UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENGAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF

HULAMIN EMPLOYEES IN PIETERMARITZBURG

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DECLARATION

I, **Siphiwe Blose**, declare that

(i)   The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

(ii)   This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

(iii)   This dissertation does not contain any other person's data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

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ABSTRACT

There has been an exceptional interest amongst researchers in wanting to understand the antecedents to motivated behaviour as much as engaged behaviour in organizations. Numerous studies reveal the grounds of employee attitudes and behaviour towards engagement which may result to spontaneous behaviour that can improve performance. Employee engagement is currently an apprehending concept within the Human Resource field. Both practitioners and the academia are struggling with understanding an unpacking this concept, however, there is little underpinning theoretical research evidence. There is convergence of opinions about the benefits that employee engagement can bring to any organisation. It is therefore the organisation that must work in developing and nurturing engagement, which requires a two-way relationship that is, between employer and employee.

The study was aimed at determining the attitudes of Hulamin employees towards employee engagement and identify factors that hinder employee engagement in order for recommendations to be made to assist employers to assess and enhance employee engagement in the workplace.

This study was qualitative in nature. The sample was made up of eighteen Hulamin employees at its Pietermaritzburg site spanning across various grades and levels of occupation. Interview guide was constructed and in-depth interviews were conducted with eighteen (18) participants. The study used a thematic analysis to analyse data to generate meaningful, trustworthy and insightful findings. The study discovered positive relationship between the participants (the employees) and Hulamin (the employer) and critical lessons on how levels of engagement can be enhanced. Based on the findings, the majority of fifteen (15) participants suggested that people seek more meaning in their day-to-day work than they do in their personal lives. This implies employers should be seeking to make work meaningful by finding out what matters to their employees, especially since evidence suggests that meaningfulness impacts not only on the individual, but also on the bottom line. The study recommended that measures of engagement be put in place with the diagnosis model to encourage employee engagement.

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EE   : Employee Engagement

HRM : Human Resources Management

HR   : Human Resources

OCB : Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement has captured the attention of business practitioners, academic researchers and government departments. These organisations are interested in understanding the concept itself and what drives engagement as well as its root causes and effects (Yalabik, Popaitoon, Chowne and Rayton, 2013: 1). Organisations strive to recruit and train their employees, however, the balance between nurturing and enhancing employee engagement levels without compromising the business competitive position is still a challenge. The question still remain on how employee engagement can be influenced in the organisation hence this study was conducted.

Papay and Santille (2015:6) argue that employers are after business growth whereas employees are the main drivers. The researchers submitted that the core measures used in business such as quality, productivity profitability are higher at companies that have larger groups of employees who are engaged. Some reviews suggest that the employee engagement concept intersect with other well-established paradigms such as job involvement, job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Karatepe, 2011:3). Every business should therefore strive to ensure that employee engagement is high. Attempts should be made to survey and establish factors that may be contributing to employee engagement or lack thereof.

Employee engagement is considered a crucial driver of staff morale and performance within the Hulamin to reduce absenteeism, enhanced quality services and improved motivation. Engagement is an important human resource variable for the majority of organisations. It helps enable the organisation to deliver a superior performance and to gain a competitive advantage. Engaged employees make additional effort, learn more and faster, and be more creative. In addition, they are your organisation's ambassadors. Furthermore, engagement is a good predictor of customer satisfaction,

personnel retention, productivity and profitability (Smith, 2016:2). Further to this, Allameh, Shahriari and Mansoori (2012:7) cited Katz and Khan (1966) suggested that in order for the business to survive, employees need to display the following three types of behaviours:

- Employees need to join and stay within the system.
- Be dependable as individuals performed their role within the system.
- Employees must demonstrate innovative and impulsive behaviour and perform above the optimum role requirements in order to achieve the organisational purposes.

In this case, employees of a successful business are required not only to meet the expectations but also to exceed those expectations. This paper presents key features of the relationship between the attitudes and behaviours of employees and factors hindering employee engagement. The establishment of employee value system that play a vital role in employee attitude towards engagement will be explored. Further, factors such as earnings, age, work experience and education will be determined. However, this chapter will focus on outlining the introductory part of this dissertation which includes the background of the study, the research problem, and the aim of the study, the research objectives and questions, the justification of the study as well as the outline of the dissertation.

1.2   BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This study will be conducted amongst employees of Hulamin Operations LTD in the Pietermaritzburg area. This company manufactures and exports aluminium products. It is the largest amongst similar manufacturers in the sub-Saharan region. Being a manufacturing type of business means Hulamin can be as successful as the type, quality and acceptance of, the products it manufactures. To the extent that employees determine the nature and standard of its products, individuals therefore greatly determine its success.

It has been observed within the company that some employees do not apply themselves to the utmost level that reflects commitment to quality, high productivity

and innovation. The number of disciplinary cases reflects the results of an attitude of a lack of discipline. This lack of discipline lands employees in hearings and huge amount of time is spent correcting practices and tasks that do not benefit the business. The high level of grievances is also indicative of unhappiness that prevails. Critically, there have been incidents of safety related offences where workforce is frequently found to have transgressed the rules. Some of the safety incidents have either resulted in lost time injuries (Hulamin HR Report, 2017:14).

It has emerged in some disciplinary and grievance hearings that employees feel undervalued as individuals perceive that management and leadership should value them. The overall circumstance suggests that there is a possibility for improvement in so far as the level of commitment and motivation is concerned. Employee engagement can still be better than what it is currently at Hulamin. It is alluring to display the problem into the organisational processes, policies and procedures that do not make employees feel valued (Hulamin HR Report, 2017:15). There is thus need to examine what the contributing factors to this state of undertakings. This study is therefore intended at finding out the root cause of the low levels of engagement including what interventions could be undertaken to heighten the level of employee willingness to commit to excelling in their duties (Robertson-Smith and Markwick, 2009:12).

Human Resources (HR) are the most valuable and vital resources of the business as engagement of employees is now recognised as a critical factor by most firms to gain a competitive advantage. Employee engagement ensures high levels of passion, enthusiasm, commitment and involvement by the employees which transcends into numerous tangible and intangible benefits for the business. Linkage between employee engagement and various performance metrics such as productivity, retention, customer loyalty and profitability need to be established (Ahlowalia, Tiwary and Jha, 2014:309).

1.3   RESEARCH PROBLEM

Hulamin Operations cannot overlook some observations that reveal that some employees are either lowly engaged or totally disengaged. This study seeks to unearth the reasons behind these employees' attitudes towards engagement. It is hoped that the answers from research questions will assist in strategies to infuse more positive and higher levels of engagement. If the study is not conducted, there is great risk that the low levels of engagement will harm the growth levels and the capacity to exceed the organisational goals Hulamin. There is sufficient evidence suggesting that highly engaged employees offer a great deal of worth towards any organisation's sustainability and profitability. Further, employees are able to be involved in the decision making and to the extent to which individuals feel and voice their ideas and concerns which can be of value to both the business and the employee (Robinson, Perryman and Hayday, 2004:24).

1.4   AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to explore the factors that have a bearing on employees' engagement and establish the employees' beliefs and value systems that play a vital role in employees' attitude towards engagement. Further, the study will identify and explore factors that may affect the employees' attitude towards engagement in the workplace.

1.5   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions are as follows:
- What are the contextual factors that have a bearing on employees' (dis)engagement?
- What are the beliefs and values that impact employees' attitudes towards engagement?
- What are the elements within employees themselves that have impact on their engagement?

- Do factors like age, earnings, work experience and education affect the employees' attitude towards engagement? and

- What recommendations and interventions can be undertaken to heighten the level of employee willingness to commit to excelling in their duties?

1.6   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To unearth the contextual factors that have a bearing on employees' engagement;

- To establish those employees' beliefs and value systems that play a role in employees' attitude towards engagement;

- To unearth those elements within the employees themselves that have impact on their engagement;

- To examine whether factors like age, earnings, work experience education etc. affect the employees' attitude towards engagement; and

- To make recommendations and interventions that can be undertaken to heighten the level of employee willingness to commit to excelling in their duties.

1.7   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to explore factors that have an influence on employees' engagement and establish employees' beliefs and value system that play a role in employees' attitude towards engagement. The study was descriptive in nature and data conducted was limited hence the study was qualitative. The research made use of interview guide and observations to gather data and utilised appropriate techniques to evaluate data to make conclusions and recommendations. The study was classified as phenomenological in nature. In relation with the research approaches, qualitative (inductive) approach was used in the interpretivist model to indicate the realism of the settings and environment that existed at Hulamin which led to this study being conducted. Further figure 3.1 below illustrate the research process that was used when conducting the study.

1.8   JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Through conducting this study, it is hoped that the questions asked will yield answers that will inform relevant interventions to improve the level of employee engagement. According to Markos and Sridevi (2010) if all facets of human resources are not addressed in an adequate manner, employees will fail to fully engage themselves in their jobs in response to such mismanagement. The concept of employee engagement is built on the underpinning of earlier conceptions such as job satisfaction, employee commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour, hence the study is significant to be conducted.

Should the study not be conducted, there is a great risk that the type of low engagement and disengagement will continue and perhaps escalate to a level where the business objectives are difficult to achieve at Hulamin. Disengagement can be regarded as the combination of psychological self from the work role and involves individuals withdrawing and being defensive during role performances which may impact on performance (Knight, 2011). Therefore, problem of low and disengagement cannot be left alone to improve without conscious effort to address it.

The study will assist in adding value to the current state of knowledge by critically evaluating the existing literature on employee engagement and providing a reflective stance on existing debates and findings. As a result, concerns about the lack of agreement on what engagement is and how issues surrounding it can be addressed.

1.9   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Unethical activities are pervasive and include violating non-disclosure agreements, breaking respondent confidentiality, misrepresenting results, deceiving people, invoicing irregularities and avoiding legal liability (Bryam, 2012:338). The ethical responsibility of collecting data in an objective and accurate way carries forward to the phase of the research during which the researcher interpret the information he/she gathered and formulating conclusions (Anderson, 2011:87). Cognisance of the

following factors was taken into account to render the study ethically sound and were briefly explained to the participants prior to interviews being conducted. Ethical considerations used in the study are as follows:

- **Informed consent**: The researcher comprehensively described the nature of the study to the participants before the interview was conducted. This ethical principle was part of the consent letter to respondents. The researcher addressed the required information to the participants on the days of the interviews (refer to Annexure B).
- **Permission to conduct the study**: The research proposal was submitted for reviewing and approval by the research committee at UKZN and was approved. In order to conduct this study Ethical clearance was obtained from UKZN's Ethics Committee whereas the gatekeeper's letter was obtained from the Registrar's Office at UKZN. The researcher ensured that necessary permission was obtained from the participants during the participation process (refer to Annexure A).
- **Avoidance of harm or non-malfeasance**: Participants were informed that the study that the respondents were partaking were conducted willingly. The participants had a right to withdraw from the study at any time. Information that was provided by the participants was treated sensitively and was not to be revealed to anybody to avoid harm to participants.
- **Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity**: During the study, anonymity of the participants was maintained by addressing participants as 1 or 2 instead of their names as no names and addresses were mentioned throughout the study and report including in the questionnaire.

1.10   LIMITATIONS AND BIAS OF THE STUDY

As a result of time constraints, the study excluded other Hulamin premises. Other grades within the company were also excluded but care was taken that the sample reliably facilitates the credibility of the generated results. The use of gender, age groups, inadequate language and race was not utilised to avoid bias.

1.11   CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1: This section introduces the research study by giving an overview of employee engagement. The research problem statement including the objectives, questions and the justification for the study are outlined.

Chapter 2: This section reviews the literature on employee engagement, various theories will be explored including other constructs that are related to the concept.

Chapter 3: This section outlines the methodology that was used in the research study. The selection of the sample, the sample size, research instrument used in data collection, the site of the study including the ethical considerations that were addressed in the study are all presented in this chapter.

Chapter 4: This chapter presents the data analysed that was gathered from research study. Data collected from the interviews were presented in table form and interpreted.

Chapter 5: This chapter presents findings from the literature review whilst also presenting empirical evidence gathered from the actual study. This section makes recommendations and interventions for Hulamin business in order to enhance its levels of employee engagement. Lastly, gaps will be exposed that require further research within the field of employee engagement.

1.12   CONCLUSION

This chapter briefly highlighted the essence of employee engagement. This chapter further presented the background of the study where a need for engaging in the study of employee engagement at Hulamin was indicated. The research problem was outlined. The research objectives and questions that formed the basis for the study were also defined. Lastly the justification for the study was provided with the significance rational for conducting the study and how the study will be of benefit to both the employees and the organisation.

The following chapter two (2) explores the literature review where the subject matter of employee engagement is presented from various theories and other constructs related to the concept will also be examined.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The conception of employee engagement has evolved into an intensely debated theory over the past few years. Truss *et al.* (2006:15) precisely argue that employee engagement has developed into a worldwide phenomenon which is thrusted by the focus on it by the academia as a positive psychology discourse. It is also propelled by the quest from the business to use the concept as a tool to extract more from engaged employees in order to achieve more of the organisational goals. Business stands to gain competitive advantage from an engaged workforce.

Bhattacherjee (2012:7) states that there are three purposes of literature review and they are as follows:

i)   To establish knowledge that abounds in that field of study

ii)   To unearth articles, authors and theories in that field

iii)   To determine gaps that may be existing.

This chapter seeks to address the main purposes of literature review as indicated by Bhattacherjee above.

Managers indisputably support that this era demands more efficiency and productivity than any other eras in the past. Organisations are striving to increase their performance. Managers have been struggling with numerous challenges to succeed putting their businesses ahead of competitors. To aid managers manage, different researchers and professionals have been contributing their part displaying the best ways that can be useful and beneficial to managers. Firms have now comprehended that by focusing on employee engagement, supervisors can create more efficient and productive workforce. Any initiatives of improvement which are taken by management cannot be successful without wilful involvement and engagement of employees (Markos and Sridevi, 2010).

2.2   ORIGINS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND ITS DEFINITION

Employee engagement is a multifaceted and dynamic process that reveals each individual's unique, personal relationship with work (Ahlowalia, Tiwary and Jha, 2014:3). Employee engagement was firstly defined by Kahn (1990) where the researcher developed a grounded theory of personal engagement and personal disengagement (Shuck and Wollard, 2009:8). It is notable that employee engagement was elevated to the current status about 27 years ago. Further, Macey and Schneider (2008) revealed that Kahn in 1990, published a paper on personal engagement in relation to work. In that piece of work, Kahn (1990) submitted that individuals make a choice to immerse themselves in their jobs based on their experience of the surrounding environment at work. Kahn developed his theory from upon what motivation theorists had submitted. Alderfer (1972) and Maslow (1954) had stated that individuals need self-employment and self-expression in their work. Kahn subsequently engaged in a study that qualitatively focused on a group of counsellors in a summer camp.

The major premise from which Kahn's work operates is the one that states that there are three psychological conditions that need to obtain for engagement to manifest and these are: psychological safety, experienced availability and experienced meaningfulness of work. Since the publication of Kahn's work to date, there has been enormous interest expressed by various writers on the subject of employee engagement. There has been a growing number of conceptualizations, measures, definitions and theories that seek to unpack and improve employee engagement. Examining the developments around employee engagement from the time Khan popularized the concept, it is therefore correct to say it has become even more popular and useful. The concept continues to attract the attention of scholars and Human Resource practitioners (Smith, 2016:10).

2.2.1 Khan's Model

According to Padhi and Panda (2015:80), Khan's model of employee engagement that was established in 1990 is considered to be the oldest model of employee engagement. The model emphasizes that there are three psychological conditions that are associated with personal engagement and disengagement of work: meaningfulness, availability and safety illustrated in figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1: Khan's Model on Employee Engagement

Meaningfulness (Need to feel valued about their work by themselves as well as by others)	**Availability** (Emotional & psychologically available to perform the work)	**Safety** (Cordial relationship of the employee with his co-worker & supervisor)
-Create goals. -Ensure adequate level of challenges. -Allow creativity. -Give autonomy.	-Create a feeling of security. -Develop confidence about his own capability. -Develop self-consciousness. -Ensure fit with the social system.	-Develop support by co-workers & supervisors. Create predictable norms & management style.

