of myself. I hope, all the time spent away from them, in my pursuit for knowledge, will teach them the importance of following and achieving their own dreams.

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ABSTRACT

There is no evidence that links employee engagement to high productivity in the sugar industry. Low levels of engagement have been observed in the South African manufacturing industry. The objective of this study was to establish the factors that influence employee engagement at Umhlathuze Valley Sugar (UVS) and to ascertain the impact of the relationship between employee engagement and productivity, to highlight areas of focus to UVS for a sustainable future. A quantitative study was done with a random sampling design used to explore the impact of employee engagement on productivity. The sample group (N= 73) was made up of female and male UVS staff. The employee engagement questionnaire that was used looked at different facets of employee engagement, these were; employee commitment towards their work, internal communication and how leadership style affects their engagement levels, employee well-being and how person job-fit influenced employee engagement. The organizational productivity questionnaire used also looked at various facets, which included; employee punctuality, commitment of employee to produce high quality work and meet deadlines, employee absenteeism and minimisation of waste to improve productivity. The study used descriptive statistics to analyse the data. The findings from the study indicate that UVS has a sufficiently engaged workforce, but there is a significant room for improvement. The participants also revealed an awareness of the impact of their engagement levels towards company productivity. However, in terms of job satisfaction and employee well-being, UVS employees are dissatisfied with their compensation packages and the lack of support in as far as work conditions are concerned. Employee motivation directed towards improving employee contribution towards productivity, HR policies aimed at creating an inclusive workplace as well strategies of improving workplace conditions, are some of the recommendations from this study. Finally, the study recommends that a similar research be conducted to include the entire sugar industry in South Africa.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The study seeks to establish factors that influence employee engagement at Umhlathuze Valley Sugar (UVS), while further exploring the influence of engagement on workplace productivity.

1.2 Background

The fact that employees are physically present and working in their workplaces does not necessarily mean they are engaged. Employee engagement is a psychological and physical demonstration of what the employee understands of his/her role in the organization, and the commitment of stewardship that manifests in high productivity levels in his/her work (Kahn, 1990). Employees that speak positively about their organizations and those that feel a sense of belonging are also those that remain loyal and will concern themselves with productivity in their roles. It is these types of employees that UVS should strive to have, as they exhibit what is known as engagement characteristics. Based on employees' experiences, the study seeks to measure their engagement characteristics, establish what prevents them from engaging and determine how engagement influences productivity. Despite the acknowledgement of its importance in business, low levels of employee engagement are reported, globally. Various studies like Mishra et.al (2015), Karatepe (2013) and Kang and Sung (2015), show a strong positive correlation of higher levels of employee engagement with stronger business performance or productivity.

In the United States (US), only 32% of employees are actively engaged (Mann and Harter, 2016). Mann and Harter (2016) estimate that a 21% increase in organizational profitability could result from improving employee engagement levels in organizations. It is also estimated that the effect of the disengaged workforce costs \$ 11 billion per annum, in the US only. According to 2017, global trends in employee engagement, just 24% of employees

are reported to be highly engaged and the engagement levels are seen to have retracted in the last year (Adair et al., 2017).

The Gallup survey that was conducted this year submits that 9 percent of the South African workforce is actively engaged (Engagement, 2017). It is revealed that 45% of the South African workforce was found to be actively disengaged at work. The Gallup's survey reported that less than 20% of the South African workforce felt that their wellbeing was supported and their career development encouraged. Leadership and communication were the major shortfalls, resulting in low engagement levels in South Africa.

A 60% majority of the South African workforce believe they have neither autonomy nor opportunity to contribute to issues that affect their work (Gallup, 2016). Out of the South Africans surveyed, 20% felt no connection to their work. Clearly, further work into the development and enhancement of engagement strategies to improve the levels of employee engagement still needs to be done in South Africa. There is no quick fix to the employee engagement challenge; however, such studies can offer strategies and recommendations for implementation to enhance it.

Kahn (1990) described employee engagement as “the employment and expression of a person’s preferred self in task behaviours. Employee engagement has emerged in business, as one of the key factors for organisations to prioritize to remain competitive. Some of the most important work that on employee engagement is by Geldenhuys, M., Laba, K., & Venter, C. (2014), who examined the relationship between meaningful work and work engagement. They found that a positive relationship exists between psychological meaningfulness and work engagement, and that meaningful work plays a significant role in sustaining employee commitment and thus productivity within the organisation. Steger, M., Dik, B., & Duffy, R. (2012), share the same sentiments on work being meaningful to employees, and further state that it contributes to the core of the organisation. Similarly Rothmann and Welsh (2013) investigated the role of psychological conditions in employee engagement using a cross sectional design. Their results confirm the significant role played by psychological meaningfulness and psychological availability in employee engagement. According to Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2014), during the process of engagement, employees become self-motivated and are driven and energized to perform to the organization’s expectations. Their study presents motivation as a construct and a predictor of employee

engagement and organizational outcomes. Other major studies are by Ghadi, M., Fernando, M., & Caputi, P. (2013), Anitha (2013), Guest (2014); and Kaliannan and Adjovu (2014) who examined the relationships between variables such as transformational leadership, compensation, training and development, workplace well-being, team and co-worker and work environment, with employee engagement. All their findings agree that these factors determine the extent to which employees will be engaged. They also found that these factors were, in most cases, predictors of employee engagement. Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2014) identified five-employee engagement levels according to the level at which the individual contributes towards the organizational goals. These five different levels are namely: the engaged, almost engaged, honeymooners, crash burners and the disengaged employees. Their study highlights the importance of managing employees effectively to boost employee engagement levels.

Whilst Berdarkar and Pandita (2014) and Soni (2013) also did some research on the effect of drivers such as communication and the culture of respect as well as transparency in the workplace, on employee engagement. Their studies also highlight these as key drivers. The importance of job crafting and person job-fit was studied by Tims, M., Bakker, A., & Derks, D. (2013). Their findings suggest that if employees craft their own jobs by either increasing their job demands through resources or matching their demand-abilities to fit their jobs; they optimize their person-job fit, and as a result, experience a sense of meaning in their work.

The Self-Determining Theory (SDT) will be used for this study. This theory was used to study human motivation, personality and optimal functioning and proposes that there are motivational orientations which guide human behaviour which play a significant role in regulating healthy behaviour and psychological well-being (Geldenhuis et al., 2014).

Studies done by Meyer and Gagne (2008), Geldenhuis et al. (2014) and Barrick et al. (2013) believe that the theory to guide employee engagement research and practice is the SDT. In their studies, they look at employee engagement from a SDT point of view and identify the underlying mechanisms as being the satisfaction of employees' basic psychological needs for job competency, autonomy and relatedness. Their studies support that there is enough evidence in literature to show that SDT is an applicable theory that can be used as a framework, predicting organizational productivity because of employee engagement. Thus, SDT is used in this study because of the three-identified basic psychological needs that

contribute to humans thriving at work, which include competency, autonomy and relatedness.

Other major studies that are relevant to employee engagement and its impact on productivity were done by Karanges et al. (2014b), Wellins et al. (2017), Farouk (2014), Pansari and Kumar (2017); and Kaliannan and Adjovu (2014). Literature clearly points out a relationship between key drivers of engagement and organizational outcomes. Other research concerning the topic relates to the barriers that hinder employee engagement. Studies cite the importance of enhancing employee engagement in organizations as an investment that can bring forth good returns. Strategies such as improved leadership, improving work design, improved communication and training are cited amongst the most influential by Anitha (2013) and Jose and Mampilly (2012).

Further enquiry on the topic should be on the training of managers and business leaders on employee engagement as a business tool so they can contribute to the cultivation of a productive work environment and employee well-being. It is also apparent that there is a lack of research in terms of the barriers of engagement and whether strategies, such as effective leadership, “blue ocean”, and good internal communication, could enhance engagement in organisations.

Previous research on the variables has been conducted extensively; however, it has not been effectively examined within the South African context. Most of the available literature on the concept is from other African countries, US, Europe and Asia. It is imperative that employee engagement be understood from the South African perspective. The unique cultural values and beliefs that South Africans have could pose different findings to what other countries have revealed. South African respondents can interpret employee engagement differently.

1.3 Focus of the study

The study focused on employee engagement at UVS to establish the impact it has on company productivity.

1.4 Problem Statement

Studies which have been conducted and data collected by previous researchers strongly link employee engagement to business performance. Various studies such as Mishra et.al (2015), Karatepe (2013), Kang, and Sung (2015), show a strong positive correlation of higher levels of employee engagement with stronger business performance or productivity. Implications for the sugar industry include a high staff turnover hence a loss of experience and skill, high frequency injury rate (HFRI) incidents that ultimately lead to low productivity. A lot of work needs to be done to establish working strategies that can enhance employee engagement in organizations. This study seeks to find solutions to enhance the low employee engagement levels reported in SA, using a sample of UVS employees as participants.

Several studies have been conducted on employee engagement, commitment and organisational productivity (Ongel, 2014, Ahmed and Dajani, 2015, Wellins et al., 2017). However, there is a dearth of academic research in this area (Gems, 2015). The levels of employee engagement in the sugar industry have not been studied. The levels of employee engagement at UVS and the relationship between employee engagement and productivity have not been researched. There is no available evidence on the link between employee engagement and high work performance leading to organisational outcomes, in the South African sugar industry context. Previous researchers have not shown that employee engagement is an intervening variable for productivity in the sugar industry. There is also a gap in terms of available evidence to show the effect of hierarchies at work, leadership and work life balance, on employee engagement, in the sugar industry.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this quantitative study was twofold. Firstly, it was to analyse the factors for employee engagement and disengagement at UVS. Secondly, the purpose was to evaluate the causal relationship between employee engagement with productivity, employee commitment, leadership style and work environment. The quantitative approach was chosen because the study seeks to establish the relationship between employee engagement and selected outcomes of the company. The independent variable, employee engagement and the dependent variable, productivity, were measured, using work environment as a moderating variable and leadership style as a mediating variable.

1.6 Research Objectives

The specific objectives that will drive the study are:

- To identify factors that influence employee engagement or disengagement at UVS.
- To establish the relationship between employee engagement, performance and commitment at UVS.
- To establish the relationship between internal communication and leadership style on employee engagement.
- To establish the relationship between job-fit and employee engagement.
- To determine the role of work environment on employee engagement
- To suggest interventions to improve employee engagement and address the employee engagement gap at UVS.

1.7 Research questions

For this study, the following questions are answered:

- What factors influence employee engagement or disengagement at UVS?
- What relationship exists between employee engagement, performance and commitment at UVS?

- What is the relationship between communication and leadership style with employee engagement?
- What is the relationship between job-fit and employee engagement?
- What is the role of work environment on employee engagement?
- What interventions are required to improve employee engagement at UVS?

1.8 Operational definitions

For this research, productivity and positive organizational outcomes will be used interchangeably. Productivity refers to the employees' continuous efforts to be able to change inputs into outputs using efficiently and sustainably in pursuit of meeting the organisational goals (Ariani, 2013). Productivity is a product of organisational outcome. In terms of the study, it will refer to the level of focus employees have in their work and their willingness to go the extra mile for task completion. An employee refers to all members of staff from all levels in the organisation, who work for the UVS. Employee engagement will refer to the level of ownership, commitment and loyalty the employee feels towards UVS.

1.9 Scope of the study

The study explores employee engagement and productivity in a single company within the SA sugar industry, UVS. The study did not measure actual business performance and profitability as a product of an engaged workforce. The study analysed the relationship of employee engagement with productivity and offers easy to implement strategies that the organisation can use to increase engagement levels.

1.10 Significance of the study

Companies like UVS are passionate about the training and development of its employees, because productivity and customer satisfaction are at the heart of the organisation's objectives. The study is thus important as employee engagement helps to drive the

performance of employees in the organisation to meet the pre-determined targets for organizational productivity (Board, 2004).

Considering the above, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact that employee engagement has on organisational productivity at UVS and to come up with recommendations to enhance employee engagement for the benefit of improving productivity. The expectation is that this study will inform UVS management and other organizations that in order to improve organisational productivity, one of the major focus areas should be ensuring that employees are engaged.

This study also aims to highlight the importance of maintaining a quality work life, by having managers who will nurture the employee well-being, which then provides an excellent opportunity for employees' motivation and job satisfaction.

This study is geared at assisting UVS management and other organizations to manage differently for competitive advantage and to lead an engaged workforce that will be sustainable to be able to better deal with organisational change and challenges in the future.

1.11 Structure of the Dissertation

The study is organised into five chapters. The overall introduction in chapter one, gives the background to the study, the research problem and lists the objectives and questions that the study will answer. The hypothesis, including the significance of the study is given in this chapter as well as the scope of the study.

Chapter Two comprises of the review of literature, employee engagement models and the proposed conceptual model. The global perspective on literature is given as well as gaps identified in the research.

In Chapter Three, the research methodology that was followed is explained wherein the research design and approach are outlined. The sampling technique and size together with

the target population are presented. The data collection instrument that was used, data quality control, validity, reliability, and ethical considerations are also explained.

Chapter Four presents the findings on the relationship between employee engagement and productivity at UVS. This chapter gives the researcher's interpretation of the employees' responses to the impact of employee engagement and productivity in the organisation.

A comprehensive discussion of the findings, by addressing each research question separately and then drawing on what the literature has revealed in relation to the deductions made, is also provided.

Chapter Five comprises of the summary of the entire dissertation, the conclusions drawn on the major findings of the study as well as recommendations for practice and policy. Recommendations for future research are included.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will conduct a literature review to establish what previous researchers have discovered on the relationship between employee engagement and productivity. It will start by presenting the theoretical framework that will be explained to shed light on the background of the study and then give definitions of the two constructs, employee engagement and productivity. The literature review will include both quantitative and qualitative studies. A global perspective on employee engagement together with the literature on engagement surveys will be given. Thereafter, prior studies that examined the drivers of employee engagement will be discussed followed by a review of the relationship between employee engagement and organizational outcomes. The barriers to employee engagement and the relevant engagement models have also been included. The summary gives a conclusion of the key findings from the literature reviews that have had a significant contribution through their findings. Lastly, a conceptual framework is drawn whereby the relationship between independent and dependent variable is shown. For this research, productivity and positive organizational outcomes will be used interchangeably.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The Self Determination Theory (SDT) was used to study human motivation, personality and best functioning. Literature shows that the quality of motivation is what matters in predicting successful outcomes more than the amount of motivation. As described by Cherry (2016), SDT is centred on three psychological needs and is driven by intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. For people to engage, they need to feel competent, connected and autonomous.

As applied to the study, if people experience positive meaning in their work, they become motivated to perform better because they experience a psychological sense of connectedness, competency and autonomy. People want more than just a salary, and are looking for a sense of belonging in their organisations and when they feel this, they become

more engaged and motivated. According to Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2014) during the process of engagement the employee becomes self-motivated and is driven and energised to perform and thus increasing productivity. Employee engagement represents a motivational assemble and a forecaster of organizational outcomes.

Theories such as social exchange theory (SET) and self-determination theory (SDT) have been advanced to explain employee engagement and organisational performance. In this study, SDT provides a framework to study employee engagement at UVS. The SDT claims that people are often motivated by external factors such as reward system, grades, evaluations or the opinions others have of them. It further explains that there is an interchange between these extrinsic forces with the intrinsic motives and individual needs.

The formal SDT has six mini-theories, which are summarized below:

2.2.1 Cognitive evaluation theory

Cognitive evaluation theories discern between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The theory assumes that the different types of motivation activate different reactions towards work. For example, intrinsically motivated employees will be more absorbed, interested and creative in their jobs, as opposed to extrinsically motivated ones who will be working with the objective of receiving tangible rewards.

2.2.2 Organismic integration theory (OiT)

The organismic integration theory assumes that extrinsically motivated behaviour is regulated in different ways. OiT proposes that when an employee can relate and feels competent in their job, they will internalize their job activities.

2.2.3 Causality orientation theory

Causality orientation theory assumes that the way people acquaint themselves to their surroundings influence how they will be motivated to perform. This theory proposes three types of orientations, which are:

- Autonomous orientations which are a result of an employee being satisfied with their basic needs
- Strong controlled orientation, which are a result of the level at which the employee is competent and can relate to their work.
- Impersonal orientations, resulting from an employee's inability to meet all three of these needs.

2.2.4 Basic psychological needs theory

The basic psychological needs theory assumes that human beings have three basic psychological needs: a need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Deci and Ryan (2014) have shown that need satisfaction is necessary for people's healthy development, engagement, motivation, and well-being. The three basic psychological needs are present and need to be satisfied at all levels of human functioning at the specific-task level (a given job task), at the domain level (work or family), and at the global level (personality) (Deci and Ryan, 2014).

2.2.5 Goal contents theory

According to SDT, people will be driven by goals, and some of these goals that individuals pursue are more likely to promote wellbeing than other goals (Kasser and Ryan, 1996). In particular, some goals, such as those that relate to community support, personal growth, and the formation of close relationships are called intrinsic (Kasser and Ryan, 1996). These goals foster autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Consequently, these goals which seem enjoyable, challenging, fulfilling, and important, are called intrinsic motivation (Kasser and Ryan, 1996). These motivations then enhance persistence and improve human wellbeing.

2.2.6 Relationships motivation theory

People want to feel connected and meaningfully related to others (Deci and Ryan, 2014). According to SDT, there is a fundamental psychological need for a human being to experience relatedness. People find relatedness to be inherently satisfying and thus essential to human wellness because they require it to be vital and to thrive (Deci and Ryan, 2014).

Meyer and Gagne (2008) used the SDT theory in their study on employee engagement and identified psychological needs for job competency, autonomy and relatedness as underlying factors for employee engagement. Meyer and Gagne (2008) believe that a theory that can be used to guide research and practice on employee engagement is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). In their article, they look at employee engagement from a SDT perspective and identify the underlying mechanisms as being the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs for job competency, autonomy and relatedness. Their study further proposes that there is enough evidence to support that a lack of satisfaction leads to poorer performance and reduces psychological well-being. The outcomes of their research reveal a strong relationship between a good psychological well-being of employee and employee engagement.

A quantitative study done by Geldenhuys et al. (2014) also used the SDT theory in their study that sought to examine the relationship between meaningful work and work engagement. The findings from Geldenhuys et al. (2014) reveal that there is a positive relationship between psychological meaningfulness and work engagement and that meaningful work has a contribution to sustaining employee commitment and thus productivity in the organization.

Karanges et al. (2014) recently investigated whether social factors, such as communication, influence employee engagement. Their study was based on the social exchange theory, which is considered one of the theoretical paradigms that can be used to explain the relationship at work. The study used an online self-administered survey on 200 non-executives, to test the theoretical model. The findings show that organizations should focus on internal communication to build higher levels of engagement.

Similarly, Barrick et al. (2013) agree with previous studies conducted by Meyer and Gagne (2008) about the psychological mechanisms that drive employee behaviour. Using the assumption in the theory of purposeful work behaviour, which is embedded in the SDT, they suppose that work behaviour is purposeful as driven by personality trait, and when motivational forces are coordinated with this, employees experience meaningfulness in their psychological state. In addition, they elaborate that the meaningfulness experienced triggers task specific motivation processes which in turn influence the achievement of work outcomes, for example productivity.

In congruence with previous studies, Tims et al. (2013) sought to gain knowledge on the impact that job crafting has on person-job fit as well as job meaningfulness. Their research findings suggest that if employees craft their jobs by increasing their job demands (support and autonomy); a situation of demands- abilities fit is created. In this way, employees can optimize their person–job fit, and as a result, they experience meaningfulness in their work. According to Steger et al. (2012) when employees find work motivating and meaningful, it contributes to the core of the organization, in terms of high levels of performance. Their findings propose that when psychological meaningfulness exists, organizational commitment is achieved and thus invariably, work engagement will be the outcome.

2.3 Review of relevant literature

2.3.1 Employee Engagement

AbuKhalifer and Som (2013) defined employee engagement as “a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organisation and its value”. An engaged employee is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization.”

Stated differently, employee engagement is “the harnessing of organization members selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances.” (Abrahams, 2012)

Menguc et al. (2013) defined employee engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption”. Whilst Mani, (2011) defined employee engagement as “the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards his organization and its values.”

Mishra et al. (2015) defined employee engagement as “the degree to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of their roles”. Ariani (2013) defined employee

engagement, as “the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s preferred self in task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, emotional) and active, full performances.

Summative definition

From the definitions given, employee engagement is psychological and physical demonstration that the employee understands his/her role in the organization, and the commitment of stewardship that is manifested in high productivity levels in his/her work.

2.3.2 Productivity

Ali et al. (2013) defined productivity as “that which people can produce with the least effort”. They went further to say that productivity “is a ratio to measure how well an organization (or individual, industry, country) converts input resources (labour, materials, machines etc.) into goods and services. “In addition, productivity refers to the “effort that individuals can produce with the least effort by putting labour, material, and machines.”

Atkinson (2013) defined productivity as “an economic output per unit of input as the unit of input can be labour hours (labour productivity) or all production factors including labour, machines and energy (total factor of productivity).”

Feige et al. (2013) defined productivity as “the ratio of output to input depending on the context and content of the output measure (e.g. products, services, market shares, value) and input measure (e.g. cash, labour, energy, materials, and work environment).”

In their critical review of literature, Yi and Chan (2013) defined productivity as the efficiency and the rate at which goods are produced. They further described it as “being used to denote a relationship between output and the associated inputs used in the production process.” It is “a measure of outputs which are obtained by a combination of inputs.”

Meyer et al. (2014) state that the definitions of productivity share characteristics of typically being about efficiency, inputs and outputs. They used an example of the Oxford Dictionary defines productivity as “effectiveness of productive effort, especially in industry, as measured in terms of the rate of output per unit of input.”

Summative definition

In summation, productivity refers to the employees’ continuous efforts to be able to convert inputs into outputs efficiently and sustainably in pursuit of meeting the organisational goals.

2.3.3 Employee Engagement: a global perspective

On a global scale, an employee engagement crisis is being reported. The percentage of highly engaged employees is reported to be 13% (Mann and Harter, 2016) and 26% are reported to be “actively disengaged” by Bersin (2015). Mann and Harter (2016) identified various factors that lead to the stagnant engagement levels in the world. Approaches that would lead to changes in individual performance, these approaches must be supported by strategic and tactical development and solutions that will yield change to organizational culture, are what is needed (Mann and Harter, 2016).

Bersin (2015) has revealed five critical elements that make an organization irresistible and drive employee engagement on a global scale. These elements make up the new model of employee engagement for winning organizations throughout the world.

These elements are:

- *Make work meaningful*

This plays the most important role in employee engagement. This element is concerned with making sure that the right people are placed in the right jobs for them to find meaning in what they do and given the tools and autonomy to succeed (Bersin, 2015).

- *Foster great management*

This element refers to the clear instructions and expectations given to employees to establish alignment amongst teams. This creates transparency, teamwork and more work gets done (Bersin, 2015).

- *Establish a flexible, humane, inclusive workplace*

This study draws that 68% of women prefer a more flexible and supportive work environment than to make more money, and men would consider working fewer hours a week. Research show that flexi working hours and a good work-life balance have a positive impact on employee engagement (Bersin, 2015).

- *Create ample opportunities for growth*

This element puts an emphasis on a learning culture in an organization as a key strategy for irresistible organizations. If employees do not feel as though their career development is being supported thorough training, coaching etc., they are likely to disengage (Bersin, 2015).

- *Establish vision, purpose and transparency in leadership*

Leadership style and communication directly affect employee engagement. Communicating a sense of purpose to employees and their contribution to the organization's vision is important to keep employees engaged.

Company (2015) conducted a survey on employee engagement covering 13 countries excluding SA. China and U.S were the two countries found to have the most engaged employees. Employee engagement is driven by certain elements in different countries, for example, in the US, what determines employee engagement is whether employees can identify with the company mission statement, whilst in UK and India, the indicator is whether the employees value being around co-workers who shared their values. In other countries, what determined employee engagement was a strong positive link to employee

relations and support, whereby teammates support each other at work. In SA, the involvement of employees in decision making and employee empowerment ranked high in the list of engagement indicators (Vittee, 2015).

2.3.4 Employee engagement surveys

Kumar and Pansari (2015) conducted a study that developed a comprehensive scorecard to measure employee engagement in organizations. The study categorised companies along a continuum of being “disengaged” to “highly engaged. “It used 208 participants who are managers at 52 companies. The scorecard was then implemented in 75 companies on three continents (North America, Europe and Asia). The results indicate that an organization’s overall employee engagement level is directly influenced by the components of employee engagement (employee satisfaction, commitment, loyalty and performance) and are therefore the result of the aggregation of these components.

In illustrating the benefits of measuring employee engagement and working on strategies to improve employee engagement, a follow-up study was conducted by Kumar & Pansari, (2015) with 75 companies. The findings revealed that companies with higher levels of employee engagement showed higher levels of profits derived from productivity. Eight companies that moved from a low level of employee engagement (disengaged) in the first year to showed a 19% average increase in earnings per share the following year. Furthermore, two companies that moved from a moderate level of employee engagement in the first year to the highest level of engagement the following year showed a 132% average increase in earnings per share.

Berdarkar and Pandita (2014) conducted a literature review to explore the concept of employee engagement and also shed light on key drivers of employee engagement by analyzing specifically three drivers, namely communication, worklife balance and leadership. This study also analyzed how these drivers impact the level of employee performance and wellbeing at workplace of the employees. The study concluded that employees are a key asset to any organization and if they are not given the right space and time to make a perfect blend of work and fun at workplace, then the sense of dis-engagement sets in. Organization and employees are both dependent on each other to fulfil their goals and objectives therefore, employee engagement should not be a one-time exercise but it

should be integrated in the organizational culture. The study goes further to mention that employee engagement should be a continuous process of learning, improvement and action. Thus, organizations today should actively look forward to fulfilling employee's expectations and thus, create an impact on the performance of employee, which directly affects the organization's performance.

Karatepe (2013) conducted a study which proposed and tested a research model that investigated whether work engagement functions as a mediator of the effects of high-performance work practices (HPWPs) on job performance and extra-role customer service. The study used 110 participants who were frontline hotel employees and their managers in the Poiana Brasov region of Romania. The results suggest that work engagement acts as a full mediator of the effects of HPWPs on job performance and extra-role customer service.

A contribution by Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2014) was a study that described the concept of engagement and its distinctiveness as well as its diminishing nature. Their study acknowledged the positive behaviour that is associated with an engaged workforce and also suggested ways to enhance engagement levels. They also advised that employee engagement in organisations needs to be managed properly because of their differences in personality, interest and abilities. They suggested ways of managing employees are, through managing their stress levels and promoting employee well-being. It is stated in their paper that job, organizational factors and past experiences can influence employee engagement levels. A model developed by Blessing White organization classifies employee engagement into five levels, according to the level at which the individual contributes towards the organization. The five levels are:

- The engaged employees who are the happiest and most productive
- The almost engaged employees are content and do just enough for the organisation
- Honeymooners who have low levels of contributions towards the success of the organization
- Crash burners who lack self contentment although they are productive
- Disengaged employees who have high levels of discontentment and talk negatively about the organisation.

