UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

The impact of the business acquisition to eliminate factors resulting in employee disengagement at 4Packaging

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"It seems unattainable until you challenge and channel it your way"

- Boniwe Zungu -

I would like to express gratitude to my guardian angels for constantly protecting and granting me the wisdom to work harder, no matter the circumstance.

To my family and partner, I thank you for being my number one fan, for constantly routing for me, and for the inspiring words of encouragement, endless support, and fortitude throughout the journey. I would like to acknowledge my mother, Nokhwezi, for taking good care of me and assisting beyond measure to ensure that I focus on completing my studies. A special acknowledgement to my late jovial grandmother for always being proud of me. To the sweetest baby, my son, Lubanzi. Your strength and charisma surpass your age, my light shines brighter because of you.

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ABSTRACT

Organisations exist in Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (VUCA). Hence there is a modest expectation that employees will naturally remain engaged without the organisation strategically implementing interventions. More especially in an organisation where there have been recurrent changes in leadership, organisational structure, and organisational culture in a period of fewer than six years such as 4Packaging Africa Durban. These changes could positively or negatively impact employees' perceptions, behaviour, and performance. Since the previous acquisition, the researcher had observed a growing pattern of disengaged workers before 4Packaging Africa Durban took over the business. With all these changes, there is a need to ascertain whether this behaviour is aggravated by the acquisitions, what factors drive it, and what effects does it have on employees' level of engagement? Factors identified in the study, which harm employee engagement include lack of communication, consultation, management, unequal treatment, disregarding employees, machines, remuneration, and trust. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact during the acquisition to recommend strategies aimed at eliminating factors that result in employee disengagement.

The key assumption of this study is that effective communication during a business acquisition can eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban. Literature pertinent to employee disengagement and employee engagement was consulted to develop a greater understanding of the theories underpinning employee disengagement concerning a business acquisition.

A formal qualitative research approach underpinned by a research tool, in-depth interviews, was employed in this study. As the researcher sought in-depth information from the 4Packaging Africa Durban employees, on the investigated topic. This methodology was appropriate for the research study as a real-world situation was being explored as it unfolds naturally. Data collected from open-ended and repeated in-depth interviews were analysed using thematic analysis.

The key findings indicate that 4Packaging Africa Durban employees are disengaged, they value communication during the process of a business acquisition, and they were negatively impacted by the business acquisition. The research findings are critical for eliminating factors that result in employee disengagement during a business acquisition at 4Packaging Africa Durban.

Keywords: acquisition, acquiror, acquiree, employee disengagement, motivation, participant, communication, management, 4Packaging Africa Durban

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LIST OF ACRONYMS ABBREVIATIONS

AFOC	Amcor Flexibles Origination Centre
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
M&A	Mergers and Acquisitions
MD	Managing Director
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
(PTY) LTD	Proprietary limited company
VUCA	Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

4Packaging Africa was established in the year 2018. Prior to the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) July 2021 riots, it had a presence in two cities in South Africa namely Johannesburg and Durban. This study will focus on 4Packaging Africa, specifically the Durban plant as it was previously known as Amcor Flexibles Origination Centre (AFOC) before being acquired by 4Packaging Africa. 4Packaging Africa, Durban has a core function to manufacture gravure printing cylinders by engraving customer required designs onto a cylinder. The engraved cylinder is used to transfer the image or design onto an image carrier. The cylinder is engraved to customer specification for printing on flexible packaging.

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) human needs are rarely permanently satisfied. The business environment created by the organisation could result in positive satisfaction levels notwithstanding that it is the nature of employees to generally desire more. It is of utmost importance for organisations to manage this desire as it impacts the employee, leading to disengagement. Which ultimately has a knock-on effect on the productivity and profitability of the business.

Businesses exist in a competitive environment hence growth and sustainability are key measures of success. Previous studies by David (2017) as well as Achim (2015) show that organisations find acquisitions as a measure to facilitate growth and expansion as well as access to resources. Growth and sustainability can be attained through an acquisition by a new organisation, in the business best interest especially when the acquiree had not been profitable for years.