Source: Graber (2014:4)

Khan's model depicts that if employees are engaged individuals are inspired to go above and beyond the call of duty to meet organizational requirements. Further, employees reinforce and support the organization's culture and values. The importance of engagement as a corporate practice and the different parameters demonstrate that the notion would keep the employees engaged, motivated and inspired, reduce turnover and improve well-being of the employees (Imandin, Bisschoff and Botha, 2014:520). However, measuring engagement has remained highly crucial for the fact that it deals with the complex feelings, emotions and psychological state of mind of the employees (Padhi and Panda, 2015: 83).

2.2.2 Defining Employee Engagement

Ahlowalia, Tiwary and Jha (2014:3) cited Kahn (1990) defined employee engagement as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances". It is rather difficult to establish common and universally agreed definition of employee engagement. Kahn (1990:694) states that employee engagement manifests in members of an organization harnessing themselves to their respective roles at work. In this regard, members express themselves cognitively, emotionally and physically as they perform their roles. Cognitive aspect of employee engagement will manifest in the beliefs that employees have regarding their organization, its working conditions including their leaders. The physical aspect of engagement will manifest in the physical energies exhibited by each employee as they go about performing their tasks. The emotional aspect of engagement has to do with the feelings that employees have regarding the organization including the negative or positive attitudes toward the leaders themselves and the organization. Therefore, Kahn (1990) submits that engagement has to do with being physically and psychologically present when performing and occupying a role in the organization**.** The following is a list of researchers' views on employee engagement:

- Richman (2006), Shaw (2005) and Baumruk (2004) have described employee engagement as intellectual and emotional commitment to an organization.
- Frank *et al.* (2004) define it as the discretionary effort that is exhibited by employees in their respective job functions.
- Truss *et al.* (2006) see employee engagement as an expression of passion for work and as a psychological state which encompasses the three engagement dimensions originally outlined by Kahn (1990).
- Hellevig (2012) submits that employee engagement centers on the achievement of organizational goals through the creation of conditions that enable human capital to thrive. As a result of such conditions, each employee is highly switched on in the execution of their jobs and put best efforts for the greatest good of the business.

What is apparent from the above is that employee engagement is often studied using different protocols. Common amongst the abovementioned attempts at defining employee engagement is the centrality of the state of one's mind and the resultant activity following the attainment of the state of engagement. It is apparent that engagement moves an individual to a particular performance that is often associated with positivity.

Ferguson (2007:17) argues that these various protocols in handling the issue of employee engagement make it difficult to arrive at a universal measurement and definition. In other words, there often emerge differences when defining employee engagement. This poses further risk in improving this concept. It is challenging to improve what you do not fully comprehend. According to Ahlowalia, Tiwary and Jha (2014:3) cited Hewitt Associates (2004) employee engagement is defined as "the state in which the individuals are emotionally and intellectually committed to the organization or the group". Based on the model in figure 2.2 below, work engagement in dependent on a number of factors such as people, work, compensation, procedures, quality of work life and opportunities provided by the business. This concept of employee engagement emphases on the three observable behaviours as follows:

- Say: the employee's support for the organization to co-workers, and refers it to potential employees and customers.
- Stay: the employee has a desire to be part of the business despite opportunities that other firms may provide, and
- Strive: where an employee put an extra effort to support the firm's goals and contributes to the success of the business.

The model of employee engagement in figure 2.2 further depict that there is a correlation between engaging employees in the business activities with procedures of the firm such as policies as well as work or life balance. The result of engaging the employees may enhance performance of the business.

Figure 2.2: Model of Employee Engagement
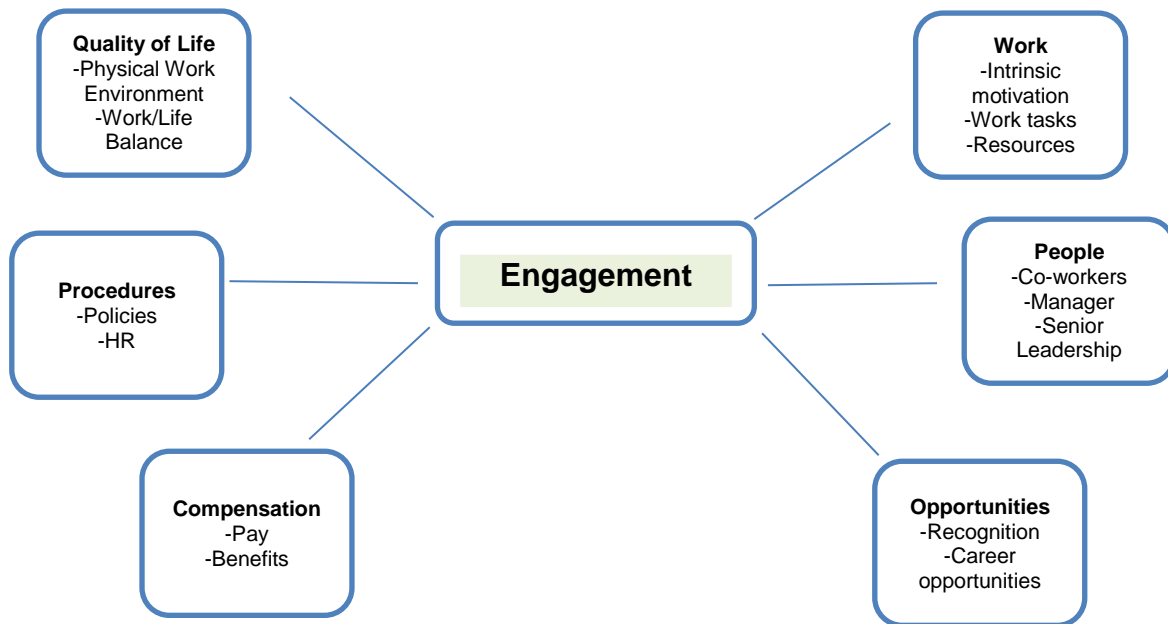
Source: Hewitt Associates (2004:22)

2.2.3 Employee Engagement in Relation to other Concepts

Saks (2006) states that there is evidence that whilst engagement is distinct in itself, it appears related to certain concepts in organizational behavior. Robinson *et al.* (2004) submit that it contains elements of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) and commitment but is certainly not a perfect match for the two construct. According to organizational and industrial psychology, OCB is an individual's voluntary commitment manifesting in a company or organization that is not necessarily forming part of a person's contractual duty. Employee engagement differs in that it is an expression of improved commitment they go on to say with engagement, there has to exist a particular degree of business awareness.

Saks (2006) argues further that organizational commitment is about attachment and an attitude that an individual will possess towards an organization whereas engagement transcends that. In effect, engagement is about the extent to which an employee will immerse themselves into their work and be as absorbed as they go

about performing their roles. Further, whereas OCB is about informal and voluntary behaviours done in conjunction with co-workers towards the organization, engagement has to do with formal roles that each employee is expected to do. Notwithstanding the various definitions, what cannot be overlooked is the similarity that employee engagement has with other familiar constructs that deal with the employees' behavior within the workplace. May *et al.* (2004) state that engagement can justifiably be associated with the notion of job involvement. According to Kanungo (1982), job involvement is a belief state manifesting psychologically. What sets this construct apart from engagement is the involvement of emotions and behaviours only evident in engagement. Job involvement is about cognitions only.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) submits that "flow" is another construct that can justifiably be associated with engagement. Flow is defined as a sensation that individuals will experience when involvement in their action total. When individuals are in a state of flow there is no need for motivation or reward. According to Kahn (1990) and Holbeche and Springett (2003), as with job involvement, the notion of flow has to do with cognitive faculties and can manifest intermittently, engagement, manifest in a longer term involvement with tasks at work.

2.3   EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT THEORIES

2.3.1 Self-determination Theory

Macey and Stacey (2008:10) use various theories to define what entails engagement. The theorists induced similarities and differences in comparison with other similar constructs within the sphere of organizational behaviour. As a result, a better understanding of some of the components of engagement is attained. Notwithstanding that, Meyer and Gagne (2008:3) argued that there is still lack of a prominent merging theory that is to assist in research and practice. The researchers further submitted that the theory, however does exist and it presents itself as self-determination theory.

Deci and Ryan (1985) revealed that there are two forms of motivation that is, intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic has to do with engaging in an activity out of sheer interest and pure enjoyment whereas extrinsic motivation has to do with engaging in an activity for

instrumental reasons. Meyer and Gagne (2008:11) stated that self-determination theory has been in existence for more than 30 years and has been well researched and tested. For that reason, researchers believe it can be used in bringing various concepts around engagement and give guidance in future research exercises.

Self-determination theory can be utilized in contributing in the field of underlying psychological mechanisms. According to this theory, the satisfaction of psychological needs such as autonomy and competence lead to autonomous regulation by an individual. According to Ryan and Deci (2000:13), there is sufficient evidence that these needs are universal and that where there is no satisfaction, there is poor performance and the psychological and physical wellbeing are reduced. The self-determination theory can thus assist in the development of intervention strategies.

Macey and Schneider (2008: 3) note that there is difficulty in confirming whether the opposite of engagement is disengagement or lack of engagement. The theorists then submit that self-determination theory makes a crucial distinction between engagement and withdrawal. According to Gagne and Deci (2005:6) both engagement and withdrawal are measurable individually. Meyer and Gagne (2008:4) submitted that there is a concept related to motivational state known as reactive autonomy. According to Koestner and Losier (2014:5), loss of autonomy may give rise to the source of control. To that end, the self-determination theory assists in explaining the behavioral reactions and motivational states that can be attributable to the absence of engagement.

According to Ryan and Deci (2000:3) self-determination theory research reveals that engaged people tend to experience greater psychological and physical well-being when compared to those that are motivated. In its own right, the wellbeing of employees is bound to have benefits to be seen in organizations recording low absence rates as indicated by Kahn (1990).

It is important to note that the self-determination theory cannot be used to directly measure engagement. Meyer and Gagne (2008:7) submit that the self-determination theory has served as a guide to measure only the variables that are associated with engagement such as behavioral outcomes, need satisfaction and motivational states in different contexts. It can thus be applicable in developing measurement for facets of engagement such as state and behavior. Consequently, it is applicable to domains

such as sports and education. Meyer and Gagne (2008) acknowledge that engagement is to be distinguished from other organizational behavior concepts such as job involvement, commitment and job satisfaction. There are two areas of limits that are identified by Meyer and Gagne (2008) and these are:

i) The encouragement of engagement to such an extent that physical health suffers and family time gets negatively impacted.
ii) In pushing for engagement, employees may be asked to stretch themselves beyond their level of competence and this may interfere with how they relate with others.

Macey and Schneider (2008:20) conclude that the self-determination theory can greatly assist in future research and development of the notion of engagement.

2.3.2 Burnout versus Engagement

Another model of engagement is to be derived from the literature on the notion of burnout. Maslach *et al.* (2010:7) note that burnout is a positive antithesis engagement. The researchers further identified six areas within work-life that may lead to engagement or burnout and these are: perceived fairness and values, rewards and recognition, control, community and social support, workload, rewards and recognition.

According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004:72) burnout and engagement are related constructs which are on the opposites by their nature. The theorists viewed burnout to be the negative counterpart whereas engagement is the positive counterpart. Burnout is essentially about a work-related state which manifests in cynicism, exhaustion and professional efficacy that is significantly reduced. To the extent that Schaufeli and Bakker (2004:70) believed engagement is the positive counterpart between the two constructs, it can be concluded that it has to do with a positive state of mind that is marked by fulfillment. The mind is healthy when compared to the ill-being that characterizes burnout. This depiction of the two constructs makes it easy to appreciate one definition of employee engagement which states that employee engagement is the degree to which employees feel motivated and thus contribute to the success of that particular organization. Such engaged employees further apply, out of their

discretion, efforts that will enhance the attainment of the broader goals of that organization or business.

The above definition of employee engagement suggests that there are three essential dimensions that can be observed and these are vigor, dedication and absorption. The three are outlined below:

- **Vigour**

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) submitted that vigor is about mental resilience and high energy levels exhibited at work, including the desire to invest great effort in work activities. The researchers further state that vigor can be observed in employees' persistence during difficult work endeavors. Employees exhibiting vigor are usually not easily fatigued. This view shows how close the notion of vigor is to that of motivation. According to Schaueli and Salanova (2008) this talks to intrinsic motivation that ensures goal oriented behavior and persistence in attaining objectives along with levels of activation and feeling enthusiastic and identifying with and being proud of one's job. Moshoeu (2015:12) argues that employees' drive, perseverance and interest in work depend on the extent to which the organization provides with the resources individuals need to perform their work roles".

- **Dedication**

Schaufelli and Bakker (2004) stated that dedication manifests in pride, enthusiasm, challenge and inspiration towards one's work. This manifestation therefore brings to the fore the notion of commitment or involvement in one's job. How an employee relates psychologically to the job being performed can reveal a degree of commitment to the job or task being performed at that particular time.

- **Absorption**

Schaufelli *et al.* (2002); Schaufelli and Bakker (2004) argue that an employee is absorbed when they feel so focused on their work such that they find it difficult to detach themselves from their work activities. The academia are so immersed in their work and nothing else appears to matter and are in a very pleasant state which Csikzentmihalyi (1990) suggests brings about a flow. The researcher further describes

a flow as a phenomenon where a person possess control over what employees may be doing leading to efficacy and competency in the ability to execute their work. Bakker, Denerouti and Euwema (2007) use the notion of flow to work activity and define it as a peak experience (albeit short) which is characterized by intrinsic motivation, work enjoyment and absorption.

2.3.3 Kahn's Theory of Psychological Conditions.

Following a study that Kahn conducted, personal engagement was described as each member harnessing themselves to their role at work wherein individuals express themselves cognitively, emotionally and physically as people perform their respective roles (Kahn 1990). Holding a similar view to Kahn and Simpson (2009) argues that personal engagement includes emotionally, cognitively and physically articulating oneself in the performance of one's work role.

Kahn (1990) states that engagement is a multi-dimensional construct because the cognitive, physical and emotional aspects are all involved. The more engaged an employee is in one of the three aspects, the higher the overall engagement will be in the performance of their work. Kahn's notion of engagement centers around three psychological conditions which are safety, availability and meaningfulness. Kahn (1990) states that these represent experiential conditions which are drivers for personal engagement. The absence of these conditions is an indicator of personal disengagement. Shuck *et al.* (2011) state that the fulfillment of these conditions determine the existence of engagement. In other words, if these conditions are not exhibited a person is thus disengaged. The three conditions are briefly discussed below:

- **Psychological meaningfulness**

  Psychological meaningfulness is regarded as a critical psychological state of working. This is so because it is one of the fundamental reasons behind people seeking employment. Rothmann and Welsh (2010) revealed that through employment, a person is provided with a sense of meaning, for the mere reason that they spend more hours at work than at home. People spend a lot of time travelling to and from work to fulfill individual growth and also as some form of

calling. Employees thus prefer to engage with work that bears meaning to them and that which is linked to their dreams and personalities. Psychological meaningfulness has to do with feelings of usefulness and adding value. It is safe to conclude that non-existence of meaningfulness in one's work activities denotes disengagement.

- **Psychological availability**

According to Jeung (2011); Rothmann and Welsh, (2013), Psychological availability is a sense of possessing the emotional, physical and psychological resources which are required to engage one at work. It can be defined as competency which is inherent in one's readiness to engage. According to Hakanen, Schaufelli and Ahola (2008), job related resources are great determinants in the manifestation of psychological availability. Therefore when resources are available, the employee's confidence in engaging in their work increases. Bakker and Demerouti (2007) argue that resources are essential to deal with work demands so that employees' engagement levels increase whilst, at the same time promoting psychological availability.