Guest (2014) conducted a review of the debates and evidence on employee engagement. The aim of his study was to assess the feasibility of engagement becoming a mainstream part of Human Resources Management (HRM) activity. His findings raise a concern of improving employee well – being and organizational engagement in order to improve organisation performance. In terms of higher engagement levels, their study places its association with higher supervisor-related job performance and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB).

A case study done by Kaliannan and Adjovu (2014) explores the impact of effective employee engagement on organizational success. They refer to engaged employees as “satisfied” and “committed” employees who immerse themselves in the successful attainment of organizational goals and are the force behind organizational success. Their findings are in agreement with other researchers Anita (2014) and Guest (2014) in that they identified work environment among other factors such as employee supervisor, job satisfaction and organisational culture as determinants of the degree to which employees will be engaged at work.

Karanges et al. (2014) researched the optimization of employee engagement using internal communication, from a social exchange theory perspective. Their study links employee engagement to higher productivity and an improved reputation of the organization. Similarly to previous research, they identified employee engagement drivers as perceived support, job characteristics, value congruence and internal communication. They collected data from 200 non- executive workers and applied linear and mediated regression to test their model. Their findings direct organisations to focus on internal communication in order to build greater perceptions of support in employees so as to foster optimal level of employee engagement.

The latest study on measuring the benefits of employee engagement was done by Kumar and Pansari (2015). Their study composed a scorecard to measure engagement levels. Their organizational scorecard is founded on the theory that the overall organization’s employee engagement level is directly influenced by the very component of engagement which they identified as; employee satisfaction, employee loyalty and employee performance. Another motivation behind the development of the scorecard is that, an understanding of an organization’s current employee engagement levels and strategies is important so that the

Company can get the most out of employee engagement; especially in the light of it being associated with higher rates of the organization's profitability and growth. They also found that by measuring the level of employee engagement in an organization, it can reveal to HR, critical areas and developmental gaps to be addressed in order to increase the engagement level because employees are the organisations.

Kumar and Pansari (2015) conducted a study where their leading question was, "why should companies care about engagement". The qualitative study was based in North and South America, Asia, Africa and Europe, where over 200 HR and Marketing managers from 52 companies in different industries were interviewed. Their study revealed a deep concern of high attrition rates shared by managers across the board, about employees who quit their jobs and then pouch their client and the increasing number of senior employees who had become less productive. The same study recognizes employee performance as an aspect of employee engagement. The findings reveal that a low employee morale and low productivity impact the company's bottom line negatively. Therefore, it is concluded that by keeping employees engaged, there can be a major positive impact on organizations.

Wellins et al. (2017) provide the answer to the question which was posed by Kumar and Pansari (2015) "why companies should care about employee engagement". They refer to employee engagement as the primary source of competitive advantage. Competitive advantage can also be understood as a measure of organizational productivity. The study analysed the engagement database compiled by Development Dimensions International (DDI), across 200 organizations. The analysis showed that employees who scored high on engagement are more satisfied in their jobs, are not thinking of leaving their organizations can achieve their performance goals. It is further estimated that if engagement levels could be improved from low to high in an organisation of 1000 employees, this can have an impact of over \$42 million to the bottom line, through productivity. The business case presented in the study reveals a strong relationship between sales and performance and employee engagement. Among the sales team, it was found that on average, highly engaged sales reps achieve 99% of the sales goals and 91% was achieved by the disengaged.

A monograph by Wellins et al. (2017) describes the economic impact of low engagement as one of that can be staggering. The purpose of their study was to assess employee engagement as a key to organizations realising their competitive advantage. In their value proposition,

they deduce that when employees in the organisation are engaged, the long-term benefits are seen in the bottom line and are differentiated from their competitors. The study demonstrates an overwhelming connection between employee engagement and organizational outcomes. The results also show that when the work environment is conducive to employees focusing their attention on their work and are motivated to do their best, productivity levels experienced by the organisation are high.

A case study by Kaliannan and Adjovu (2014) explored the impact of effective employee engagement on organisational success. It argues that the concept of organisational success is not infused in tangible results but rather in the organisation's employees. The study notes that executives are obsessed with focusing on brand equity, market share and increasing profitability, yet all these attributes of business success would not be possible without employees. The study describes the role of employee engagement in the success of the organisation as that of a catalyst, whereby employees serve as the drivers behind the steering wheel of their organisations' productivity.

2.3.5 Drivers of employee engagement

2.3.5.1 HR policies and practices

Anyadike (2013) conducted a study to investigate the role of Human Resources Planning (HRP) in ensuring employee productivity in the Nigeria Public Organizations. This was after problems were identified relating to human resource planning. The study recommended that the public organization should embrace human resource planning if employee productivity must be ensured. Human resources planning in the public organizations must be matched with the organizations' strategic planning to enable for enhanced employee productivity. The Nigerian public organizations should learn to embrace human resources outsourcing as a trend in human resource management as it is believed to ensure productivity in the organizations. Organisational policies should be responsive so that they appear considerate to employees' well-being.

2.3.5.2 Commitment to employee well being

In support of the above, Gandy et al. (2014) conducted a study to compare employee overall well-being to chronic disease status, which has a long-established relationship to productivity, as relative contributors to on-the-job productivity. The study used 2629 participants who were employees with diabetes or without any chronic conditions. The results revealed that well-being was the most significant predictor of productivity cross-section ally in a model that included disease status and demographic characteristics. Longitudinally, changes in well-being contributed to changes in productivity beyond what could be explained by the presence of chronic disease or other fixed characteristics.

2.3.5.3 Communication (two-way)

A number of researchers have identified different drivers in their studies. Leadership, communication and a work-life balance were observed by Bedarkar and Pandita (2014) as drivers of employee engagement. Under a similar notion Soni (2013) deduced that a culture of respect, constant feedback both from manager to employee and vice versa, counselling and mentoring, as key drivers of employee engagement.

Dulagil (2012) states that if there were to be any level of engagement, there needs to be clear communication of the core values and beliefs of the employees. He adds that the transparency about the goals and objectives of the organization should be evident. Supervisors and managers should demonstrate care about the health and well-being of the employees. There should also be a person-job fit alignment so that people are placed in their areas of capabilities. Managers should trust their employees and create opportunities for growth so that they remain engaged and productive.

Farouk (2014) explored the attitude of employees on productivity. The study included communication as a driver of employee engagement in organisations. The study refers to the assumption made by scholars, that if employees were included in the decision-making process of matters concerning their work and more so if they are given the opportunity to make decisions themselves, there would be positive benefits for both the employee and the organization. If organizations could endeavour to improve the process of informing employees about issues and changes in relation to their work environment, employees would be more likely to be initiative and suggest improvements, which in turn increase the productivity of their work.

2.3.5.4 Leadership style by immediate management

Karaa et al. (2013) conducted a study to test the notion that transformational leadership style is more effective than transactional leadership style by fostering employee well-being enhancing quality of work life and life satisfaction as well as increasing organizational commitment and decreasing employee burnout. The study used 443 participants from Turkish 5-star hotels. The findings support the positive effect of transformational leadership in the hospitality industry, which implies that hospitality managers should be trained to use a transformational leadership style to enhance employee well-being, a significant predictor of productivity. Theory shows that exercising authentic and supportive leadership improves employee engagement.

2.3.5.5 Involvement in decision making

A quantitative study by Ariani (2013) was conducted to examine the relationship between employee engagement, OCB and Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB), in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. A significant positive relationship between employee engagement and OCB was revealed by the study. It further explains OCB as the occurrence of behaviours that result in efficient and effective functioning of the organization that is increased by the engaged employees. These behaviours are identified as; high energy demonstrated by employees, the eagerness to meet goal. Strategies to increase OCB suggested in the study as having maintained the social systems that support the performance of the organisation, like involving employees in decision-making. These were identified by Ladley et al. (2015) as creating more group interactions and by Sharath (2014) as cultivating and promoting a workplace where there is more;

- Altruism, where individuals are willing to assist one another in their work.

- Courtesy, such that colleagues are able to inform each other about issues that may increase or reduce their workload like being absent from work.
- Sportsmanship where employees are encouraged to have tenacity, accountability and not exhibit negative behaviour when things do not go as planned.

2.3.5.6 Training and development

Another study by Anitha (2014) identified the key determinants of employee engagement and how they relate in terms of predictability of productivity. In this causal study, 700 questionnaires were administered upon which 383 were valid responses. The study found that the identified factors such as ; leadership, compensation, training and development and workplace well- being as predictors of employee engagement. Training and development was identified to be the most important determinant of engagement levels of employees. It can thus be said that these factors determine the extent to which employees are engaged at work.

A study conducted by Bal et al. (2013) looked at the developmental and accommodative HRM as enhancers of employee engagement and commitment. Some researchers argue that this type of HRM as one that enhances employee outcomes rather than HRM that is equipped to adjust with organizational decline. Developmental HRM refers to training, job enrichment and is known to aim at increasing the ability to perform better at one's job, thereby contributing to productivity. As found by Jose and Mampilly (2012) it is expected that when a company develops its employees, they will reciprocate by working hard to support the organisational effectiveness. The provision of training improves service accuracy and is equivalent to rewarding people. By doing a skills analysis, gaps can be identified and filled

2.3.5.7 Performance and appraisal

The importance of enhancing employee engagement in the organization is shown by Jose and Mampilly (2012) in an article which was based on satisfaction with HR practices and employee engagement. The study reveals that if an organization engages in performance

management and appraisal, they will in turn feel obligated and thus be motivated to do their best to support the organisation's goals. The study also implies that employees are not fully utilized and increasing their engagement levels would tap into their maximum potential, which could elicit good returns for the company.

2.3.5.8 Pay and benefits

Yamoah (2013) conducted a study to examine the relationship between compensation and productivity using a case study approach. The study used 60 respondents from the banking industry in Ghana. The results indicated a significant relationship between compensation and productivity. In support of that finding, Chung, et al. (2013) wrote a report that sheds insights on how different elements of the compensation plan enhance productivity. The report provides evidence that bonuses enhance productivity across all segments. Over-achievement commissions help sustain the high productivity of the best performers even after attaining quotas.

Quarterly bonuses help improve performance of the weak performers by serving as pacers to keep the sales force on track to achieve their annual sales quotas. Remuneration can be made attractive to employees by introducing incentives, bonuses or holiday vouchers to acknowledge good performance

2.3.5.9 General work environment

Appiahene et al. (2014) conducted a study to investigate ICT usage as predictor of teachers' productivity in Schools/Institutions. The study used 650 participants who were teachers from both public and private schools in Kumasi Metropolis of Ghana. The findings of this study revealed that schools in Kumasi Metropolis are currently making headways towards participating in the global acceptance and use of ICT. The teaching profession in Ghana is a challenging one and quick access to and retrieval of appropriate teaching methods and notes by teachers, lectures, researchers etc. in the emerging digital era requires effective implementation and use of ICT in Schools/Institutions.

2.4 Employee engagement and organizational productivity/outcomes

Anita (2014) conducted a study to identify the key determinants of employee engagement and their predictability of the concept. The study also examined the impact of employee engagement on employee performance. The study used 383 participants from the Coimbatore District Small Industries Association in India. The results revealed that employee engagement had significant impact on employee performance, which is a significant predictor of productivity.

A meta-analytical study was conducted by Harter et al. (2013) to examine the true relationship between employee engagement and performance, consistency or generalizability of the relationship between employee engagement and performance across organizations and the practical meaning of the findings for executives and managers. A total of 263 research studies across 192 organizations in 49 industries, with employees in 34 countries. The study looked at nine outcomes: customer loyalty/engagement, profitability, productivity, turnover, safety incidents, shrinkage, absenteeism, patient safety incidents and quality (defects). The findings revealed that employee engagement is related to each of the nine performance outcomes studied. The results also indicated high generalizability, which means the correlations were consistent across different organizations. To confirm the above findings, conducted another similar meta-analytical study to examine the true relationship between employee engagement and performance, consistency or generalizability of the relationship between employee engagement and performance across organizations and the practical meaning of the findings for executives and managers. A total of 339 research studies across 230 organizations in 49 industries, with employees in 73 countries. The study looked at nine outcomes: customer loyalty/engagement, profitability, productivity, turnover, safety incidents, shrinkage, absenteeism, patient safety incidents and quality (defects). The findings revealed that employee engagement is related to each of the nine performance outcomes studied.

A recent study by Kazimoto (2016) focused on the measurement of employee engagement as a non-financial factor in relation to organizational performance. The study shows evidence that a relationship exists between employee engagement and organizational performance, in a sense that when employees are engaged and committed, organizational

performance also improves. The study also highlights the fact that human related issues were previously neglected by organisations whereas it has become known that employee satisfaction yields higher profitability. The study concludes that the lack of knowledge and ability by managers to consider people engagement as key drivers of organisational productivity is a challenge that further research must still address. In agreement with previous studies, it is also stated that employees with higher engagement levels tend to reduce staff turnover and absenteeism, factors that prove employee engagement is attached to organisational performance.

According to Farouk (2014) it has been shown that employee engagement does impact organizational productivity. Regarding previous studies that have been conducted, the study proposes that if an organisation has employees whose engagement levels are above average, it is almost twice as likely to be successful. The study also introduces a motivational factor into the engagement concept in that it explains that what makes engaged employees to be more productive is the fact that they are more motivated than the disengaged one. The inverse relationship is also shown where low levels of employee engagement are detrimental to performance. This research also confirm that the engaged employees exercise an element of care in what they do and their efforts in contributing to the success of the organization and therefore will have a greater sense of ownership and accountability. In so doing, they become less absent from work and more willing to take on more responsibility and have initiative as well. The same study shows that based on previous studies, the 100 best places to work had a low turnover rate of 13% in comparison to the 28.5% found for other industries. This confirms the theory that engaged employees are more committed and loyal to their organisation and are not inclined to leave their organizations feel a sense of belonging.

2.5 Barriers to employee engagement

A Harvard business review done by Kim and Mauborgne (2014) explored leadership as a barrier to employee engagement and focused on “blue ocean leadership” as a means to overcome the challenges of poor engagement that organizations face with their employees. The review talks about the blue ocean leadership as a model that can assist leaders to turn disengaged employees to engaged ones. This can be done by focusing on acts and activities

that leaders could change to boost motivation and the organization's bottom line. The review gives examples of the acts and activities that leaders should undertake as:

- Spending time with senior managers
- Explaining clearly the company strategy to employees
- Empowering front line managers to stretch themselves
- Coaching employees (Kim and Mauborgne, 2014)

Mishra et al. (2015) conducted a study to investigate the role of internal communications on employee engagement. The exploratory study found internal communication a significant player in building a culture of transparency between management and employees. Furthermore, the study iterates that good communication is necessary to keep employees engaged with the organizations' priorities. Consequently, the absence of good communication leads to poor engagement. The study suggests communication methods such as one on one to build engagement with employees.

Another study by Kang and Sung (2017) was also conducted to analyse how employee communication leads to employee engagement. The study concurred with Mishra et al. (2015) with regards to poor communication being a barrier to employee engagement. The study randomly selected representatives to participate. The finding clearly demonstrated a strong link between employee communication and engagement. The absence of effective communication therefore, affects employee engagement negatively. To facilitate good communication the study encouraged organisations to nurture communication by listening to employees' concerns and to encourage them to participate in workplace discussions.

Bakker et al. (2014) sought to provide solutions to what causes stress and burnout and to what motivate employees to consistently do their best at jobs and achieve organisational goals. The aim of their paper was to discuss job demands-resources (JD-R) theory within the context of the JD-R model. From their study, it is revealed that if organisations provide their employees with sufficient job challenges, job resources and social support and skills through training, they are influencing employee engagement and performance. If employees can design their jobs, it give autonomy to mobilize resources and structure tasks, this also contribute to their well-being. When employees' well-being is taken care of, there are fewer incidences of stress and burnout.

Another important component of employee engagement is given by Kumar and Pansari (2015) as employee satisfaction. The study reported various reasons that can cause an employee to be dissatisfied as:

- Misaligned person-job fit
- Lack of skills and hence loss of interest
- Lack of feedback
- Lack of incentives (Kumar and Pansari, 2015)

The study reported that if employees in the organization have low satisfaction levels, their enthusiasm and interest for the company and its activities will be low as well as the likelihood to stay absent frequently and produce poor quality work.

2.6 Employee engagement models

2.6.1 The Corporate Leadership Council Model (CLC)

The CLC model of employee engagement emphasises business outcomes (Board, 2004). The Corporate Leadership Council Model of Engagement is depicted in Figure 2.1.

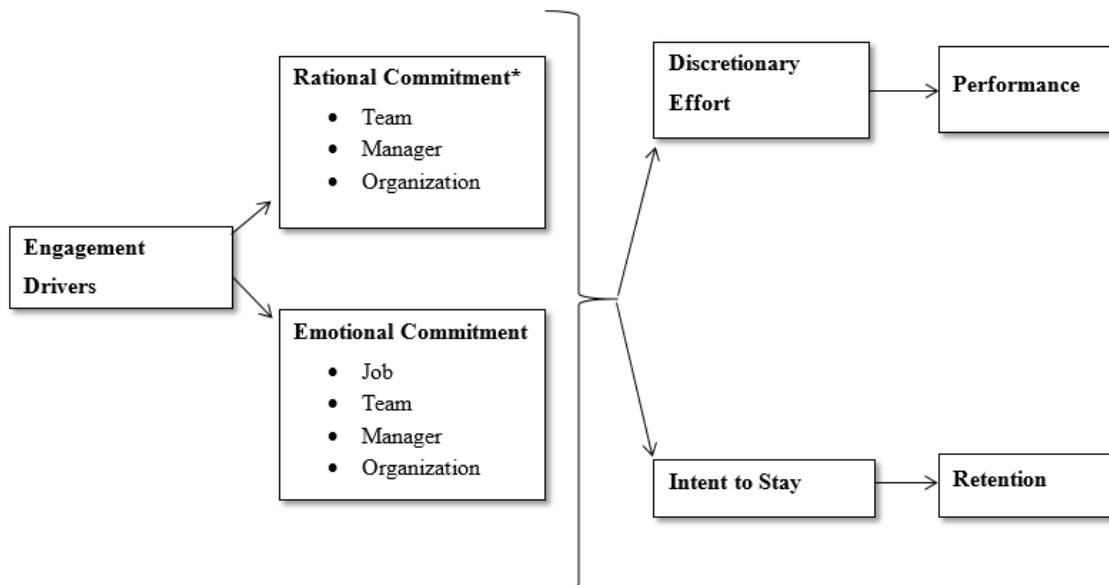


Figure 2.1: The Corporate Leadership Council’s Model of Engagement (Board, 2004)

The Council Board (2004) denotes to engagement as the degree to which employees are committed to their organisations, how hard they will work and as an outcome of that commitment how long they will be willing to stay within the organisation. The CLC model looks at the rational commitment and emotional commitment from employees. The rational commitment is associated with the degree to which employees think their managers have their best interests at heart. Emotional commitment refers to how much employees value their work and how enjoyable their work is to them. The outcomes which result in improved performance and retention, are the discretionary effort which is employees going beyond the call of duty, and intent to stay, which is the employee's reluctance to leave the organisation (Board, 2004).

2.6.2 The ISR model

The ISR model aims to increase engagement levels by assisting organizations to understand what drives engagement, through the use of their model.

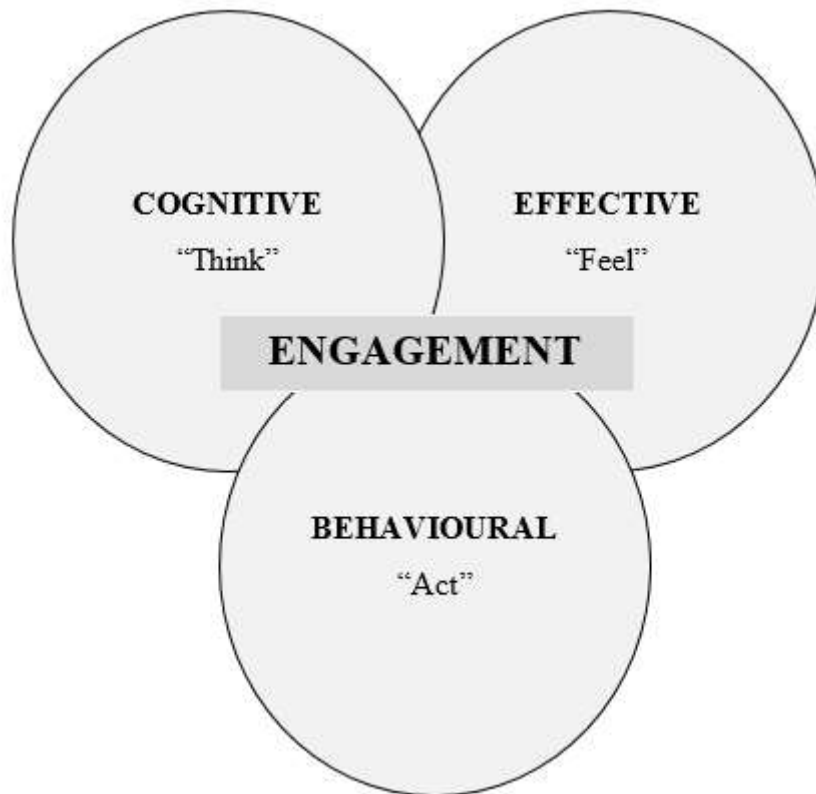


Figure 2.2: The Three components of ISR engagement approach (Perrin, 2007)

The ISR engagement model has 3 components to it and is presented in Figure 2.2. The cognitive or “Think” component refers to how employees perceive and rationalize the organisation’s vision and values. The emotional or “Feel” component refers to how employees identify with the organization, looks at whether or not employees feel a sense of belonging and pride for their organization. The behavioural or “Act” component captures the employee engagement outcomes that employers are looking for such as productivity, the willingness to go the extra mile for the organization whenever necessary. According to Perrin (2007) the 3 components can be used to measure engagement and a measure of all these 3 is critical in developing a set of option of improving engagement levels.

2.6.3 Drivers of employee engagement

Studies report that drivers of employee engagement influence the degree to which employees are engaged. Most of the studies cite internal communication, leadership, training and development as well as workplace well-being as major contributors to raising employee engagement levels. Other studies also cite rewards compensation, job satisfaction,

organizational culture and teamwork as drivers of employee engagement to a certain extent. One study that was reviewed, classified the levels of engagement according to the individual's contribution towards the organization's success. Employee engagement levels were classified as; engaged, almost engaged, honeymooners, crash burners and disengaged. This study focuses on HR policies and practices, commitment to employee well-being, communication, leadership style, involvement in decision-making, training and development, performance appraisal, pay and benefits and general work environment as drivers of employee engagement.

2.6.4 Employee engagement and organizational productivity/outcomes

All the studies from the literature indicate a positive relationship between the two constructs. One specific study that was reviewed referred to employee engagement as the primary source of competitive advantage, which can also be understood as organizational productivity. All studies also share the same sentiments among each other in saying that low engagement levels contribute to low productivity levels. One study in agreement to this finding particularly referred to employee engagement as a catalyst to productivity and profitability. The economic impact of low employee engagement is described in another study as one that can be staggering. Out of all the eight studies reviewed under this subsection, one specific study illustrated an overwhelming connection between employee engagement and organizational outcomes, such as productivity. The literature reviewed clearly points at employee engagement as being a lever gearing organizations towards success through productivity delivered by engaged employees.

Studies cite the importance of enhancing employee engagement in organizations as an investment that can elicit good returns. The reviewed literature identified strategies that can be implemented to boost employee engagement, such employee training and development, improved leadership such as "blue ocean", amiable organizational policies, improving OCB such as altruism, sportsmanship and improving work design. An improved communication amongst employees with their managers would increase employee engagement, as indicate by the studies. Communication can take the form of one on one, listening and via emails or short messaging. One study highlighted the cultivation of a productive workplace culture by managers as a strategy that can also be used to enhance employee engagement because employees thrive to perform such environments.

2.6.5 Barriers to employee engagement and job commitment

All the reviewed studies refer to the absence of the determinants of employee engagement as a hindrance to engagement, or largely as factors that result in poor engagement levels in the organization. Generally, studies indicated poor communication, a hostile work environment and poor leadership as major barriers to employee engagement. The absence of these factors was reported as major barriers because of the significant role they play in building a culture of transparency and trust between management and employees. Some studies pointed out the importance of organizations showing congruence between employees and their jobs. These studies revealed that if an employee is not aligned to his job, he will experience stress, burnout and dissatisfaction, and will find it difficult to engage and connect to his work. Studies also emphasised the absence of employee well-being as detrimental to employee engagement. It has been empirically shown that when employees feel that they are not cared for and are not given autonomy to re- design their jobs, they lose interest and enthusiasm in their jobs.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

A proposed Impact of employee engagement on productivity model

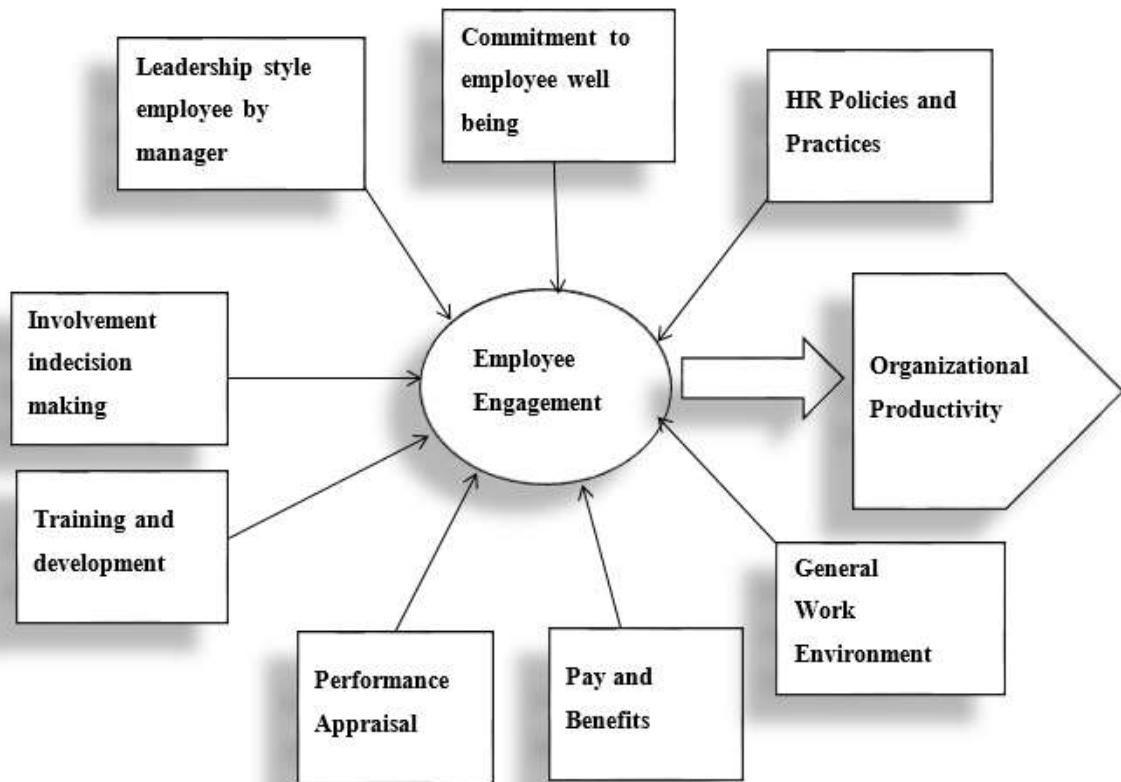


Figure 2.3: Researcher’s own

The conceptual framework that was developed is presented in Figure 2.3: Conceptual Framework. The empirical research findings show that dimensions of HR policies and practices, commitment to employee well-being, communication, leadership , involvement in decision making, training and development, performance appraisal, pay and benefits and general work environment have a positive effect on organizational productivity. Moreover, good internal communication with leadership style correlated with employee positive attitude and commitment to the organization.