This study conducts research to assist 4Packaging Africa Durban when acquiring a new business to be aware of the impact that the business acquisition has on employees, to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement. According to Silverman (2020)

scientific research offers a solution to problems by determining what needs to be investigated by reviewing existing scientific knowledge on the topic. Walliman (2001) describes research as a loosely used term to describe activities such as that of collecting multitudes of information for producing new products. In this research study, 4Packaging Africa Durban is the acquiror and AFOC is the acquiree.

According to Wickramasinghe and Karunaratne (2009) there is a gap in the literature on employee experiences during mergers and acquisitions (M&A). During an acquisition, any factors leading to employee disengagement need to be eliminated for the acquiror to take over engaged employees. Therefore, reducing any negative effects on productivity and profitability. Thereafter, management can focus on growth and sustainability not only for the organisation but for the employees' jobs as well. Although the organisation initiating the sale of the business acts in the best interest of both the employees and the business. Unfortunately, employees are the ones who are left with uncertainty as they are seeking stability and job security. It is often perceived by senior management that the task of integrating two organisations is less complex. However, the uncertainty coupled with historical unresolved issues could fail the acquisition. According to Wickramasinghe and Karunaratne (2009) as previously quoted by (Schraeder and Self 2003) to gain support for the acquisition a study of this nature is required to identify the concerns and needs of the employees. The success of a business such as 4Packaging Africa Durban heavily depends on employees.

According to Creedy (2008) research is about making discoveries that may include new theoretical results, new empirical consistencies, an enhanced understanding of a problem, and even a renewed perception of a problem or even a solution to a problem. The purpose of this research study has been to determine the impact of an acquisition on employees to ascertain whether it affects employees' level of engagement. Therefore, eliminating any factors that result in employee disengagement by the business acquisition.

The research study was conducted using the newly acquired business which is the 4Packaging Africa Durban plant. The context of this study is the manufacturing industry. This study seeks to answer the research questions by investigating the impact of the recent business on employees' level of engagement. This study was prompted by an

announcement made by the acquiree, regarding the sale of the business from AFOC to 4Packaging Africa. At the time of the announcement, the acquisition was approaching its final stage. The researcher then began initiating the study to determine the impact of the acquisition on employee level of engagement to determine whether there was a strong presence of engagement or disengagement. This research study aims to determine this impact during the change to recommend strategies intended at eliminating factors that result in employee disengagement whilst improving those that lead to increased employee engagement.

If there is a presence of employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban, understand what gives rise to this issue. Thereafter, providing a comprehensive review of the constraints that typically arise because of employee disengagement to meaningfully contribute towards minimising the number of disgruntled employees, inevitably increasing productivity.

This study will explore the need for employees to be involved during acquisition for it to be a success. Involved in terms of employees' perceptions of the change so that the organisation has employees' buy-in, which is of fundamental importance to the success of the acquisition and business at large.

To achieve the aims and objectives, this study will adopt a qualitative research approach which will be employed through in-depth interviews as a data collection tool. According to Silverman (2020) qualitative research involves real-life situations, verbally described. The qualitative research approach captures detailed information about a smaller group of people. Enabling this smaller group of people to state and describe their experience in their own words. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) qualitative research approach reflects on perspective, and tries to find, and understand the meaning of an experience, group, or social situation. It also seeks to find range and discrepancy in findings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016).

The findings of this study will reveal whether employee disengagement exists within the organisation. If it does exist, what impact does it have on employee engagement and ultimately organisational performance. Once the research is conducted and the data

received is analysed, the study will conclude by providing recommendations for addressing employee disengagement for the betterment of the organisation by employing sustained competitive advantage and productivity enhancement.

This chapter outlines the study performed on the impact of the business acquisition to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement. The chapter further presents the background, motivation, research problem, research questions, research aims, and objectives as well as the limitations and delimitations knowledgeable to this study.

1.2 Theoretical framework

A prevailing research study revealed that research conducted on employee engagement and employee disengagement indicated a link between the concepts of employee engagement and employee disengagement with the theories of motivation (Sello, 2019). Whilst searching for literature on employee disengagement, the researcher discovered that the amount of literature on employee disengagement was limited. Hence, the researcher included literature on employee engagement. Engagement is related to the psychological and cognitive perspectives (Rai, 2012).