- **Psychological safety**

Psychological safety is defined as a feeling of the ability to safely engage self with no apprehension of negative consequences to one's individual image, career and status at work. According to Moshoeu (2015), people generally feel safer in instances where individuals are sure people will not be harmed for expressing themselves at work. She further submits that trustworthy and supportive management is most likely to induce psychological safety within a working environment. May *et al.* (2004) depict that in situations that are unpredictable, threatening and ambiguous are likely to bring about feelings of being unsafe to employees. Kahn (1990) states that situations that promote trust are clear, non-threatening, consistent and predictable. Kahn (1990) further states that under these situations, people fully understand what is allowed or disallowed, including the implications of their behaviour. At the core of Kahn's theory is the degree to which each employee is psychologically present when conducting their work. Similarly to what Rich *et al.* (2010:619) concluded that engagement is about the

allocation of personal resources to the performance of job assignments including the persistence and the intensity in the application of the resources.

2.3.4 Expansion of Kahn's Theory

Building on Kahn's core conceptualization of the notion of engagement, May *et al.* (2004) developed some measurement of engagement in the form of a three dimension theory which consists of the emotional, cognitive and physical dimensions. When these researchers progressed their work, they experienced some problems in presenting these three as distinct entities. Need was thus seen for a more robust measurement. A group of researchers from the Kingston Employee Engagement Consortium see engagement as being positively present when work is performed through the contribution of intellectual effort whilst experiencing meaningful connection and positive emotions with others (Alfes *et al.*, 2010:5). Engagement is then deemed to have the following three facets:

- **Propensity to think deeply regarding work tasks – Intellectual engagement**

There are obvious benefits to employees thinking deeply about the tasks that they are involved with. In effect, this shows the presence of mind and the attendant consciousness about the tasks at hand. Factors like quality of are likely to be uppermost in the mind of an employee that is intellectually engaged. Another factor that could result from this is deep problem solving. An employee that is intellectually engaged can be assumed to be worried about doing the best in their tasks with the result that they will incline towards dealing with problems as though they were mere challenges to be tackled (May *et al.*, 2004).

- **Enthusiasm and positive emotions – Affective engagement**

This form of engagement is essentially about vigor and determination. Tackling tasks with enthusiasm and positive emotions is effective way of embracing the task at hand and giving it one's best measure.

- **Discussion on work related improvements – Social engagement.**

This aspect suggests a particular degree of excitement about the task being performed. However, it does not stop at the level of absolute excitement, work related improvements get discussed and indeed implemented. Each individual brings a particular dimension or challenge which gets discussed and possible solutions explored. As solutions are sought, this activity brings to the fore the concept of innovation. The Kingston team raised concerns about the physical component of engagement. The team submitted that physical engagement should not suggest that employees overwork themselves to a point where their family life gets disrupted by homework. Overworking that results in taking work home should not happen. Gatenby *et al.,* (2009); Rees *et al.* (2009); and Alfes *et al.* (2010) all point out that the manifestation of engagement needs to be at the realm of the workplace, around work and, expressly, relating to work.

2.4   Hellevig's perspective on Employee engagement

Hellevig (2012) states that employee engagement has to do with the achievement of organizational strategic goals through the creation of conditions that enable human capital to thrive. He further submits that when these conditions obtain, every employee, from the lowest to the senior most rank, is so switched on such that they individually give their best in the interest of the broader business. The attainment of this state, Helleving succumbs, rests with management playing their active role as drivers (2012). Based on this view, it is clear that employee engagement manifests in a mutual way. In other words, senior management has to actively design and foster appropriate conditions to enhance employee engagement. It can thus be safely assumed that once the conditions are there, individual employees will correspondingly exhibit engagement.

2.4.1 Elements that are related to Employee Engagement

Hellvig (2012) revealed that it is easy to mistake employee engagement for other similar constructs that bear similarity to it. The theorist further discuss the employee empowerment, employee commitment and job satisfaction as constructs that engagement can be confused with. Below is a discussion of these concepts which are namely employee empowerment, employee commitment and job satisfaction.

- **Employee empowerment**

This notion suggests that employees are endowed with some level of authority towards decision making within the business. Such empowerment may not however be sufficient to generate visible engagement. It is true that those who are already engaged may greatly benefit from empowerment. In other words employee empowerment may induce greater levels of engagement but, an employee ought to have been engaged already. Engagement thus appears to be central and a fundamental condition for empowerment to add any value (Hellvig, 2012).

- **Employee commitment**

This notion bears resemblance to engagement but differs in some respects. According to Hellvig (2012) has to do with a compulsion of some sorts. In other words, an employee somewhat feels compelled to perform work. Employee engagement, on the other end, has to do with discretionary effort that an employee puts into their work towards the attainment of organizational goals. It is also clear that with employee engagement, a conscious choice is made by an employee to give off their best for greater organizational good.

- **Job satisfaction**

According to Hellvig (2012) the job satisfaction theory places the burden of creating a comfortable and happy workplace on the employer. He further argues that most employers labour under the notion that a workforce that is happy will necessarily be more productive. Lots of studies indicate that this may not always be true. Employee engagement on the other end, is about a reciprocal activity when compared to the one way traffic that job satisfaction is. Hellvig (2012) submits that attaining job satisfaction may not translate into higher levels of engagement. In other words, it is possible to

witness an employee who is only satisfied about their job conditions but is not applying additional discretionary effort towards the attainment of the company goals.

Hellvig (2000) submits that this notion often manifests in the level of motivation that often abounds in engaged employees. Such employees are intrinsically motivated. In such an environment, all that the business needs to do is to focus its strategic objectives whilst its engaged employees put in extra ordinary effort. The results are bound to reflect higher profits and bigger return on investments for the shareholders.

One outstanding feature of engaged employees is that they put in their best. For them it is not only about a better pay but, importantly better results for the company. Whereas the pay may come, theirs is, first and foremost, putting in extra ordinary effort. This clearly suggests that there is time commitment that manifests. Putting in extra effort may require that more time resources be utilized. Should time bring about some burden or disruption to family and social life, engaged employees are likely to be innovative in how they execute their job assignments. Therefore, innovation becomes one common characteristic that manifests in the work lives of engaged employees (Markos and Sridevi, 2010).

Engaged employees are naturally concerned about issues like safety, quality, customer service and costs. It must be noted that they do this not because they must but, because they are inwardly driven to do that. Hellvig (2000) submits that employers are compelled to correspondingly create a business environment that encourages engagement. The culture that should prevail within the business should be the one that enhances rather than diminish employee engagement. Corporate culture therefore is central (Knight, 2011).

Table 2.1: Characteristics of Engaged Employees

Characteristics of a fully engaged workforce	Advantages	Risks when a workforce is not fully engaged
• Motivated team	• Self-directed	• Dictated to, not self-directive.
• Excellent safety results		• Catastrophic safety results.
• Heightened trust relationship between employees and management which results in sound communication.	• Skilled employees facilitating greater productivity	• No trust • Lack of shared vision • Fraudulent and illegal activities increase'
• Employees have a "voice"	• Individual employee has a sense of having contributed, compared to this having been done by shop stewards on their behalf	• Minimal participation by employees • Absence of goodwill
• Employees understand the vision and values of an organization	• Employees tend to live the vision and values of the organization	• Employee do not trust or embrace the vision and values
• Low turnover	• Employees work for their boss since they feel listened to	• Employees will jump at the next opportunity to leave
• High levels of innovation	• Employees with a sense of a voice will contribute as they know their opinion matters	• Minimal or no contribution at all.

Source: Knight (2011:13)

2.4.2 The Role of Corporate Culture

Hellvig (2012:7) correctly notes that employee engagement cannot manifest in a vacuum. Further, engagement needs to be anchored in proper corporate culture that assists in sustaining and stimulating it. Hellvig (2012:8) briefly defines corporate culture as the sum total of the practices within a business, the behaviors, and decisions of its leadership and the employees at large. In a nutshell, corporate culture is simply the way business is conducted in an organization. The importance of corporate culture cannot be overemphasized. It can enhance employee engagement through promoting self-motivation, self-discipline and self-organization. Corporate culture that has minimal meddling and interference from management results in employee self-management. Minimal bureaucracy and hierarchy are pillars that can create progressive corporate culture that sustains engagement. It is therefore obvious that business leaders need to consciously create particular circumstances to enable engagement. Numerous studies confirm that teamwork also assists in the realization of commonly shared goals.

2.5 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND TRUST

The notion of trust is one that is difficult to define since it is approached from various angles. One definition that is offered by Rousseau *et al.* (1998) suggests that it is a psychological state characterized by willingness to accept vulnerability on the basis of expectations of the behaviour or intentions of another.

Another definition is offered by Mayer *et al.* (1995). They state that it is about one party being willing to make themselves vulnerable to the actions of another. This is done with the hope by the trustor that the one trusted will neither harm them nor take advantage of their vulnerability. This suggests that there is an element of taking a risk here. Within the work environment, trust will often manifest in a belief by one employee that the other will act in a manner that does not harm them. This points to a belief or a mental attitude and can thus appropriately be characterized as a particular psychological state.

Noteboom (2002) simplifies the elements of trust as consisting of the four aspects namely:

  (i)   A person trusting
  (ii)   A person being trusted
  (iii)   Trusting in some aspects of behaviour
  (iv)   Trusting in particular circumstances

It is now clear that within the workplace, an employee will naturally trust their supervisor or management, including the organization itself.

2.6 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND INNOVATION

Rao (2016) submits that owing to the global economic challenges, organizations are more open to innovation and creativity. Kruger (2007) notes in a Gallup study that there is correlation between engagement and innovation. A finding from this study was that 60% of engaged employees stated that their jobs functions brought out a flow of creative ideas. Only a mere three percent of employees that were not actively engaged could attain that state of creativity. This finding was again reflected in a research project undertaken in 2007 by the Chartered Management institute. This research established association between innovation and employee engagement. The findings revealed that from 1500 managers in the United Kingdom, there was an overwhelming 92% indication of engagement particularly in organizations where innovation was a dominant leadership feature. This provides evidence of the correlation between engagement and innovation.

Truss *et al.* (2006) note that the notion of employee engagement has received a lot of attention global and that this has largely to do with the focus on the notion of positive psychology amongst the academic community. In the UK, the Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) acknowledged the importance of the phenomenon of employee engagement such that it commissioned studies on it. Engagement is now regarded as so vital such that CIPD recommended that it be included in the top ten professional areas that HR practitioners need to focus on. A study commissioned in by MacLeod and Clarke (2009) emphasized that if the notion of employee engagement including its underlying principles were to be widely understood and practiced, great potential could be unleashed from the workforce. Further it emphasized that there

would be considerable change in the well-being and the performance of the general workforce in the UK. The McLeod (2010) review advocates for a business case that would see employers investing in strategies that seek to enhance the levels of engagement. The following points were gleaned from several research studies:

➢ Engaged businesses recorded a growth profit that is threefold faster compared to that of their competitors. In the process turnover gets reduced by 87% whilst performance improves by 20%.

➢ Businesses where engagement is high improved their income by 19.2% within a period of 12 months whereas a decline of 37% decline was recorded in those where engagement was low.

➢ Where engagement is high net income growth rose 13.7% where a decline of 3.8 % was recorded in those where engagement was low.

➢ Businesses with a score within the higher ranks of engagement index reflected 27% better profitability when compared to those with a score within the lower ranks

➢ Disengaged workers would generally take on average 6.2 sick leave days per year whereas the highly engaged one would take 2.7 per year

2.7   ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF ENGAGEMENT

Kular *et al.* (2008) state that more studies have begun to focus on the antecedents and consequences of the notion of employee engagement. With the interest that has been generated by employee engagement, it is not surprising that there is such focus. Saks (2006) established distinction between two forms of engagement that is, organization engagement and job engagement. He maintained that the two are related but remain distinct from each other. This suggests that the psychological conditions that give rise to organization and job engagement are not similar. This view is important in so far as it introduces a new dimension on engagement which had traditionally been viewed as manifesting at an individual level. Saks (2006) argues that academics and practitioners agree that employee engagement has positive consequences. It can thus be argued that there exists a connection between business results and employee engagement. Harter *et al.* (2002:272) concluded that

engagement and employee engagement connect to positive outcomes at a level that vital to many companies. Whereas employee engagement manifests at an individual level that leads to positive business results, it must therefore firstly impact outcomes at an individual level. It can be concluded that it significantly relates to individuals' behaviors and attitudes. It is therefore too critical to pay attention to employee engagement in relation to individual differences.

2.8   DRIVERS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

In the literature, drivers of engagement in HR are individuals who lead or results in to a particular phenomenon. Various researchers have attempted to establish factors resulting in to employee engagement and developed models to designed inferences for managers. The diagnosis model in figure 2.3 below aims at identifying the common drivers that will increase employee engagement levels of employees. The strongest driver of employee engagement is a sense of feeling valued and involved. These drivers, when identified, help the organization to capitalize their resources to the optimum to enhance bottom line results. Employees may have varying drivers of personal work engagement.

Figure 2.3: Drivers of Employee Engagement
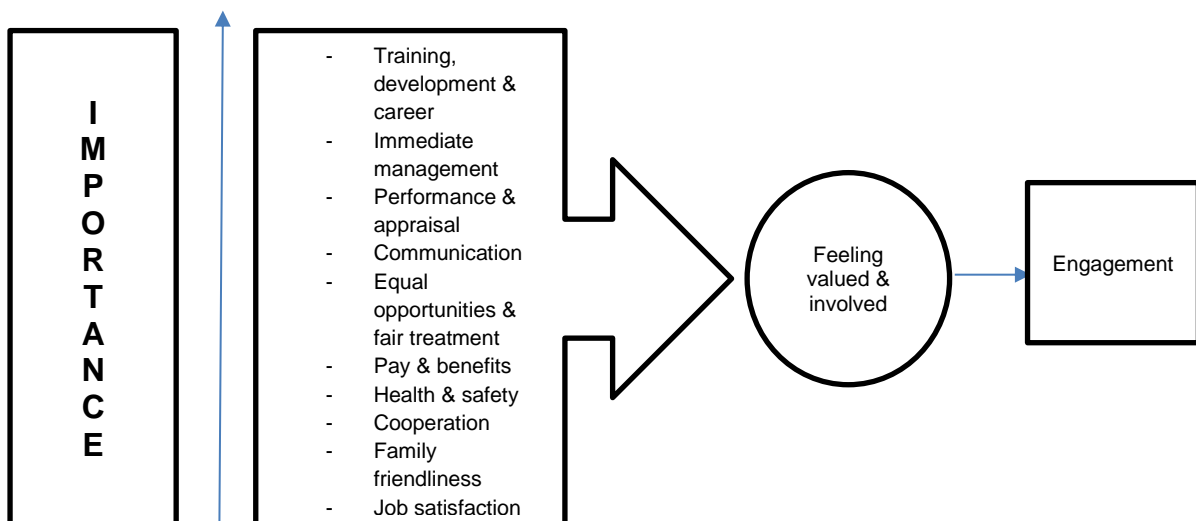
Sources: IES (2004:8)

Hellvig (2012) lists the following as drivers of engagement as some of the drivers are in figure 2.2:

- **Fairness**, **respect and trust:** the above are all too familiar concepts. However the concepts go a long way in contributing to the level of engagement at an individual level. Fairness induces some degree of equality and non-discrimination amongst the entire workforce. Respect often results in the workforce working in a non-threatening environment with the knowledge that everyone in the organization is valued. Trust often results in every individual giving their all in the knowledge that the organization and its leadership is behind them. This easily facilitates going an extra mile in achieving organizational goals.

- **Alignment within the workforce:** which ensures that the vision, values and mission are well known and shared by all. It is critical for leadership to ensure that the workforce knows what the vision of the organization is. In other words, knowledge of what the organization aspires to. In this way, each individual will work towards ensuring that the organization goals are met and indeed exceeded. Values that the organization upholds must also be known. The mission, which essentially is about how the vision is to be attained must also be known so that the end state is reached using ethical, efficient and acceptable methods.