A study by Anitha (2014) also found that the variables that had an impact on employee engagement were working environment, leadership, employee development, and team and co-worker relationship. Employee engagement had a significant impact on employee performance. A great focus and effort is required particularly on the factors such as

workplace well-being and HR policies as they showed a significantly higher impact on employee engagement and hence employee performance (Anitha, 2014).

2.8 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has presented relevant empirical research studies that have examined the role of employee of employee engagement, commitment and attitude on organizational productivity. Key determinants of employee engagement have been reviewed and gave some insight to barriers of engagement. Studies on strategies to enhance engagement have also been reviewed. The foundation to the chapter was laid by first defining the two constructs, employee engagement and productivity, then an overview of a global perspective was given followed by the outcomes of surveys that have been conducted. Employee engagement has emerged in business as one of the key factors that organizations ought to prioritize to remain competitive. The engagement models are also given.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a map of how the research was conducted, to answer the research questions that are presented. The purpose of the study was to establish the impact that employee engagement has on productivity and subsequently provide strategies for organisations to enhance it. The study has also analysed the challenges that lead to employees disengaging and causing low employee engagement at UVS. The design that was selected is included as well as the sampling technique and size. The chosen research philosophy is given together with the justification for the questionnaire used. The data collection methods used were found to be suitable, given the limited available time in which to complete the research. The research quality plan in terms of data analysis and quality control was also taken into consideration. The ethical considerations for the participants were also a great part of this research.

3.1.1 The objectives of the study were:

- To identify factors that influence employee engagement or disengagement at UVS.
- To establish the relationship between employee engagement, performance and commitment at UVS.
- To establish the relationship between internal communication and leadership style on employee engagement.
- To establish the relationship between job-fit and employee engagement.
- To determine the role of work environment on employee engagement
- To suggest interventions to improve employee engagement and address the employee engagement gap at UVS.

3.1.2 Research questions

For this study, the following questions were addressed:

- What factors influence employee engagement or disengagement at UVS?
- What relationship exists between employee engagement, performance and commitment at UVS?
- What is the relationship between communication and leadership style on employee engagement?
- What is the relationship between job-fit and employee engagement?
- What is the role of work environment on employee engagement?
- What interventions are required to improve employee engagement at UVS?

3.2 Research Design

A positivist research paradigm with a quantitative method was used. The survey research design was found to be most appropriate in answering the research questions, which have been asked. The survey research design chosen was also found to be the most suitable in meeting the objectives of the study. The survey research enabled the study to identify the factors that contribute to an outcome and established the relationship between variables, which is the major objective of this study. A quantitative study is appropriate for testing pre-determined outcomes and for the statistical analysis of significant correlations between variables (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative method was selected for this study so that the research instrument based on the survey questions could collect employee engagement and productivity data. This research was a cross-sectional design. This design is best suited for studies that seek to find out the dominance of a phenomenon, trend, problem or issue, by taking a cross-section of the population. They are useful in obtaining the current holistic ‘picture’ as it presents itself at the time of the study. Such studies are cross-sectional with regard to both the study population and the time of investigation (Kuma, 2011).

Table 3.1 gives a summary of the advantages that led to the selection of the quantitative design strategy.

Table 3.1: Summary of advantages of a quantitative study design (Creswell, 2014)

Advantages
1. Able to test a theory or hypothesis
2. Suitable to identify factors that influence an outcome and to test correlations
3. A questionnaire suffices for the measurement of data and statistical analysis
4. The concept being tested must be known
5. Findings of the study are objective

3.3 Research Approach

In selecting a research approach, the research questions or the hypothesis is what determines which type to choose. There are three types of research approaches, and these are:

- Deductive research approach
- Inductive research approach
- Abductive research approach (Dudovskiy, 2015)

According to Dudovskiy (2015) the deductive approach tests the validity of the assumption or hypothesis that the study gives, whilst the inductive approach contributes to the emergence of new theories and generalizations. The abductive research approach, starts with ‘surprising facts’ or ‘puzzles’ and the research process is devoted to explaining them (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

The study has assumed or hypothesis that engaged employees are motivated to increase productivity and therefore contribute to the organisation’s productivity. During the research process, this assumption was tested and its validity discussed in detail in chapter 5.

Therefore, the author has chosen the deductive approach for this study as it was assumed that it will allow for objectivity, predictability and will enable the findings to be generalized back to the UVS population. This ensured that effective recommendations were made to the company management.

3.4 Study Site

The research site is the area in which the study was conducted. The research site that was chosen is the UVS Company. The UVS is a company that is within the sugar industry, situated in the Northern Kwa-Zulu Natal. There are four other sugar companies that fall under the main umbrella company including UVS. The main reason of this choice was because the author is familiar with the sugar industry operations and the study participants were well within the author's accessibility for data collection purposes.

3.5 Target Population

The target population was the current UVS employees, including personnel from logistics, administration, general workers and managers. The sample consisted of higher degree holders (middle and senior managers) and non-matriculants (general workers). All departments were considered, as this was a census survey. Two employees were not available as they were off sick at the time of conducting the survey. The total number of participants was 73 from a population of 75 people. A census was used in carrying out this survey, since the population of UVS is small. A formula was used and was confirmed using a sample size table, which is included in Appendix 7.

3.6 Sampling Technique

Saunders et al. (2009) define sampling as a "process of selecting a sample of a population of interest for purposes of making observations and inferences about that population". There exist two categories of sampling: probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Non-probability sampling is when the probability of selecting an element in the population is unknown. The stratification of the population is done before the sample is selected, and this ensures that all key groups of populations are represented in the sample.

For this study, probability sampling, where a simple random sampling technique was used. This is where every element in the population stands an equal chance of being included in the sample. This was important for the study so that a representative sample was taken which enabled the findings to be generalized back to the entire population. This also ensured that there was no sampling bias.

3.7 Sample size

The sample consisted of UVS employees. The ages of the participants ranged between 21 years to 60 years with varying service lengths. For a confidence level of 99% and 2.5% margin of error, a sample size for a target population of 75 people is 73. The formula below was used to calculate the sample size:

$$n = \frac{X^2 \times N \times P(1 - P)}{(ME^2 \times (N - 1)) + (X^2 \times P \times (1 - P))}$$

Where:

N = sample size

X² = chi – square for the specified confidence level @ 1 degree of freedom

N = Population size

P = Population proportion (0.5)

ME = Desired margin of error (2.5%)

3.8 Research Instrument

The data was collected using two instruments, which were; Employee engagement (EE) and Productivity (P) questionnaires. As mediating variables, the demographic items were also included.

3.8.1 Employee engagement

Employee engagement was measured using a modified version of the most accurate and well-known Gallup Q12 that was developed by Dr Clifton in the 1950s and further tested by Gallup's researchers over the years. It is submitted by Gallup (2016) that Q12 is the most effective way of measuring employee engagement and its impact on the business outcomes that matter most. In addition to this, measuring engagement via Q12 survey directly ties in with Gallup's strategies to better productivity, profitability and employee retention. An email to request permission to modify the Q12 survey was sent to Gallup organisation. Questions were added to the Q12 questionnaire as the author felt the inclusion of these would enhance the response to the research questions. The instrument has been used since 1997 in the criterion-related studies where a combined meta-analysis to study the relationship of employee satisfaction and engagement (as measured by Q12) to business or work unit profitability, productivity, employee retention, and customer satisfaction/loyalty was done across 1,135 business units. Since its final wording and order were completed in 1998, Q12 has been administered to more than 7 million employees in 112 different countries (Gallup, 2016).

3.8.2 Productivity

A productivity questionnaire was developed using surveys that have been used by other researchers. To test the questionnaire for validity, it was first administered to 25 employees. Prior discussions were held with the employees with regards to the questions. The questionnaire consisted of 18 questions, taking into cognisance that the research objectives are effectively covered.

Demographic items

The introductory part of the questionnaires comprised of items that mediated the relationship of employee engagement with productivity. A mediator variable is “the variable that causes mediation in the dependent and the independent variables (Creswell, 2014). In other words, it explains the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable (Solutions, 2017). The items were population group, gender, age, highest level of education, years of service, type of work and seniority at work.

3.9 Data Quality Control

Data quality assurance is a process whereby research data is profiled to be cleaned (Creswell, 2014). Cleaning of data involved the removal of outliers, correction of errors and missing data interpolation, with the aim to improve the quality of data to be interpreted. The structure of the questionnaires used limited the amount of possible errors and outliers that could occur. Respondents were encouraged to answer all the questions in the survey for integrity purposes.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

The validity of the Q12 was confirmed by the comprehensive studies that have used it before, on a global scale. The measurements were chosen because of their reliability and have been validated, and because of the direct responses, it provides to the research questions. Creswell (2014) refers to reliability as the extent to which the measurement is without bias. Validity refers to how well the research instruments test the given study objectives and the hypothesis, that it intended to measure (Creswell, 2014)

3.11 Procedures

3.11.1 Data Analysis

Data analysis was done by using the SPSS analysis technique to identify the level of prediction made by the various factors, which were identified on employee engagement and productivity. Descriptive statistical analysis, as well as cross tabulation comparisons were done about the population.

The information on reliability was calculated using Cronbach coefficient alpha. This was done to assess the effectiveness of the measurement to the constructs. Cronbach's coefficient alpha is a "reliability coefficient that indicates how well the items in a set, positively correlate to one another". It was computed in terms of the average inter-correlations among the items measuring the concept. The closer Cronbach's alpha is to 1, the higher the internal consistency of reliability (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

3.12 Ethical Considerations

The author's interest in workplace productivity motivated the journey into this study. The author has gained deeper insight into how employee engagement can be used as a tool to improve productivity in the workplace. This study was as much for the author as it was for the employees and UVS management.

The UVS workplace consisted of literate staffs that were able to complete the questionnaire independently, although the author was readily available to clarify issues that caused confusion.

The independency in the completion of the questionnaires by the respondents was an important factor that ensured no bias and no influence on the responses. Upon the selection of the research site, a written formal request for permission to use the workplace premises and employees for the study was submitted to the UVS General Manager. A copy of the letter is attached in Appendix A.

An ethical clearance application was then submitted to the University, following which, approval to conduct the study was granted before the questionnaires were administered. All the respondents were of a working age and were over 18 years of age. The participants were informed of the study by means of a letter of consent, that the participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from participation at any given time, as they so wished without incurring any penalties. The consent letter was explained to the respondents before they completed the questionnaires. The identity of the respondents remained anonymous.

No online questionnaires were completed. The author made use of hardcopies, which were personally delivered to the UVS and given to participants onsite. The confidentiality of the completed surveys was maintained as the researcher collected them personally and will safe-keep them for five years in line with the University's requirements. The responses on the questionnaires were captured on an Excel spreadsheet that was prepared for statistical analysis. The data collected was analysed using a statistical package of which the results thereof are reported in Chapter 4 of the dissertation.

3.13 Summary

This chapter has presented the research methodology that this study followed. It comprises of research design and approach, the sampling technique for the study, which is simple random sampling, and the measuring instruments for the two constructs namely; Employee engagement and Productivity. The research procedure, including data quality control and ethical considerations are also presented herein. The hypothesis presented was tested by the deductive approach, which was used. Overall, this chapter has given a clear procedure that could be followed if this study were to be replicated by another researcher.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The aim of the study was to explore the impact of employee engagement on productivity at UVS. The empirical literature was done to establish the relationship between employee engagement, which is the dependent variable, and productivity as the dependent variable. The data was collected by using two surveys, which were analysed using the SPSS and Spearman statistical package. The chapter presents the research findings and the discussion of the results. It begins by presenting the profile information of the study participants. The discussion will address the research questions that are listed in chapter 1, separately and will confirm the hypothesis.

4.2 Demographics or Profile

Below are the participants' demographic details. This information was gathered to gain an overall understanding of participant backgrounds. Seventy-three employees took part in the study.

4.2.1 Gender

The gender distribution of the participants is graphically presented in Figure 4.1.

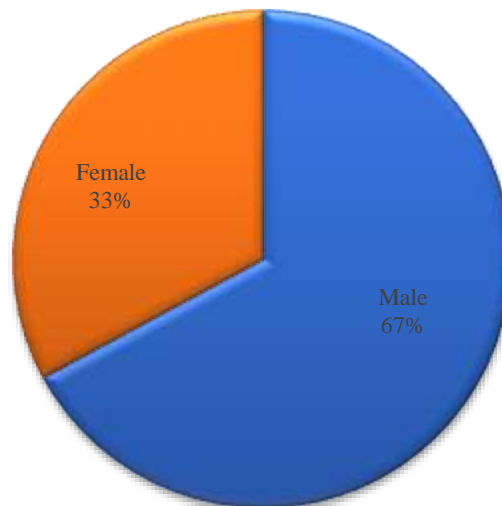


Figure 4.1: Gender distribution

As can be seen in Figure 4.1, two thirds of the 73 participants were male. This implies that at UVS, for every female participant there were two male participants. Based on the gender participation rate, this could suggest that UVS is a male dominated work environment or that female employees were sceptical or afraid to participate in the study.

4.2.2 Race

A profile of cultural diversity was obtained by collecting information on the race group of participants. The race distribution of the participants is presented in Figure 4.2.

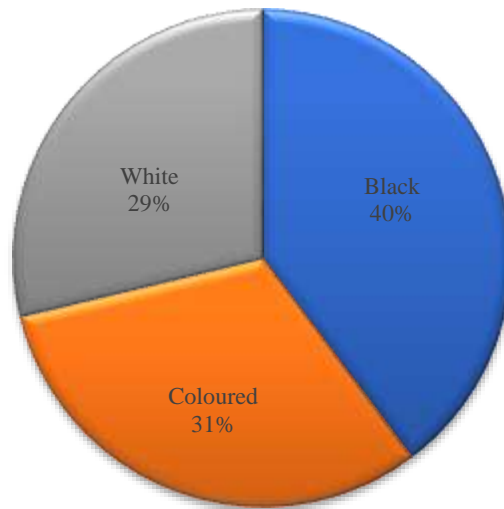


Figure 4.2: Race distribution

As depicted in Figure 4.2, the blue portions indicate the African group only. The population group that was the most represented in this study were Africans, as 40% of the 73 participants. Coloureds and Whites had almost the same amount of representation with Coloureds having 2% more representation than Whites.

4.2.4 Age Distribution

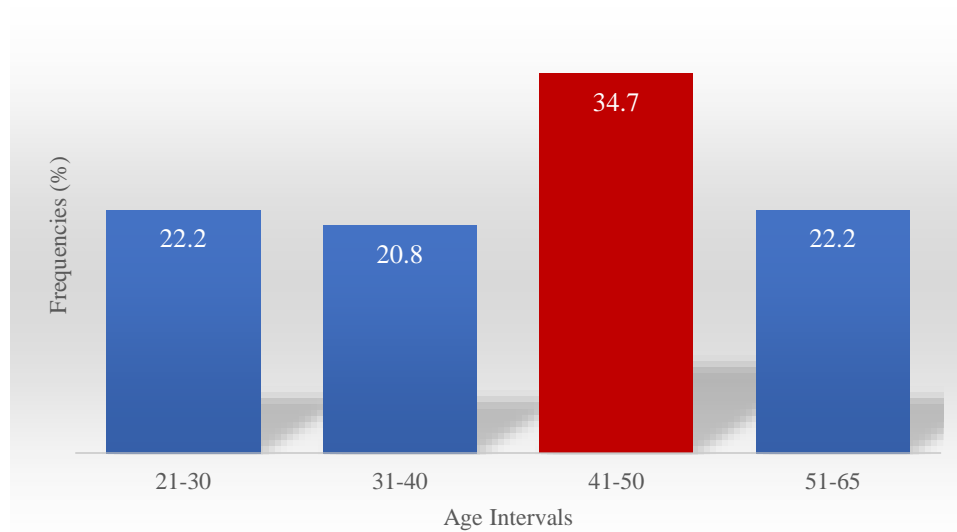


Figure 4.3: Age distribution

Figure 4.3 shows that most participants are in age category 41 – 50 years old. This age range represented 34.7% of the total participants. An equal number of participants fell into either the 21 - 30-year age category or the 51 - 65-year age category. Participants aged from 31 – 40 years were the least represented at 20.8%. However, they only differed by one participant from the 21 – 30 and 51 – 65-year age categories. The maturity level of the most represented age category may have implications on the study conclusions. The youthful nature of the second best represented category, 21 -30-year-old, would also have an impact on the survey conclusions. The conclusions may be biased in favour of the voice of the majority.

4.2.5 Departmental distribution

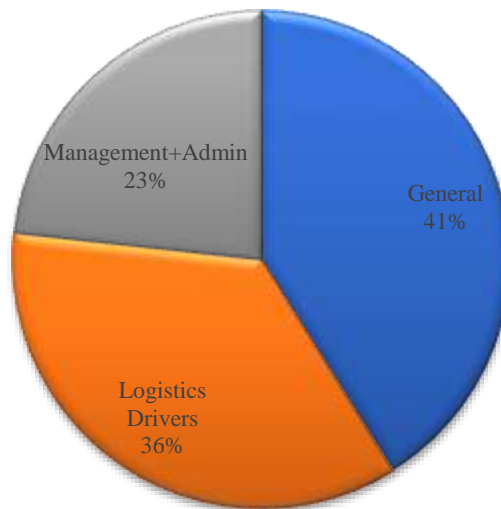


Figure 4.4: Departmental distribution

As seen in Figure 4.4, most participants at 41% were classified as general workers (plant operators, workshop artisans). They were followed by the logistics department (36%) and lastly, by management and administration (23%). This is indicative of the population distribution at UVS.

4.2.6 Employee role at work

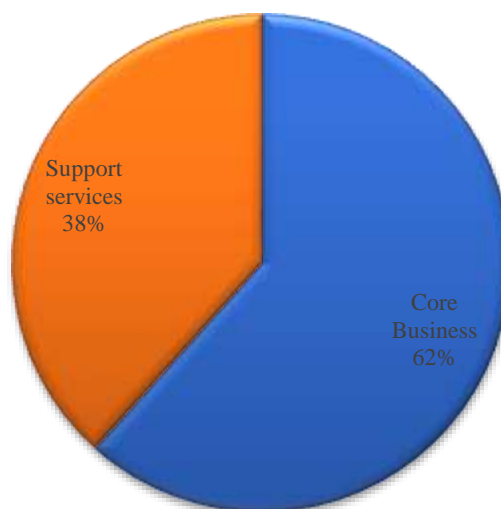


Figure 4.5: Employee role at work

In terms of the roles that the participants play in UVS, most participants (62%) indicated that they were involved in core business activities (see Figure 4.5). The remaining 38%

provided support services. In addition, most of the participants (60.3%) were part of management, with the remaining 39.7% holding non-management positions (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Employee role

A7. Your role	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Management	44	60.3	60.3
Non-management	29	39.7	100.0
Total	73	100.0	

4.2.7 Post level

Table 4.2: Post Level

A12 Post level	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Unskilled and defined decision making	3	4.1	4.1
Semi-skilled and discretionary decision making	8	11.0	15.1
Skilled technical and academically qualified workers, junior management, supervisors, foremen and superintendents	27	37.0	52.1
Professionally qualified, experienced specialists and Middle Management	26	35.6	87.7
Top Management, Senior Management	9	12.3	100.0
Total	73	100.0	

As evidenced in Table 4.2, the majority (84.9%) of participants were at least technically skilled or had some sort of professional qualification and some degree of span of control within the organisation. Only 15.1% of the participants were at most semi-skilled (see cumulative total, first 2 rows in Table 4.2). Within this group, 27% of them were unskilled employees with limited decision-making powers. Of the total number of participants, 35 (48%) of them were professionally qualified or were part of middle to top management.

4.2.8 Number of years in the company

Table 4.3: Years in the company's service

A9. Number of years in the company	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
1 - 5	39	54	54
6 - 10	16	22	76
> 10	18	24	100
Total	73	100.0	

As can be seen in Table 4.3, slightly over 50% of the participants were at the company for at most 5 years. Only 24% of the participants had been in the company for more than 10 years with the longest tenured employee having served the company for 37 years.

4.2.9 Level of Education

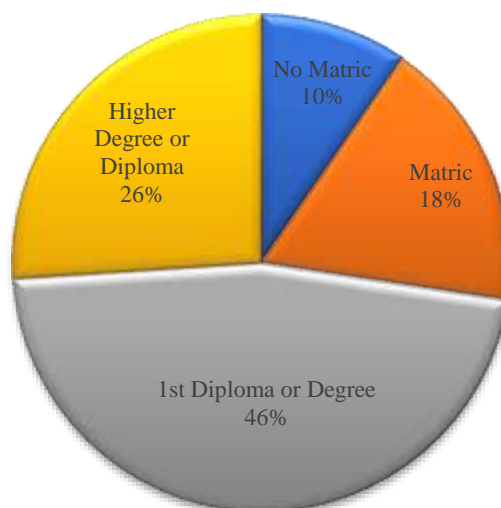


Figure 4.6: Level of Education

As visualised in Figure 4.6, the vast majority (90%) of the 73 participants had matriculated. Of these, a slight majority (51.5%) had at least an undergraduate qualification or diploma. Twenty-nine percent of them had some form of postgraduate degree or diploma. The remaining 10% of the participants indicated that they had not completed their secondary school level of education.

4.3 Study Objectives / Questions

This section focuses on addressing the study objectives. These are presented in the form of research questions, which specifically address the study's objectives. Five constructs were used to extract the information necessary to answer the study's objectives (see Table 4.4). These constructs, however, were formed by extracting elements from the two overall aspects that the questionnaire was designed to gather data for. These consisted of 37 questions that formed the employee engagement (EE) aspect, and 18 questions that formed the productivity (P) aspect. These two aspects were tested for reliability using the Cronbach's alpha, the results are tabulated in Table 4.4.

Cronbach's alpha is considered to be one of the most objective tools to test for the reliability of a measuring instrument (Coakes and Ong, 2011). The Cronbach's alpha was developed to provide a measure of the internal consistency of a test or scale. It is expressed as a number between 0 and 1. Numbers closer to 1 indicate higher degrees of reliability. In general, alpha readings below 0.6 are considered poor, between 0.6 and less than 0.8 are considered acceptable, and readings that are 0.8 and greater are considered good (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010).

Table 4.4: Reliability Statistics for constructs addressing Research Questions

Aspects	Questions	Cronbach's Alpha
Employee Engagement	EE1 - EE37	0.857
Productivity	P1-P18	0.353
Research Questions		Construct Questions
What factors influence employee engagement or disengagement at UVS?	EE9 – EE14 + EE26	
	P1-P5 + P16-P18	
What relationship exists between employee engagement, performance and commitment at UVS?	P6-P12	
What is the relationship between communication and leadership style on employee engagement?	EE 27 – EE37	
What is the relationship between job-fit and employee engagement?	EE 1 – EE8	
What is the role of work environment on employee engagement?	EE15 – EE25	

Table 4.4 shows the Cronbach alphas for the questions that addressed the employee engagement (EE1 – EE37) and the productivity (P1 – P18) aspects of the study. These questions constituted all the questions that were used to extract data to address the study’s objectives and aim. Based on the alpha reading, 0.857 in Table 4.4, the elements for testing for employee engagement are considered reliable. The elements testing for productivity, on the other hand, were not considered reliable (alpha = 0.353). However, the productivity element was designed to ensure that participants were giving thought to each of the questions being asked. As such, several questions were deliberately negatively stated or scored. Consequently, in some instances a response that appeared to have been negative, based on the set scale given to participants, was in fact a positive response. Therefore, for the purposes of this aspect of the questionnaire, the low alpha reading does not affect the research tool’s ability to serve its intended purpose with confidence.

Table 4.5 is based on a contraction of the responses that participants gave, on a 5 point Likert Scale, on employee engagement. This entailed grouping together all the “strongly disagree” responses into an “overall disagree” category and all the “agree” and “strongly agree” responses into an “overall agree” category. The reason for doing this was not to complicate the quintessence of the responses based on the degree of agreement or disagreement. Thus, the intention was to establish whether participants agreed or disagreed with the statements,

independent of the degree of agreement or disagreement. The full (or actual) 5 point Likert Scale responses are tabulated in Appendix 1.

Main Objective

4.4 The impact of employee engagement on organisational productivity

4.4.1 Employee Productivity Factors

To explore the relationship between employee engagement and productivity, 8 questions were asked. The scores are summarized in Table 4.6.

Table 4.5: Employee Productivity Factors

Relationship between EE and Productivity	Question	Never		Almost never		Sometimes		Fairly often		Very often		Always		Tot.
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N
Employee contribution to productivity	P1. Do you normally come early to work	8	11	0	0	11	15	7	10	13	18	34	47	73
Employee contribution to productivity as result of task completion	P2. Do you normally work until late to finish a task, without being asked	6	8	1	1	24	33	5	7	11	15	26	36	73
Employee awareness of negative effect of absenteeism to productivity	P3. Do you often stay absent from work without a tangible reason	60	82	5	7	7	10	1	1	0	0	0	0	73
Contribution to productivity because of high performance	P4. How often is your work performance better than that of your colleagues	7	10	2	3	34	49	10	14	9	13	8	11	70
Awareness of employees value add to the organization	P5. Do you feel as though your job performance benefits your organisation	1	1	1	1	8	11	5	7	17	24	40	56	72
Work success as a result of high quality work produced	P16. How often do you experience work success	4	5	0	0	12	16	13	18	18	25	26	36	73
Awareness of contributing to productivity by meeting deadlines	P17. How often do you meet deadline in your work (doing what you are asked for in time)	1	1	1	1	11	15	10	14	25	34	25	34	73
Awareness of waste minimization to improve productivity	P18. How often do you make mistakes in your job	10	14	8	11	51	70	3	4	1	1	0	0	73

Based on Table 4.6 it is only in three areas where more than 50% of participants concentrated their responses. These were “Do you often stay absent from work without a tangible reason?”, “How often do you make mistakes in your job?” and “Do you feel as though your job performance benefits your organisation? “Based on the results summarized in Table 4.6, in response to absenteeism, 82% of the participants indicated that they would never stay away from work without a good reason. A further 7% indicated that they would almost never stay away from work without a valid reason. It is concluded that 89% of participants are

aware of the negative impact that absenteeism has on productivity as they felt it is important to have a justifiable reason for not coming to work and would not stay away from work for no good reason. However, it is a concern is that 10% of the participants indicated that they sometimes did stay away from work without a good reason and 1 participant indicated that they did so often. These findings are affirmed by Harter et al. (2013) who examined productivity and absenteeism as some of the outcomes of employee engagement. Their studies reveal that there is a relationship between employee engagement and absenteeism and that absenteeism contributes to productivity loss.