According to Addo (2020) it is a fact that there is a noticeable link between employee engagement and organisational performance. Kahn (1990) alludes to the manifestation of employee engagement. The research study was framed from the theoretical support of Kahn who was among the first authors to popularise the concept of personal engagement and disengagement using the three dimensions of psychological conditions which are linked to the prevailing theoretical concepts (Kahn, 1990).

The research study focused on eliminating the factors that result in employee disengagement during a business acquisition. The three motivation theories are discussed to understand how employees should be motivated and what motivates employees. According to Kahn (1990) motivation is a psychological concept. Hence, this study is also framed from the theoretical support of the three content theories of motivation such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's theory, and McGregor's Theory X and

Theory Y. Kahn's three psychological conditions together with the three content theories of motivation provide the theoretical framework for this study.

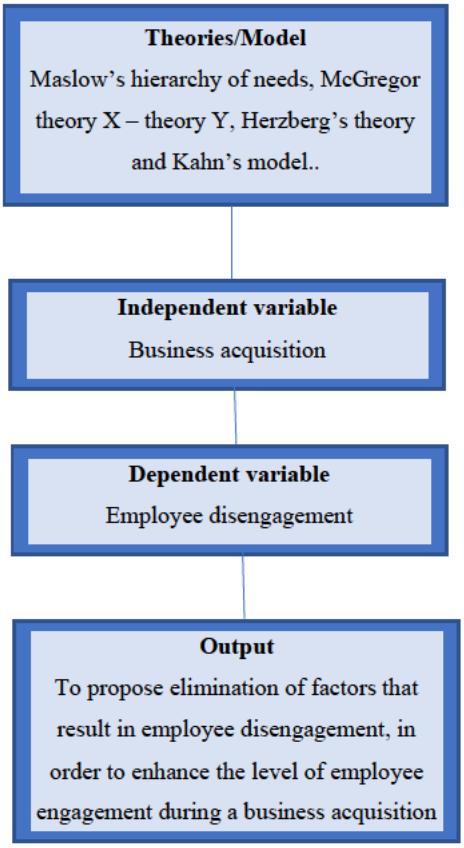

Figure 1.1 Theoretical Framework

Source: Author

1.3 Background

4Packaging Africa is a German global manufacturing company that had a presence in two cities in South Africa, Johannesburg and Durban. The Durban plant was located in the Pinetown suburb. On the 1st of July 2021, 4Packaging Africa acquired AFOC. Giving birth to 4Packaging Africa Durban plant. Since the acquisition was still new, and the study investigates the impact of the business acquisition, therefore involving both businesses, the background of Amcor flexibles and 4Packaging Africa will be covered. Amcor is a responsible global leader in developing and producing consumer packaging for food,

personal care, medical, pharmaceutical, beverage, and many other products. Amcor Flexibles had two hundred and thirty sites spread across, approximately, forty countries with an employee count of over forty thousand people (Amcor, n.d.). The organisation is classified under the manufacturing industry which significantly contributes to the growth of the economy as well as the creation of employment.

Amcor Flexibles was established in the 1860s by Samuel Ramsden as a pulp and paper business. The organisation has a lengthy history of acquisitions, with the latest being the acquisition of Bemis company. AFOC was amongst the many companies that exist under the Amcor Flexibles group as a result of being acquired by the group back in 2016 (Amcor, n.d.).

Table 1-1 4Packaging Africa Ownership History

1965	John Gilmour founded Gravure Cylinders (Pty) Ltd, a repro and gravure print cylinder company for supply tooling for the packaging and print market.
2000	Craig Gilmour, (John's son) bought the company wholly from John.
2007	Craig formed a partnership with a black women consortium, with Craig retaining 70% and serving as Managing Director (MD).
2011	Simon Sonn joined the business and took over as MD owning 4%.
2012	Gilsonn Investments was formed with Simon Sonn owning (51%) and Craig Gilmour (49%)
2013	Gilsonn Investments then bought the consortium out to own 100% of the shares in the business.
2018	Gilsonn Investments offers German-based repro and cylinder company 4Packaging (GmbH) 49% of Gilsonn's shares in Gravure Cylinders (Pty) Ltd.
2018	Gravure Cylinders (Pty) Ltd's name changes to 4Packaging Africa (Pty) Ltd to align with German partners.
2019	Simon Sonn purchased 49% of Craig's shares in Gilsonn to own 100% and in effect 51% of 4Packaging Africa with 4Packaging (GmbH) owning 49%.
2021	Repropack (4Packaging Africa, Durban) and an associate company of 4Packaging Africa, acquires the Amcor Flexibles Origination Centre cylinder plant in Durban Pinetown.