- **Communication at internal and external levels needs to flow freely:** Communication has been repeatedly proven to facilitate knowledge. Engagement can be vastly improved where the workforce is constantly informed about what the business needs and wants at any given time. The information that is shared serves as a guideline to individuals within the organization to respond and navigate better ways to propel the business forward. This often results in excellent organization-wide results.

- **Empowerment of employees across the business:** the empowerment of individual employees can never be over-emphasized as it ensures that skilled and capable workforce is at the foundation of achieving success. This ensures the involvement of all within a commonly understood framework and often works well if joint decision making is a feature. An empowered workforce will often gravitate towards using their skills and expertise for the greater good of

the organization. Every individual will feel capacitated to use their skills and expertise knowing that they are not handicapped by any situation.

- **Efficiency of processes**: this involves having minimal rules where there is need, whilst leaving room for improvement, change and innovation. This state is bound to generate engagement as the workforce feels free to improve the systems, try new ways of doing business and, lastly, innovate for future existence of the organization.

- **Organizational structure**: a culture that promotes and enhances team work, rather than inhibit it, is likely to generate higher levels of teamwork. Team work is attained through individuals feeling a sense of bringing something to the table and each playing their part for the betterment of the entire organization. This type of culture makes employee engagement thrive.

- **Self-discipline within the entire workforce:** this ensures that everybody is working for the overall good of the business. Everyone is individually working towards the attainment and the betterment of organizational goals. The culture of self-discipline can be a catalyst towards higher levels of employee engagement.

- **Quality and customer satisfaction being a center of focus:** the entire workforce strives to maintain quality whilst ensuring that the customers are satisfied with the products. Each individual is therefore imbued with a sense of throwing their weight behind quality, customer satisfaction and productivity. Quality and customer satisfaction become a center of focus. Under this environment employee engage is bound to thrive**.**

- **Recognition and reward systems:** for each talent within the business, recognition and reward for excellent work performed often brings out the best within individual employees. These two systems often encourage an employee to do more. It is to be expected that there will be higher levels of employee engagement as each individuals is driven into extra discretionary effort towards achieving organizational goals.

- **Effective HR business partnering:** that is heavily involved in driving progressive change. The notion of HR Business partnering is meant to ensure that the welfare of employees is prime and that the conditions are ripe for the workforce to focus on productivity with less worry for their work conditions and

benefits. In an environment where human capital is actively providing best work life, employee engagement is bound to be enhanced. This is because the main focus for each individual employee is to perform well in meeting and possibly exceeding the business goals.

- **Clear job profiles:** that facilitate development and personal growth. Clarity of job a job profile brings a lot of stability to the mind of an employee. Beyond that, an employee is further inclined towards self-development and personal growth within their career of choice. With this condition obtaining, it is to be expected that engagement is likely to thrive as that particular employee would be on a positive and enhanced career growth trajectory. Once individuals have developed themselves, attained career growth, people are likely to spur on in applying extra discretionary effort in executing their job functions.

- **Quality of life:** that creates a balance between work and family life. It is no secret that work life does not happen in a vacuum. It is performed by people who come from family backgrounds that may bring unnecessary pressure to an individual employee. Should an individual fail to handle family pressure, work-output may suffer as a result. The creation of balance between work and family life is critical so as to enable an individual to focus on each without compromising the other.

- **Engagement and the theory of inclusivity:** According to the Willis Towers Watson research project conducted in 2016, many organizations are attempting to understand and enhance diversity in their organizational cultures.

This study focused on 27 companies wherein over 350000 employees were involved. The report in summary reflected the following that 78% of employees held a positive view of inclusion and diversity within their company. The following statements formed the basis of this positive view:

> - Management does support equal opportunities for every employee
> - Management does support diversity within the workplace
> - The environment accepts differences brought about by Age, Cultural background, Ethnicity, Gender.

Drivers of perceptions of diversity and inclusion. The following factors emerged as having huge impact of diversity and inclusion:

- ➤ Communication
- ➤ Teamwork
- ➤ Career development

2.9   ENGAGEMENT AND INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

As indicated in the above discussions, the psychological literature reveals various and sometimes conflicting explanations of what engagement entails. There is a school of thought supported by McCashland (1999), Miles (2001) and Karter *et al.* (2003) that suggests that engagement manifests as a product of certain aspects in the workplace whereas another suggests that it is brought into the workplace by each individual employee. The second school of thought finds expression through Harter *et al.* 2002. Ferguson (2007) seems to be supporting the second school of thought by stating that individual differences play a significant role.

Kahn (1990) stated that an individual's ability to engage in the performance of their role may be determined by their psychological make-up. This, he goes further, also accounts for their ability to be committed at work. Portello (1996) agrees with this view by stating that when individuals experience unsafe conditions, their individual coping strategies will accordingly determine their level of engagement. Robinson (2006) argues that individual differences significantly determine an individual's potential level of engagement. In other words, the extent to which an individual differs from another will accounts for the varying degree of engagement that can be reflected from them.

There is no doubt that perception plays a vital role in individual behavior. According to Buchanan and Huczynski (2004:215) perception refers to a psychological process that serves to organize and interpret sensory data. It is central to how an individual makes sense of their particular surroundings and reality. Therefore, perception is significantly about how an individual responds and interprets the events surrounding them. In the same vein, it must be noted that each individual receives information in their own particular way. Robinson (2006) submits that individuals use their particular frames of reference in order to make sense of situations and events that surround them.

The process of perception often centers on individual personality. It is for this reason that Bowditch and Buono (2001:46) submit that personality assists in the perceptual

filtering which in turn determine our world-view. It can be concluded that there is no particular objective comprehension of the external reality except personal perception that is experienced by a unique individual.

May *et al.* (2004) illustrate that employee engagement is closely linked to wellbeing and emotional experiences. Kular *et al.* (2008) submit that whereas emotions are a feature of each individual's make-up, their impact is not often considered when explaining individual lives. This extends also to the work life. In other words an individual's behavior at work could be greatly affected by how individuals are feeling emotional. To confirm this view, Wilson (2004: 99-100) briefed that individual feelings provide the necessary connection with outside reality and often reflect internal feedback on the next course of action. Further it was stated that emotions such as boredom, hurt, envy, worry, sadness, excitement are often felt as a result of being in any organization. Therefore, by the virtue of being in an organization and experiencing the abovementioned emotions, an employee has to be understood within the broader context of someone whose actions may be underpinned by such emotions. An employee's behavior is thus not in a vacuum.

2.10 RATIONALITY AND EMOTIONS

A study of engagement by Towers Perrin (2003) identified rationality and emotions as key components. One finding of this study revealed that emotions account for an employee's personal satisfaction including some sense of affirmation and inspiration emanating from merely belonging to that particular organization. As an example, the major factor is a feeling of personal accomplishment derived from an individual's job. The other contrasting finding has to do with rational factors, which account for an individual employee' relationship with the broader organization. This directly talks to an individual understanding their role in the bigger organizational scheme of things. Rational engagement therefore manifests in understanding one's role in relation to the broader organizational objectives. From an emotional perspective, the study revealed that fewer employees responded that their work environment inspired them to give of their best. The research actually revealed that employees found areas such as communication with management, overwhelming work overload and the absence of opportunities for development to be a great source of dissatisfaction. Some learning

from this is that organizational leadership needs to focus on the abovementioned areas in order to enhance the level of engagement from amongst the employees. Towers Perrin (2003) discovered that creating conditions that enhance engagement should never stop and that the work experience should not only be enriching but also be meaningful. Interestingly, the study showed that benefits and remuneration were not ranking highly as conditions for engagement. Elements such as autonomy, accountability, strong leadership, opportunities and sense of control over one's work-life were found to be quite fundamentals which could never be substituted.

2.10.1 Personal Relationships

In a research conducted by Moore (2004) and Crabtree (2005) it was established that work-related stress and family stress have a bearing on engagement. Family related problems may be transported to work life hence impacting the level of connectedness by an individual to the organization. In particular, unhealthy domestic life can diminish the enthusiasm to wake up to give your all in the workplace. This broadly suggests that personal relationships can impact employee engagement. Personal relationships were also found to have a significant role to play from one employee to the other. Locke and Taylor (1990) argued that those employees with good interpersonal relationships with their fellow colleagues tended to find meaningfulness in their work space.

Robinson (2006) submits that emotions are related to wellbeing. A research conducted by Roffey Park Institute (RPI) clearly demonstrates the link between employee health and wellbeing. The RPI clearly exposes the view shared by many author that once management focus on the employee' emotions and deeper needs, business performance is likely to be heightened. Cooper (1997) submits that proper regulation of employee emotions can assist in driving productivity gains and trust from individual employees. Heimer (1999) submits that innovation and effective performance can be brought about by well managed emotions. Towers Perrin (2003) established that senior management's expression of care about employee wellbeing goes a long way in driving engagement. Such expression often imbues an individual with a sense of appreciation which generally translates into extra discretionary effort being applied.

2.11   CONCLUSION

This chapter reviewed the literature and theories on employee engagement and attitudes.   Definitions were presented, examined the organizational benefits and discuss likely methods of encouraging such behaviors. Further, drivers of employee engagement were revealed. Having established that OCB has a beneficial effect on the organization, factors that promote them were discussed. Attitudinal variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, fairness and leader supportiveness all have a positive relationship with OCB might be caused by some underlying morale factors (Robinson, Perryman and Hayday, 2004).

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The research design and methodology is defined as the plan and procedure for research that span decisions from broad assumptions and detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Wayne, 2011:20). The research designs are influenced by practical consideration, theory used, epistemology or ontology of the study. Whilst the methodology emphasize the overall approach of the research process such as survey or action research. This chapter presents the methodology that focuses on research processes and procedures used when conducting the study in Hulamin Pietermaritzburg, in both the business and interpretation of data (Van Wyk 2014:13). (2015:4) mention that research method is used to outline a specific research technique or procedure for collecting and analysing data such a focus groups and questionnaire.

The purpose of this study was to explore factors that have a bearing on employees' engagement and establish employees' beliefs and value system that play a role in employees' attitude towards engagement. The study was descriptive in nature and data conducted was limited hence the study was qualitative. The research made use of interview guide and observations to gather data and utilised appropriate techniques to evaluate data to make conclusions and recommendations. The study was classified as phenomenological in nature.

3.2   RESEARCH APPROACHES

Research approaches are categorised as positivist (quantitative) and phenomenological (qualitative) paradigms. A qualitative research method was used in this study. Wayne (2011) stated that qualitative research is primarily exploratory research. It allows the researcher to gain opinions, motivations and reasons. Qualitative research assists in uncovering trends in opinions and thoughts which leads to diving deeper into the problem. It is hoped that the opinion and thoughts expressed by the respondents during the in-depth interviews exposed a particular thematic

movement which will shed more light on the attitudes that Hulamin employees have towards employee engagement. The researcher will deliberately utilize this method in order to conduct in-depth exploration of the notion of employee engagement. The table 3.1 below illustrate the differences between the qualitative and quantitative study that researchers need to view prior to conducting the study.

Table 3.1: Differences of Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Quantitative Research	Qualitative Research
Deductive	Inductive
Positivism	Interpretivist
Values and Biases are to be held in Check;	Subjectivity and values are Inevitable and Desirable
Post-positivist Knowledge Claims	Transformational Knowledge Claims
Survey and Experiments	Narratives, Case Study, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, and Ethnography, Case
Fixed Approaches, Numerical Data, and Close-Ended Questions	Emerging Approaches, Text/ Image Data, and Open-Ended Questions,
Test Theories/Explanations; Validity and Reliability; Statistical Treatment; Generalisations and Large and Representative Samples	Gathers Contributor Meanings; Comprises of Personal Values and Understands the Setting of Participants; Validates Finding and Interprets Data

Source: (Salvador, 2016:109)

3.2.1 Quantitative Approach

Quantitative research is a methodology that is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into useable statistics. The method is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviours and other defined variables and thereafter generalize results from a larger sample population. Quantitative research uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in the study. Data collection methods are more structured compared to qualitative data collection methods. With this approach, data is collected using surveys and systematic observations (Creswell, 2007).

3.2.2 Qualitative Approach

Qualitative methods provide the setting against which to more fully understand those results. The approach captures what people have to say in their own words and describe their experiences in depth. Qualitative data provides the texture of real life in its many variations; it gives insight into the reasoning and feelings that motivate people to take action. In short, quantitative methods are standardized, systematically obtaining succinct responses from as many clients as possible. A qualitative approach provides greater productivity and more detailed information about a smaller number of people (SEEP, 2000).

3.2.2.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Qualitative Approach

Advantages of the qualitative research as mentioned by Sekaran and Bougie (2013:95) are as follows:

- Useful in the early stages when the researcher may be unsure of what will be studied.
- Does not require a design plan that is strict, the study unfolds more naturally.
- Gains more detailed and rich data in the form of comprehensive written descriptions or visual evidence.
- Looks at context and social meaning and how it affects individuals.

Disadvantages of qualitative research include:

- The researcher becomes more involved in the process.
- The researcher interprets the research according to his or her own biased view.
- The researcher has to be present in order to conduct the research, but the presence of the researcher may influence the responses.
- The research findings are time consuming and difficult to present in visual ways (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013:105).

3.3   RESEARCH PROCESS

In relation with the research approaches, qualitative (inductive) approach was used in the interpretivist model to indicate the realism of the settings and environment that existed at Hulamin which led to this study being conducted. Literature provided evidence in what is being reflected. Equivalent to that, theories discussed in the literature review on employee attitudes towards engagement and contextual factors that have a bearing on employees' engagement resulted in there-of exploring ways on how engagement in Hulamin can be improved which subsequently emerged to the research questions illustrated in the study were used to formulate the research hypotheses. Further figure 3.1 below illustrate the research process that was used when conducting the study.

The first phase of formulating and clarifying the research or topic or questions simplified the objectives of the study for the purpose of a descriptive nature based on inductive reasoning through developing conclusions from collected data by using texts. The research proposal was established and approved by the school (UKZN) in order to conduct a complete study. The literature was critically discussed in chapter two with various theories of employee engagement. The study design was developed as discussed in point 3.4 below during the planning process. The data collection methods and preparation were based on the approach used in the study that is, qualitative. Numerous methods of data collection were explored. The samples were drawn to inform the data analyses and interpretation stage. These included exploring various methods of data analysis and derived to the chosen data analysis method (thematic).