Seventy percent of the participants indicated that they sometimes made mistakes on the job. This may be understandable as errors could arise for several reasons given the fact that some of these reasons could be out of an employee's control. However, 14% of the participants indicated that they never made mistakes when performing their duties. This indicates a lack of focus and attention when carrying out tasks. This lack of focus may be signalling a declining level of engagement and a concern for UVS management to address. This deduction is supported by Mishra et al. (2015) who defined employee engagement as the extent to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in his work.

Only 56% of the participants felt that their work always benefited the organisation. A further 24% indicated that they often felt this way. This suggests that participants are aware of their worth and contribution to the organisation. On the other hand, this also implies that the organisation does not communicate their appreciation for their efforts often enough for them not to doubt their performance or worth to the organisation. Nonetheless, the above indicates that 80% of the respondents knew that they added value to the company. This finding relates to Steger et al. (2012) who are of the view that when employees find their work meaningful and motivating, it contributes to the core of the organization, yielding high levels of performance.

In terms of other productivity measures, only 47% of the participants normally came to work early. Forty-nine percent felt that they sometimes outperformed their co-workers. A further 36% indicated that they always worked until late when necessary to complete a task without being prompted to do so. Similarly, only 36% of the participants indicated that they always felt that they succeeded in performing their duties. Sixty-eight percent of participants felt that they very often (34%) or always (34%) met their work deadlines.

In view of these responses, it is concluded that UVS employees exhibit satisfactory characteristics of an engaged workforce. Most of the respondents answered positively to the questions that tested their awareness of the impact of their activities and attitudes towards work productivity and the relationship between engagement and productivity, as given in Table 4.6. These findings are in agreement with AbuKhalifer and Som (2013) because they also found that engaged employees are those who are aware of their business context and work with colleagues to improve performance to benefit the organization.

To further identify and understand the dynamics that influence employee engagement and productivity, demographics ranging from gender, race, age, educational level and employee designation were compared. A cross tabulation analysis was done.

Regarding Table 4.5.1 and Table 4.5.2, male and female employees had different responses to engagement and productivity factors. Female employees have a lower disagreement score on engagement factors than that of males, which means that they are more engaged than their male counterparts. Conversely, on Table 4.5.2, male employees scored higher on productivity factors in comparison to females. This may translate to women having less time to work extended hours to meet deadlines because women still do a larger part of domestic work and childcare.

Table 4.5.1: Gender and Employee engagement

Employee Engagement Factors	Male		Female		Total
	Disagree		Disagree		
	n	%	n	%	n
I am satisfied with my job	5	71	2	29	7
My job is stressful	19	70	8	30	27
I would speak of the organisation I work for	5	71	2	29	7
I like to speak get involved with other organizational activities, other than my job	10	67	5	33	15
I am committed to serving my organization	0	0	1	100	1
I am engaged to my job	4	80	1	20	5
I avoid working too hard	29	66	15	34	44

Table 4.5.2: Gender and Productivity

Productivity Factors	Male		Female		Total
	Often – Always		Often – Always		
	n	%	n	%	n
Do you normally come early to work	38	70	16	30	54
Do you normally work until late to finish a task, without being asked	32	76	10	24	42
Do you often stay absent from work without a tangible reason	0	0	1	100	1
How often is your work performance better than that of your colleagues	18	67	9	33	27
Do you feel as though your job performance benefits your organisation	42	68	20	32	62
How often do you experience work success	39	68	18	32	57
How often do you meet deadline in your work (doing what you are asked for in time)	41	68	19	32	60
How often do you make mistakes in your job	2	50	2	50	4

Table 4.5.3: Race and Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement Factors	Asian		Black		Coloured		White		Total
	Disagree		Disagree		Disagree		Disagree		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
I am satisfied with my job	0	0	3	43	1	14	3	43	7
My job is stressful	0	0	8	30	10	37	9	33	27
I would speak highly speak of the organisation I work for	0	0	5	71	0	0	2	29	7
I like to speak get involved with other organizational activities, other than my job	0	0	3	20	8	53	4	27	15
I am committed to serving my organization	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	1
I am engaged to my job	0	0	2	40	1	20	2	40	5
I avoid working too hard	0	0	15	34	13	30	16	36	44

Table 4.5.4: Race and Productivity

Productivity Factors	Asian		Black		Coloured		White		Total
	Often – Always		Often – Always		Often – Always		Often – Always		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Do you normally come early to work	0	0	22	41	17	31	15	28	54
Do you normally work until late to finish a task, without being asked	0	0	21	50	9	21	12	29	42
Do you often stay absent from work without a tangible reason	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100	1
How often is your work performance better than that of your colleagues	0	0	13	48	6	22	8	30	27
Do you feel as though your job performance benefits your organisation	0	0	25	40	21	34	16	26	62
How often do you experience work success	0	0	23	40	18	32	16	28	57
How often do you meet deadline in your work (doing what you are asked for in time)	0	0	24	40	18	30	18	30	60
How often do you make mistakes in your job	0	0	1	25	0	0	3	75	4

The responses of the different race groups are presented on Tables 4.5.3 and Table 4.5.4. No significant comparisons can be drawn from the responses, as they were slightly similar. Apart from the manifestation of lower levels of productivity from the white group, since they scored lower on work success, punctuality and the frequency of meeting deadlines. This finding suggests that employee engagement does not differ significantly by race and productivity differs slightly with the black race being more productive.

Table 4.5.5: Age group and Employee engagement

Employee Engagement Factors	21-30		31-40		41-50		51-65		Total
	Disagree		Disagree		Disagree		Disagree		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
I am satisfied with my job	1	14	2	29	2	29	2	29	7
My job is stressful	7	26	4	15	9	33	7	26	27
I would speak highly speak of the organisation I work for	2	29	0	0	5	71	0	0	7
I like to speak get involved with other organizational activities, other than my job	4	27	3	20	5	33	3	20	15
I am committed to serving my organization	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100	1
I am engaged to my job	1	20	2	40	2	40	0	0	5
I avoid working too hard	8	19	8	19	18	42	9	21	43

Table 4.5.6: Age group and Productivity

Productivity Factors	21-30		31-40		41-50		51-65		Total
	Often – Always		Often – Always		Often – Always		Often – Always		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Do you normally come early to work	12	23	8	15	20	38	13	25	53
Do you normally work until late to finish a task, without being asked	6	15	9	22	16	39	10	24	41
Do you often stay absent from work without a tangible reason	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	1
How often is your work performance better than that of your colleagues	8	31	5	19	10	38	3	12	26
Do you feel as though your job performance benefits your organisation	15	25	11	18	21	34	14	23	61
How often do you experience work success	14	25	10	18	20	36	12	21	56
How often do you meet deadline in your work (doing what you are asked for in time)	14	24	13	22	20	34	12	20	59
How often do you make mistakes in your job	0	0	1	25	2	50	1	25	4

Table 4.5.5 and Table 4.5.6 show responses of the different age groups that exist at UVS. The results show that younger employees from age group 21-30 years and those aged 50 plus are more engaged and productive as very few disagreed with the engagement factors. Likewise, 0% reported to have stayed absent from work without a tangible reason, demonstrating commitment to productivity. This may be attributed to the experience of a new career to the younger group, and the achievement of career fulfilment in the older age group. This finding suggests that those between ages 31 -50 may not be doing the kind of jobs they had expected, and thus not fully engaged. On the other hand, the low engagement levels may be due to employees feeling as though they have reached a plateau in their careers. Training opportunities and interventions aimed at this age group should be considered.

Table 4.5.7: Employee designation and employee engagement

Employee Engagement Factors	Management		Non-management		Total
	Disagree		Disagree		
	n	%	n	%	n
I am satisfied with my job	3	43	4	57	7
My job is stressful	16	59	11	41	27
I would speak highly speak of the organisation I work for	2	29	5	71	7
I like to speak get involved with other organizational activities, other than my job	8	53	7	47	15
I am committed to serving my organization	1	100	0	0	1
I am engaged to my job	4	80	1	20	5
I avoid working too hard	30	68	14	32	44

Table 4.6.8: Employee designation and Productivity

Productivity Factors	Management		Non-management		Total
	Often – Always		Often – Always		
	n	%	n	%	n
Do you normally come early to work	34	63	20	37	54
Do you normally work until late to finish a task, without being asked	26	62	16	38	42
Do you often stay absent from work without a tangible reason	1	100	0	0	1
How often is your work performance better than that of your colleagues	18	67	9	33	27
Do you feel as though your job performance benefits your organisation	35	56	27	44	62
How often do you experience work success	37	65	20	35	57
How often do you meet deadline in your work (doing what you are asked for in time)	43	72	17	28	60
How often do you make mistakes in your job	3	75	1	25	4

Regarding Tables 4.6.7 and 4.6.8, management and non-management responses to engagement and productivity factors are compared. The scores show that managers are slightly less engaged than employees. 1 manager disagreed to being committed in comparison to 0 employees disagreeing to being committed. The leaders who should be

providing the vision, direction and motivation to the employees, revealed less commitment and engagement to serving their organization in comparison to their employees. In terms of productivity, managers scored slightly higher than employees, to staying absent without a tangible reason thus showing a lack of commitment to productivity. This finding reveals a need for coaching of managers to become effective to produce engaged employees at UVS.

Table 4.5. 9: Education and Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement Factors	No Matric		Matric		1st Diploma or Degree		Higher Degree or Diploma		Total
	Disagree		Disagree		Disagree		Disagree		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
I am satisfied with my job	0	0	1	14	3	43	3	43	7
My job is stressful	4	15	6	22	14	52	3	11	27
I would speak highly speak of the organisation I work for	0	0	0	0	4	57	3	43	7
I like to speak get involved with other organizational activities, other than my job	2	13	4	27	3	20	6	40	15
I am committed to serving my organization	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100	1
I am engaged to my job	0	0	2	40	2	40	1	20	5
I avoid working too hard	4	9	10	23	18	41	12	27	44

Table 4.5.10: Education and Productivity

Productivity Factors	No Matric		Matric		1st Diploma or Degree		Higher Degree or Diploma		Total
	Often – Always		Often – Always		Often – Always		Often – Always		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Do you normally come early to work	4	7	10	19	24	44	16	30	54
Do you normally work until late to finish a task, without being asked	5	12	8	19	16	38	13	31	42
Do you often stay absent from work without a tangible reason	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	1
How often is your work performance better than that of your colleagues	1	4	4	15	12	44	10	37	27
Do you feel as though your job performance benefits your organisation	7	11	9	15	28	45	18	29	62
How often do you experience work success	5	9	12	21	27	47	13	23	57
How often do you meet deadline in your work (doing what you are asked for in time)	4	7	12	20	30	50	14	23	60
How often do you make mistakes in your job	0	0	1	25	3	75	0	0	4

The level of education was considered to have a determining factor in employee engagement and productivity because it facilitates improvements and competitiveness in a company. From Tables 4.5.9 and Table 4.5.10, the responses show that those employees with no matric are more engaged and productive, exhibiting positive scores for both engagement and productivity factors. This may be the case, since this group rarely changes jobs, as they understand that their marketability is low. This group is closely followed by those with higher degrees/diploma. Those with higher degrees, are presumed to be generally stable and have established themselves within the organisation, thus tending to be more engaged than the rest.

Research question 1

4.4.2 What factors influence employee engagement or disengagement at UVS?

Table 4.6: General Employee Engagement Factors

Employee Engagement (Personal feelings about employment)	Overall Disagree		Neutral		Overall Agree		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
EE9. I am satisfied with my job	7	10	16	22	50	68	73
EE10. My job is stressful	27	37	18	25	28	38	73
EE11. I would speak highly of the organisation I work for	7	10	13	18	53	73	73
EE12. I like to speak and get involved with other organizational activities, other than my job	15	21	16	22	42	58	73
EE13. I am committed to serving my organization	1	1	2	3	70	96	73
EE14. I am engaged in my job	5	7	4	5	64	88	73
EE26. I avoid working too hard	44	60	15	21	14	19	73

Table 4.5 shows the questions that were deployed to establish the influences of employee engagement at UVS. For the purposes of this study, 5 elements were used to assess the levels of engagement and factors that influence engagement at UVS. These were job satisfaction, job stress, organizational commitment, participation in organizational activities and engagement itself. The aim was to link employee engagement to productivity. An understanding of the level of employee engagement and its drivers is important to company management and HR because it reveals critical areas of concern to be addressed.

As can be seen in Table 4.5, participants had an overall positive response to the employee engagement aspects of what influences their participation. In terms of the spread of responses, participants most frequently agreed with all but one of the statements. The only statement where participants most often disagreed was to “I avoid working too hard”.

The majority (96%) indicated that the most important factor influencing their engagement at UVS was their commitment towards serving the organisation. An overwhelming majority (88%) also indicated that they were very engaged in their work, although only 68% of them indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs. A further 73% indicated that they would speak very highly of their organisation demonstrating a sense of pride. When asked to indicate whether they would avoid working too hard, 60% of them responded that they had no problem with working hard. Not too many respondents indicated that they were engaged in other aspects of the organisation apart from their jobs, with only 58% indicating that they spoke and participated in other organisational aspects. Participants seemed very divided on the level of stress that they experienced with their jobs. There were almost an equal number of participants who agreed overall (38%) and who disagreed overall (37%). The remaining 25% opted to remain neutral or were undecided on whether the jobs were a source of stress to them or not.

Based on this interpretation of results, it is concluded that; employee commitment, job satisfaction, a sense of pride, are factors that strongly influence employee engagement at UVS. It can also be said that some degree of employee engagement exists. Equally so, it can be deduced that job stress has an influence on the level of disengagement in the company. Kumar and Pansari (2015) agree with these findings when they described elements of in such as; employee satisfaction, commitment, loyalty, as having a direct influence on employee engagement. Also in agreement with this analysis are Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2014) who found that job stress can negatively influence employee engagement in an organization and therefore must be managed.

Research Question 2

4.4.3 What relationship exists between employee engagement, performance and commitment at UVS?

For this section, the relationships between employee engagement and performance and employee engagement and commitment were evaluated. To look at commitment, two questions were deployed. The workers were measured on how much they were willing to go the extra mile to contribute to organisational productivity and the second one was aimed at measuring waste minimization through being careful at work.

Table 4.8: Employee Engagement, Performance and Commitment

Employee Productivity	Never		Almost never		Sometimes		Often		Very often		Always		Tot.
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N
P6. How often are your productive at work	1	1	0	0	8	11	6	9	24	34	31	44	70
P7. How often do you go out of your way to do extra work for the company	9	13	4	6	17	24	13	18	17	24	11	15	71
P8. How often has your work performance been found to be lower than expected by your leader	29	40	15	21	19	26	5	7	3	4	2	3	73
P9. How much of the time do you do no work when you are supposed to be working	42	58	18	25	8	11	3	4	0	0	2	3	73
P10. How much of the time do you find yourself not working as carefully as you should	39	53	17	23	13	18	0	0	3	4	1	1	73
P11. How much of the time is the quality of your work lower than expected	23	32	25	34	18	25	2	3	1	1	4	5	73
P12. How much of the time do you find yourself not concentrating on your work	32	44	14	19	24	33	1	1	2	3	0	0	73

To establish the relationship between employee engagement and performance, employees were asked questions pertaining to how they perceived their productivity levels. As shown in Table 4.7 more than 50% of participant responses were concentrated in any one-response category for only 2 employee productivity questions addressing their performance and commitment. These are “How much of the time do you do no work when you are supposed to be working?” and “How much of the time do you find yourself not working as carefully as you should?”

In terms of “How much of the time do you do no work when you are supposed to be working?” Out of the participants, 58%, indicated that they never idle around when they have work to do. A further 25% added that they almost never sat idle when they are supposed to be working. Taken jointly, this indicates that 83% of the participants did not idle around when they are supposed to be executing their work duties.

It is concluded that UVS employees execute their jobs meticulously and therefore perceived as committed to serving the organization. In accordance with this conclusion is Kaliannan and Adjovu (2014) who found that committed employees dedicate themselves in the attainment of organizational goals and the drivers of organizational success.

Fifty-three percent of the participants indicated that they were always careful when performing their work functions. A further 23% indicated that they usually performed their work duties carefully. This indicates that 76% of the participants were almost always or always careful while working. Despite this high level of care in performing their duties, only 63% of the participants indicated that they never lost concentration on their work.

A further 44% of the respondents felt that they were always productive at work, with 34% responding to being often productive at work. Apart from one person who indicated that they were never productive at work, the remaining 14 (20%) participants were not very confident in their work productivity. In addition, 61% of the respondents indicated that they felt that their leaders either never (40%) or almost never (21%) found them performing below par. However, (14%) found that more often than not, their leaders found their performance to be below standard. The perceptions that participants had of their leaders’ assessment of the quality of their work was almost the same as what participants’ assessments of their own work. This is evidenced by 66% of the participants indicating that the quality of their work was never (32%) or almost never (34%) below standard.

Perhaps the most unsatisfactorily responded to question was on how often participants would go the extra mile to take on additional duties at work. Here 24% indicated that they sometimes would and another 24% responded that they did this frequently. Nineteen percent, however, indicated that they would never (13%) or would almost never (6%) go the extra mile for the company in respect of taking on additional duties.

Based on this analysis, UVS employees are productive but are only willing to do the basic minimum required of them. With motivational strategies and encouragement from management, UVS employees would become more engaged and contribute better to productivity. The results do not indicate drive and motivation to go beyond the call of duty. This finding is in harmony with Farouk (2014) who is of the view that motivation plays an added role in driving an engaged employee to perform even better. His study found that motivation is what makes an engaged employee to be more productive.

Research Question 3

4.4.4 What is the relationship between communication and leadership style on employee engagement?

Table 4.9: Communication and Leadership Effects on Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement (Perceptions about leadership)	Overall disagree		Neutral		Overall agree		Total N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
EE27. Consults me on matters of importance to me	9	12	15	21	49	67	73
EE28. Discusses my training and developmental needs with me	12	17	10	14	50	69	72
EE29. Recognises me when I have done a good job	8	11	11	15	54	74	73
EE30. Makes me feel like my work counts	8	11	7	10	58	79	73
EE31. Is open and honest with me	8	11	15	21	50	68	73
EE32. Keeps me in touch with what is going on in the organization	6	8	15	21	51	71	72
EE33. Is supportive if I have a problem	7	10	14	19	52	71	73
EE34. Makes it clear to me what is expected of me from my job	1	1	12	16	60	82	73
EE35. Listens if I have a suggestion to make	7	10	12	17	53	74	72
EE36. Treats me fairly	3	4	20	27	50	68	73
EE37. We communicate well with each other	3	4	12	16	58	79	73

This objective seeks to evaluate the role of communication and leadership style on employee engagement at UVS. A similar approach as in other sections was used to construct Table 4.9. It is therefore a contraction that reflects (or groups) all the statements where the participants agreed together and does the same for statements where they disagreed. A summary of the results is given in Table 4.9 while a detailed account of responses is given in Appendix 2.

Overall, the majority of participants had positive perceptions of their leadership. This is reflected in the least agreed to statement “Consults me on matters of importance to me” being agreed to by 67% of the participants. Participating UVS employees most strongly affirmed that their leaders communicated clearly on what their expectations of them when performing their duties. Of the 11 statements making this construct, this statement was agreed to the most by employees (i.e. 82% agreed overall).

Jointly ranked second highest by the participants was the communication that they had with their leaders (79%) and the appreciation expressed by their leaders in making them feel that their work counted (79%). The third highest ranked statements, based on participants’ agreement, was the recognition that they were given by their managers for a job well done (74%) and that their leaders were patient to listen to their suggestions (74%). A further 71% of the participants found their leaders to be supportive when they were faced with problems. A similar percentage felt that their leaders kept them informed with the organisation’s activities.

Sixty-nine percent of the participants indicated that the leaders discussed their training and developmental needs with them. However, this statement was the most disagreed to by 17%. A further 68% of the participants felt that their leaders were open and honest with them; and treated them fairly. However, 27% of the participants were unsure or chose not to comment on the treatment that they received from the leaders.

Most employees are satisfied with the level of communication and are generally happy with the support they get from their leaders; and therefore, are engaged. Most employees felt that they are made part of the decision-making process and therefore are perceived as productive and engaged. In support of this conclusion is Berdarkar and Pandita (2014) who observed leadership and communication as key drivers of employee engagement. Furthermore, Farouk (2014) agrees that if employees are included in the decision making process of matter pertaining to their jobs, they become engaged and productive in their jobs. Karaa et al. (2013) also agree that supportive leadership improves employee engagement.

Research Question 4

4.4.5 What is the relationship between job-fit and employee engagement?

This objective looks at the relevance of job –fit with Employee engagement. Participants were asked 8 questions that related to how well they perceived their jobs fit, to them.

A similar approach as described in the previous sections was used to construct Table 4.10.

A detailed account of responses in given in Appendix 3.

Table 4.10: Job-fit and Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement (Personal feelings about employment)	Overall disagree		Neutral		Overall agree		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N
EE1 I am fit to do my job	0	0	3	4	70	96	73
EE2. My job feels right for me	0	0	6	8	67	92	73
EE3. I have been given the right tools	1	1	10	14	60	85	71
EE4. I have been adequately trained to do my job	2	3	9	12	62	85	73
EE5. My jobs activities are personally meaningful to me	2	3	6	8	65	89	73
EE6. The work I do in my job is of value to me	2	3	13	18	57	79	72
EE7. The work I do in my job is of value to the company	1	1	5	7	67	92	73
EE8. When I wake up in the morning I look forward to going to work	7	10	10	14	56	77	73

Table 4.10 shows that an overwhelming majority of the participants felt that they fitted in well with their jobs. This is evidenced in 77% being the lowest agreement that they had, which was for the statement that enquired whether they looked forward to coming to work in the morning. This statement also had the most disagreement responses (10%) received of the 8 statements making this construct.

Participants were confident that they were ideal for the jobs that they did with 96% of them agreeing that they were fit for their respective jobs. Furthermore, 92% of the participants indicated that the work that they did felt right to them and added value to the company.

Although 92% of the participants indicated that their work added value to the company, only 79% of them felt that what they did for the company was valuable to them. In this instance, only 2 participants disagreed that their work was of value to them. Of all the neutral

responses given by the participants, this statement received the most responses (18%) when compared to the other 7 statements within this construct.

Job activities were thought to be personally meaningful to 89% of the respondents. In addition, 85% of the respondents indicated that they were adequately trained for their jobs and were equipped with the appropriate tools to perform their duties.

It is deduced that there is a very good degree of person-job fit and as result UVS employees are found to be engaged and productive. This conclusion is affirmed by Kumar and Pansari (2015) who reported an aligned person – job fit as an important component of employee engagement. Their study supports that an aligned person job-fit results in high levels of employee satisfaction, enthusiasm and the production of high quality work. Moreover, Dulagil (2012) found that an aligned person job-fit ensures that employees remain engaged because they are placed in their areas of capability.

Research Question 5

4.4.6 What is the role of work environment on employee engagement?

This objective was intended to explore the employee well-being and productivity at UVS. To do this, 11 questions were deployed with the aim of answering this research question. The responses are summarized in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Work Environment and Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement (Personal feelings about employment)	Overall disagree		Neutral		Overall agree		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N
EE15. I achieve the correct balance between my home and work lives	14	19	12	16	47	64	73
EE16. UVS provides me to support to help meet my work-life balance	14	19	21	29	37	51	72
EE17. I often think about other things when I'm doing my work	34	47	17	24	21	29	72
EE18. I am rarely distracted when I'm doing my job	16	22	16	22	41	56	73
EE19. I really put my heart when I'm doing my job	2	3	4	5	67	92	73
EE20. I get excited when I perform well in my job	4	5	6	8	63	86	73
EE21. I often felt no emotion when I perform my job	44	60	18	25	11	15	73
EE22. I avoid working overtime whenever possible	32	44	10	14	31	42	73
EE23. I stay until the job is done	4	5	5	7	64	88	73
EE24. How I perform in my job affects how I feel	8	11	6	8	58	81	72
EE25. I exert a lot of energy in my job	3	4	5	7	65	89	73

Table 4.11 shows that most participants felt most strongly about the commitment and effort that they put into their jobs. This is evidenced by 92% agreeing that they put their hearts into performing their jobs. Eighty-nine percent of the participants, however, felt that they expended a lot of energy when performing their jobs. A further 88% indicated that they stayed at work until they completed the job that they were doing, with 86% of the participants expressing that they felt a sense of satisfaction when they performed well at their jobs. Although 88% of the participants were committed to staying until they completed their work, only 44% of them were prepared to work overtime.

Forty-two percent of the participants explicitly indicated that they would avoid overtime whenever they had the choice to.

Eighty-one percent of the participants indicated that their performance at their jobs affected their feelings, with 60% of the participants indicating that they often felt emotion when doing their jobs. Only 15% of the participants indicated that they felt no emotion when performing their jobs.

It appears from the responses received that focus and concentration at work were challenges for employees to some degree. This can be seen by only 56% of the participants indicating

that they were hardly ever distracted when doing their work and a further 47% indicating that they rarely thought about other things when performing their jobs.

Finding a balance between home and work seemed not to be much of a challenge for 64% of the respondents. However, 19% of the participants were having difficulties in striking a balance between home and work. The company was perceived not to be very supportive in helping employees find a balance between home and work-life. This is evidenced by only 51% of the participants indicating that the company did provide them with some support to balance their work and private lives.

It is concluded that UVS employees are committed to performing their jobs well, however their work – life balance is also an important element that they consider when carrying out their tasks. It is found that UVS employees do not like to work overtime and the creation of this type of work environment negatively impacts on their job satisfaction and thus engagement levels, whenever they are asked to do so. In agreement with this finding is Bersin (2015) who found a good work-life balance and supportive work environment as two of the key drivers of employee engagement, on a global scale. His research revealed flexible working hours and a good work-life balance as having a positive effect on employee engagement.

Research Objective 6

4.4.7 What interventions are required to improve employee engagement at UVS?

To answer this objective, participants were asked to comment in writing on what changes they would like to see happening at UVS, which would make them happy at work. They were also asked questions geared towards uncovering what would motivate them to work harder and in relation to leadership treatment. In terms of interventions that UVS could implement to enhance employee engagement, most respondents mentioned good compensation packages, adequate resources, additional training and development, fair and equal treatment and involvement in policy changes and decision-making.