Source: Sonn (2021)

The three directors of 4Packaging Africa are Simon Sonn (MD), David Möller, and Craig Gilmour. In South Africa, there are two sites, one in Johannesburg, Benoni, which specialises in repro, design management, pre-print design simulation, electromechanical gravure print cylinder processing, and original equipment base manufacture.

When the study was conducted, the second site was in Durban, Pinetown specialising in repro and electromechanical gravure print cylinder processing. 4Packaging Africa employed approximately eighty people, including both the Benoni and Pinetown plant.

Dissen site in Germany imported cellaxy direct laser engraving, embossing, structured varnish, tactile and other specialty engraved cylinders. As a result of the ownership and management control, 4Packaging Africa is accorded a level two BBBEE status. Markets supplied by 4Packaging are inclusive of tobacco, beverage labels and flexibles. End markets are inclusive of AB InBev, British American Tobacco (BAT), and Unilever.

1.4 Problem statement

A change such as that of an acquisition in the workplace challenges an organisation to initiate new ways of retaining and restoring employees' commitment. According to Soundarya *et.al* (2018) M&A often ignores the most sensitive issue, which is the employee issues. This study attempts to address the impact of the business acquisition to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban. Before being acquired by 4Packaging Africa Durban, this plant had experienced two acquisitions over fewer than six years. Changing from Nampak Flexibles Origination Centre to Amcor Flexibles Origination Centre and most recent to 4Packaging Africa Durban. This has resulted in frequent changes in leadership as well as the organisational environment, structure, and culture. The culture of the team is heavily influenced by the organisational culture. Employees must constantly internalise and adapt to a new organisational culture and leadership which can be uncomfortable if they wish to remain in the business. This could potentially impact the 4Packaging Africa Durban employees in various ways as the acquisition process often excludes the entire team of which success centers.

Disengaged employees are disgruntled workers, lack enthusiasm, and are disconnected from the work they do or the organisation at large. These employees may be submissively going through their daily tasks and duties sometimes restricting output. Executing their duties without focus, energy, or passion. These employees lack the drive to go the extra

mile without being pushed or asked repetitively to do so. This type of employee often needs to be micromanaged to be productive (Allam, 2017). Disengaged employees are dangerous because they could undermine and possibly sabotage the culture of the organisation with then affects productivity (Allam, 2017). To address this problem, this study seeks to understand if the acquisition has an effect on employees' level of engagement or disengagement and what drives employees to become disengaged as this has a huge impact on efficiency, effectiveness, quality, productivity, On Time In Full (OTIF) and absenteeism as well as the overall effect it has on organisational performance. According to Towers Perrin (2007-2008) there is a strong link between the company's financial performance and employee engagement.

1.5 Research aims and objectives

As 4Packaging Africa Durban, is going through a transition phase, this study aims to investigate the impact of the business acquisition to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement through qualitative research. Addressing any catalyst of employee disengagement for a smooth transition, satisfied employees, and a conducive business environment. This study aims to further understand and then discuss the need for addressing employee disengagement in the workplace.

The following objectives are created to facilitate answering the research questions:

- To evaluate 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' readiness for a changing environment.
- To investigate the effectiveness of the acquisition process on employees at 4Packaging Africa Durban.
- To examine 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' views, experiences, and opinions on business acquisition.
- To evaluate 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' perception of the acquisition leading to demotivation of employees' which results in disengagement.
- To determine a conducive work environment that promotes organisational commitment at 4Packaging Africa Durban.