Figure 3.1: The Research Process
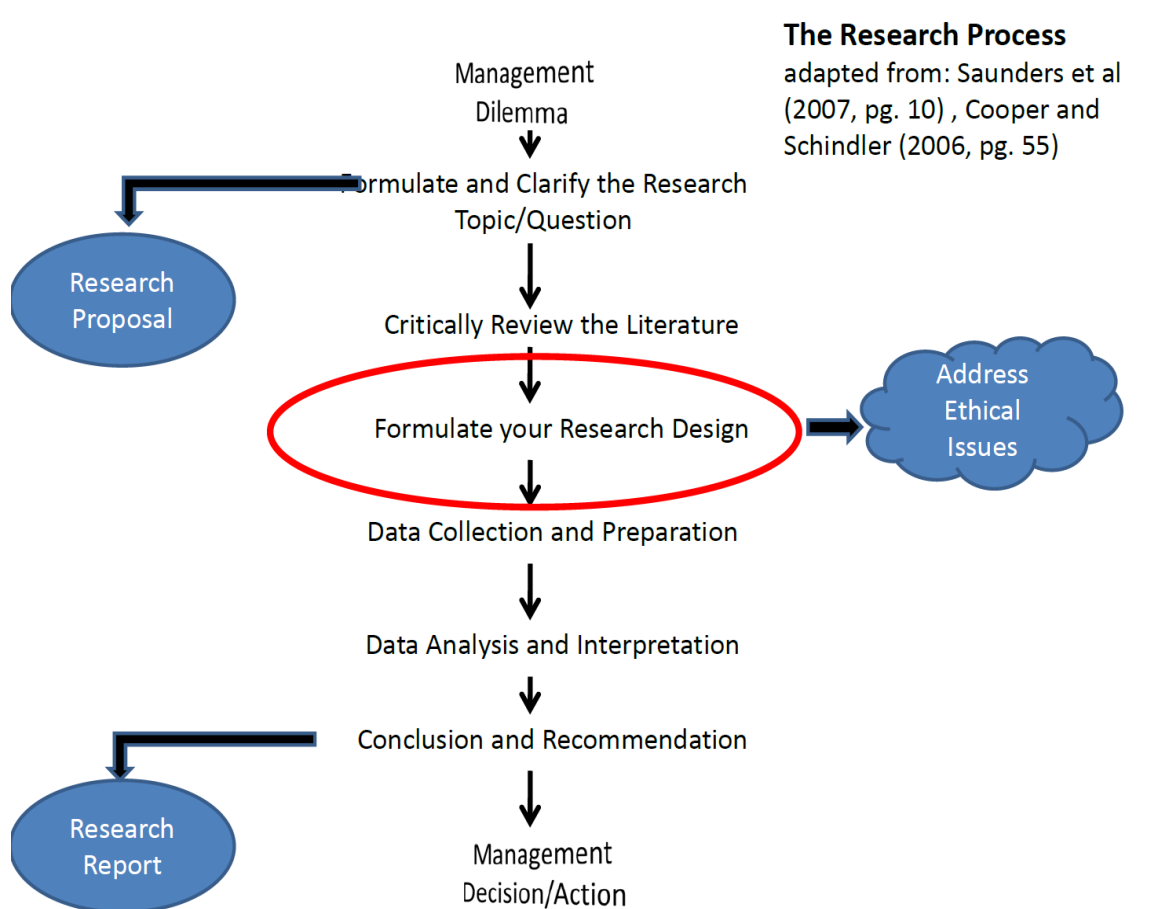
Source: Saunders *et al.* (2007:10)

3.4   RESEARCH DESIGN

There are six types of research design namely; phenomenological, ethnographic, grounded theory, historical, case study, and action research. Phenomenological studies examine human experiences through the descriptions provided by the individuals involved. These experiences are called lived experiences. The goal of phenomenological studies is to describe the meaning that experiences hold for each subject. This type of research is used to study areas in which there is little knowledge.

A case study research design in this research was used. Yin (2003) states that utilizing such research design enables the researcher to explore organizations or individuals relationships, programs or communities whilst supporting the deconstruction and

reconstruction of various different phenomena. The researcher opted for a case study research design because it enabled a degree of focus on particular and interesting cases. Employee engagement is gaining popularity and is receiving attention from various scholarly angles this research design greatly helped the researcher to fully explore the notion of employee engagement.

3.5   SAMPLING STRATEGY

The methods literature regarding sampling in qualitative research is characterized by significant inconsistencies and uncertainties which can be problematic for students and researchers seeking a clear and coherent understanding (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg and McKibbon, 2015). Sampling is defined as "the act, process, or technique of selecting a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population" (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg and McKibbon, 2015).

Mutinta (2014) states that sampling manifests in the selection of a rather small portion of the population such that it represents the target population. Since a qualitative research methodology was used in the study, non-probability sampling was employed in selecting a sample. Zikmund (2003) defines non-probability sampling as a technique where the units of the sample are selected using the researcher's subjective judgment or personal convenience. Under the circumstances the study employed purposive sampling. Mutinta (2014) depicted that a purposive sampling is premised on the researcher's insight into the target population of the study. Hence the researcher opted for participants who were deemed to have meaningful contribution in respect of the phenomenon that was being explored. Purposeful sampling enables the researcher to extract into information-rich cases for in-depth study. The difference between probability and non-probability sampling is illustrated in table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: Comparison of Probability and Non-probability Sampling

Basis for Comparison	Probability Sampling	Non-Probability Sampling
Basis of selection	Randomly	Arbitrarily
Opportunity of selection	Fixed and known	Not specified and unknown
Research	Conclusive	Exploratory
Result	Unbiased	Biased
Method	Objective	Subjective
Inferences	Statistical	Analytical
Hypothesis	Tested	Generated

Source: Gentles, Charles, Ploeg and McKibbon (2015:11)

3.5.1 Probability Sampling

Probability sampling is a sampling technique, in which the subjects of the population get an equal opportunity to be selected as a representative sample. According to King, (2016:1) probability sampling also includes the following five methods:

- Simple random sampling that is sampling exclusive of replacement.
- Systematic sampling where the sample is attained by nominating the 5th element in the sampling frame.
- Stratified random sampling is attained by categorisation of the population elements into parallel groups, called strata, and choosing a simple random sample from within each stratum.
- Cluster sampling is a simple random sample in which each sampling unit is a cluster.
- Multi stage sampling is the combination of all the sampling methods.

3.5.2 Non-probability Sampling

Non-probability sampling is a method of sampling wherein, it is not known that which individual from the population will be selected as a sample. According to Guetterman (2015), there are five non-probability sampling techniques as indicated below namely:

- Quota sampling is when the purpose is to come up with a sample where the strata (groups) being studied (for example, males versus. females students) are relative to the population being studied.
- Convenience sampling is where the units that are nominated for the study are the easiest to access.
- Purposive sampling, also known as selective or subjective sampling, reflects a group of sampling method that is dependent on the decision of the researcher when it comes to choosing the units (for example, people, cases/organisations, events, pieces of data) that are to be studied. These purposive sampling techniques include maximum variation sampling, homogeneous sampling, and typical case sampling; extreme (or deviant) case sampling, total population sampling and expert sampling hence this study used this technique.
- Self-selection sampling is appropriate when units or cases are allowed to participate willingly.
- Snowball sampling is particularly appropriate when the study is hidden and/or hard-to-reach. These include populations such as drug addicts, homeless people and so forth.

This study however, used a purposive sampling which is a non-probability method that was used to select participants where each employee at Hulamin.

3.5.3 Sample and Sample Size

Mutinta (2004) defines a sample as a subset of the entire population which is picked to be part of the study. The sample for this study was selected to include lower level employees and managerial employees at both Edendale and Camps drift sites. As indicated above, managerial and non-managerial employees were included in the

study. The main aim was to conduct a study that was to reveal employee attitudes to engagement across the entire organisation.

Table 3.3: Targeted Sample Size

Grade	Population	Sample
4	44	2
7	65	2
9	105	3
12 (Bargaining Unit)	204	3
10–A4 (Bargaining Unit)	45	2
10–A5(Bargaining Unit)	75	4
14 – H3 (Bargaining Unit)	317	2
TOTAL	855	18

3.6 TARGET POPULATION

Davies (2005) states that target population refers to the entire set of unit analysis. In other words, the target population becomes the source from which the data will be collected. It must consist of particular units. This study focused on the employees who were in the Bargaining Unit and in the managerial ranks. Grades 4, 7, 9, 13 to 18 including those that are regarded as salaried staff that is, Grades 1 to 12. This enabled the researcher to interact with the staff that is deemed to be somewhat senior in rank, and those that are deemed to be in lower ranks. The middle rank was also included so that the entire spectrum was covered. Such spread facilitated reaching various employees with various work-life contributions to be made. The selection process was such that various racial groups were also included. This was deemed by the

researcher to be a fair and representative approach that reflects the work-life of all the employees that were on-board the Hulamin payroll.

This study was conducted at the company's offices in Pietermaritzburg which are situated at Edendale Road including the Camps Drift. Whereas Hulamin Operations is big in size and covered more than these two sites, the study was confined to just these two sites.

3.7   DATA COLLECTION METHODS

In qualitative study there are four approaches of obtaining data, namely; participating setting, observing directly, in-depth interviews and analysing documents and material culture (Temple and Young, 2004:161-178). Primary and secondary data sources were used to answer the research questions. Saunders *et al.* (2009) revealed that data could either be primary or secondary. Primary data are "new data collected specifically for that purpose; while secondary data are data that have already been collected for some other purpose".

In this study primary data was mostly obtained by the use of interviews and publications as well as through self-administering of questionnaires, while secondary sources such as past studies and archives were used and accessed from various journal databases in order to obtain reliable theories and empirical findings that were applied. Interview guide and one-on-one interviews were conducted to prepare for the analysis based on the respondents' different answers to the questions provided on the interview guide. Responses to questions were captured during interviews that is, verbal discussions with respondents. Interviews, observations, and utilisation of audio-visual recording were research techniques used in gathering data from the partakers (Saunders *et al.*, 2009)

An adequate interview guide acknowledges four important facts of human social interactions that influence what people are likely to say to you. These four facts are: (1) Research questions are not the same as interview questions; (2) People's

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espoused theories differ from their theories-in-use; (3) Interviews are social occasions; and (4) Testimony by itself is relatively weak form of evidence. The research questions were based on three sections which comprised of demographic information and general questions. For this study in-depth interviews were conducted using specific questions that were written down for guidance.

3.7.1 Research Instruments

Research instruments are tools that the academic utilizes to gather data. It is vital to select a valid and trustworthy tool when collecting data so that dependable data is ensured. For the objectives of this research, qualitative research methodology was used and the data collection technique utilised was open ended questionnaire. Fink (2013:10) states that structured questionnaires are resourceful and are the best tool for collecting data from a large number of respondents. As a result of the nature of this study being qualitative, there were in-depth discussions with respondents on the subject study. The interviews were not limited to the questions constructed as respondents elaborated and extended further into other issues related to employee engagement and how engagement practices can be enhanced. Data gathered was based on individuals' feelings and past experiences. Qualitative research design included observations, individual dialogues or interviews, focus group discussions, field notes, audio-visual recordings, and use of qualitative documents (Fink, 2013:11).

3.7.2 Interview Question Construction

The interview guide was designed based on the objectives of the research study and the main aim was to obtain data. The interview guides were developed using open ended questions so that the respondents can respond freely in their own words and be able to express their feelings. The open ended questions allowed the respondents to give more information and elaborate. Questions developed were open-ended, which began with 'how and why? The interview guide was divided into three sections. Section A were demographic information and Section B were questions based on the research objectives for discussion.

3.7.3 Administration of the Interviews

Research interviews can be grouped as follows: unstructured, semi structured and structured. Gauri & Gronhaung (2002) submit that interviews are generally viewed as excellent data collection methods. In-depth interview enabled the researcher to get a clear and accurate picture of a respondent's position or behaviour (Ghauri *et al.* 2002). For this study, the researcher opted for structured interviews because of the benefits explored and better comprehended the notion being studied. All responses were transcribed for better interpretation of data. All 18 respondents participated in the interview process. The interviews were conducted in the boardroom at Hulamin for easy access. Interviews were scheduled for each participant as some participants were committed to other meetings. The duration of the interview was 45 minutes to allow participants to discuss and provide answers fully.

3.8   DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about inherent and explicit measurements and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is represented in it. Meaning-making can refer to subjective or social meanings. Qualitative data analysis also is employed to explore and describe issues in the field or structures and processes in routines and practices. Qualitative data analysis combines approaches of an unbalanced analysis of the material (overviews, condensation, summaries) with approaches of a detailed analysis (elaboration of categories, hermeneutic interpretations or identified structures). The final aim is often to arrive at generalizable statements by comparing various materials or various texts or several cases (Flick, 2013).

Qualitative data analysis is usually dependent on interpretation (phenomenological) where participants made views of their realm and seek perceptions to the meanings of existences and experiences hold for people. In this study, data required several explanations. This was as result of huge amounts of qualitative evidence that was collected. The researcher intended at making logic of the collected data as data gathered was based on meanings expressed through words from respondents

Qualitative data analysis observes and interpret words rather than numbers (Polit and Beck, 2008:508).

Data gathered during the interviews process was analysed using conceptualisation. Data was grouped into themes and or groups in a systematic way that is, grouped data into sub themes and patterns were interpreted to enable summary of the classification of themes and interrelations of responses for conceptualisation. Additionally, data was recorded using the audio-recorders and notes to ensure that the transcripts were correct. There are five types of data analysis in a qualitative study namely; grounded theory, hermeneutic analysis, thematic analysis, concepts and suitability. This study used a thematic data analysis. The thematic analysis facilitated in coding relations, to contemplate of a theme as a large category applied to a large mass of data than in top-down or bottom-up coding tactics (Welman *et al.,* 2010:213). Thematic Analysis was used in the study as it was capable of detecting and identifying factors and variables that influenced issues generated by participants. Therefore, the participants' interpretations were significant in terms of giving the most appropriate explanations for their behaviours, actions and thoughts.

Table 3.4 illustrate the stages of thematic analysis used in the study. Applying thematic networks is simply a way of organising a thematic analysis of qualitative data. Thematic analyses seek to unearth the themes relevant in a text at different levels, and thematic networks aim to facilitate the structuring and depiction of these themes. Clearly, the process of deriving themes from textual data and illustrating these with some representational tool is well established in qualitative research (Ibrahim, 2012:4). Thematic networks systematize the extraction of:
  i) lowest-order premises evident in the text (Basic Themes);
  ii) categories of basic themes grouped together to summarize more abstract principles (Organising Themes); and
  iii) Super-ordinate themes encapsulating the principal metaphors in the text as a whole (Global Themes).

These are then represented as web-like maps depicting the salient themes at each of the three levels, and illustrating the relationships between them.

Table 3.4: Stages of Thematic Analysis

Stage	Description
1. Code Material	- Devise a coding framework - Dissect text into segments using coding framework
2. Identify themes	- Abstract themes from coded texts - Refine themes
3. Construct Thematic Networks	- Arrange themes - Select basic themes - Re-arrange into organising themes - Deduce global theme - Illustrate as thematic network - Verify and refine the network
4. Describe and explore thematic network	- Describe the network - Explore the network
5. Summarise thematic network	
6. Interpret patterns	

Source: Ibrahim (2012:17)

3.9 PILOT STUDY

It is significant to conduct a pilot study in order for the researcher to see whether the questions that have been developed will have a meaning when the actual study is conducted. The pilot study was conducted at the Hulamin with four (4) participants nine (9) days before the study was conducted to enable any changes to the interview guide.

According to Saunders *et al.* (2012:451) the pilot study has the following advantages:

- A pilot study purpose is to refine the interview guide to allow for meaning to the participants.
- It measures the questions' trustworthiness of the data that will be gathered.
- It also enhances the quality of information to be collected from the respondents.

The results from the pilot indicated that the followings questions needed to be changed:

Question 5:

"What does trust mean to you and trustworthiness?"

Changed to read as:

"Does trust in the company and its leadership affect the employees' attitude towards engagement*?"*

Question 7:

"Do you ever experience being undervalued in the company?"

Changed to read as:

"In what way do you experience being valued by Hulamin such that you would promote the company to the broader community outside?

3.10   DATA QUALITY CONTROL

Lincoln and Cuba (1989) state that the trustworthiness of a research study is critical towards the evaluation of its worth. The four elements involved in establishing trustworthiness are Transferability, Dependability, Conformability and Credibility.

Transferability demonstrates that the results of the study can be applied in other contexts. Data can be enhanced by providing thick description which is providing ample detail to enable a reader to decide for themselves whether the results of their study can be transferred to their particular context.

According to Guba (1989) dependability are unexpected changes which may manifest in the duration of the study of a particular phenomenon. In order to assess the extent of dependability, the researcher therefore needs to explain and record unexpected occurrences that manifested during the study and how those changes would have changed their method to the phenomenon.

Guba (1989) revealed that the concept of conformability explains the investigator's concern to objectivity. As a result the importance of triangulation in enhancing such conformability emphasized so as to minimize the effect of bias reflected by the investigator. The researcher is expected to ensure that the conclusions derive from

the ideas and experiences of the respondents instead of the preferences and characteristics of the researcher.

Linda and Cuba (1989) stated that the process of ensuring credibility is one of the cornerstones towards establishing trustworthiness. Denzin (1994) argues that credibility can be enhanced through using some of the following strategies: persistent observation, prolonged engagement, peer debriefing, triangulation, member checking and negative case analysis.