This demonstrates the extent to which employees are not happy with the way these factors are currently, at UVS. This establishes what was identified by Anitha (2014) to be the

determinants of Employee engagement. Anitha (2014) also identified elements such as leadership, good compensation packages, training and development, and work-life balance as predictors of employee engagement. These are the factors, which UVS employees feel, need to be addressed by their management in order for them to be happy at work.

In terms of the general comments given in response to additional questions pertaining to motivational factors; revising pay and benefits (bonus), an improved two-way communication (listening to employees' view), improving working conditions and culture (safety and HR policies), were the most cited as elements that would motivate them to work harder. It is concluded that UVS employees are not sufficiently engaged to contribute towards productivity and can be motivated by using these strategies. In support of this view Dulagil (2012) considered that, if there were to be any level of employee engagement, there needs to be clear transparency and communication about organizational goals. His study also supports the notion that managers should demonstrate care about the employee well-being (health and safety). In parallel with this Soni (2013) observed that a culture of respect and constant feedback from manager and employee, vice versa is an important driver of employee engagement.

Also confirming these finding Yamoah (2013) highlighted a significant relationship between compensation packages and productivity by providing evidence that bonuses enhance productivity across the organization.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has presented the results together with the discussion of the findings. The profile of the participants was also shown in graphical form, interpreted and discussed. The results were presented in such a way that each research objective was answered separately. Descriptive statistics was done and each table of results is accompanied by interpretations. Conclusions have been drawn from the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overall summary, conclusion and the recommendations for the research conducted on the impact of employee engagement on productivity at UVS. Also, included in this chapter are contributions to knowledge and recommendations for practice, policy and suggestions for future research.

5.2 Summary

The findings show that most of the participants were involved in the core business activities at UVS. This was an indication that their productivity levels directly impacted on the business. That is why improving their engagement levels would have significant outcomes on business productivity. Most participants were either technically skilled or possessed a professional qualification which was an indication that they had some span of control within the organisation. The study variables were compared with the profiles of the respondents in cross tabulation format. High levels of engagement were recorded amongst female employees, those whose age group was 21 -30 and above 50 years and those employees who were without a matric qualification. High productivity levels were recorded among the same profiles, except that in the case of gender, males were found to be more productive than their female counterparts.

Despite efforts by HRM, to keep employees satisfied and intrinsically motivated, employee engagement in the sugar industry has been found wanting, thus adversely affecting production. Previous research did not consider the sugar industry. The purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between employee engagement and productivity at UVS.

The conceptual framework that was developed for this study, was driven by the following objectives, namely to: to identify factors that influence employee engagement or disengagement at UVS; to establish the relationship between employee engagement,

performance and commitment at UVS; to establish the relationship between internal communication and leadership style on employee engagement; to establish the relationship between job-fit and employee engagement; to determine role of work environment on employee engagement; to suggest interventions to improve employee engagement and address the employee engagement gap at UVS.

The study used descriptive and cross-sectional research design. Questionnaires were used to collect data. The analyses of data entailed the use of descriptive statistics. The data was summarized and presented in tables, which was in turn discussed.

The findings show that most the participants were involved in the core business activities at UVS. This was an indication that their productivity levels directly impacted on the business. That is why; improving their engagement levels would have significant outcomes on business productivity. Most participants were either technically skilled or possessed a professional qualification which was an indication that they had some degree of span of control within the organisation.

The main objective of the study sought to establish that impact that employee engagement has on organizational productivity. Part of the study aimed at establishing the factors that influence employee engagement or disengagement at UVS. To find out what the factors for employee engagement and disengagement were, the researcher deployed five questions. The findings revealed strong factors that influence employee engagement to be; employee commitment, job satisfaction, work environment, person job-fit and organisational pride. Job stress was found to be a major factor influencer of disengagement at UVS.

The second objective was aimed at examining the relationship between employee engagement, performance and commitment at UVS. The findings indicated a high degree of employee commitment and performance among participants. This relationship illustrated an empirically proven relationship between the two variables.

The third objective sought to explore the relationship between communication and leadership style with employee engagement. The findings of the study show that employees are satisfied with the level of communication and the leadership style that was being

exercised at UVS. These results established that a good relationship exists between communication, leadership style and employee engagement.

The fourth objective was to uncover the relationship that person-job fit has with employee engagement. The results showed that a very good degree of person job-fit exists which positively influenced UVS employees to be engaged.

The fifth objective was to explore the role that work environment plays on employee engagement. The findings revealed that a good work-life balance plays a significant role in positively influencing employee engagement levels.

The sixth objective was to seek interventions that are required to improve employee engagement at UVS. Some of the interventions revealed by the study are: better compensation packages, adequate resources, additional training and fair and equal treatment of employees. This implies that if management were to improve on these, they would realise an engaged and productive workforce.

5.3 Conclusions

Productivity is the goal for any company's competitive advantage. This study sought to investigate whether employee engagement has an impact on company productivity, and if so, establish engagement factors at UVS. Some key conclusions were reached relating to the findings of the study. Employee engagement was found to have an influence on productivity at UVS, which is why managers should consider the strategies of monitoring and enhancing employee engagement, through conducting employee engagement surveys and feedback sessions, to motivate employees.

A reasonable impression is that UVS has a sufficiently engaged workforce. Some of the driving factors that strongly influence employee engagement at UVS are: person job-fit, job satisfaction, employee commitment and a sense of pride in the organization's management must note that employees play a focal role in the performance of an organization. For UVS to be profitable, management ought to be responsive to their employees' concerns and nurture their relationship with them to encourage these drivers. This implies that

management and HR should be employee focused to leverage optimum engagement levels for improved performance.

The findings of the study also established that leadership style had a significant contribution towards employee engagement. It is the role of management to lead by aligning employees to the vision and goals of the company to establish a set of shared values and culture, which will lead to high levels of engagement and improved productivity.

The findings also revealed that communication is an additional key driver of employee engagement. This implies that internal communication in the organization, play a role in influencing performance. The findings of the study concurred with what literature says on employee engagement and its drivers. The study concludes that the lack of managerial transparency and the existing bureaucracy standards at UVS are hindering high productivity levels.

5.4 Contributions to knowledge

It is recommended that managers focus on improving employee engagement levels to improve productivity at UVS. This study was aimed at establishing the relationship between employee engagement and productivity at UVS. Research done has established that employee engagement is one of the key drivers of productivity. This research has noted that prior empirical studies have focused on developed countries and other African countries, but not the SA sugar industry.

In addition, those studies were not consistent in their conceptualization of the research variables. However, the drivers of employee engagement have been studied comprehensively. This study contributes to literature by confirming that employee engagement does have a positive influence on organisational productivity.

This study adds to the existing body of knowledge on employee engagement, to the conversations of concern pertaining to management and research on the intricacies of factors that influence productivity.

The study has conceptualised the relationship between employee engagement and productivity by using leadership style as a mediating variable and work environment as a moderating variable. The use of these integrated variables has implications for the manufacturing industry. To enhance the conceptualization of employee engagement and productivity, three important factors were used, namely: employee commitment, person job-fit and communication.

The uniqueness of this study to existing literature is in its identification of the best predictors of employee engagement in a SA sugar environment. The study sheds some light on the uncertainty around the value that employee engagement adds towards driving organizational productivity.

The research has given a model where employee engagement, performance and commitment can be studied as independent variables; leadership style as a mediating variable and work environment as playing a role of moderation; productivity as the dependent variable, measured through increased customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction.

5.5 Recommendations for policy implications

The conceptualized model has been confirmed by the findings. Several actions have been recommended for management. Job satisfaction, as a factor of employee engagement, was found to have a contribution towards productivity. UVS managers should place emphasis on investing in strategies that will promote employee well-being and provide safe working conditions to realise the benefits of having an engaged workforce to enhance productivity.

UVS managers, through HR policy crafting and implementation, are in a good position to positively influence the employee engagement levels in the organisation, to increase productivity. Managers should place emphasis on creating an inclusive workplace culture, whereby employees are treated as though they belong with the organization. UVS management should design policies which will enable them to measure employee engagement levels to sustain the organization through continuous improvement efforts.

Employee engagement was found to positively influence productivity at UVS. Employee engagement has also been acknowledged as key to an organization's competitive advantage.

Management is to ensure that employees are conversant of the organization's vision and mission, because an understanding of the organization's objectives will ensure alignment between the organization and its employees. When employees are aligned with the organization's goals, they become engaged.

Employee commitment was found to strongly influence employee engagement at UVS. The implication is that management must provide employees with adequate and required resources, with the autonomy to perform their duties to improve productivity. Top management should demonstrate trust in their operational managers and eliminate the element of leading by fear. This will promote commitment in the organization and enable managers to establish clear goals as well as craft and execute strategies to improve organizational performance.

Person- job fit was found to have a contribution towards the engagement levels at UVS. Within the context of a unionized workforce and dominant labour policies, management must ensure that there are system integrations in place, which will change the culture in the organization to increase productivity. Strategies such as training policies that will enhance employee capacity, will lead to increased engagement levels and productivity.

Work environment was also found to be a predictor of employee engagement. In these volatile and highly competitive business times, the work environment has a direct impact on the performance of an organization. Industries should work together with industry regulators and government to ensure that the organization is in cognisance with its labour needs, and create a conducive working environment for all.

5.6 Recommendations for further research

This was a cross-sectional study and it is thus envisaged that a longitudinal study would confirm informed conclusions of future research. Further research should be done to investigate the causative relationship of transformational leadership with employee

engagement. Further research can also be conducted to validate the findings and conclusions of this study, by conducting a similar study across the entire SA sugar industry.

In addition, further investigations should be done to establish the moderating role of other variables, on the relationship between employee engagement and organizational productivity.

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Required Sample Size[†]

Population Size	Confidence = 95%				Confidence = 99%			
	Margin of Error				Margin of Error			
	5.0%	3.5%	2.5%	1.0%	5.0%	3.5%	2.5%	1.0%
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
20	19	20	20	20	19	20	20	20
30	28	29	29	30	29	29	30	30
50	44	47	48	50	47	48	49	50
75	63	69	72	74	67	71	73	75
100	80	89	94	99	87	93	96	99
150	108	126	137	148	122	135	142	149
200	132	160	177	196	154	174	186	198
250	152	190	215	244	182	211	229	246
300	169	217	251	291	207	246	270	295
400	196	265	318	384	250	309	348	391
500	217	306	377	475	285	365	421	485
600	234	340	432	565	315	416	490	579
700	248	370	481	653	341	462	554	672
800	260	396	526	739	363	503	615	763
1,000	278	440	606	906	399	575	727	943
1,200	291	474	674	1067	427	636	827	1119
1,500	306	515	759	1297	460	712	959	1376
2,000	322	563	869	1655	498	808	1141	1785
2,500	333	597	952	1984	524	879	1288	2173
3,500	346	641	1068	2565	558	977	1510	2890
5,000	357	678	1176	3288	586	1066	1734	3842
7,500	365	710	1275	4211	610	1147	1960	5165
10,000	370	727	1332	4899	622	1193	2098	6239
25,000	378	760	1448	6939	646	1285	2399	9972
50,000	381	772	1491	8056	655	1318	2520	12455
75,000	382	776	1506	8514	658	1330	2563	13583
100,000	383	778	1513	8762	659	1336	2585	14227
250,000	384	782	1527	9248	662	1347	2626	15555
500,000	384	783	1532	9423	663	1350	2640	16055
1,000,000	384	783	1534	9512	663	1352	2647	16317
2,500,000	384	784	1536	9567	663	1353	2651	16478
10,000,000	384	784	1536	9594	663	1354	2653	16560
100,000,000	384	784	1537	9603	663	1354	2654	16584
300,000,000	384	784	1537	9603	663	1354	2654	16586

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Factors influencing Employee Engagement / Disengagement

Employee Engagement (Personal feelings about employment)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
	N	n	n	n	n	N
EE9. I am satisfied with my job	2	5	16	38	12	73
EE10. My job is stressful	11	16	18	19	9	73
EE11. I would speak highly speak of the organisation I work for	3	4	13	35	18	73
EE12. I like to speak and get involved with other organizational activities, other than my job	11	4	16	26	16	73
EE13. I am committed to serving my organization	0	1	2	41	29	73
EE14. I am engaged in my job	1	4	4	46	18	73
EE26. I avoid working too hard	20	24	15	10	4	73

APPENDIX 2: Effect of Communication and Leadership Style on Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement (Perceptions about leadership)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
	N	n	n	n	n	N
EE27. Consults me on matters of importance to me	3	6	15	32	17	73
EE28. Discusses my training and developmental needs with me	2	10	10	35	15	72
EE29. Recognises me when I have done a good job	5	3	11	27	27	73
EE30. Makes me feel like my own counts	2	6	7	39	19	73
EE31. Is open and honest with me	3	5	15	33	17	73
EE32. Keeps me in touch with what is going on in the organization	2	4	15	36	15	72
EE33. Is supportive if I have a problem	2	5	14	31	21	73
EE34. Makes it clear to me what is expected of me from my job	0	1	12	39	21	73
EE35. Listens if I have a suggestion to make	3	4	12	36	17	72
EE36. Treats me fairly	1	2	20	31	19	73
EE37. We communicate well with each other	1	2	12	31	27	73

APPENDIX 3: Relationship between Job-fit and Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement (Personal feelings about employment)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
	n	n	n	n	n	N
EE1 I am fit to do my job	0	0	3	25	45	73
EE2. My job feels right for me	0	0	6	40	27	73
EE3. I have been given the right tools	0	1	10	36	24	71
EE4. I have been adequately trained to do my job	2	0	9	41	21	73
EE5. My jobs activities are personally meaningful to me	1	1	6	44	21	73
EE6. The work I do in my job is of value to me	0	2	13	34	23	72
EE7. The work I do in my job is of value to the company	0	1	5	42	25	73
EE8. When I wake up in the morning I look forward to going to work	2	5	10	35	21	73

APPENDIX 4: Relationship between Work Environment and Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement (Personal feelings about employment)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
	N	n	n	n	n	N
EE15. I achieve the correct balance between my home and work lives	3	11	12	40	7	73
EE16. UVS provides me to support to help meet my work-life balance	5	9	21	31	6	72
EE17. I often think about other things when I'm doing my work	11	23	17	18	3	72
EE18. I am rarely distracted when I'm doing my job	2	14	16	36	5	73
EE19. I really put my heart when I'm doing my job	0	2	4	37	30	73
EE20. I get excited when I perform well in my job	3	1	6	40	23	73
EE21. I often fell no emotion when I perform my job	20	24	18	8	3	73
EE22. I avoid working overtime whenever possible	11	21	10	22	9	73
EE23. I stay until the job is done	3	1	5	42	22	73
EE24. How I perform in my job affects how I feel	1	7	6	32	26	72
EE25. I exert a lot of energy in my job	1	2	5	33	32	73

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION 1.1 Introduction This chapter introduces the study by first presenting a background to the study and the outline of what the study entails. The statement of the problem that the study seeks to solve, together with the contribution that the study will have to the stakeholders in organisations and society as well as to the academic body of new knowledge, is given. The aim of the study together with the objectives and questions highlight the key variables that the study seeks to address. Furthermore, the expected outcomes as well as the anticipated shortcomings to the study are included, followed by the statement of assumptions that were made. Subsequently, the structure and goal of each chapter throughout the entire study is outlined at the end of this chapter. 1.2 Background The fact that employees are physically present and working in their workplaces does not mean that they are engaged. Employee engagement is a psychological and physical demonstration of what the employee understands of his role in the organization, and the commitment of stewardship that manifests in high productivity levels in his work. Employees that speak life about their organizations and those that feel a sense of belonging are also those that remain loyal and will concern themselves with productivity in their roles. It is these types of employees that UVS should strive to have because they exhibit what is known as engagement characteristics. Based on the experiences of employees, the study seeks to measure their engagement characteristics, establish what prevents them from engaging and to also determine how engagement influences productivity. Despite the acknowledgement of its importance in business, low levels of employee engagement are reported, globally. Various studies show a strong positive correlation of higher levels of employee engagement with stronger business performance or productivity. In the United States (US), only

32 per cent of employees are actively engaged(Mann and Harter, 2016). Mann and Harter (2016) estimate that a 21% increase in organizational profitability could result from improving employee engagement levels in organizations. It is estimated that the effect of the disengaged workforce costs \$ 11 billion per annum, in

the US only. According to 2017 global trends in employee engagement, just 24 percent of employees are reported to be highly engaged and the engagement levels are seen to have retracted in the last year (Adair et al., 2017). The Gallup survey that was conducted this year submits that 9 percent of the South African workforce is actively engaged (Engagement, 2017). It is alarming that 45 percent of the South African workforce was found to be actively disengaged at work. The Gallup's survey reported that less than 20 percent of the South African workforce felt that their well-being is supported and their career development is being encouraged. Leadership and communication were the major shortfalls resulting in shockingly low engagement levels in South Africa. A 60 percent majority of South African workforce believe they have neither autonomy nor opportunity to contribute to issues that affect their work. Out of the South Africans surveyed, 20 percent felt no connection to their work. Clearly, further work into the development and enhancement of engagement strategies to improve the levels of employee engagement still needs to be done in South Africa. There is no quick fix to the employee engagement challenge; however, such studies can offer strategies and recommendations to for implementation to enhance it. The economic impact of low employee engagement levels is described by Engagement (2017) as a staggering one. Kahn (1990) is acknowledged by literature as the first person to write a paper about employee engagement. Kahn (1990) described employee engagement as "the employment and expression of a person's preferred self in task behaviours." Employee engagement has emerged in business, as one of the key factors that organisations

ought to prioritize in order to remain competitive. Some of the most important work that has been done about employee engagement was by Geldenhuys et al. (2014), who examined the relationship between meaningful work and work engagement. They found that a positive relationship exists between psychological meaningfulness and work engagement and that meaningful work plays a significant role in sustaining employee commitment and thus productivity in 2 the organisation. Steger et al. (2012) share the same sentiments on work being meaningful to employees, and further state that it contributes to the core of the organization. Similarly Rothmann and Welsh (2013) investigated the role of psychological conditions in employee engagement using a cross sectional design. Their results confirm the significant role played by psychological meaningfulness and psychological availability in employee engagement. According to Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2014), during the process of engagement employees become self-motivated and are driven and energized to perform to the organization's expectations. Their study presents motivation as a construct and a predictor of employee engagement and organizational outcomes. Other major studies are by Ghadi et al. (2013), Anitha (2013), Guest (2014); and Kaliannan and Adjovu (2014) who examined the relationships between variables like transformational leadership, compensation, training and development, workplace well-being, team and co-worker and work environment, with employee engagement. All their findings agree that these factors determine the extent to which employees will be engaged. They also found that these factors were in most cases predictors of employee engagement. Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2014) identified five- employee engagement levels according to the level at which the individual contributes

towards the organizational goals. These five different levels are; the engaged, almost engaged, honeymooners, crash burners and the disengaged employees. Their study highlights the importance of managing employees effectively to boost employee engagement levels. Whilst Berdarker and Pandita (2014) and Soni (2013) also did some research on the effect of drivers such as communication and culture of respect as well as transparency in the workplace, on employee engagement. Their studies also highlight these as key drivers. The importance of job crafting and person job-fit was studied by (Tims et al.,

2013). Their findings suggest that if employees craft their own jobs, by either increasing their job demands through resources or match their demand-abilities to fit their jobs; they optimize their person-job fit and as a result experience a sense of meaning in their work. The Self Determining Theory (SDT) will be used for this study. Researchers; Edward L Deci and Richard determined Deci first introduced it in 1971. This theory was used to study human motivation, personality and optimal functioning. The SDT proposes that there are motivational orientations which guide human behaviour and these play a significant role in regulating healthy behaviour and psychological well-being (Geldenhuys et al., 2014). 3 Studies done by Meyer and Gagne (2008), Geldenhuys et al. (2014) and Barrick et al. (2013) believe that the theory to guide employee engagement research and practice is the SDT. In their studies, they look at employee engagement from a SDT point of view and identify the underlying mechanisms as being the satisfaction of employees' basic psychological needs for job competency, autonomy and relatedness. Their studies support that there is

enough evidence in literature to show that SDT is an applicable theory that can be used as a framework predicting organizational productivity because of employee engagement. Thus, SDT is used in this study because of the three identified basic psychological needs that contribute to humans thriving at work, which are; competency, autonomy and relatedness. Other major studies that are relevant to employee engagement and its impact on productivity were done by Karanges et al. (2014b), Wellins et al. (2017), Farouk (2014), Pansari and Kumar (2017); and Kaliannan and Adjovu (2014). Literature clearly points out a relationship between key drivers of engagement and organizational outcomes. Other research concerning the topic is about the barriers that hinder employee engagement. Studies cite the importance of enhancing employee engagement in organizations as an investment that can bring forth good returns. Strategies such as improved leadership, improving work design, improved communication and training are cited amongst the most influential by Anitha (2013) and Jose and Mampilly (2012). Further enquiry on the topic should be on the training of managers and business leaders on employee engagement as a business tool so that they can contribute to the cultivation of a productive work environment and employee well-being. It is also apparent that there is a lack of research in terms of the barriers of engagement and whether or not strategies, such as effective leadership, "blue ocean", and good internal communication, could enhance engagement in organisations. Previous research on the variables has been conducted extensively; however, it has not been effectively examined within the South African context. Most of the available literature on the concept is from other African countries, America, Europe and Asia. It is imperative that the relationship between employee engagement be understood from the South African perspective. The unique cultural values and beliefs that South Africans have could pose different findings to what other countries have revealed. South African respondents can interpret employee engagement differently.

1.3 Focus of the study

The study will focus on engagement and productivity at UVS in order to establish the underlying causes of low engagement or disengagement such as poor communication, work environment and leadership effectiveness, the relationship of employee engagement with productivity and offer easy to implement strategies that the organisation can use to increase engagement levels.

1.4 Problem Statement

Studies which have been conducted and data collected by previous researchers strongly link employee engagement to business performance. Various studies show a strong positive correlation of higher levels of employee engagement with stronger business performance or productivity. Implications for the sugar industry include a high staff turnover hence a loss of experience and skill, high frequency injury rate (HFRI) incidents that ultimately lead to low productivity. A lot of work needs to be done in terms of establishing working strategies that can enhance employee engagement in organizations. This study seeks to find solutions to enhance the low employee engagement levels that are reported in SA, using a sample of UVS employees as participants. A number of studies have been conducted on employee engagement, commitment and organisational productivity (Ongel, 2014, Ahmed and Dajani, 2015, Wellins et al., 2017). However, there is a dearth of academic research in this area (Gems, 2015). The levels of employee engagement in the sugar industry have not been studied. In particular, the levels of employee engagement at UVS and the relationship between employee engagement and productivity has not been researched. There is no available evidence

on the link between employee engagement and high work performance leading to organizational outcomes, in the South African sugar industry context. Previous researchers have not shown that employee engagement is an intervening variable for productivity in the sugar industry. There is also a gap in terms of available evidence to show the effect of hierarchies at work, leadership and work life balance, on employee engagement, in the sugar industry.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this quantitative study was twofold. Firstly, it was to analyse the factors for employee engagement and disengagement at UVS. Secondly, the purpose was to evaluate the causal relationship between employee engagement with productivity, employee commitment, leadership style and work environment. The quantitative approach was chosen because the study was to establish the relationship between employee engagement and selected outcomes of the company. The independent variable, employee engagement and the dependent variable, productivity, were measured, using work environment as a moderating variable and leadership style as a mediating variable.

1.6 Research questions

For the purpose of this study, the following questions are answered: ? What factors influence employee engagement or disengagement at UVS? ? What relationship exists between employee engagement, performance and commitment at UVS? ? What is the relationship between communication and leadership style with employee engagement? ? What is the relationship

between job-fit and employee engagement? ? What is the role of work environment on employee engagement? ? What interventions are required to improve employee engagement at UVS? 1.7 Research Objectives The specific objectives that will drive

3the study are: ? ? **To identify factors that influence employee engagement**

or disengagement at UVS. To establish the relationship between employee engagement, performance and commitment at UVS. ? To establish the relationship between internal communication and leadership style on employee engagement. ? ? ? To establish the relationship between job-fit and employee engagement. To determine role of work environment on employee engagement To suggest interventions to improve employee engagement and address the employee engagement gap at UVS. 1.8 Theoretical Framework The Self Determination Theory (SDT) was used to study human motivation, personality and best functioning. Literature shows that the quality of motivation is what matters in predicting successful outcomes more than the amount of motivation. As described by Cherry (2016), SDT is centred on 3 psychological needs and is driven by intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. For people to engage, they need to feel competent, connected and autonomous. As applied to the study, if people experience positive meaning in their work, they become motivated to perform better because they experience a psychological sense of connectedness, competency and autonomy. People want more than just a salary, but are looking for a sense of belonging in their organizations and when they feel this, they become more engaged and motivated. According to Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2014) during the process of engagement the employee becomes self-motivated and is driven and energised to perform and thus increasing productivity. Employee engagement represents a motivational assemble and a forecaster of organizational outcomes. 1.9 Operational definitions For the purpose of this research, productivity and positive organizational outcomes will be used interchangeably. Productivity refers to the employees' continuous efforts to be able to change inputs into outputs using efficiently and sustainably in pursuit of meeting the organisational goals. Productivity is a product of organisational outcome. In terms of the study, it will refer to the level of focus employees have in their work and their willingness to go the extra mile for task completion. An employee refers to all members of staff from all levels in the organisation, who work for the UVS. Employee engagement will refer to the level of ownership, commitment and loyalty the employee feels towards UVS. 1.10 Assumptions and Limitations It is assumed that the method that is selected is relevant for the study chosen. It is also assumed that this study will unveil a deeper and meaningful understanding to what causes low engagement amongst the UVS workforce so that it is effectively enhanced. The study will use a sample of representatives from all functional levels in the organization; hence, the results of the primary research may be biased because of the different levels of education, seniority and leadership roles of the participants. It has been acknowledged by previous studies that such variables can affect employee engagement levels in an organization. 1.11 Scope of the study The study focuses on a single company within the SA sugar industry, UVS. The study will not measure actual business performance and profitability as a product of an engaged workforce. For the study to have meaning to UVS, the study has established the following: • What it would take for UVS employees to be more engaged at work • What it would take for UVS employees to be more committed to their work • The management style which is preferred by UVS employees • Interventions that can be implemented at UVS, to enhance employee engagement? 1.12 Significance of the study Companies like UVS are passionate about the training and development of its employees, because productivity and customer satisfaction are at the heart of the organization's objectives. The study is important because employee engagement helps to drive the performance of employees in the organization in order to meet the pre-determined targets for organizational productivity. In light of the above, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact that employee engagement has on organizational productivity at UVS and to come up with recommendations to enhance employee engagement for the benefit of improving productivity. The expectation is that this study will inform UVS management as well as other organizations that, to improve organizational productivity, one of the major focus areas is ensuring that employees are engaged. This study also aims to highlight the importance of maintaining a quality work life, by having managers who will nurture the employee well-being, which then provides an excellent opportunity for employees' motivation and job satisfaction. This study is

geared at assisting UVS management and other organizations to manage differently for competitive advantage and to lead an engaged workforce that will be sustainable to be able to better deal with organizational change and challenges in the future. 1.13 Structure of the Dissertation The study is organized into five chapters. The overall introduction in chapter one, gives the background to the study, the research problem and lists the objectives and questions that the study will answer. The hypothesis, including the significance of the study is given in this chapter as well as the scope of the study. Chapter Two is comprised of the review of literature, employee engagement models and the proposed conceptual model. The global perspective on literature is given as well as gaps identified in the research. In Chapter Three, the research methodology that was followed is explained wherein the research design and approach are outlined. The sampling technique and size together with the target population are presented. The data collection instrument that was used, data quality control, validity, reliability, and ethical considerations are also explained. Chapter Four presents the findings on the relationship between employee engagement and productivity at UVS. This chapter gives the researcher's interpretation of the employees' responses to the impact of employee engagement and productivity in the organization. A comprehensive discussion of the findings by addressing each research question separately and then drawing in what the literature has revealed in relation to the deductions made, is also given in this chapter. Chapter Five, is comprised of the summary of the entire dissertation, the conclusions drawn on the major findings of the study as well as recommendations for practice and policy. Recommendations for future research are included. CHAPTER TWO 2 LITERATURE REVIEW 2.1 Introduction This chapter will conduct a literature review in order to establish what previous researchers have discovered on the relationship between employee engagement and productivity. It will start by presenting the theoretical framework that will be explained to shed light on

the background of the study and then give definitions of the two constructs, employee engagement and productivity. The literature review will include both quantitative and qualitative studies. A global perspective on employee engagement together with the literature on engagement surveys will be given. Thereafter, prior studies that examined the drivers of employee engagement will be discussed followed by a review of the relationship between employee engagement and organizational outcomes. The barriers to employee engagement and the relevant engagement models have also been included. The summary gives a conclusion of the key findings from the literature reviews that have had a significant contribution through

their findings. Lastly, a conceptual framework is drawn whereby the relationship between independent and dependent variable is shown. For the purpose of this research, productivity and positive organizational outcomes will be used interchangeably. 2.2 Theoretical Framework Theories such as social exchange theory (SET) and self-determination theory (SDT), have been advanced to explain employee engagement and organisational performance. In this study, SDT provides a framework to study employee engagement at UVS. The SDT claims that people are often motivated by external factors such as reward system, grades, evaluations or the opinions others have of them. It further explains that there is interchange between these extrinsic forces with the intrinsic motives and individual needs. The formal SDT has six mini-theories, which are summarized below: 2.2.1 Cognitive evaluation theory Cognitive evaluation theories discern between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The theory assumes that the different types of motivation activate different reactions towards work. For example, intrinsically motivated employees will be more absorbed, interested and creative in their jobs, as opposed to extrinsically motivated ones who will be working with the objective

of receiving tangible rewards. 2.2.2 Organismic integration theory (OiT) Organismic integration theory assumes that extrinsically motivated behaviour is regulated in different ways. OiT proposes that when an employee can relate and feels competent in their job, they will internalize their job activities. 2.2.3 Causality orientation theory Causality orientation theory is based on the assumption that the way people acquaint themselves to their surroundings influence how they will be motivated to perform. This theory proposes three types of orientations, which are: ? Autonomous orientations which are a result of an employee being

satisfied with their basic needs ? Strong controlled orientation, which are a result of the level at which the employee is competent and can relate to their work. ? Impersonal orientations, which are a result of an employee not being able to meet all these three needs. 2.2.4 Basic psychological needs theory The basic psychological needs theory assumes that human beings have three basic psychological needs: a need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Deci and Ryan (2014) have shown that need satisfaction is necessary for people's healthy development, engagement, motivation, and well-being. The three basic

psychological needs are present and need to be satisfied at all levels of human functioning at the specific-task level (a given job task), at the domain level (work or family), and at the global level (personality) (Deci and Ryan, 2014).