1.6 Research questions

- Are 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' ready for the acquisition?
- What impact does the changing work environment at 4Packaging Africa Durban have on employees' engagement?
- What are the 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' views, experiences, and opinions on a business acquisition?
- How do 4Packaging Africa Durban employees perceive the change brought about by the acquisition as demotivating, resulting in disengagement?
- What could be recommendations for a conducive work environment and organisational commitment at 4Packaging Africa Durban?

1.7 Key assumptions

The key assumption of this research study is that identifying and eliminating factors that result in employee disengagement before a business acquisition, can contribute to facilitating a smooth and successful acquisition for both the employer and employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban. According to Junni and Teerikangas (2019) acquisitions have played an integral role in progressing an organisation's growth, renewal, and competitive advantage. A healthy and successful business desires to make as much profit as possible. Hence acquisitions have become an attractive and viable alternative for growing a business. As a result, 4Packaging Africa endeavoured to embark on a path to acquire AFOC to promote business growth. Opportunities are often limited for companies that manufacture gravure cylinders to expand and grow organically. An acquisition plays an essential role in the expansion of a business of this nature. Particularly, if the business is not profitable and has been hindered by low demand for a long period. The business is enticed, if not forced, by the option of being acquired by a larger business. When employees are engaged there is employee buy-in and commitment, hence a win-win situation is created as the company receives great performance. This is of grave importance as it ultimately improves employee effectiveness and performance. According

to Heger (2007) employee engagement has a critical impact on business outcomes. This study explores priority areas that 4Packaging Africa Durban management could focus on to gain the best support for employees' satisfaction and the change process. It is often difficult to predict employees' perception to change, during an acquisition and factors leading to employee disengagement. This study aids in identifying these factors for 4Packaging Africa Durban management to focus on addressing critical factors which result in employee disengagement. Eliminating employees' negative perceptions could pave the way, therefore increasing the chance of employee engagement and a successful acquisition.

Employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban are no longer fully engaged as they do not perform to their full ability. It is assumed that this lack of performance is also impacted by poor communication which was also evident from the initiation of the acquisition till the end. As well as retrenchment that occurred during the previous acquisition. Employees' fear losing their jobs like the previous acquisition outcome. Studying the impact of a business acquisition and its consequence on employee disengagement has a practical and theoretical relevance not only to 4Packaging Africa but to many organisations irrespective of the business sector, that are experiencing the presence and growth in the number of employees who have succumbed to disengagement. Johnson (2004) once stated in his book that the ability to engage employees, to make them work with the organisation is going to be one of the greatest organisational battles in the coming decade.

1.8 Justification of the study

Employee disengagement remains a global challenge and a key subject of interest in research enquiry (Barros *et al.*, 2016). There is a cost to low employee engagement which the management of 4Packaging Africa Durban should be concerned about. The complete production process cannot be attained without 4Packaging Africa Durban employees as the majority of the production process requires manual labour. Whilst a very small portion of the production process is semi-automated. Therefore, the production process requires employees who are often referred to as machine operators to operate the machines. Hence

this study is of supreme importance to 4Packaging Africa Durban and other organisations experiencing employee disengagement within the gravure cylinder manufacturing sphere with an operation that heavily depends on manual labour.

This study is needed to develop recommendations to address issues around employee disengagement to facilitate the success of the acquisition whilst improving the performance of the organisation, therefore also enabling a pleasant work environment. It is also needed to better enable organisational leaders to address current and future challenges of this nature.

A contribution to the literature of this nature especially from a South African context, is considered important by the researcher as there is a research gap and this is a growing concern that affects both the employee and the organisation at large.

Findings will be important to the following audience:

- 4Packaging Africa Durban leadership
- 4Packaging Africa Durban employees
- Organisations faced with the challenge of employee disengagement
- Researchers investigating topics on employee disengagement and employee engagement
- Researchers investigating factors that contribute toward employee disengagement and how they can be eliminated in a similar context as this study
- Researchers investigating how employee engagement can be enhanced during a business acquisition

According to Bedarkar and Pandita (2014) employee engagement has developed as a crucial driver of business today. The main study contribution is to enlighten 4Packaging Africa Durban of the reality of employee disengagement in the organisation as well as its impact on organisational performance. This study is needed for the purpose to study the impact of the business acquisition to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement at the 4Packaging Africa Durban plant as the acquisition transpires.