In order to ensure credibility, triangulation which is about using different methods such as interviews and focus groups were used. According to Guba, Hunter & Brewer (1989) using different methods at once makes up for the researcher's limitations whilst exploiting their particular benefits. As far as possible, supporting data can be derived from documents so as to provide further background and better explain behaviour and attitudes of the participants in the group. Particular details that may have been provided by the respondents can also be verified from these documents. The researcher can further enhance credibility by ensuring that the respondents' eagerness to participate in the study is high. This will ensure that they are genuinely prepared to participate and will most likely supply truthful information.

3.11   CONCLUSION

This chapter described the research methodology used in the study both on application and appropriateness. Focusing on qualitative methods assisted the researcher in obtaining a broader viewpoint as well as many participants into the study. Various methods of data analysis and data collection as well as sampling strategies were explored.

The next chapter four will discuss and present data analysed as well as the results based on the interviews conducted.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The data that has been collected during the research study is presented and analysed in this chapter. It is only after data has been collected that it becomes vital to interpret it.   Smith and Firth (2011) stated that researchers use diverse methods so that collected data is made sense of. This being a qualitative study, it is critical that data is meaningfully configured. Such will enable the retention and clarity of the voices that emerged from the participants in the study. The study was conducted at the offices of Hulamin Operations LTD at Moses Mabhida Road in Pietermaritzburg. Whereas Hulamin has offices in Midrand and in Cape Town, the Pietermaritzburg office was identified for its larger and more diversified composition of employees. The different grades that range from senior management to lower levels could all be found at the chosen site of Pietermaritzburg.

This chapter focuses on presenting data analyses in a form of tables and texts (intepretivism). Response rate will be depicted and analyzed as well as the research questions derived from the research questions and objectives of the study discussed in chapter one (1).

4.2   DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is aimed at analysing data to obtain usable and useful information. Data may describe and summarize information collected and identify relationships between variables and also compare those variables. Data analyses is the "process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data". Qualitative data analysis is the search for general statements about relationships among categories of data (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). Recurring patterns or themes emergent from data, dependent on observation framework were used. The researcher seeks to establish the meaning of the phenomenon from views of participants. Data was further analysed

using intepretivism, that is, phenomenological and thematic analysis where conceptualisation and data were grouped into themes, coded and interpreted. Data was investigated, refined, altered and presented with the aim of obtaining all the valuable information and recommendations. Coding refers to the topic identification, concerns, relationships, and dissimilarities that were revealed through the participants' narratives and interpreted by the researcher. This process allowed the researcher to comprehend the world from each participant's perspective during the interview process and discussions. Coding was done by hand transcribed on paper. The themed diagram is indicated in figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1: Themes and Sub-themes used in the Study

Themes	Sub-themes

Quality of work life

Interpersonal & intrapersonal aspects
- Having a sense of belonging in the firm
- Feel empowered
- Establish good working relationships with co-workers & managers

Structural & Physical aspects
- Working tasks/duties
- Working conditions
- Organizational management

Role expectations
- Clear role
- Facilitate/couch
- Feedback opportunities

Structural & Physical aspects
- Having a sense of belonging in the firm
- Feel empowered
- Establish good working relationships with co-workers & managers

Motivation
- Freedom to express views
- Empowerment
- Engagement
- Training and Development
- Reward

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4.3   RESPONSE RATE AND DISCUSSION

Response rates provide valuable insight into the accuracy of data collected. A response rate refers to the total number of people who completed the study divided by the number of people who make up the total sample group (Rasouli, 2014). It is vital to have a high response rate to maximize the validity and worthiness of the findings of the study. This may include providing explanations of what the response rate is and strategies to increase response rates. In this study, employees that were employed at Hulamin were motivated by the researcher to take part in the study and benefits of being part of the study which included enhanced understanding of employee engagement to the business. Nine (9) questions were prepared for the interviews consisting of three sections.   All set interviews were successful and conducted as follows:

- 18 (eighteen) consultations for in-depth interviews in boardroom at Hulamin.

The response rate was eighteen (100%) as per targeted sample. This was a result of the probability sampling strategy used called purposive sampling which in the study is a non-probability method used to select participants at Hulamin. Hence the turnover of participation was eighteen (100%) as individuals who met the criteria were allowed to participate chosen by the researcher as a primary data source due to the nature of the research design. The responses are presented as discussed per participants below in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Participants at Hulamin

Participants	Grade	Sample
1= African Male **2=** African Female	**4 (Senior Managerial)**	**2**
3= African Female **4=** White Male	**7 (Managerial)**	**2**
5= Coloured Male **6=** Indian Male **7=** African Male	**9 (Junior Managerial)**	**3**
8= African Male **9=** African Female **10=** Coloured Male	**12 (Supervisory level)**	**3**

11= African Female 12= African Male	**10–A4 (Bargaining Unit)**	**2**
13= Indian Female 14= Coloured Female 15= African Male 16= Coloured Female	**10–A5(Bargaining Unit)**	**4**
17= African Male 18= African Female	**14 – H3 (Bargaining Unit)**	**2**
	TOTAL	**18**

Table 4.1 provides biographical information relating to the participants in this study. The sample includes employees from senior managerial levels to the lowest graded within the bargaining unit. Seven of the participants are drawn from the managerial rank. Three are from the supervisory rank and eight are from semi-skilled and unskilled ranks. There are ten males and eight females hence maintaining an almost even number in terms of gender.

4.4 FINDINGS AND DATA PRESENTATION

The results obtained were based on the interview guide that were distributed to the participants and the study was conducted at the boardroom at Hulamin in Pietermaritzburg. Data was presented using tables and interpreted in a meaningful way that provided answers to the research questions. Emerging themes such as employee engagement were identified through interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). These themes were clustered per objective. The transcribed interviews were printed and the transcripts were read frequently and analysed using words and tables to present findings. Questions were structured as follows:

i) Each interview consisted of 9 questions

ii) Data is presented in three sections:

- Section A (Questions 1- 5) participants were asked to give input on particular concepts put forward by the researcher.

- Section B (Questions 6 – 7) participants were asked to furnish input without any concept being suggested
- Section C (Question 8 -) participants were asked to give personal experience and subjective input from their point of view.

4.4.1 Demographic Information

Demographic information findings were based on the overall sample that participated in the study (18). Demographic information included age distribution, gender, qualifications of participants and racial groups the participants belonged into. This set of data was intended to explain the demographic variables of the sample and to evaluate any influence on the research findings. The demographic data comprised of age, gender, racial groups, and work experience and qualification level.

Employee engagement and contextual factors that have a bearing on employee engagement have an impact on by the physical, demographic, economic, social and cultural contexts. Demographic aspects below will be discussed based on the responses.

There were eighteen (18) participants in total from different age groups and ethnicity. Hulamin is dominated by the African society of 61.11% followed by 22.22% of Coloured community and the minority was 5.55% of White community who participated in the study. There were ten (10) males and eight (8) females that participated in the study.

4.4.1.1   Age Distribution of Respondents

Table 4.2 below depict the demographic information based on age groups of participants.

Table 4.2: Age

Age Group	Frequency (Participants)	Percentage of Participants
18-35	4	22.22%
35-45	3	16.66%
45-55	6	33.33%
55-65	5	27.77%
Total	**18**	**100%**

The table above depicts that the majority of participants were at the age of 45-55, six (6) respondents which is 33.33%; followed by 27.77% of five (5) respondents between the ages of 55-65 who participated in the study. Lastly were the minority of three (3) participants that were between the ages of 35-45 with 16.66% of three (3) respondents. In this study the correlation between age and Hulamin employees were significant indicating that the groups of individuals who are employed in the company are mostly between the ages of 45-55 followed by old-aged with 22.77%. This indicates that the middle and old aged are working at Hulamin and may have more knowledge on the study based on their experiences of being in the organization.

4.4.1.2 Gender Distribution of Respondents

Table 4.3 below shows the gender distribution that each participant belonged into.

Table 4.3: Gender

Gender	Frequency (Participants)	Percentage
Males	10	55.55%
Females	8	44.44%

Table 4.3 above shows that the majority of the respondents were males with fifty five point fifty five that is 55.55% and the minority of forty four point forty four which is 44.44% were females. This illustrates that the majority of employees working at Hulamin are males.

4.3.1.3   Racial Groups

Table 4.4 below illustrates the racial groups that participated in the study at Hulamin.

Table 4.4: Race

Racial Group	Frequency (Participants)	Percentage of Population
African	11	61.11%
Coloured	4	22.22%
White	1	5.55%
Indian	2	11.11%

The group of Africans responded in this study was high by eleven (11) which is 61.11%; followed by four (4) respondents who were Coloureds, that is, 22.22%; and lastly were two (2) respondents that were categorized as Indians racial group which was at 11.11% participated in the study. The information is based on the people who were participated in the study.

4.4.1.4   Educational Qualification Respondents

The table 4.5 below illustrates the educational qualification information of respondents. This table shows the effect of education ratio on understanding and knowing the processes and factors that may hinder the employee engagement at Hulamin and an impact of employee attitudes towards engagement and the significance of employee involvement for decision making (Smith, 2016).

Table 4.5: Educational Qualification

Education Level	Frequency (Participants)	Percentage of Population
Below Matric	0	0%
Matric	0	0%
Diploma	4	22.22%
Degree	5	27.77%
Post Grad	6	33.33%
Other (Certificates)	3	16.66%

Table 4.5 above depicts that the highest percentage of respondents with education qualification which were Post Grad were six (6) with 33.33%; followed by five (5) respondents who had Degrees (27.77%) and the minority of three 93) had other (certificates) with 16.66% of the respondents. This states that the participants were able to respond to the questions provided and discussed further on the recommendations.

4.4.2 Findings based on the Responses

The findings are based on the response from one-on-one interviews conducted with the Hulamin employees that were based on different backgrounds or categories of the age and gender. The responses were briefly discussed within each group regarding various discussion points based on the interview guide which directly or indirectly discussed to the perceptible examination of the contextual factors that hinder employee engagement and if earnings, work experience and so forth may have an impact on employee attitudes. These points of discussion included:

- Views on from respondents on the contextual factors that may hinder employee engagement.

- Establishing employees' beliefs and value systems that may enhance employees' attitudes.

- To unearth those elements within the employees themselves that have impact on their engagement.

- Examine if factors such as age, earnings and work experience as well as education may affect employees attitudes.

- Interventions to improve employee engagement.

4.4.2.1 Views on from respondents on the contextual factors that may hinder employee engagement. – *What are the contextual factors that have a bearing on employees' (dis)engagement?*

It was gathered from the interviews that there were mixed feelings on the views of contextual factors that may hinder employee engagement. However the majority of thirteen (13) respondents which is 72.22% had more or less similar responses based on the question provided.

There were various differing aspects among the respondents. As respondents were asked to elaborate, the following table 4.6 are responses that were captured:

Table 4.6: Do factors like training and development affect the employees' attitude towards engagement?

Participants	Responses / Emerging Themes & Sub-themes
All	**Training and development** • This is a key element, develops skills improves the level of performance hence greater engagement. • Trained and developed employees reciprocate the affection shown through training and developing them. They give their all and will do extra-ordinary work. • Training and development enhances an employee's marketability and they may, simply look for greener pastures elsewhere. • Training and development results in greater engagement. • Training and development plays a critical role in enhancing engagement. Employees feel cared for. • Employees feel empowered when they are constantly being trained and developed. This enhances their level of engagement. • Training and development leads to competence and competitiveness amongst employees who, in turn, get engaged. • Training and development are the bricks with which the trust and attachment to the organization are built. The two are solid foundation for engagement. • Training and development are viewed as essential steps towards better job prospects. Employees' level of engagement is much higher when they are constantly trained and developed.

	• Training and development generally has an engaging effect. However no amount of training and development will assist if the underlying issue(s) causing disengagement is/are not identified and dealt with.

The above table depict that training and development based on the majority of respondents who supported the fact that this aspect "*plays a critical role in enhancing engagement and employees feel cared for*" as indicated by one of the participants. Hellvig (2012) listed drivers of engagement such as alignment within workforce which ensures that the vision, values and mission are well known and shared by all, communication and empowerment of employees across the business to ensure that skilled and capable workforce are the foundation of achieving successful business. Recognition and reward for excellent work performed often brings out the best within individual employees.

As respondents were asked to elaborate, the following interviews are some of the responses that were captured in overall:

Table 4.7: Does trust in the company and its leadership affect the employees' attitude towards engagement?

Participants	Responses / Emerging Themes & Sub-themes
All	• Trust in the leadership is important as employees need to believe that their efforts will be acknowledged in driving the company forward. • Trust impacts on engagement positively. Lack of trust conversely leads to diminished engagement as the true motives of leadership are doubted. • Employees always need to know what Hulamin means for them if they trust that it means well, they become engaged. • Yes, trust in the company and in leadership is key to an individual being engaged. • In a big way, it starts with leaders who "walk the talk", employees in turn trust them and will thus go an extra mile towards making the organization work. The level of engagement is surely high. • The lack of trust, on the other hand, will lead to diminished engagement. • Trust definitely enhances the level of engagement whilst the lack thereof does the opposite. Trust has to be built over and over again in order to maintain the level of engagement too.

	• Trust is a workplace currency which is given and received. Its presence facilitates employee attachment to the organization and hence the greater level of engagement. • The more trust the employees have on the leadership, the better they are engaged and will go an extra mile for the organization

In Table 4.7, it is evident based on the majority of thirteen respondents (72.22%) that trust is the main factor that may affect employees' attitude towards engagement. It is essential that leaders show the way to the employees on how trust can be of value to both the business and the employee (Smith, 2016). In support of this statement one of the respondents stated that "*In a big way, it starts with leaders who "walk the talk", employees in turn trust them and will thus go an extra mile towards making the organization work. The level of engagement is surely high*".

As respondents were asked to elaborate, the following interviews are some of the responses that were captured in overall:

Table 4.8: Does race affect employee's attitude towards engagement?

Participants' grade, race and gender	Responses / Emerging Themes & Sub-themes
All	• Discrimination on the basis of race may lead to disengagement. • Those who are not covered by affirmative action may be disengaged as they see promotional opportunities passing them by in favour of the previously disadvantaged. • Yes, because of the demographics of the KZN Province, certain racial groups seem to occupy prestigious positions. This results in them being attached to the company and those who are not preferred are disengaged. • Race does have an impact on engagement, especially those employees who have not embraced a progressive South African workplace. They feel the new non-white management is not acting fairly towards them. They are, as a result, disengaged. • Yes race impacts on employee engagement. There is a prevailing perception that black employees are overlooked for promotional

Participants	Responses / Emerging Themes & Sub-themes
	opportunities. Other races advance faster. Black employees feel excluded and are not likely to be as engaged as other races.
	• Race definitely plays a critical role. Some sections feel certain races are preferred over others. To those that are perceived to be excluded, there is disengagement. Those that are favourites are engaged.
	• No there is no visible negative impact on engagement which is caused by different racial groups.

The minority of eight (8) respondents felt that disengagement is caused by discrimination. The majority of ten (10) respondents believed that race was the main factor that impact on employee engagement. One responded supported that "*Yes race impacts on employee engagement. There is a prevailing perception that black employees are overlooked for promotional opportunities. Other races advance faster. Black employees feel excluded and are not likely to be as engaged as other races.*"

As respondents were asked to elaborate, the following interviews are some of the responses that were captured in overall:

Table 4.9: What are the contextual factors that have a bearing on employees' attitude towards engagement?