2.2.5 Goal contents theory According to SDT, people will be driven by goals, and some of these goals that individuals pursue are more likely to promote wellbeing than other goals (Kasser and Ryan, 1996). In particular, some goals, such as those that relate to community support, personal growth, and the formation of close relationships--are called intrinsic (Kasser and Ryan, 1996). These goals foster autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Consequently, these goals which seem enjoyable, challenging, fulfilling, and important, are called intrinsic motivation (Kasser and Ryan, 1996). These motivations then enhance persistence and improve human wellbeing.

2.2.6 Relationships motivation theory People want to feel connected and meaningfully related to others (Deci and Ryan, 2014). According to SDT, there is a fundamental psychological need for a human being to experience relatedness. People find relatedness to be inherently satisfying and thus essential to human wellness because they require it to be vital and to thrive (Deci and Ryan, 2014). Meyer and Gagne (2008) used the SDT theory in their study on employee engagement and identified psychological needs for job competency, autonomy and relatedness as underlying factors for employee engagement. Meyer and Gagne (2008) believe that a theory that can be used to guide research and practice on employee engagement is the Self- 13 Determination Theory (SDT). In their article, they look at employee engagement from a SDT perspective and identify the underlying mechanisms as being the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs for job competency, autonomy and relatedness. Their study further proposes that there is enough evidence to support a lack of satisfaction leads to poorer performance and reduces psychological well-being. The outcomes of their research reveal a strong relationship between a good psychological well-being of employee and employee engagement. A quantitative study done by Geldenhuys et al. (2014) also used the SDT theory in their study that sought to examine the relationship between meaningful work and work engagement. The findings from Geldenhuys et al. (2014) reveal that there is a positive relationship between psychological meaningfulness and work engagement and that meaningful work has a contribution to sustaining employee commitment and thus productivity in the organization. Karanges et al. (2014) recently conducted an investigation into whether social factors such as communication influence employee engagement. Their study was based on the social exchange theory, which is considered one of the theoretical paradigms that can be used to explain the relationship at work. The study used an online self – administered survey on 200 no-executives, to test the theoretical model. The findings show that, organizations should focus on internal communication in order to build higher levels of engagement. Similarly, Barrick et al. (2013) agree with previous studies conducted by Meyer and Gagne (2008) about the psychological mechanisms that drive employee behaviour. Using the assumption in the theory of purposeful work behaviour, which is embedded in the SDT, they suppose that work behaviour is purposeful as driven by personality trait, and when motivational forces are coordinated with this, employees experience meaningfulness in their psychological state. In addition, they elaborate that the meaningfulness experienced triggers task specific motivation processes which in turn influence the achievement of work outcomes, for example productivity. In congruence with previous studies Tims et al. (2013) sought to gain knowledge on the impact that job crafting has on person-job fit as well as job meaningfulness. Their research findings suggest that if employees craft their jobs by increasing their job demands (support and autonomy), a situation of demands- abilities fit is created. In this way, employees can optimize their person – job fit and as a result, they experience meaningfulness in their work. According to Steger et al. (2012) when employees find work motivating and meaningful, it contributes to the core of the organization, in terms of high levels of performance. Their findings propose that when psychological meaningfulness exists, organizational commitment is achieved and thus invariably work engagement will be the outcome.

2.3 Review of relevant literature

2.3.1 Employee Engagement AbuKhalifer and Som (2013) defined employee engagement as “a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its value”.

3An engaged employee is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the

organization.”

Stated differently, employee engagement is “the harnessing of organization members selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances.”(Abrahams,2012). Menguc et al. (2013) defined employee engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption”. Whilst Mani, (2011) defined employee engagement as “the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards his organization and its values.” Mishra et al. (2015) defined employee engagement as “the degree to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of their roles”. Ariani (2013) defined employee 15 engagement as “the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s preferred self in task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, emotional) and active, full performances”. Summative definition From the definitions given, employee engagement is psychological and physical demonstration of the employee’s understanding of his/her role in the organization, and the commitment of stewardship that is manifested in high productivity levels in his/her work. 2.3.2 Productivity Ali et al. (2013) defined productivity as “that which people can produce with the least effort”. They went further to say that productivity “is a ratio to measure how well an organization (or individual, industry, country) converts input resources (labour, materials, machines etc.) into goods and services.”In addition, productivity refers to the “effort that individuals can produce with the least effort by putting labour, material, and machines.” Atkinson (2013) defined productivity as “an economic output per unit of input”. “The unit of input can be labour hours (labour productivity) or all production factors including labour, machines and energy (total factor of productivity).” Feige et al. (2013) defined productivity as “the ratio of output to input depending on the context and content of the output measure (e.g. products, services, market shares, value) and input measure (e.g. cash, labour, energy, materials, and work environment).” In their critical review of literature, Yi and Chan (2013) defined prodproductivity as the efficiency and the rate at which goods are produced. They further described it as “being used to denote a relationship between output and the associated inputs used in the production process.” It is “a measure of outputs which are obtained by a combination of inputs.” Meyer et al. (2014) state that the definitions of productivity share characteristics of typically being about efficiency, inputs and outputs. They used an example of the Oxford Dictionary defines productivity as “effectiveness of productive effort, especially in industry, as measured in terms of the rate of output per unit of input.” Summative definition In summation, productivity refers to the employees’ continuous efforts to be able to convert inputs it no outputs efficiently and sustainably in pursuit of meeting the organisational goals. 2.3.3 Employee Engagement: a global perspective On a global scale, an employee engagement crisis is being reported. The percentage of highly engaged employees is reported to be 13% (Mann and Harter, 2016) and 26% are reported to be “actively disengaged” by Bersin (2015). Mann and Harter (2016) identified various factors that lead to the stagnant engagement levels in the world. Approaches that would lead to changes in individual performance, these approaches must be supported by strategic and tactical development and solutions that will yield change to organizational culture, are what is needed (Mann and Harter, 2016). Bersin (2015) has revealed five critical elements that make an organization irresistible and drive employee engagement on a global scale. These elements make up the new model of employee engagement for winning organizations throughout the world. These elements are: ? Make work meaningful This plays the most important role in employee engagement. This element is concerned with making sure that the right people are placed in the right jobs for them to find meaning in what they do and given the tools and autonomy to succeed (Bersin, 2015) ? Foster great management This element refers to the clear instructions and expectations given to employees in order to establish alignment amongst teams. This creates transparency, teamwork and more work gets done (Bersin, 2015) ? Establish a flexible, humane, inclusive workplace This study draws that 68% of women prefer to have a more flexible and supportive work environment than to make more money, and men would consider working fewer hours a week. Research show that flexi working hours and a good

3work- life balance have a positive impact on employee engagement

(Bersin, 2015) ? Create ample opportunities for growth This element puts an emphasis on a learning culture in an organization as a key strategy for irresistible organizations. If employees do not feel as though their career development is being supported through training, coaching etc., they are likely to disengage (Bersin, 2015) ? Establish vision, purpose and transparency in leadership Leadership style and communication directly affect employee engagement. Communicating a sense of purpose to employees and their contribution to the organization's vision is important to keep employees engaged. Company (2015) conducted a survey on employee engagement covering 13 countries excluding SA. China and U.S were the two countries found to have the most engaged employees. Employee engagement is driven by certain elements in different countries, for example, in US what determines employee engagement is whether or not employees can identify with the company mission statement, whilst in UK and India, the indicator is whether the employees value being around co-workers who shared their values(Company, 2015).In other countries, what determined employee engagement was a strong positive link to employee relations and support where teammates support each other at work. In SA, the involvement of employees in decision making and employee empowerment ranked high in the list of engagement indicators (Vittee, 2015). 2.3.4 Employee engagement surveys Kumar and Pansari (2015) conducted a study that

1 developed a comprehensive scorecard to measure employee engagement in organizations. The study categorised **companies along a continuum of being “disengaged” to**

“highly engaged.”It used 208 participants who are managers at 52 companies. The scorecard was then implemented

1 in 75 companies on three continents (North America, Europe and Asia). The results indicate that an organization's overall employee engagement level is directly influenced by the components of employee engagement (employee satisfaction, commitment, loyalty and performance) and are therefore the result of the aggregation of these components. In illustrating the benefits of measuring employee engagement and working on strategies to improve employee engagement, a follow-up study

was conducted by Kumar & Pansari, (2015) with 75 companies. The findings revealed

1 that companies with higher levels of employee engagement showed higher levels of profits that are derived from

productivity.

1 Eight companies that moved from a low level of employee engagement (disengaged) in the 19 first year to

1 showed a 19% average increase in earnings per share the following year.

Furthermore, two companies that moved from a moderate level of employee

engagement in the first year to the highest level of engagement the following year showed a 132% average increase in earnings per share.

Berdarkar and Pandita (2014) conducted a literature review to explore the concept of employee engagement and also shed light on key drivers of employee engagement by analyzing specifically three drivers, namely communication, work-life balance and leadership. This study also analyzed how these drivers impact the level of employee performance and well-being at workplace of the employees. The study concluded that employees are a key asset to any organization and if they are not given the right space and time to make a perfect blend of work and fun at workplace, then the sense of disengagement sets in. Organization and employees are both dependent on each other to fulfil their goals and objectives therefore, employee engagement should not be a one-time exercise but it should be integrated in the organizational culture. The study goes further to mention that employee engagement should be a continuous process of learning, improvement and action. Thus, organizations today should actively look forward to fulfil employee's expectations and thus, create an impact on the performance of employee, which directly affects the organization's performance. Karatepe (2013) conducted a study which proposed and tested a research model that investigated whether work engagement functions as a mediator of the effects of high-performance work practices (HPWPs) on job performance and extra-role customer service. The study used

110 participants who were frontline hotel employees and their managers in the Poiana Brasov region of Romania. The results suggest that work engagement acts as a full mediator of the effects of HPWPs on job performance and extra-role customer service. A contribution by Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2014) was a study that described the concept of engagement and its distinctiveness as well as its diminishing nature. Their study acknowledged the positive behaviour that is associated with an engaged workforce and also suggested ways to enhance engagement levels. They also advised that employee engagement in organisations needs to be managed properly because of their differences in personality, interest and abilities. They suggested ways of managing employees are, through managing their stress levels and promoting employee well-being. It is stated in their paper that job, organizational factors and past experiences can influence employee engagement levels. A model developed by Blessing White organization classifies employee engagement into five levels, according to the level at which the individual contributes towards the organization. The five levels are: ? The engaged employees who are the happiest and most productive ?

The almost engaged employees are content and do just enough for the organisation ? Honeymooners who have low levels of contributions towards the success of the organization ? Crash burners who lack self-contentment although they are productive ? Disengaged employees who have high levels of discontentment and talk negatively about the organisation. During the same year Guest (2014) conducted a review of the debates and evidence on employee engagement. The aim of his study was to assess the feasibility of engagement becoming a mainstream part of Human Resources Management (HRM) activity. His findings raise a concern of improving employee well-being and organizational engagement in order to improve organisation performance. In terms of higher engagement levels, their study places its association with higher supervisor-related job performance and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB). An interesting case study done by Kaliannan and Adjovu (2014) explores the impact of effective employee engagement on organizational success. They refer to engaged employees as "satisfied" and "committed" employees who immerse themselves in the successful attainment of organizational goals and are the force behind organizational success. Their findings are in agreement with other researchers Anita (2014) and Guest (2014) in that they identified work environment among other factors such as employee supervisor, job satisfaction and organisational culture as determinants of the degree to which employees will be engaged at work. During the same year Karanges et al. (2014) researched the optimization of employee engagement using internal communication, from a social exchange theory perspective. Their study links employee engagement to higher productivity and an improved reputation of the organization. Similarly to previous research, they identified employee engagement drivers as perceived support, job characteristics, value congruence and internal communication. They collected data from 200 non-executive workers and applied linear and mediated regression to test their model. Their findings direct organisations into focussing on internal communication in order to build greater perceptions of support in employees so as to foster optimal

level of employee engagement. The latest study on measuring the benefits of employee engagement was done by Kumar and Pansari (2015). Their study composed a scorecard to measure engagement levels. Their organizational scorecard is founded on the theory that the overall

1 organization's employee engagement level is directly influenced by the very component of engagement

which they identified as; employee satisfaction,

1 employee loyalty and employee performance. Another motivation behind the development of the

scorecard is that, an understanding of an organization's current employee engagement levels and strategies is important so that the Company can get the most out of employee engagement; especially in the light of it being associated with higher rates of the organization's profitability and growth. They also found that by measuring the level of employee engagement in an organization, it can reveal to HR, critical areas and developmental gaps to be addressed in order to increase the engagement level because employees are the organisations. Kumar and Pansari (2015) conducted a study where their leading question was, "why should companies care about engagement". The qualitative study was based

1 in North and South America, Asia, Africa and Europe, where over 200 HR and Marketing managers from 52 companies in

different industries were interviewed. Their study revealed a deep concern of high attrition rates shared by managers across the board, about employees who quit their jobs and then pouch their client and the increasing number of

1 senior employees who had become less productive. The

same study recognizes employee performance as an aspect of employee engagement. The findings reveal that a low employee morale and low productivity impact the company's bottom line negatively. Therefore, it is concluded that by

1 keeping employees engaged, there can be a major positive impact on

organizations. Wellins et al. (2017) provide the answer to the question which was posed by Kumar and Pansari (2015) "why companies should care about employee engagement". They refer to employee engagement as the primary source of competitive advantage. Competitive advantage can also be understood as a measure of organizational productivity. The study analysed the engagement database compiled by Development Dimensions International (DDI), across 200 organizations. The analysis showed that employees who scored high on engagement are more satisfied in their jobs, are not thinking of leaving their organizations are capable of achieving their performance goals. It is further estimated that if engagement levels could be improved from low to high in an organisation of 1000 employees, this can have an impact of over \$42 million to the bottom line, through productivity. The business case presented in the study reveals a strong relationship between sales and performance and employee engagement. Among the

sales team, it was found that on average 99% of the sales goals are achieved by highly engaged sales reps and 91% was achieved by the disengaged. A monograph by Wellins et al. (2017) describes the economic impact of low engagement as one of that can be staggering. The purpose of their study was to assess employee engagement as a key to organizations realising their competitive advantage. In their value proposition, they deduce that when employees in the organisation are engaged, the long-term benefits are seen in the bottom line and are differentiated from their competitors. The study demonstrates an overwhelming connection between employee engagement and organizational outcomes. The results also show that when the work environment is conducive to employees focusing their attention on their work and are motivated to do their best, productivity levels experienced by the organisation are high. A case study by Kaliannan and Adjovu (2014) explored the impact of effective employee engagement on organisational success. It argues that the concept of organisational success is not infused in tangible results but rather in the organisation's employees. The study notes that executives are obsessed with focusing on brand equity, market share and increasing profitability, yet all these attributes of business success would not be possible without employees. The study describes the role of employee engagement in the success of the organisation as that of a catalyst, whereby employees serve as the drivers behind the steering wheel of their organisations' productivity.

2.3.5 Drivers of employee engagement

2.3.5.1 HR policies and practices

Anyadike (2013) conducted a study to investigate the role of Human Resources Planning (HRP) in ensuring employee productivity in the Nigeria Public Organizations. This was after problems were identified with regards to human resource planning. The study recommended that the public organization should embrace human resource planning if employee productivity must be ensured. Human resources planning in the public organizations must be matched with the organizations' strategic planning to enable for enhanced employee productivity. The Nigerian public organizations should learn to embrace human resources outsourcing as a trend in human resource management as it is believed to ensure productivity in the organizations. Organisational policies should be responsive so that they appear considerate to employees' well-being.

2.3.5.2 Commitment to employee well being

In support of the above, Gandy et al. (2014) conducted a study to compare employee overall well-being to chronic disease status, which has a long-established relationship to productivity, as relative contributors to on-the-job productivity. The study used 2629 participants who were employees with diabetes or without any chronic conditions. The results revealed that well-being was the most significant predictor of productivity cross-sectionally in a model that included disease status and demographic characteristics. Longitudinally, changes in well-being contributed to changes in productivity beyond what could be explained by the presence of chronic disease or other fixed characteristics.

2.3.5.3 Communication (two-way)

A number of researchers have identified different drivers in their studies. Leadership, communication and a work-life balance were observed by Bedarkar and Pandita (2014) as drivers of employee engagement. Under a similar notion Soni (2013) deduced that a culture of respect, constant feedback both from manager to employee and vice versa, counselling and mentoring, as key drivers of employee engagement. Dulagil (2012) states that if there were to be any level of engagement, there needs to be clear communication of the core values and beliefs of the employees. He adds that the transparency about the goals and objectives of the organization should be evident. Supervisors and managers should demonstrate care about the health and well-being of the employees. There should also be a person-job fit alignment so that people are placed in their areas of capabilities. Managers should trust their employees and create opportunities for growth so that they remain engaged and productive. Farouk (2014) explored the attitude of employees on productivity. The study included communication as a driver of employee engagement in organisations. The study makes reference to the assumption made by scholars, that if employees are included in the decision making process of matters concerning their work and more so if they are given the opportunity to make decisions themselves; there would be positive benefits for both the employee and the organization. If organizations could endeavour to improve the process of informing employees about issues and changes in relation to their work environment, employees would be more likely to be initiative and suggest improvements, which in turn increase the productivity of their work.

2.3.5.4 Leadership style by immediate management

Karaa et al. (2013) conducted a study to test the notion that transformational leadership style is more effective than transactional leadership style by fostering employee well-being (enhancing quality of work life and life satisfaction as well as increasing organizational commitment and decreasing employee burnout). The study used 443 participants from Turkish 5-star hotels.

The findings support the positive effect of transformational leadership in the hospitality industry, which implies that hospitality managers should be trained to use a transformational leadership style to enhance employee well-being, which is a significant predictor of productivity. Theory shows that exercising authentic and supportive leadership improves employee engagement. 2.3.5.5 Involvement in decision making A quantitative study by Ariani (2013) was conducted to examine the relationship between employee engagement, OCB and Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB), in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. A significant positive relationship between employee engagement and OCB was revealed by the study. It is further explained OCB as the occurrence of behaviours that result in efficient and effective functioning of the organization and it is increased by the engaged employees. These behaviours are identified as; high energy demonstrated by employees, the eagerness to meet goal. Strategies to increase OCB suggested in the study as having maintaining the social systems that support the performance of the organisation, like involving employees in decision-making. These were identified by Ladley et al. (2015) as creating more group interactions and by Sharath (2014) as cultivating and promoting a workplace where there is more; ? Altruism, where individuals are willing to assist one another in their work ? Courtesy, such that colleagues

are able to inform each other about issues that may increase or reduce their workload like being absent from work ? Sportsmanship where employees are encouraged to have tenacity, accountability and not exhibit negative behaviour when things do not go as planned. 2.3.5.6 Training and development Another study by Anitha (2014) identified the key determinants of employee engagement and how they relate in terms of predictability of productivity. In this causal study, 700 questionnaires were administered upon which 383 were valid responses. The study found that the identified factors such as ; leadership, compensation, training and development and workplace well-being as predictors of employee engagement. Training and development was identified to be the most important determinant of engagement levels of employees. It can thus be said that these factors determine the extent to which employees are engaged at work. A study conducted by Bal et al. (2013) looked at the developmental and accommodative HRM as enhancers of employee engagement and commitment. Some researchers argue that this type of HRM as one that enhances employee outcomes rather than HRM that is equipped to adjust with organizational decline. Developmental HRM refers to training, job enrichment and is known to aim at increasing the ability to perform better at one's job, thereby contributing to productivity. As found by Jose and Mampilly (2012) it is expected that when a company develops its employees, they will reciprocate by working hard to support the organisational effectiveness. The provision of training improves service accuracy and is also equivalent to rewarding people. By doing a skills analysis, gaps can be identified and filled 2.3.5.7 Performance and appraisal The importance of enhancing employee engagement in the organization is shown by Jose and

Mampilly (2012) in an article which was based on satisfaction with HR practices and employee engagement. The study reveals that if an organization engages in performance management and appraisal, they will in turn feel obligated and thus be motivated to do their best to support the organisation's' goals. The study also implies that employees are not fully utilized and increasing their engagement levels would tap into their maximum potential and this could elicit good returns for the company. 2.3.5.8 Pay and benefits Yamoah (2013) conducted a study to examine the relationship between compensation and productivity using a case study approach. The study used 60 respondents from the banking industry in Ghana. The results indicated a significant relationship between compensation and productivity. In support of that finding, Chung, et al.

(2013) wrote a report that sheds insights on how different elements of the compensation plan enhance productivity. The report provides evidence that bonuses enhance productivity across all segments. Over-achievement commissions help sustain the high productivity of the best performers even after attaining quotas. Quarterly bonuses help improve performance of the weak performers by serving as pacers to keep the sales force on track to achieve their annual sales quotas. Remuneration can be made attractive to employees by introducing incentives, bonuses or holiday vouchers to acknowledge good performance

2.3.5.9 General work environment Appiahene et al. (2014) conducted a study to investigate ICT usage as predictor of teachers' productivity in Schools/Institutions. The study used 650 participants who were teachers from both public and private schools in Kumasi Metropolis of Ghana. The findings of this study revealed that schools in Kumasi Metropolis are currently making head ways towards participating in the global acceptance and use of ICT. The teaching profession in Ghana is a challenging one and quick access to and retrieval of appropriate teaching methods and notes by teachers, lectures, researchers etc. in the

emerging digital era requires effective implementation and use of ICT in Schools/Institutions. 2.4 Employee engagement and organizational productivity/outcomes Anita (2014) conducted a study to identify the key determinants of employee engagement and their predictability of the concept. The study also examined the impact of employee engagement on employee performance. The study used 383 participants from the Coimbatore District Small Industries Association in India. The results revealed that employee engagement had significant impact on employee performance, which is a significant predictor of productivity. A meta-analytical study was conducted by Harter et al. (2013) to examine the true relationship between employee engagement and performance, consistency or generalizability of the relationship between employee engagement and performance across organizations and the practical meaning of the findings for executives and managers. A total of 263 research studies across 192 organizations in 49 industries, with employees in 34 countries. The study looked at nine outcomes: customer loyalty/engagement, 28 profitability, productivity, turnover, safety incidents, shrinkage, absenteeism, patient safety incidents and quality (defects). The findings revealed that employee engagement is related to each of the nine performance outcomes studied. The results also indicated high generalizability, which means the correlations were consistent across different organizations. To confirm the above findings, conducted another similar meta-analytical study to examine the true relationship between employee engagement and performance, consistency or generalizability of the relationship between employee engagement and performance across organizations and the practical meaning of the findings for executives and managers. A total of 339 research studies across 230 organizations in 49 industries, with employees in 73 countries. The study looked at nine outcomes: customer loyalty/engagement, profitability, productivity, turnover, safety incidents, shrinkage, absenteeism, patient safety incidents and quality (defects). The findings revealed that employee engagement is related to each of the nine performance outcomes studied. A recent study by Kazimoto (2016) focused on the measurement of employee engagement as a non-financial factor in relation to organizational performance. The study shows evidence that a relationship exists between employee engagement and organizational performance, in a sense that when employees are engaged and committed, organizational performance also improves. The study also highlights the fact that human related issues were previously neglected by organisations whereas it has become known that employee satisfaction yields higher profitability. It is concluded by the study, the lack of knowledge and ability by managers to consider people engagement as key drivers of organisational productivity, is a challenge that further research must still address. In agreement with previous studies, it is also stated that employees with higher engagement levels tend to reduce staff turnover and absenteeism, factors that prove employee engagement is attached to organisational performance. According to Farouk (2014) it has been shown that employee engagement does impact organizational productivity. With reference to previous studies that have been conducted, the study proposes that if an organisation has employees whose engagement levels are above average, it is almost twice as likely to be successful. The study also introduces a motivational factor into the engagement concept in that it explains that what makes engaged employees to be more productive is the fact that they are more motivated than the 29 disengaged one. The inverse relationship is also shown where low levels of employee engagement are detrimental to performance. This research also confirms that the engaged employees exercise an element of care in what they do and their efforts in contributing to the success of the organization and therefore will have a greater sense of ownership and accountability. In so doing, they become less absent from work and more willing to take on more responsibility and have initiative as well.