Before 4Packaging Africa took over the business, there seemingly was an increase in dissatisfaction amongst employees in the organisation and production was significantly decreasing. Employees seemed disengaged and detached from the primary objective, which is the role that each employee plays to contribute to the overall success of the organisation. As the acquisition transpires, it is important to evaluate the impact of the business acquisition to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement as this could be carried over or triggered by the acquisition or coupled by both occurrences.

Both the employees and leaders of the organisation will benefit from their input into the study. The employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban will gain from their contribution as their concerns and expectations will be linked to recommendations in the final chapter as they will be directly investigated, evaluated, and addressed thoroughly. The leaders of 4Packaging Africa can be assisted by this study to decrease employee disengagement as employees adapt to the change. Assisting the organisation in increasing the number of engaged workers which in turn will have a positive ripple effect on employee satisfaction, performance, productivity, and overall increased profitability.

When the results of the research are available, the researcher will provide recommendations to address this obstacle. These recommendations will be a valued addition to 4Packaging Africa and other organisations with a similar challenge at large. These recommendations could be used by 4Packaging Africa in compiling relevant and effective policies to assist the business in eliminating issues of employee disengagement. Also drawing the attention of other organisations to the urgency of addressing employee disengagement to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement whilst improving efficiency and effectiveness of organisational performance.

This study insight, from an academic perspective, should contribute to the future development of research on employee disengagement as there is plenty of room for research on the impact of employee disengagement during an acquisition. This study further presents a basis for future research and debates on topics such as how disengaged employees affect organisational performance which inevitably affects Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and much more.

1.9 Research methodology

Qualitative research methodology with a constructivist philosophical assumption, employing a content analysis strategy of inquiry to collect participants meaning and make interpretation of the data, was employed in this study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Underpinned by a research tool, which is in-depth interviews, to gather data from the target population being the employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban. The selected methodology was appropriate, as the researcher seeks more in-depth information from the 4Packaging Africa Durban employees, on the investigated topic, as a real-world situation was being investigated as it unfolds naturally. Data collected from open-ended and repeated in-depth face-to-face and telephonic interviews from the population of twenty participants was analysed using thematic analysis and interpreted to make conclusions and recommendations.

1.10 Clarification of keywords

The purpose of this section is to provide operational definitions of the keywords utilised in this study.

Acquiree

The company which is being taken over by another company to fully operate as one entity (Moles & Terry, 2005).

Acquiror

The company that is buying another company to grow its operation (Moles & Terry, 2005).

Acquisition

An acquisition according to Soundarya *et al.* (2018) is a purchase of an asset such as a plant. It occurs when two or more companies combine. An acquisition is considered by businesses to grow a business, gaining market power and synergies (Soundarya *et al.*, 2018). There are various motives for an organisation to transact into an acquisition such

as value creation for example efficiency, cost savings, economies of scope, and market power (Haleblian *et al*., 2009).

Communication

The transmission of a message, sent through a communication channel, from a sender to a receiver. An essential component of communication is feedback (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010).

Employee disengagement

Is the opposite of employee engagement, it is the condition of not being engaged whilst performing work duties, as a result, harming productivity (Edmund & Noon, 2017).

Gravure cylinder

Is an engraved image carrier that is used in gravure printing (Gravure Cylinder - PrintWiki, n.d.).

Management

The process of coordinating people and other resources, such as materials, information, and finances, to attain organisational goals is referred to as management (Pride *et al*., 2017). The role of management is to coordinate these four resources to produce goods and services.

Motivation

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) motivation is a force within an individual that drives and impels the individual to action. Furthermore, it is the individual internal process that sustains behaviour. It is dynamic and constantly changing in response to life experiences, an individual's physical condition, interactions with other people, and the environment. Motives can take either a positive or negative direction.

Packaging Africa Durban

4Packaging Africa is a family-run business, leading in manufacturing gravure cylinders, with a presence in South Africa and Germany.

Participant

According to Porta (2016) a participant is defined as an individual whom research is conducted upon. In this research study, it is the employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban who respond to the interview questions via face-to-face and telephonic interviews.