Participants	Responses / Emerging Themes & Sub-themes
All	• Recognition of performance
	• Interim increases
	• Communication
	• Gender
	• Incentives
	• Corporate culture
	• Recognition and rewards
	• Leadership support
	• Organizational fairness
	• Leadership style
	• Clear career prospects
	• Diversity management
	• Fairness
	• Consistency

	• Honesty
	• Clear direction
	• Support from Management
	• Leadership
	• Communication
	• Reward and recognition
	• Professional personal growth
	• Accountability and performance
	• Vision and values
	• Corporate social responsibility
	• Career development opportunities
	• Job and personality match

The majority of the respondents felt that the listed factors in table 4.9 are the main contributing aspects that hinder employees towards engagement. Professional personal growth and job match are some of the factors that were common amongst the respondents. A finding from this study was that a majority of seventeen (17) of engaged employees stated that their jobs functions brought out a flow of creative ideas. These factors can also be the drivers of engagement. Hellvig (2012) listed drivers of engagement such as alignment within workforce which ensures that the vision, values and mission are well known and shared by all, communication and empowerment of employees across the business to ensure that skilled and capable workforce are the foundation of achieving successful business. Recognition and reward for excellent work performed often brings out the best within individual employees.

4.4.2.2 Establishing employees' beliefs and value systems that may enhance employees' attitudes: - *What are the beliefs and values that impact employees' attitudes towards engagement?*

There seem to be a general feeling that there is no employee engagement. This was based on the results that thirteen (13) which is 72.22% of the respondents who did not know whether the employees are engaged or not. There are those amongst the respondents who believed that there was an employee engagement before but people lack motivation and resulted in not being involved in Hulamin activities. This was

further supported by the high level of disciplinary records of employees (Hulamin HR Report, 2017). In the interviews and responses participants felt that creating a culture of respect amongst employees and leaders and BBBEE would enhance employee relations and attitudes towards engagement. However, the majority of twenty (11) which is 61.11% of respondents believed that there was a need to develop a corporate culture that will comprise of behaviours and practices of the business and encourage employees to utilising the system.

As respondents were asked to elaborate, the following interviews are some of the responses that were captured in overall:

Table 4.10: What are the beliefs and values that impact employees' attitudes towards engagement?

Participants	Responses / Emerging Themes & Sub-themes
All	- Honesty - Integrity - Respect between leadership and employees - Open communication - Lack of respect - Integrity - Culture of demanding - BBBEE - Company values - Racial stereotypes - Language and culture - Respect - Recognition of good work - Accommodating diversity - Convincing leadership - Honesty - Courage - Imagination - Openness - Discipline - Honour - Respect - Dedication

	• Fortitude
	• Resilience
	• Leadership and Management
	• Communication
	• Collaboration
	• Organizational Culture
	• Sense of not being heard

4.4.2.3 Examine if factors such as age, earnings and work experience as well as education may affect employees attitudes: - How do factors like age and earnings affect the employees' attitude towards engagement?

The majority of the eleven (11) respondents of 61.11% believed age and earning factors had an impact on employee engagement as employees tend to more relaxed in the work environment as employees are waiting for retirement and they feel that their experiences are not acknowledged. The minority of seven (7) respondents, 38.88% felt that there is career advancement hence they are engaged and value discipline and authority.

The minority 38.88% felt that engagement is a challenge. This is evidently as the minority were older. According to Robinson, Perriman and Hayday (2004), engagement levels decline as employees get older so is the length of service. However, management and professionals tend to have high engagement levels than their colleagues in supporting roles as a result of experiences and job characteristics as illustrated in table 4.12 below.

As respondents were asked to elaborate, the following interviews are some of the selected responses that were captured in overall:

Table 4. 11: Responses

Participants	Responses / Emerging Themes & Sub-themes
All	**Age** *Older employees tend to disengage because*: • They are waiting for their retirement day. • Their time is up and have reached "expiry date". • Nothing more to work for • They have no access to career development. • Their experience is not acknowledged • They are often not part of innovation *Older employee tend to engage because:* • Their knowledge and wisdom are acknowledged. • They give their all without expectation of higher pay. • They feel useful because of skill: when their expert opinion is sought. • They respect their trade and treat everyone with respect. • They value discipline and authority • They generally love the organization that they have been with through thick and thin. *Younger employees tend to disengage because:* • They are unsure of their contribution to the business. • They possess mobile skills that they can use in any other organization. • They feel they do not have a voice or are not heard by leadership. • Because of employability, they are not committed and loyal to just one employer. • They are chasing money instead of commitment *Younger employees tend to engage because:* • They are excited about career advancement prospects. • They are presented with training and development opportunities. • Of the existence of succession planning interventions • Being identified for talent pool initiatives **Earnings** • If happy with pay, employees likely to be engaged • If unhappy will, disengage and look for greener pastures elsewhere • Can give rise to bossy behaviour • Earnings do not count for much towards engagement • Generally a feeling of being underpaid can lead to negative attitude towards work hence disengagement • People value recognition and sense of belonging more than money. • Perceptions of unfair earnings lead to disengagement • Extremely high earnings may induce laziness and disengagement • Absence of financial incentives leads to disengagement.

As respondents were asked to elaborate, the following interviews are some of the responses that were captured in overall:

Table 4. 12: How do factors like work experience and educational qualifications affect the employees' attitude towards engagement?

Participants	Responses / Emerging Themes & Sub-themes
All	**Work experience** • Experienced employees will find it easy to grasp the complexities of their tasks, leading to their greater engagement. • The less experienced will struggle to meet targets and as a result, be frustrated with their work. They could thus develop a negative attitude towards their work and end up being disengaged. • Qualifications have to be backed up by sufficient and relevant experience. • Longer work experience, these are old and engaged • Shorter work experience, not engaged, demanding flexi-hours • Experienced are engaged, they understand the bigger picture • If the experienced are not tasked properly, they may disengage • Experienced are engaged, they understand the bigger picture • If the experienced are not tasked properly, they may disengage • The more experienced disengage when led by a younger person especially if the leader does not recognize their value. • The less experienced also disengage when they are led by an old leader who does not recognize them • Experienced employees have less stress, good attitude hence are engaged. They can navigate the intricacies of their job functions. • The more experienced clearer on the wider business vision hence more engaged. • The experienced ones understand how their contribution fits into the business hence will be highly engaged **Qualifications** • The more educated clearer on the wider business vision hence more engaged. • The educated ones understand how their contribution fits into the business hence will be highly engaged • The more qualified are likely to find their job functions more attractive. They are bound to be engaged. • More qualified will have a sense of contribution to the organization hence an attachment that leads to engagement.

	• More qualifications lead to engagement
	• Less qualifications lead to less
	• Qualified are engaged since they understand the bigger picture
	• Less educated disengaged they simply are hanging in there since they have no other options.
	• Less educated may turn out to be more engaged as they await their opportunities
	• The less qualified or plain illiterate value being acknowledged for what they know.
	• The more educated (with formal qualifications) are more engaged when performing job functions that are challenges.
	• The more educated like doing that are regarded as "carrying status
	• The more experienced will find it easier to handle tasks, gain positive attitude towards their work and hence are more engaged.

The table above depicts that the majority of twelve (12), 66.66% of respondents felt that qualifications were the motivator and factor that make employees engaged as the employee may have a wider and clearer understanding of the business vision and the significance of the contribution that the employees may have to the business. The less qualified or plain illiterate value being acknowledged for what they know. Experienced employees will find it easy to grasp the complexities of their tasks, leading to their greater engagement.

4.4.2.4 To unearth those elements within the employees themselves that have impact on their engagement: - *What are the elements within employees themselves that have impact on their engagement?*

The majority of fourteen (14) respondents of 77.77% are of the opinion that there are various elements within employees that may have an impact on their engagement such as skills enhancement, work-life balance and career growth. The respondents elaborated in table 4.13 shows the support of the majority of the findings. Employees are willing to go an extra mile as individuals value the organization. Positive attitudes towards organization makes an employee engaged which means the employee is aware of the business context and is able to work with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the business (Robinson, Perryman and Hayday, 2004).

As respondents were asked to elaborate, the following interviews are some of the responses that were captured in overall:

Table 4.13: Are you geared to engage in discretionary extra effort and innovation for the good of the organization?

Participants	Responses / Emerging Themes & Sub-themes
All	• Yes I am. Involved in developing employees and enhancing their skills. I go an extra mile in placing employees at the right space • Yes I am. Provided there is work-life balance • Yes, Hulamin is like my second home • Not currently. Prospects for success and growth are slim • I do not feel particularly geared. Extrusions Division portrayed in bad light when compared to Rolled Product Division • I am geared and willing to go an extra mile • Yes, I am always "switched on" to do this

As respondents were asked to elaborate, the following interviews are some of the responses that were captured in overall:

Table 4.14: In what way (if at all) do you experience being valued by Hulamin such that you would promote the company to the broader community outside?

Participants	Responses/ Emerging Themes & Sub-themes
All	• Being in training and development am able to promote externally the work that Hulamin does. I am proud to share with people externally how the company is changing the lives of fellow South Africans. • I feel valued, Hulamin is investing in me. I would proudly tell the good story of Hulamin. • I believe I am valued because Hulamin has trusted me with expensive machinery. I am making a contribution and will grab any opportunity to continue doing that. • In a slightly negative way. There are no prospects for me (like succession plans, crafted milestones etc.) which make one feel like work towards meaningful goals. I do not feel being valued as a company asset • I would go to great lengths in promoting Hulamin. Loyalty is a principle I live by and I display it in my entire life be it at work or home.

| | • I am willing to promote Hulamin externally |
| | • Training and development make me feel highly valued by Hulamin |

Table 4.41 depicts that the majority of fifteen (15) respondents felt that training and development is the aspect that makes them being valued by the company. One of the respondents in support of the findings stated that "*Training and development make me feel highly valued by Hulamin*". Training and development aims at developing employee skill, knowledge and competencies that are essential for competitiveness to enhance business performance. There was strong evidence demonstrating that effective training and a development program led to organization effectiveness with high productivity and reduced intention to quit (Knight, 2010). To engage employees through a training and development program, career development should be linked to offer the psychological meaning to the employees by providing career related objectives, effective development plan and implementation, and a monitoring plan to achieve career development objective.

4.4.2.5 To make recommendations and interventions that can be undertaken to heighten the level of employee willingness to commit to excelling in their duties:
- *What recommendations and interventions can be undertaken to heighten the level of employee willingness to commit to excelling in their duties?*

The majority of the participants fifteen (15) which is 83.33% viewed that there is a need to develop new models and systems that will help enhance employee engagement and change employees' attitudes towards engagement. One of the respondents stated that "*new systems must be in place and change management be involved in the process*". These systems should be sensibly developed and people who will be changed agents be carefully selected in order to gain support from employees. There should be improved communication between the employees and the company and aim to build a strong relationship. Employees only want to feel valued by the business. This is a two way process. However, the business needs to put in place practices that will assist in the process.

Based on the findings that improvement is required in various aspects. Training and development is one aspect that the majority of employees feel valued, therefore, the

business needs to encourage those who are still left behind and focus on other aspects such as minimizing discrimination, creating an organizational culture in order for employees to be more innovative and engaged. Hellvig (2012) briefly defines corporate culture as the sum total of the practices within a business, the behaviours, and decisions of its leadership and the employees at large. Kruger (2007) notes in a Gallup study that there is correlation between engagement and innovation. A finding from this study was that sixty percent of engaged employees stated that their jobs functions brought out a flow of creative ideas.

Table 4.15 illustrates the programmes that were described by the majority of the respondents on how and which programmes or activities employees were engaged on that provided evidence whether employee engagement was efficient at Hulamin. These results were based on the overall respondents that took part in the study. Some of the responses were as follows:

Table 4.15: Activities related to Employee Engagement

Activity/Programme	Frequency (Participants)	Percentage
Training & Development	15	83.33%
Communication with Stakeholders	10	55.55%
Partnerships with Hulamin	9	50%
Organizational Culture	12	66.66%
Recognition and Reward	17	94.44%

As discussed in chapter two (2) of the literature review, there are various protocols in handling the issue of employee engagement which makes it difficult to arrive at a universal measurement and definition (Ferguson, 2007). In other words, there often emerge differences when defining employee engagement was evident from the interviews with participants that these activities are informed by employee participation. Chapter one (1) in the Problem Statement listed the challenges faced by Hulamin which were also identified by the majority of respondents.

This shows that Hulamin is faced with challenges that the employees need to address together with the company in order to improve productivity. Themes were developed using the identified challenges listed by the researcher to determine the relationship

of variables. Evidence from the majority of twelve (12) respondents (66.66%) believed that engagement can result in other outcomes that may be related to achieving the business goals. Although employee engagement is a complex and multi-level process, it is however, able to be evaluated and even examined as an employee involvement affecting the business. The understanding of employee engagement may be enabled through enhanced designed systems where the role of employee and employer is described upon independently of other aspects of the intervention or program.

The findings of variables confirm that there is a relationship between these different variables and all have an impact employees' attitudes towards engagement through facilitation of employee involvement. If communication is a major challenge as the majority of twelve (12) which is 66.66% felt that activities and processes are not shared hence employees feel undervalued. The guiding principles of the policy, among others, include emphasis on engagement and overview of the system, main-streaming of gender and racial issues and a special focus on training and development. Further, employees have a right to be involved individually and collectively in the daily planning and implementation of their company to enhance the process of quality delivery services at Hulamin and enhancement plans be developed as the majority of fifteen which is 83.33% responded.

4.4   CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and findings, it was evident that the majority of fifteen (15) respondents felt that there is a need for change and new systems that will help enhance employee engagement at Hulamin. Data was presented using tables and interpreted as per participants' responses. Challenges that were outlines in chapter one of the research problem were also addressed by employees, meaning both the employer and employees need to develop a system that will enable efficient employee engagement and change of attitudes towards engagement.

The next chapter five (5) will discuss the conclusions and recommendations based on the primary study and literature review.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The findings of this study are presented in this final chapter. The empirical findings gleaned from the study will be discussed against the background of the literature review which is related to this study. A brief summary of the relevant themes that emerged from examining the notion of employee engagement will be presented. The themes that emerged from the actual study will be mirrored against the literature that was reviewed.

Kahn is credited with initially bringing to the fore what employee engagement is about. As indicated earlier, it is correct to state that the journey of the notion of employee engagement began in earnest in 1990 when Kahn produced his seminal work following a study he conducted. He located the notion within the realm of an individual's state of mind and its experience of work. Theorists that further expanded on his foundational work

Kahn (1990) states that engagement is a multi-dimensional construct because the cognitive, physical and emotional aspects are all involved. The more engaged an employee is in one of the three aspects, the higher the overall engagement will be in the performance of their work. Kahn's notion of engagement centres around three psychological conditions which are safety, availability and meaningfulness. Kahn (1990) states that these represent experiential conditions which are drivers for personal engagement. The absence of these conditions is an indicator of personal disengagement. Shuck *et. al.* (2011) state that the fulfilment of these conditions determine the existence of engagement. In other words, if these conditions are not exhibited a person is thus disengaged.

5.2   FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

### 5.2.1 Summary of Findings From the Literature Review

Convergence of views shows that there is a great deal of commonality to be observed when the outcomes of engagement are examined. All theories suggest that engagement is a state that can be empirically observed. Self-determination theory as explained by Macey and Schneider (2008) identified the outcome as the performance of particular tasks and the resultant organizational effectiveness. These are very significant outcomes. This was supported by the majority of twelve (12) which is 66.66% of respondents felt that engagement should start with the employee by being valued by the company Hulamin. Ryan and Deci (2000) submit that research on Self-determination theory reveals that employees who are engaged in their tasks also express greater psychological and physical wellbeing in comparison to those who are disengaged. Inadequate to say, engaged employees are bound to exhibit better health conditions than those who are not. This is also confirmed by the results of the study commissioned in the UK and (Ryan and Deci, 2000). This study listed a finding that disengaged workers would generally take on average 6.2% of sick leave days per year whereas the highly engaged one would take 2.7% per year.

Hellvig (2012) listed drivers of engagement stated in figure 5.1 as a diagnosis tool such as alignment within workforce which ensures that the vision, values and mission are well known and shared by all, communication and empowerment of employees across the business to ensure that skilled and capable workforce are the foundation of achieving successful business. Recognition and reward for excellent work performed often brings out the best within individual employees. The majority of the respondents felt that communication and empowerment are essential aspect of enhancing employees' attitudes towards engagement.