The same study shows that based on previous studies, the 100 best places to work had a low turnover rate of 13% in comparison to the 28.5% found for other industries. This confirms the theory that engaged employees are more committed and loyal to their organisation and are not inclined to leave their organizations feel a sense of belonging. 2.5 Barriers to employee engagement A Harvard business review done by Kim and Mauborgne (2014) explored leadership as a barrier to employee engagement and focused on "blue ocean leadership" as a means to overcome the challenges of poor engagement that organizations face with their employees. The review talks about the blue ocean leadership as a model that can assist leaders to turn disengaged employees to engaged ones. This can be done by focusing on acts and activities that leaders could change in order to boost motivation and the organization's bottom line. The review gives examples of these acts and activities that leaders should undertake as: ? Spending time with senior managers ? Explaining clearly the company strategy to employees ? Empowering front line managers to

stretch themselves? Coaching employees (Kim and Mauborgne, 2014) Mishra et al. (2015) conducted a study to investigate the role of internal communications on employee engagement. The exploratory study found internal communication a significant player in building a culture of transparency between management and employees. Furthermore, the study iterates that good communication is necessary to keep employees engaged with the organizations' priorities. Consequently, the absence of good communication leads to poor engagement. The study suggests communication methods such as one on one to build engagement with employees. 30 Another study by Kang and Sung (2017) was also conducted to analyse how employee communication leads to employee engagement. The study concurred with Mishra et al. (2015) with regards to poor communication being a barrier to employee engagement. The study randomly selected representatives to participate. The finding clearly demonstrated a strong link between employee communication and engagement. The absence of effective communication therefore, affects employee engagement negatively. To facilitate good communication the study encouraged organisations to nurture communication by listening to employees' concerns and to encourage them to participate in workplace discussions. Bakker et al. (2014) sought to provide solutions to what causes stress and burnout and to what motivate employees to consistently do their best at jobs and achieve organisational goals. The aim of their paper was to discuss job demands-resources (JD-R) theory within the context of the JD-R model. From their study, it is revealed that if organisations provide their employees with sufficient job challenges, job resources and social support and skills through training, they are influencing employee engagement and performance. If employees are allowed to design their jobs, it give autonomy to mobilize resources and structure tasks,

this also contribute to their well-being. When employees' well-being is taken care of, there are fewer incidences of stress and burnout. Another important component of employee engagement is given by Kumar and Pansari (2015) as employee satisfaction. The study reported various reasons that can cause an employee to be dissatisfied as: ? Misaligned person-job fit ? Lack of skills and hence loss of interest ? Lack of feedback ? Lack of incentives (Kumar and Pansari, 2015) The study reported that if employees in the organization have low satisfaction levels, their enthusiasm and interest for the company and its activities will be low as well as the likelihood to stay absent frequently and produce poor quality work. 2.6 Employee engagement models 2.6.1 The Corporate Leadership Council Model (CLC) The CLC model of employee engagement emphasises business outcomes (Board, 2004). The Corporate Leadership Council Model of Engagement is depicted in Figure 2.1. Figure 2.1: The Corporate Leadership Council's Model of

Engagement (Board, 2004) The Council Board (2004) denotes to engagement as the degree to which employees are committed to their organisations, how hard they will work and as an outcome of that commitment how long they will be willing to stay within the organisation. The CLC model looks at the rational commitment and emotional commitment from employees. The rational commitment is associated with the degree to which employees think their managers have their best interests at heart. Emotional commitment refers to how much employees value their work and how enjoyable their work is to them. The outcomes which result in improved performance and retention, are the discretionary effort which is employees going beyond the call of duty, and Intent to stay, which is the employee's reluctance to leave the organisation (Board, 2004). 2.6.2 The ISR model The ISR model aims to increase engagement levels by assisting organizations to understand what drives engagement, through the use of their model. Figure 2.2: The Three components of ISR engagement approach (Perrin, 2007) The ISR engagement model has 3 components to it and is presented in Figure 2.2. The cognitive or "Think" component refers to how employees perceive and rationalize the organisation's vision and values. The emotional or "Feel" component refers to how employees identify with the organization, looks at whether or not

2employees feel a sense of belonging and pride for their organization. The

behavioural or "Act" component captures the employee engagement outcomes that employers are looking for such as 33 productivity, the willingness to go the extra mile for the organization whenever necessary. According to Perrin (2007) the 3 components can be used to measure engagement and a measure of all these 3 is critical in developing a set of option of improving engagement levels. 2.7 Summary and Conclusion This chapter has presented relevant empirical research studies that have examined the role of

employee of employee engagement, commitment and attitude on organizational productivity. Key determinants of employee engagement have been reviewed and gave some insight to barriers of engagement. Studies on strategies to enhance engagement have also been reviewed. The foundation to the chapter was laid by first defining the two constructs, employee engagement and productivity, then an overview of a global perspective was given followed by the outcomes of surveys that have been conducted. Employee engagement has emerged in business as one of the key factors that organizations ought to prioritize in order to remain competitive. The engagement models are also given. The conclusions that are drawn from the literature review are aligned to the research objectives and questions and are classified as follows; 2.7.1 Drivers of employee engagement Studies report that drivers of employee engagement influence the degree to which employees are engaged. Most of the studies cite internal communication, leadership, training and development as well as workplace well-being as major contributors to raising employee engagement levels. Other studies also cite rewards compensation, job satisfaction, organizational culture and teamwork as drivers of employee engagement to a certain extent. One study that was reviewed classified the levels of engagement according to the individual's contribution towards the organization's success. Employee engagement levels were classified as; engaged, almost engaged, honeymooners, crash burners and disengaged. This study focuses on HR policies and practices, commitment to employee well-being, communication, leadership style, involvement in decision making, training and development, performance appraisal, pay and benefits and general work environment as drivers of employee

engagement. 34 2.7.2 Employee engagement and organizational productivity/outcomes All the studies from the literature indicate a positive relationship between the two constructs. One specific study that was reviewed referred to employee engagement as the primary source of competitive advantage, which can also be understood as organizational productivity. All studies also share the same sentiments among each other in saying that low engagement levels contribute to low productivity levels. One study in agreement to this finding particularly referred to employee engagement as a catalyst to productivity and profitability. The economic impact of low employee engagement is described in another study as one that can be staggering. Out of all the eight studies reviewed under this subsection, one specific study illustrated an overwhelming connection between employee engagement and organizational outcomes, such as productivity. The literature reviewed clearly points at employee engagement as being a lever gearing organizations towards success through productivity delivered by engaged employees. Studies cite the importance of enhancing employee engagement in organizations as an investment that can elicit good returns. The reviewed

literature identified strategies that can be implemented to boost employee engagement, such employee training and development, improved leadership such as "blue ocean", amiable organizational policies, improving OCB such as altruism, sportsmanship and improving work design. An improved communication amongst employees with their managers would increase employee engagement, as indicate by the studies. Communication can take the form of one on one, listening and via emails or sms. One study highlighted the cultivation of a productive workplace culture by managers as a strategy that can also be used to enhance employee engagement because employees thrive to perform such environments. 2.7.3 Barriers to employee engagement and job commitment All the reviewed studies refer to the absence of the determinants of employee engagement as a hindrance to engagement, or to a greater extent as factors that result in poor engagement levels in the organization. Generally, studies indicated poor communication, a hostile work environment and poor leadership as major barriers to employee engagement. The absence of these factors was reported as major barriers because of the significant role 35 they play in building a culture of transparency and trust between management and employees. Some studies pointed out the importance of organizations showing congruence between employees and their jobs. These studies revealed that if an employee is not aligned to his job, he will experience stress, burnout and dissatisfaction, and will find it difficult to engage and connect to his work. Studies also emphasised the absence of employee well-being as detrimental to employee engagement. It has been empirically shown that when employees feel that they are not cared for and are not given autonomy to re-

design their jobs, they lose interest and enthusiasm in their jobs. 2.8 Conceptual Framework A proposed Impact of employee engagement on productivity model Figure 2.3: A conceptualized model of the impact of employee engagement on organizational productivity The conceptual framework that was developed is presented in Figure 2.3: Conceptual Framework. The empirical research findings show that dimensions of HR

2policies and practices, commitment to **employee well-being,** communication, leadership , involvement **in**

decision making, training and development, performance appraisal, pay and benefits and general work environment have a positive effect on organizational productivity. Moreover, good internal communication with leadership style correlated with employee positive attitude and commitment to the organization. A study by Anitha (2014) also found that the variables that had an impact on employee engagement were working environment, leadership, employee development, and

3team and co-worker relationship. Employee engagement had **a significant impact on employee**

performance (r^2 , 0.597). A great focus and effort is required particularly on the factors such as workplace well-being and HR policies as they showed a significantly higher impact on employee engagement and hence employee performance (Anitha, 2014). CHAPTER THREE 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 3.1 Introduction This chapter provides a map of how the research was conducted, in order to answer the research questions that are presented. The purpose of the study was to establish the impact that employee engagement has on productivity and subsequently provide strategies for organizations to enhance it. The study has also analysed the challenges that lead to employees disengaging and causing low employee engagement at UVS. The design that was selected is included as well as the sampling technique and size. A summary of the thought behind the chosen research philosophy is given together with the justification for the questionnaire used. The data collection methods used were found to be the most efficient, given the limited available time in which to complete the research. The research quality plan in terms of data analysis and quality control was also taken into consideration. The ethical considerations for the participants were also a great part of this research. 3.1.1 The objectives that drove the study were: ? ? To identify factors that influence employee engagement or disengagement at UVS. To establish the relationship between employee engagement, performance and commitment at UVS. ? To establish the relationship between internal communication and leadership style on employee engagement. ? ? ? To establish the relationship between job-fit and employee engagement. To determine role of work environment on employee engagement To suggest interventions to improve employee engagement and address the employee engagement gap at

UVS. 3.1.2 Research questions For the purpose of this study, the following questions were addressed: ? ? What factors influence employee engagement or disengagement at UVS? What relationship exists between employee engagement, performance and commitment at UVS? ? What is the relationship between communication and leadership style on employee engagement? ? ? ? What is the relationship between job-fit and employee engagement? What is the role of work environment on employee engagement? What interventions are required to improve employee engagement at UVS? 3.2 Research Design A positivistic research paradigm with a quantitative method was used. The survey research design was found to be most appropriate in answering the research questions, which have been asked. The survey research design chosen was also found to be the most suitable in meeting the objectives of the study. The survey research enabled the study to identify the factors that contribute to an outcome and established the relationship between variables, which is the major objective of this study. A quantitative study is appropriate for testing pre-determined outcomes and for the statistical analysis of significant correlations between variables (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative method was selected for this study so that the research instrument based on the survey questions could collect employee engagement and productivity data. This research was a cross-sectional design. This design is best suited for studies that seek to find out the dominance of a phenomenon, trend, problem or issue, by taking a cross-section of the population. They are useful in obtaining the current holistic 'picture' as it presents itself at the time of the study. Such studies are cross-sectional with regard to both the study population and the time of investigation (Kuma, 2011). Table 3.1 gives

a summary of the advantages that led to the selection of the quantitative design strategy. Table 3.1: Summary of advantages of a quantitative study design Advantages 1. Able to test a theory or hypothesis 2. Suitable to identify factors that influence an outcome and to test correlations 3. A questionnaire suffices for the measurement of data and statistical analysis 4. The concept being tested must be known 5. Findings of the study are objective

3.3 Research Approach In selecting a research approach, the research questions or the hypothesis is what determines which type to choose. There are three types of research approaches, and these are: ? Deductive research approach ? Inductive research approach ? Abductive research approach (Dudovskiy, 2015) According to Dudovskiy (2015) the deductive approach tests the validity of the assumption or hypothesis that the study gives, whilst the inductive approach contributes to the emergence of new theories and generalizations. The abductive research approach, starts with 'surprising facts' or 'puzzles' and the research process is devoted to explaining them (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The study has made the assumption or hypothesis that engaged employees are motivated to increase productivity and therefore contribute to the organisation's productivity. During the research process, this assumption was tested and its validity discussed in detail in chapter 5. Therefore, the author has chosen the deductive approach for this study as it was assumed that it will allow for objectivity, predictability and will enable the findings to be generalized back to the UVS population. This ensured that effective recommendations were made to the company management.

3.4 Study Site The study site is the area in which the study was conducted. The study site that was chosen is the UVS Company. The UVS is a company that is within the sugar industry, situated in the Northern KZN. There are four other sugar companies that fall under the main umbrella company including UVS. The main reason of this choice was because the author is familiar with the sugar industry operations and the study participants were well within the author's accessibility for data collection purposes.

3.5 Target Population The target population was the current UVS employees from which a representative sample was selected. The sample consisted of both employees and management. All departments were considered in the target population.

3.6 Sampling Technique Saunders et al. (2009) define sampling as a "process of selecting a sample of a population of interest for purposes of making observations and inferences about that population". There exist two categories of sampling; probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Non-probability sampling is when the probability of selecting an element in the population is unknown. The stratification of the population is done before the sample is selected, and this ensures that all key groups of population are represented in the sample. For this study, probability sampling, where a simple random sampling technique was used. This is where every element in the population stands an equal chance of being included in the sample. This was important for the study so that a representative sample was taken which enabled the findings to be generalized back to the entire population. This also ensured that there was no sampling bias.

3.7 Sample size The sample consisted of UVS employees. The ages of the participants ranged between 21 years to 60 years with varying service lengths. For a confidence level of 99% and 2.5% margin of error, a sample size for a target population of 75 people is 73. The formula below was used to calculate the sample size:
$$n = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times (1 - p)}{ME^2}$$
 Where: N = sample size X² = chi - square for the specified confidence level @ 1 degree of freedom N = Population size P = Population proportion (0.5) ME = Desired margin of error (2.5%) A consensus was conducted in carrying out this survey, since the population of UVS is small. This formula was confirmed by the use of a sample size table which is included in Appendix B.

3.8 Research Instrument The data was collected using two instruments, which were; Employee engagement (EE) and Productivity (P) questionnaires. As mediating variables, the demographic items were also included.

3.8.1 Employee engagement Employee engagement was measured using a modified version of the most accurate and well-known Gallup Q12 that was developed by Dr Clifton in the 1950s and further tested by Gallup's researchers over the years. It is submitted by Gallup (2016) that Q12 is the most effective way of measuring employee engagement and its impact on the business outcomes that matter most. In addition to this, measuring engagement via Q12 survey directly ties in with Gallup's strategies to better productivity, profitability and employee retention. An email to request permission to modify the Q12 survey was sent to Gallup organisation. Questions were added to the Q12 questionnaire as the author felt the inclusion of these would enhance the response to the research questions. The instrument has been used since 1997 in the criterion-related studies where a combined meta-analysis to study the relationship of employee satisfaction and engagement (as measured by Q12) to business or work unit profitability, productivity, employee retention,

and customer satisfaction/loyalty was done across 1,135 business units. Since its final wording and order were completed in 1998, Q12 has been administered to more than 7 million employees in 112 different countries.

3.8.2 Productivity A productivity questionnaire was developed using surveys that have been used by other researchers. To test the questionnaire for validity, it was first administered to 25 employees. Prior discussions were held with the employees with regards to the questions. The questionnaire consisted of 18 carefully edited and selected questions, taking into cognisance that the research objectives are effectively covered.

Demographic items The introductory part of the questionnaires comprised of items that mediated the relationship of employee engagement with productivity. A mediator variable is “the variable that causes mediation in the dependent and the independent variables”. In other words, it explains the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable” (Solutions, 2017). The items were population group, gender, age, highest level of education, years’ of service, type of work and seniority at work.

3.9 Data Quality Control Data quality assurance is a process whereby research data is profiled in order to be cleaned. Cleaning of data involved the removal of outliers, correction of errors and missing data interpolation, with the aim to improve the quality of data to be interpreted. The structure of the questionnaires used limited the amount of possible errors and outliers that could occur. Respondents were encouraged to answer all the questions in the survey for integrity purposes.

3.10 Validity and Reliability The validity of the Q12 was confirmed by the comprehensive studies that have used it before, on a global scale. The measurements were chosen because of their reliability and have been validated, and because of the direct responses, it provides to the research questions. Creswell (2014) refers to reliability as the extent to which the measurement is without bias. Validity refers to how well the research instruments test the given study objectives and the hypothesis, that it intended to measure (Creswell, 2014)

3.11 Procedures 3.11.1 Data Analysis

3 Data analysis was done by using the SPSS analysis technique to identify the level of prediction made by the various factors, which were identified on employee engagement

and productivity. Descriptive statistical analysis was done where inferences about the population were made. Correlation analysis

3 was also be used to establish the level of impact that employee engagement has on employee

productivity. The information on reliability was calculated using Cronbach coefficient alpha. This was done to assess the effectiveness of the measurement to the constructs. Cronbach’s coefficient alpha is a “reliability coefficient that indicates how well the items in a set, positively correlate to one another”. It was computed in terms of the average inter- correlations among the items measuring the concept. The closer Cronbach’s alpha is to 1, the higher the internal consistency of reliability (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

3.12 Ethical Considerations The author’s interest in workplace productivity motivated the journey into this study. The author has gained deeper insight into how employee engagement can be used as a tool to improve productivity in the workplace. This study was as much for the author as it was for the employees and UVS management. The UVS workplace consisted of literate staffs that were able to complete the questionnaire independently, although the author was readily available to clarify issues that caused confusion. The independency in the completion of the questionnaires by the respondents was an important factor that ensured no bias and no influence to the responses. Upon the selection of the study site, a written formal request for permission to use the workplace premises and employees for the study was submitted to the UVS General Manager. A copy of the letter is attached in Appendix A. An ethical clearance application was then submitted to the University, following which, approval to conduct the study was granted before the questionnaires were administered. All the respondents were of a working age and were over 18 years of

age. The participants were informed of the study by means of a letter of consent, that the participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from participation at any given time, as they so wished without incurring any penalties. The consent letter was explained to the respondents before they completed the questionnaires. The identity of the respondents remained anonymous. No online questionnaires were completed. The author made use of hardcopies, which were personally delivered to the UVS and given to the participants onsite. The confidentiality of the completed surveys was maintained as the researcher collected them personally and will safe-keep them for five years in line with the University's requirements. The responses on the questionnaires were captured on an Excel spreadsheet that was prepared for statistical analysis. The data collected was analysed using a statistical package of which the results thereof are reported in Chapter 4 of the dissertation. 3.13 Summary This chapter has presented the research

methodology that this study followed. It comprises of research design and approach, the sampling technique for the study, which is simple random sampling, and the measuring instruments for the two constructs namely; Employee engagement and Productivity. The research procedure, including data quality control and ethical considerations are also presented herein. The hypothesis presented was tested by the deductive approach, which was used. Overall, this chapter has given a clear procedure that could be followed if this study were to be replicated by another researcher. CHAPTER FOUR 4 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION 4.1

Introduction The aim of the study was to explore the impact of employee engagement on productivity at UVS. The empirical literature was done to establish the relationship between employee engagement, the dependent variable and productivity, the dependent variable. The data was collected by using two surveys, which were analysed using the SPSS and Spearman statistical package. The chapter presents the research findings and the discussion of the results. It begins by presenting the demographic information of the study participants. The discussion will address the research questions that are listed in chapter 1, separately and will confirm the hypothesis. 4.2 Demographics Below are the participants' demographic details. This information was gathered to gain an overall understanding of participant backgrounds. 73 employees took part in the study. 4.2.1 Gender The gender distribution of the participants

is graphically presented in Figure 4.1. Female 33% Male 67% Figure 4.1: Gender distribution As can be seen in Figure 4.1, two thirds of the 73 participants were male. This implies that at UVS, for every female participant there were two male participants. Based on the gender participation rate, this could suggest that UVS is a male dominated work environment or that female employees were sceptical or afraid to participate in the study. 4.2.2 Race A profile of cultural diversity profile was obtained by collecting information on the race group of participants. The race distribution of the participants is presented in Figure 4.2. White Black

29% 40% Coloured 31% Figure 4.2: Race distribution As depicted in Figure 4.2, the Black population group was the most represented in this study as 40% of the 73 participants came from this race group. Coloureds and Whites had almost the same amount of representation with Coloureds having 2% more representation than Whites. However, none of the participants were Indian. This suggests that UVS does not have any Indian employees or this racial demographic opted non-participation as a group (intentionally or unintentionally. 4.2.4 Age Distribution 34.7 Frequencies (%) 22.2 20.8 22.2 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-65 Age Intervals Figure 4.3: Age distribution Figure 4.3 shows that most participants are in age category 41 – 50 years old. This age range represented 34.7% of the total participants. An equal number of participants fell into either the 21 - 30 year age category or the 51 - 65 year age category. Participants aged from 31 – 40 years were the least represented. However, they only differed by one participant from the 21 – 30 and 51 –

65 year age categories. It should be noted, that the 51 – 65 year age category is over a larger interval than the other age categories, as such more individuals were able to fall within this range relative to other categories. The maturity level of the most represented age category may have implications on the study conclusions. The youthful nature of the second best represented category, 21 -30 year old, would also have an impact on the survey conclusions. 4.2.5 Departmental distribution Management+Admin 23% General 41% Logistics Drivers 36% Figure 4.4: Departmental distribution As seen in Figure 4.4, most participants at

41% were classified as general workers (plant operators, workshop artisans). They were followed by the logistics department(36%) and lastly, by management and administration (23%). This is indicative of the population distribution at UVS. 4.2.6 Employee role at work Support services 38% Core Business 62% Figure 4.5: Employee role at work In terms of the roles that the participants play in UVS, the majority of participants (62%) indicated that they were involved in core business activities (see Figure 4.5). The 51

remaining 38% provided support services. In addition, most of the participants (60.3%) were part of management, with the remaining 39.7% holding non-management positions (see Table 4.1). Table 4.1: Employee role A7. Your role Frequency % Cumulative % Management 44 60.3 60.3 Non-management 29 39.7 100.0 Total 73 100.0 Source: Field survey, 2017

4.2.7 Post level Table 4.2: Post Level A12 Post level Frequency % Cumulative % Unskilled and defined decision making 3 4.1 4.1 Semi-skilled and discretionary decision making 8 11.0 15.1 Skilled technical and academically qualified workers, junior management, supervisors, foremen and superintendents 27 37.0 52.1 Professionally qualified, experienced specialists and Middle Management 26 35.6 87.7 Top Management, Senior Management 9 12.3 100.0 Total 73 100.0 Source: Field survey, 2017

As evidenced in Table 4.2, the majority (84.9%) of participants were at least technically skilled or had some sort of professional qualification and some degree of span of control within the organisation. Only 15.1% of the participants were at most semi-skilled (see cumulative total, first 2 rows in Table 4.2). Within this group, 27% of them were unskilled employees with limited decision-making powers. Of the total number of participants, 35 (48%) of them were professionally qualified or were part of middle to top management.

4.2.8 Number of years in the company Table 4.3: Years in the company's service A9. Number of years in the company Frequency % Cumulative % 1 - 5 39 54 54 6 - 10 16 22 76 > 10 18 24 100 Total 73 100.0 Source: Field survey, 2017

As can be seen in Table 4.3, slightly over 50% of the participants were at the company for at most 5 years. Only 24% of the participants had been in the company for more than 10 years with the longest tenured employee having served the company for 37 years.

4.2.9 Level of Education No Matric Higher 10% Degree or Diploma 26% Matric 18% 1st Diploma or Degree 46% Figure 4.6: Level of Education

As visualised in Figure 4.6, the vast majority (90%) of the 73 participants had matriculated. Of these, a slight majority (51.5%) had at least an undergraduate qualification or diploma. Twenty-nine percent of them had some form of postgraduate degree or diploma. The remaining 10% of the participants indicated that they had not completed their secondary school level of education.

4.3 Study Objectives / Questions This section focuses on addressing the study objectives. These are presented in the form of research questions, which specifically address the study's objectives. Five constructs were used to extract the information necessary to answer the study's objectives (see Table 4.4). These constructs, however, were formed by extracting elements from the two overall aspects that the collection tool was designed to gather data for. These consisted of 37 questions that formed the employee engagement (EE) aspect of the collection tool, and 18 questions that formed the productivity (P) aspect of the collection tool. These two aspects were tested for reliability using the Cronbach's alpha, the results are tabulated in Table 4.4. Cronbach's alpha is considered to be one of the most objective tools for testing for the reliability of a measuring instrument (Coakes and Ong, 2011). The Cronbach's alpha was developed to provide a measure of the internal consistency of a test or scale. It is expressed as a number between 0 and 1. Numbers closer to 1 indicate higher degrees of reliability. In general, alpha readings below 0.6 are considered poor, between 0.6 and less than 0.8 are considered acceptable, and readings that are 0.8 and greater are considered good (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010).

Table 4.4: Reliability Statistics for constructs addressing Research Questions Aspects Questions Cronbach's Alpha Employee Engagement EE1 - EE37 0.857 Productivity P1-P18 0.353

Research Questions Construct Questions What factors influence employee engagement or disengagement at UVS? EE9 - EE14 + EE26 P1-P5 + P16-P18 What relationship exists between employee engagement, performance and commitment at UVS? P6-P12 What is the relationship between communication and leadership style on employee engagement? EE 27 - EE37 What is the relationship between job-fit and employee engagement? EE 1 - EE8 What is the role of work environment on employee engagement? EE15 - EE25 Source: Field survey, 2017

Table 4.4 shows the alphas for questions that addressed the employee engagement (EE1 - EE37) and the productivity (P1 - P18) aspects of the study collection tool. These questions constituted all the questions that were used to extract data to address the study's objectives and aim. Based on the alpha reading in Table 4.4, the elements for testing for employee engagement are considered reliable with a reading of 0.857. The elements testing for productivity, on the other hand, were not considered reliable for their intended purpose (alpha = 0.353). However, the productivity element was designed to ensure that participants were really giving thought to each of the questions asked. As such, several questions were deliberately negatively stated or scored. Consequently, in some instances a response that appeared to have been negative, based on the set scale given to participants, was in fact a positive response. So for the purposes of this aspect of the questionnaire, the low alpha reading does not

impact on the research tool's ability to serve its intended purpose with confidence. Table 4.5 is based on a contraction of the responses that participants gave, on a 5 point Likert Scale, with regards to employee engagement. This entailed grouping together all the "strongly disagree" responses into an "overall disagree" category and all the "agree" and "strongly agree" responses into an "overall agree" category. The reason for doing this was not to complicate the quintessence of the responses based on the degree of agreement or disagreement. Thus the intention was to establish whether participants agreed or disagreed with the statements, independent of the degree of agreement or disagreement. The full (or actual) 5 point Likert Scale responses are tabulated in Appendix 1.

Main Objective 4.4 The impact of employee engagement on organisational productivity

4.4.1 Employee Productivity Factors To explore the relationship between employee engagement and productivity, 8 questions were asked. The scores are summarized in Table 4.6.

Table 4.5: Employee Productivity Factors

Question	n	%	Never	Almost	n	never	%	Sometimes	n	%	Fairly often	n	%	Very often	%	Always	n	%	Tot. N
Employee contribution to productivity P1. Do you normally come early to work	8	11	0	0	11	15	7	10	13	18	34	47	73						
Employee contribution to productivity as result of task completion P2. Do you normally work until late to finish a task, without being asked	8	11	0	0	11	15	7	10	13	18	34	47	73						
Employee contribution to productivity as result of high performance P3. Do you often stay absent from work without a tangible reason	6	8	60	82	7	10	15	21	7	3	24	7	34	33	10	49	5	1	10
Employee contribution to productivity as result of high performance P4. How often is your work performance better than that of your colleagues	6	8	60	82	7	10	15	21	7	3	24	7	34	33	10	49	5	1	10
Awareness of employees value to the organization P5. Do you feel as though your job performance benefits your organisation	1	1	1	1	8	11	5	7	17	24	40	56	72						
Work success as a result of high quality work produced P16. How often do you experience work success	4	5	0	0	12	16	13	18	18	25	26	36	73						
Awareness of contributing to productivity by meeting deadlines P17. How often do you meet deadline in your work (doing what you are asked for in time)	1	1	1	1	11	15	10	14	25	34	25	34	73						
Awareness of minimization to productivity waste improve P18. How often do you make mistakes in your job	10	4	8	1															

Source: Field survey, 2017

51 70 3 4 1 1 0 0 73 Based on Table 4.6 it is only in three areas where more than 50% of participants concentrated their responses. These were "Do you often stay absent from work without a tangible reason?", "How often do you make mistakes in your job?" and "Do you feel as though your job performance benefits your organisation?" Based on the results summarized in Table 4.6, in response to absenteeism, 82% of the participants indicated that they would never stay away from work without a good reason. A further 7% indicated that they would almost never stay away from work without a valid reason. It is concluded that 89% of participants are aware of the negative impact that absenteeism has on productivity as they felt it is important to have a justifiable reason for not coming to work and would not stay away from work for no good reason. However, it is a concern is that 10% of the participants indicated that they sometimes did stay away from work without a good reason and 1 participant indicated that they did so fairly often. These findings are affirmed by Harter et al. (2013) who examined productivity and absenteeism as some of the outcomes of employee engagement. Their studies reveal

3that there is a relationship between employee engagement and absenteeism and that

absenteeism contributes to productivity loss. Seventy percent of the participants indicated that they sometimes made mistakes on the job. This may be understandable as errors could arise for several reasons given the fact that some of these reasons could be out of an employee's control. However, 14% of the participants indicated that they never made mistakes when performing their duties. This indicates a lack of focus and attention when carrying out tasks. This lack of focus may be signalling a declining level of engagement and a concern for UVS management to address. This deduction is supported by Mishra et al. (2015) who defined employee engagement as the extent to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in his work. Only 56% of the participants felt that their work always benefited the organisation. A further 24% indicated that they often felt this way. This suggests that participants are aware of their worth and contribution to the organisation. On the other hand this also implies that the organisation does not communicate their appreciation for their efforts often enough for them not to doubt their performance or worth to the organisation. Nonetheless, the above indicates that 80% of the respondents knew that they

added value to the company. This finding relates to Steger et al. (2012) who are of the view that when employees find their work meaningful and motivating, it contributes to the core of the organization, yielding high levels of performance. In terms of other productivity measures, only 47% of the participants normally came to work early. Forty-nine percent felt that they sometimes outperformed their co-workers. A further 36% indicated that they always worked until late when necessary to complete a task without being prompted to do so. Similarly, only 36% of the participants indicated that they always felt that they succeeded in performing their duties. Sixty-eight percent of participants felt that they very often (34%) or always (34%)

met their work deadlines. In view of these responses, it is concluded that UVS employees exhibit satisfactory characteristics of an engaged workforce. Most of the respondents answered positively to the questions that tested their awareness of the impact of their activities and attitudes towards work productivity and the relationship between engagement and productivity, as given in Table 4.6. These findings are in agreement with AbuKhalifer and Som (2013) because they also found that engaged employees are those who are aware of their business context and work with colleagues to improve performance to benefit the organization. To test this relationship further, the Spearman's rank – order correlations was performed. The test is a non-parametric equivalent of Pearson's product – moment correlations. (Statistics, 2013). The results of the correlation analysis are displayed in Table 4.7. The results reveal a small correlation of 0.212

at a significant level of $p < 0.05$, indicating a positive relationship exists. Employee engagement is therefore a significant predictor of productivity. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative (H_1) is accepted, that employee engagement contributes to increased levels of organizational productivity at UVS. This conclusion is supported by Anitha (2014) who identified determinants of employee engagement and their predictability and also found employee engagement as a significant predictor of productivity. Research question 1 4.4.2 What factors influence employee engagement or disengagement at UVS? Table 4.6: General Employee Engagement Factors Employee Engagement (Personal feelings about employment) n Overall Disagree % Neutral n % Overall Agree n % Total n

EE9. I am satisfied with my job	7	10	16	22	50	68	73							
EE10. My job is stressful	27	37	18	25	28	38	73							
EE11. I would speak highly of the organisation I work for	7	10	13	18	53	73	73							
EE12. I like to speak and get involved with other organizational activities, other than my job	15	21	16	22	42	58	73							
EE13. I am committed to serving my organization	1	1	2	3	70	96	73							
EE14. I am engaged in my job	EE26. I avoid working too hard	5	44	7	60	4	15	5	21	64	88	14	19	73

73 Source: Field survey, 2017 Table 4.5 shows the questions that were deployed in order to establish what influences employee engagement at UVS. For the purposes of this study, 5 elements were used to assess the levels of engagement and factors that influence engagement at UVS. These were job satisfaction, job stress, organizational commitment, participation in organizational activities and engagement itself. The aim of doing this was to be able to link employee engagement to productivity. An understanding of the level of employee engagement and its drivers is important to company management and HR because it reveals critical areas of concern to be addressed. As can be seen in Table 4.5, participants had an overall positive response to the employee engagement aspects of what influences their participation. In terms of the spread of responses, participants most frequently agreed with all but one of the statements. The only statement where participants most often disagreed was to "I avoid working too hard". The vast majority (96%) indicated that the most important factor influencing their engagement at UVS was their commitment towards serving the organisation. An overwhelming majority (88%) also indicated that they were very engaged in their work, although only 68% of them indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs. A further 73% indicated that they would speak very highly of their organisation demonstrating a sense of pride. When asked to indicate whether they would avoid working too hard, 60% of them responded that they had no problem with working hard. Not too many respondents indicated that they got engaged in other aspects of the organisation apart from their jobs, with only 58% indicating that they spoke and participated in other organisational aspects. Participants seemed very divided on the level of stress that they experienced with their jobs. There were almost an equal number of participants who agreed overall (38%) and who disagreed overall (37%). The remaining 25% opted to remain neutral or were undecided on whether the jobs were a source of stress to them or not. Based on this interpretation of results, it is concluded that; employee commitment, job satisfaction, a sense of pride, are factors that strongly influence employee engagement at UVS. It can also be said that some degree of employee engagement exists. Equally so, it can be deduced that job stress has an influence on the level of disengagement in the company. Kumar and Pansari (2015) agree with these

findings when they described elements of in such as; employee satisfaction, commitment, loyalty, as having a direct influence on employee engagement. Also in agreement with this analysis are Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2014) who found that job stress can negatively influence employee engagement in an organization and therefore must be managed. Research Question 2 4.4.3 What relationship exists between employee engagement, performance and commitment at UVS? For this section, the relationships between Employee engagement and performance and Employee engagement and commitment were evaluated. To look at commitment, 2 questions were deployed. The workers were measured on how much they were willing to go the extra mile to contribute to organizational productivity and the second one was aimed at measuring waste minimization through being careful at work. Table 4.8: Employee Engagement, Performance and Commitment

Employee Productivity	Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Fairly often	Very often	Always	Tot.
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
N	1	0	8	11	6	9	24
%	4	0	33	38	25	38	100
n	1						

productive. Research Question 3 4.4.4 What is the relationship between communication and leadership style on employee engagement? Table 4.9: Communication and Leadership Effects on Employee Engagement
Employee Engagement (Perceptions about leadership) Overall disagree n % Neutral n % Overall agree n %
Total N EE27.

2Consults me on matters of importance to me

9 12 15 21 49 67 73 EE28. Discusses my training and developmental needs with me 12 17 10 14 50 69 72

EE29. Recognises me when I have done a good job 8 11 11 15 54 74 73 EE30. Makes me feel like my work counts 8 11 7 10 58 79 73 EE31. Is open and honest with me 8 11 15 21 50 68 73 EE32.

2Keeps me in touch with what is going on

in the organization 6 8 15 21 51 71 72 EE33. Is supportive if I have a problem 7 10 14 19 52 71 73 EE34.
Makes it clear to me what is expected of me from my job 1 1 12 16 60 82 73 EE35.

2Listens if I have a suggestion to make

7 10 12 17 53 74 72 EE36. Treats me fairly 3 4 20 27 50 68 73 EE37. We communicate well with each other
3 4 12 16 58 79 73 Source: Field survey, 2017 This objective seeks to evaluate the role of communication and leadership style on employee engagement at UVS. A similar approach as in other sections was used to construct Table 4.9. It is therefore a contraction that reflects (or groups) all the statements where the participants agreed together and does the same for statements where they disagreed. A summary of the results is given in Table 4.9 while a detailed account of responses is given in Appendix 2. Overall, the majority of participants had positive perceptions of their leadership. This is reflected in the least agreed to statement “Consults me on matters of importance to me” being agreed to by 67% of the participants. Participating UVS employees most strongly affirmed that their leaders communicated clearly on what their expectations of them when performing their duties. Of the 11 statements making this construct, this statement was agreed to the most by employees (i.e. 82% agreed overall). Jointly ranked second highest by the participants was the communication that they had with their leaders (79%) and the appreciation expressed by their leaders in making them feel that their work counted (79%). The third highest ranked statements, based on participants’ agreement, was the recognition that they were given by their managers for a job well done (74%) and that their leaders were patient to listen to their suggestions (74%). A further
71% of the participants found their leaders to be supportive when they were faced with problems. A similar percentage felt that their leaders kept them informed with the organisation’s activities. Sixty-nine percent of the participants indicated that the leaders discussed their training and developmental needs with them. However, this statement was the most disagreed to by 17%. A further 68% of the participants felt that their leaders were open and honest with them; and treated them fairly. However, 27% of the participants were unsure or chose not to comment on the treatment that they received from the leaders. The majority of employees are satisfied with the level of communication and are generally happy with the support they get from their leaders; and therefore are engaged. Most employees felt that they are made part of the decision making process and therefore are perceived as productive and engaged. In support of this conclusion is Berdarker and Pandita (2014) who observed leadership and communication as key drivers of employee engagement. Furthermore, Farouk (2014) agrees that if employees are included in the decision making process of matter pertaining to their jobs, they become engaged and productive in their jobs. Karaa et al. (2013) also agree that supportive leadership improves employee engagement. Research Question 4 4.4.5
What is the relationship between job-fit and employee engagement? This objective looks at the relevance of job-fit with Employee engagement. Participants were asked 8 questions that related to how well they

perceived their jobs fit, to them. A similar approach as described in the previous sections was used to construct Table 4.10. A detailed account of responses is given in Appendix 3. Table 4.10: Job-fit and Employee Engagement Employee Engagement (Personal feelings about employment) Overall disagree n % Neutral n % Overall agree n % Total N EE1. I am fit to do my job 0 0 3 4 70 96 73 EE2. My job feels right for me 0 0 6 8 67 92 73 EE3. I have been given the right tools 1 1 10 14 60 85 71 EE4. I have been adequately trained to do my job 2 3 9 12 62 85 73 EE5. My jobs activities are personally meaningful to me 2 3 6 8 65 89 73 EE6. The

2work I do in my job is of value to me

2 3 13 18 57 79 72 EE7. The

2work I do in my job is of value to the

company 1 1 5 7 67 92 73 EE8. When I wake up in the morning I look forward to going to work 7 10 10 14

56 77 73 Source: Field survey, 2017 Table 4.10 shows that an overwhelming majority of the participants felt that they fitted in well with their jobs. This is evidenced in 77% being the lowest agreement that they had, which was for the statement that enquired whether they looked forward to coming to work in the morning. This statement also had the most disagreement responses (10%) received of the 8 statements making this construct. Participants were confident that they were ideal for the jobs that they did with 96% of them agreeing that they were fit for their respective jobs. Furthermore, 92% of the participants indicated that the work that they did felt right to them and added value to the company. Although 92% of the participants indicated that their work added value to the company, only 79% of them felt that what they did for the company was valuable to them. In this particular instance, only 2 participants disagreed that their work was of value to them. Of all the neutral responses given by the participants, this statement received the most responses (18%) when compared to the other 7 statements within this construct. Job activities were thought to be personally meaningful to 89% of the respondents. In addition, 85% of the respondents indicated that they were adequately trained for their jobs and were equipped with the appropriate tools to perform their duties. It is deduced that there is a very good degree of person-job fit and as result UVS employees are found to be engaged and productive. This conclusion is affirmed by Kumar and Pansari (2015) who reported an aligned person – job fit as an important component of employee engagement. Their study supports that an aligned person job-fit results in high levels of employee satisfaction, enthusiasm and the production of high quality work. Moreover, Dulagil (2012) found that an aligned person job-fit ensures that employees remain engaged because they are placed in their areas of capability. Research Question 5 4.4.6 What is the role of work environment on employee engagement? This objective was intended to explore the employee well-being and productivity at UVS. To do this, 11 questions were deployed with the aim of answering this research question. The responses are summarized in Table 4.11. Table 4.11: Work Environment and Employee Engagement Employee Engagement (Personal feelings about employment) Overall disagree n % Neutral n % Overall agree n % Total N EE15.

2I achieve the correct balance between my home and work lives

14 19 12 16 47 64 73 EE16. UVS provides me to support to help meet my work- life balance 14 19 21 29 37 51 72 EE17.

2I often think about other things when I'm doing my work EE18. I am rarely distracted when I'm doing my job

34 16 47 22 17 16 24 22 21 41 29 56 72 73 EE19. I really put my heart when I'm doing my job 2 3 4 5 67 92
73 EE20.

2I get excited when I perform well in my job

4 5 6 8 63 86 73 EE21.

2I often felt no emotion when I perform my job EE22. I

avoid working overtime whenever possible 44 32 60 44 18 10 25 14 11 31 15 42 73 73 EE23. I stay until the
job is done 4 5 5 7 64 88 73 EE24.

2How I perform in my job affects how I feel

8 11 6 8 58 81 72 EE25.

2I exert a lot of energy in my job

3 4 5 7 65 89 73 Source: Field survey, 2017 Table 4.11 shows that the majority of participants felt most strongly about the commitment and effort that they put into their jobs. This is evidenced by 92% agreeing that they put their hearts into performing their jobs. Eighty-nine percent of the participants, however, felt that they expended a lot of energy when performing their jobs. A further 88% indicated that they stayed at work until they completed the job that they were doing, with 86% of the participants expressing that they felt a sense of satisfaction when they performed well at their jobs. Although 88% of the participants were committed to staying until they completed their work, only 44% of them were prepared to work overtime. Forty-two percent of the participants explicitly indicated that they would avoid overtime whenever they had the choice to. Eighty-one percent of the participants indicated that their performance at their jobs affected their feelings, with 60% of the participants indicating that they often felt emotion when doing their jobs. Only 15% of the participants indicated that they felt no emotion when performing their jobs. It appears from the responses received that focus and concentration at work were challenges for employees to some degree. This can be seen by only 56% of the participants indicating that they were hardly ever distracted when doing their work and a further 47% indicating that they rarely thought about other things when performing their jobs. Finding a balance between home and work seemed not to be much of a challenge for 64% of the respondents. However, 19% of the participants were having difficulties in striking a balance between home and work. The company was perceived not to be very supportive in helping employees find a balance between home and work-life. This is evidenced by only 51% of the participants indicating that the company did provide them with some support to balance their work and private lives. It is concluded that UVS employees are committed to performing their jobs well, however their work – life balance is also an important element that they consider when carrying out their tasks. It is found that UVS employees do not like to work overtime and the creation of this type of work environment negatively impacts on their job satisfaction and thus engagement levels, whenever they are asked to do so. In agreement with this finding is Bersin (2015) who found a good work-life balance and supportive work environment as two of the key drivers of employee engagement, on a global scale. His research revealed flexi working hours and a good work-life balance as having a positive effect on employee engagement. Research Objective 6 4.4.7 What interventions are required to improving employee engagement at UVS? To answer this objective, participants were asked to comment in writing on what changes they would like to see happening at UVS, that would make them happy at work. They were also asked questions geared towards uncovering what

would motivate them to work harder and in relation to leadership treatment. In terms of interventions that UVS could implement to enhance employee engagement, most respondents mentioned good compensation packages, adequate resources, additional training and development, fair and equal treatment and involvement in policy changes and decision-making. This demonstrates the extent to which employees are not happy with the way these factors are currently, at UVS. This establishes what was identified by Anitha (2014) to be the determinants of Employee engagement. Anitha (2014) also identified elements such as leadership, good compensation packages, training and development, and work-life balance as predictors of employee engagement. These are the factors, which UVS employees feel, need to be addressed by their management in order for them to be happy at work. In terms of the general comments given in response to additional questions pertaining to motivational factors; revising pay and benefits (bonus), an improved two-way communication (listening to employees' view), improving working conditions and culture (safety and HR policies), were the most cited as elements that would motivate them to work harder. It is concluded that UVS employees are not sufficiently engaged to contribute towards productivity and can be motivated by using these strategies. In support of this view Dulagil (2012) considered that, if there were to be any level of employee engagement, there needs to be clear transparency and communication about organizational goals. His study also support the notion that managers should demonstrate care about the employee well-being (health and safety). In parallel with this Soni (2013) observed that a culture of respect and constant feedback from manager and employee, vice versa is an important driver of employee engagement. Also confirming these finding Yamoah (2013) highlighted a significant relationship between compensation packages and productivity by providing evidence that bonuses enhance productivity across the organization.

4.5 Summary This chapter has given the results presentation together with the discussion of the findings. The demographics were shown in graphical form, and were interpreted and discussed. The results were presented in such a way that each research objective was answered separately. Descriptive statistics was done and each table of results is accompanied by interpretations and inferences that were made. Conclusions have been drawn from the findings. CHAPTER FIVE 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction This chapter presents an overall summary, conclusion and the recommendations for the research conducted on the impact of employee engagement on productivity at UVS. Also included in this chapter are contributions to knowledge and recommendations for practice, policy and suggestions for future research. 5.2 Summary Despite efforts by HRM, to keep employees satisfied and intrinsically motivated, employee engagement in the sugar industry has been found wanting, thus adversely affecting production. Previous research, which has been conducted globally, did not zoom in on the sugar industry. The purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between employee engagement and productivity At UVS. The conceptual framework that was developed for this study, was driven by the following objectives; to identify factors that influence employee engagement or disengagement at UVS, to establish the relationship between employee engagement, performance and commitment at UVS, to establish the relationship between internal communication and leadership style on employee engagement,

to establish the relationship between job-fit and employee engagement, to determine role of work environment on employee engagement, to suggest interventions to improve employee engagement and address the employee engagement gap at UVS. The study made use of descriptive and explanatory research design. Questionnaires were used to collect data. The analyses of data entailed the use of descriptive and inferential statistics. The data was summarized and presented in tables, which were then discussed using descriptive statistics.

3The strength of the relationship between employee engagement and

productivity was quantified by the use of a correlation analysis. This was also used as a basis to reject the null hypothesis. The findings show that the majority of the participants were involved in the core business activities at UVS. This was an indication that their productivity levels directly impacted on the business. That is why; improving their engagement levels would have significant outcomes on business productivity. Most participants were either technically skilled or possessed a professional qualification which was an indication that they had some degree of span of control within the organization. The main objective of the study sought

to establish that impact that employee engagement has on organizational productivity. Part of the study aimed at establishing the factors that influence employee engagement or disengagement at UVS. To find out what the factors for employee engagement and disengagement were, the researcher deployed five questions. The findings revealed strong factors that influence employee engagement to be; employee commitment, job satisfaction, work environment, person job-fit and organisational pride. Job stress was found to be a major factor influencer of disengagement at UVS. The second objective was aimed at examining the relationship between employee engagement, performance and commitment at UVS. The findings indicated a high degree of employee commitment and performance among participants. This relationship illustrated an empirically proven relationship between the two variables. The third objective sought to explore the relationship between communication and leadership style with employee engagement. The findings of the study show that employees are satisfied with the level of communication and the leadership style which was being exercised at UVS. These results established that a good relationship exists between communication, leadership style and employee engagement. The fourth objective was to uncover the relationship that person-job fit has with employee engagement. The results showed that a very good degree of person job-fit exists which positively influenced UVS employees to be engaged. The fifth objective was to explore the role that work environment plays on employee engagement. The findings revealed that a good work-life balance plays a significant role in positively influencing employee engagement levels. The sixth objective was to seek interventions that are required in order to improve employee engagement at UVS. Some of the interventions revealed by the study are; better compensation packages, adequate resources, additional training and fair and equal treatment of employees. This implies that if management were to improve on these, they would realise an engaged and productive workforce.

5.3 Conclusions

Productivity is the ultimate goal for any company's competitive advantage. This study sought to investigate whether employee engagement has an impact on company productivity, and if so, establish engagement factors at UVS. Some key conclusions were inferred, with reference to the findings of the study. Employee engagement was found to be statistically significant in influencing productivity at UVS, which is why managers should consider strategies of monitoring and enhancing employee engagement, through conducting employee engagement surveys and feedback sessions, to motivate employees. A positive correlation was found between employee engagement and productivity. A reasonable impression is that, UVS has a sufficiently engaged workforce. Some of the driving factors that strongly influence employee engagement at, UVS are; person job-fit, job satisfaction, employee commitment and a sense of pride in the organization. UVS management must note that employees play a focal role in the performance of an organization. For UVS to be profitable, management ought to be responsive to their employees' concerns and nurture their relationship with them to encourage these drivers. This implies that management and HR should be employee focused so as to leverage optimum engagement levels for improved performance. The findings of the study established that leadership style had a significant contribution towards employee engagement. It is the role of management to lead by aligning employees to the vision and goals of the company, to establish a set of shared values and culture, which will lead to high levels of engagement and improved productivity. The findings also revealed that communication is also a key driver of employee engagement. This implies that internal communication in the organization, play a role in influencing performance. The findings of the study concurred with what literature says on employee engagement and its drivers. The study concludes that the lack of managerial transparency and the existing bureaucracy standards at UVS are hindering high productivity levels.

5.4 Contributions to knowledge

It is recommended that managers focus on improving employee engagement levels, in order to improve productivity at UVS. This study was aimed at establishing the relationship between employee engagement and productivity at UVS. Previous research studies, which have been done established that employee engagement is one of the key drivers of productivity. A significant relationship between the two variables was also found to exist. Nevertheless, this research has noted that prior empirical studies have focused on developed countries and other African countries, but not the SA sugar industry. In addition, those studies were not consistent in their conceptualization of the research variables. However, the drivers of employee engagement have been studied comprehensively. This study contributes to literature by confirming that employee engagement has a positive correlation with productivity and thus a positive influence on organizational productivity. This study adds to the existing body of knowledge on employee engagement, to the conversations of concern

pertaining to management and research on the intricacies of factors that influence productivity. The

3study has conceptualised the relationship between employee engagement and

productivity by using leadership style as a mediating variable and work environment as a moderating variable. The use of these integrated variables has implications for the manufacturing industry. To enhance the conceptualization of employee engagement and productivity, three important factors were used; employee commitment, person job-fit and communication. 76 The uniqueness of this study to existing literature is in its identification of the best predictors of employee engagement in a SA sugar environment. The study sheds some light on the uncertainty around the value that employee engagement adds in driving organizational productivity. The research has given a model where employee engagement, performance and commitment can be studied as independent variables, leadership style as a mediating variable and work environment as playing a role of moderation, productivity as the dependent variable, measured through increased customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction. 5.5 Recommendations for policy implications

The conceptualized model has been confirmed by the findings. A number of actions have been recommended for management. Job satisfaction as a factor of employee engagement was found to have a contribution towards productivity. UVS managers should place emphasis on investing in strategies that will promote employee well-being and provide safe working conditions so as to realise the benefits of having an engaged workforce to enhance productivity. UVS managers, through HR policy crafting and implementation, are in a good position to positively influence the employee engagement levels in the organisation, to increase productivity. Managers should place emphasis on creating an inclusive workplace culture, whereby employees are treated as though they belong with the organization. UVS management should design policies which will enable them to measure employee engagement levels so as to sustain the organization through continuous improvement efforts. Employee engagement was found to positively influence productivity at UVS. Employee engagement has been acknowledged as key to an organization's competitive advantage. Management is to ensure that employees are conversant of the organization's vision and mission, because an understanding of the organization's objectives will ensure alignment between the organization and its employees. When employees are aligned with the organization's goals, they become engaged. Employee commitment was found to strongly influence employee engagement at UVS. The implication is that management must provide employees with adequate and required resources, with the autonomy to perform their duties to improve productivity. Top management should demonstrate trust in their operational managers and eliminate the element of leading by fear. This will promote commitment in the organization and enable managers to establish clear goals and thus be able to craft and execute strategies to improve organizational performance. Person- job fit was found to have a contribution towards the engagement levels at UVS. Within the context of a unionized workforce and dominant labour policies, management must ensure that there are system integrations in place, which will change the culture in the organization to increase productivity. Strategies such as training policies that will enhance employee capacity, will lead to increased engagement levels and productivity. Work environment was also found to be a predictor of employee engagement. In these volatile and highly competitive business times, the work environment has a direct impact on the performance of an organization. Industries should work together with industry regulators and government to ensure that the organization is in cognisance with its labour needs, and create a conducive working environment for all. 5.6 Recommendations for further research This was a cross-sectional study. It is envisaged that a longitudinal study would confirm informed conclusions of future research. Future research should be done to investigate the causative relationship of transformational leadership with employee engagement. Future research can also be conducted to validate the findings and conclusions of this study, by conducting a similar study across the entire SA sugar industry. In addition, further investigations should be done to establish the moderating role of other variables on the relationship between employee engagement and organizational productivity. 80 1 5 6 7

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