As pointed out by Smith (2016) employee engagement has for long time been studied using varying protocols. Ferguson (2007) argues that these various protocols in handling the issue of employee engagement make it difficult to arrive at a universal measurement and definition. In other words, there often emerge differences when defining employee engagement.

In order for gaps to be filled in engagement, a diagnosis tool need to be developed as suggested by the majority of fifteen (15) respondents who felt that systems need to be in place to drive employee engagement. These drivers were also a challenge to the respondents as some felt that there were disengaged as a result of lack of that driver or aspect such as training and development to old age employees and pay and rewards as well as communication. Performance and appraisal were recommended by the respondents as indicated under recommendations that employees need to be measured on engagement in order to drive the process efficiently. Kruger (2007) stated in a Gallup study that there is correlation between engagement and innovation. A finding from this study was that fourteen (14) of engaged employees stated that their jobs functions brought out a flow of creative ideas. Hence the driver engagement tool can be implemented.

Figure 5.1: The Drivers of Employee Engagement: a diagnosis tool
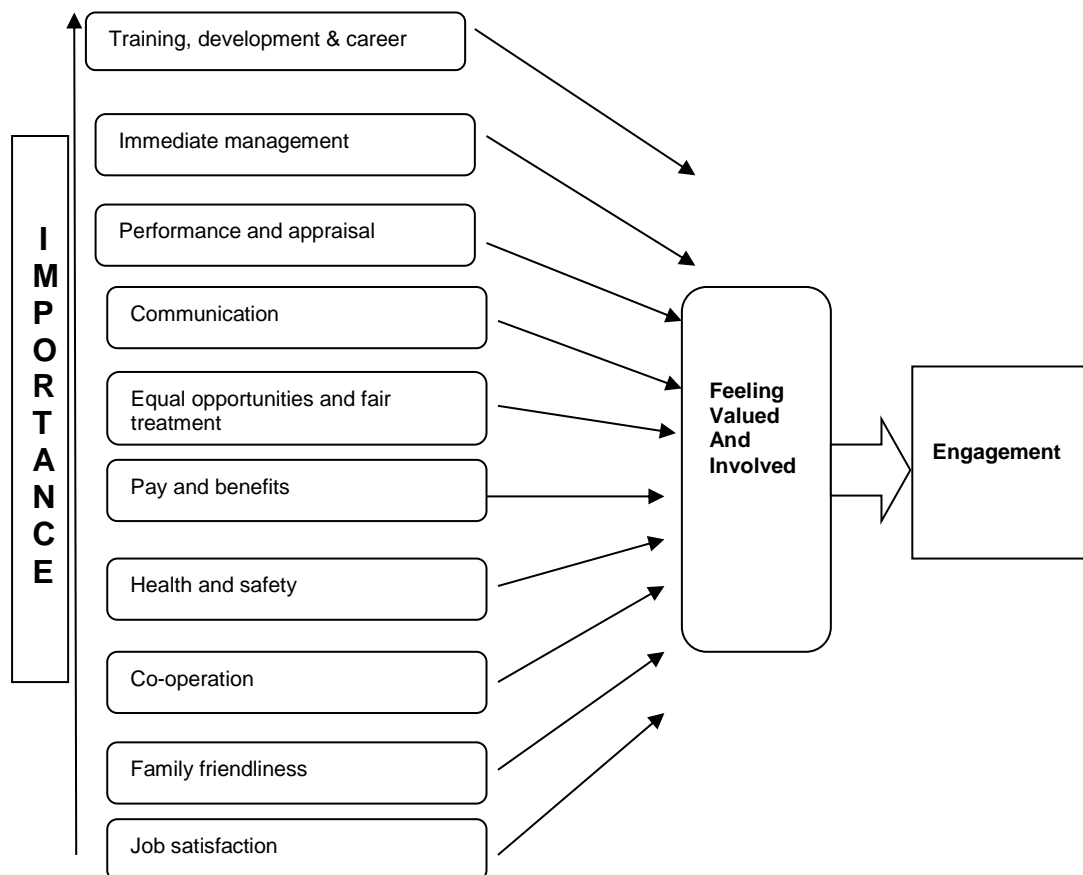
Source: Robinson, Perryman and Hayday (2004)

There is a clear link between employees' experiences and general perceptions of working life and their sense of being valued and involved and therefore to their engagement levels, as engagement is closely linked to feeling valued and involved. This is evidently from the findings that the majority of 65.55% of respondents supported that employees need to value the organization in order for the business as this process is a two way process. Engagement is believed to be one step beyond commitment, which has been shown to have an impact on business outcomes; it is also linked to increased intention to stay with the organization. It therefore makes sense for organizations to monitor the engagement levels of employees, and to take action to increase these.

5.2.2 Summary of Findings From the Primary Research

The findings are based on the responses from one-on-one interviews conducted with the Hulamin employees that were grounded on different backgrounds or categories of the age and gender. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data and data was presented in tables and interpreted. The responses were briefly discussed individually regarding various discussion points based on the interview guide which directly or indirectly discussed to the perceptible examination of the contextual factors that hinder employee engagement and if earnings, work experience and so forth may have an impact on employee attitudes. It was gathered from the interviews that there were mixed feelings on the views of contextual factors that may hinder employee engagement. However the majority of thirteen (13) respondents which is 72.22% had more or less similar responses based on the question provided.

It was depicted that training and development based on the majority of respondents who supported the fact that this aspect "*plays a critical role in enhancing engagement and employees feel cared for*" as indicated by one of the participants. It is essential that leaders show the way to the employees on how trust can be of value to both the business and the employee (Smith, 2016:10). In support of this view one of the respondents stated that "*The more trust the employees have on the leadership, the better they are engaged and will go an extra mile for the organization*". There are those amongst the respondents who believed that there was an employee engagement

before but people lack motivation and resulted in not being involved in Hulamin activities. This was further supported by the high level of disciplinary records of employees from HR department (Hulamin HR Report, 2017). The minority 38.88% felt that engagement is a challenge. This is evident as the marginal were older. According to Robinson, Perriman and Hayday (2004), engagement levels deteriorate as employees get older so is the length of service within the organization. However, management and professionals tend to have high engagement levels than their colleagues in supporting roles as a result of experiences and job characteristics as illustrated in table 4.12 above. Employees are willing to go an extra mile as individuals value the organization. Positive attitudes towards organization makes an employee engaged which means the employee is aware of the business context and is able to work with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the business (Robinson, Perryman and Hayday, 2004).

It was evident based on the majority of thirteen respondents (72.22%) that trust was the main factor that affected employees' attitude towards engagement. Brown, Gray, McHardy and Taylor (2015:1) state that there is a relationship between any employee trust of managers and workplace performance. It is perceptible that employee behaviour may influence organizational level of performance given that many employees have some degree of discretion with respect to how hard individuals work and valued or trusted. When an employee has the freedom to make decisions and take action without consulting the supervisor all the time, it can result in work engagement. Ethical leaders need to trust their employees and empower individuals with strategic priorities (Engelbrecht, Heine and Mahembe, 2014:1).

There are those amongst the respondents who believed that there was an employee engagement before but people lack motivation and resulted in not being involved in Hulamin activities. This was further supported by the high level of disciplinary records of employees (Hulamin HR Report, 2017). However, the majority of twenty (11) which is 61.11% of respondents believed that there was a need to develop a corporate culture that will comprise of behaviours and practices of the business and encourage employees to utilising the system. Organizational culture reflects the environment, the behaviours, the values, the office rituals, and the language of those working in one workplace and determine how and why things should be done in the business.

Employee engagement is a direct outcome of a high-performance company culture as high-performance cultures clearly outline behaviours and norms that are healthy and supportive. Therefore employees need to clearly understand their culture and what is expected of them (Brenyah and Obuobisa-Darko, 2017:3).

The majority of the participants fifteen (15) which is 83.33% viewed that there is a need to develop new models and systems that will help enhance employee engagement and change employees' attitudes towards engagement. Employee engagement start with an individual to enhance productivity, better customer service and lower turnover hence it is essential for individuals to take ownership of tasks and projects given. Strategic employee engagement initiatives support organizational branding and reputation among employees (Kaliannan and Adjovu, 2015:162).

5.3   CONCLUSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

There is clear evidence in the psychological literature of the effect of individual differences on work performance. Kahn (1990) suggested that individual differences shape a person's nature, which in turn, affects their ability to personally engage or disengage in all or some types or role performances. Furthermore, perception and personality have been suggested to be key influences on how individuals respond, thus shaping and directing how engaged they are. People's perceptions of meaning with regard to the workplace has connections with how engaged they are and their level of performance (Holbeche and Springett 2003).

Findings suggest people seek more meaning in their day-to-day work than they do in their personal lives. This implies employers should be seeking to make work meaningful by finding out what matters to their employees, especially since evidence suggests that meaningfulness impacts not only on the individual, but also on the bottom line. The findings show that organizational trust and psychological empowerment that forecast positive job behaviour in various cultures are also critical in understanding the Hulamin employees' positive organizational behaviour such as work engagement. Practical implications for everyday purposes, the findings suggested that organizational trust may be a significant component of organizational

interventions. Given that psychological empowerment is strongly related to work engagement, empowerment intervention programs is therefore important in building employees that would be engaged in their work (Ugwu and Rodriguez Sanchez, 2014:3).

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.4.1 Recommendations

- It is recommended that the engagement model be developed that will illustrate the strong link between employees feeling valued and involved and engagement as illustrated in figure 5.1. In addition to the model, a diagnostic tool can be used to stem organization-specific drivers from attitude survey data that can be conducted by Hulamin HR. The findings suggested that many of the drivers of engagement were common to all organizations, regardless of sector; however, some variability is likely, and the relative strength of each driver is also likely to be contingent upon the organization being studied.

- It is also recommended that an employee engagement measurement tool (performance appraisal) be developed to assess the attitudes and opinions of employees in the organization. This will enable the business to make informed decisions and increase employee morale.

- Having a performance development plan is significant as it may have an impact of high level of engagement. Based on the performance plans, training needs, development and career aspirations will be identified.

- It is also recommended that agents be established who will drive the process of engagement in the organization together with change through figure 5.1 above as a diagnostic tool.

- A need to develop a corporate culture that will comprise of behaviours and practices of the business and encourage employees to utilising the system was recommended. Culture is one of the important sources of competitive advantage as it affects organizational behaviour and corporate performance positively or negatively (Brenyah and Obuobisa-Darko, 2017: 1).

- The four practices illustrated by Chuaywongyart (2002) in the table 5.1 below supported by findings from the interviews were viewed as the significant interventions to execute to drive employee engagement.

Table 5.1: HRM Practices and Interventions

HRM Practices	Interventions
Attracting	Employer branding
Developing	Career development opportunity
Performing	Boss-employee relationship enhancement
Rewarding	Fair compensation and recognition

- Enhanced communication and empowerment of employees across the business to ensure that skilled and capable workforce are the foundation of achieving successful business.

- Recognition and reward for excellent work performed often brings out the best within individual employees.

- It was recommended that opportunities be developed to improve skills of individuals and retain skills. If employees are not expanding their competencies and capabilities, individuals risk compromising their employability within both their current organization as well as others. Accordingly, opportunities for growth and development are among the most important predictors of employee engagement (McMullen & Group, 2013:27).

- It was recommended that managers be provided with couching and mentoring and held accountable for their employees' engagement as they are primarily responsible for their employees' engagement levels for quality of work life.

- Improve transparency in corporate HR of work planning in order for teams and individuals to have clear tasks, goals and what is expected of them to achieve. Further, allow employees to suggest for any improvements of the systems or new developments.

5.5   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings from qualitative analysis showed that work-life balance is amongst the top three factors to attract talent, especially for the highly educated employees. Therefore, future research should examine a new trend of human resources management practices which match with a new generation workforce, examining how the company can support employee work and life such as virtual office, work and life balance and international talent transfer programs. A question for future research might be how does the virtual office working practice impact employee engagement among a new generation workforce.

5.6   CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to explore the factors that have a bearing on employees' engagement and establish the employees' beliefs and value systems that play a vital role in employees' attitude towards engagement. A qualitative approach was utilised using a range of balancing methods. The study has provided insights on the types of decisions that employee's impact on engagement such as the attitudes and behaviours. The study has also identified a range of factors influencing employees' attitudes towards engagement such as lack of communication, employees feeling undervalued and lack of training and development opportunities. It was evident from the study that the majority of employees suggested aspects such as systems, corporate culture on employee engagement be implemented and race or gender discrimination minimised. The business cannot function without its employees, therefore, communication and empowerment and involving employees need to be taken into consideration by the company. Drivers of engagement were also illustrated which ensures that the Hulamin vision, values and mission are well known and shared by all. Skilled and capable workforce are the foundation of attaining a successful business. Therefore, companies such as Hulamin need to create systems that will support drivers of engagements through change agents and reward excellent work performed.

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Annexure A: Letter: Gate Keeper

Annexure B: Consent Letter

Annexure C: Interview Guide

This research questionnaire wishes to get your view

The information on this questionnaire will be used for academic purposes and its confidentiality is ensured.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS INFORMATION

1. Gender: a) Male [   ]   b) Female [   ]

2. Age:

18 - 35	35 - 45	45 - 55	55 – 65

3. Race

African
Coloured
White
Indian

4. Highest level of education

Grade 11 and below	Matric	Diploma	Degree	Post Grad	Professional	Other, specify

SECTION B: QUESTIONS RELATED TO RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- How do factors like age and earnings affect the employees' attitude towards engagement?
- How do factors like work experience and educational qualifications   affect the employees' attitude towards engagement?

- Do factors like training and development affect the employees' attitude towards engagement?
- Does trust in the company and its leadership affect the employees' attitude towards engagement?
- Does race affect employee's attitude towards engagement?
- What are the contextual factors that have a bearing on employees' engagement?
- What are the beliefs and values that impact employees' attitudes towards engagement?
- Are you geared to engage in discretionary extra effort and innovation for the good of the organization?
- In what way (if at all) do you experience being valued by Hulamin such that you would promote the company to the broader community outside?
- Recommendations?

Annexure D: Ethical Clearance Letter

24 November 2017

Mr Siphiwe Michael Blose 8626799
School of Management, IT and Governance
Westville Campus

Dear Mr Blose

Protocol reference number: HSS/2123/017M
Project title: Employee attitudes towards engagement: A case study of Hulamin employees in Pietermaritzburg

FULL APPROVAL – No Risk/Exemption Application

In response to your application received 1 November 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Prof TI Nzimakwe
cc. Academic Leader Research: Prof Brain McArthur
cc. School Administrator: Ms Angela Pearce

Dear Respondent,

D Admin Research Project
Researcher: SM Blose (083 677 5503)
Supervisor: Prof TI Nzimakwe (031 260 2606)
Research Office: Ms M Snyman (031 260 8350)

I, Siphiwe Michael BLOSE (8626799), am a Master of Commerce (HRM) student in the School of Management, IT and Governance, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled *"Employee Attitudes towards Engagement: A Case Study of Hulamin Employees in Pietermaritzburg"*

The aim of this study is to evaluate those elements within the employees themselves that have impact on their engagement of Hulamin Employees in Pietermaritzburg.

Through your participation I hope to analyse the demographic factors that may possibly have a bearing on employees' attitudes towards engagement.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this research project. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the School of MIG, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, please contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above.

This interview should take about 20-30 minutes to complete. I hope you will take the time to participate in the interview.

Sincerely

Investigator's signature_____ Date_____

This page is to be retained by participant

D Admin Research Project

Researcher: SM Blose (083 677 5503)

Supervisor: Prof TI Nzimakwe (031 260 2606)

Research Office: Ms M Snyman (031 260 8350)

CONSENT

I_____ (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I hereby consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

This page is to be retained by researcher