1.11 Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is composed of five chapters which are outlined as follows:

Table 1-2 Dissertation Chapter Breakdown

Chapter	Content
Chapter One: Nature and scope of the study	The first chapter provides an overview of the research undertaken using an introduction. Furthermore, it provides insight into the background of the study. The chapter also covers research study objectives, research questions, problem statements as well as the importance and limitations of the study.
Chapter Two: Literature review	The second chapter comprises an introduction, and a review of relevant literature which takes into consideration opinions from other researchers in the field of acquisitions, employee disengagement, and organisational change among other opinions. Exposing the existing gaps in the literature. Theories underpinning the study are also highlighted. Furthermore, this chapter sheds light on understanding the real context of the study being explored.
Chapter Three: Research Methodology	The third chapter provides an overview of the selected research design and methodology. Covering the collection of data which is the form of interviews as well as the data analysis method employed. Providing insight into the population and how it was selected as well as reliability and validity.
Chapter Four: Data analysis and interpretation of results	The fourth chapter presents and deliberates on the key findings that were obtained through in-depth interviews administered to the target population.
Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations	The fifth chapter which is the final and concluding chapter of this study gives recommendations to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement to the stakeholders concerned as well as for future research in line with this study.

Source: Author

1.12 Conclusion

Although the decision to sell the business was already concluded by the time this study was initiated. The researcher deemed it important to carry out this study to explore employees' perception of the acquisition and how it has affected their level of engagement.

This chapter introduced the study, covered the background of the study, and further elaborated on the problem statement, research aims, objectives and limitations. The chapter that follows will review existing literature to obtain further insight, knowledge, and understanding of the factors that result in employee disengagement.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The reality of acquiring AFOC was realised by 4Packaging Africa Durban. As mentioned previously, this is the third business acquisition in less than six years that employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban had experienced. The constant change in leadership tends to harm employee morale (Aujla & Mclarney, 2020). One of the key reasons why factors that result in employee disengagement need to be eliminated during a business acquisition is that engaged employees desire to see their organisation succeed as they feel aligned socially, emotionally as well as spiritually to the organisations' vision, mission, and purpose (Fleming & Asplund, 2007). Furthermore, for any organisation, employees are the most valuable resource hence their attitudes must be positive for an organisation to succeed (Yousaf, 2020).

According to Aujla and Mclarney (2020), organisational change is a common occurrence in most organisations in this everchanging world of acquisitions, mergers, restructuring, and innovations. The change process is often extremely stressful, especially for the people who are affected by the change if they have not been involved in the process (Mäkikangas *et al*., 2019). It is a common business practice that the acquisition process often excludes employees as they are informed about the change when the acquisition is finalised (Jay, 2014). Human capital is imperative as it is perceived to increase productivity and certainly profitability. It is argued by Kreisman (2002) that a stable group of employees that are dedicated and competent are the most volatile and valuable asset. In a business environment like 4Packaging Africa Durban, it is arguably one of the most important factors of production as the business is semi-automated. Behind every machine, at 4Packaging Africa Durban, an operator is operating it. It is the co-workers who have expert knowledge and get the work done. Therefore, without co-workers, there is no production. Consequently, an organisation needs to value and take care of its people as employee disengagement is not tangible. Hence, it is of key importance for organisations to invest in keeping their co-worker's well-being high.

According to Bedarkar and Pandita (2014) employee engagement has three key drivers, namely leadership, communication, and last but not least work-life balance. Organisations are aware that employees spend the majority of their time and days in a year at work. Over fifty percent of 4Packaging Africa Durban employees have been with the organisation for more than ten years. Hence, it is of utmost importance for 4Packaging Africa Durban to know how to facilitate a smooth transition to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement as the business takes off, going into the future.

4Packaging Africa Durban exists in a manufacturing industry, where productivity, quality, efficiency, and ultimately profitability are critical. Any factors affecting manufacturing efficiencies such as those that relate to employee disengagement are key factors to be addressed. As a leader, the researcher observed the behaviour of co-workers at 4Packaging Africa Durban and the reduced production figures going into the acquisition. The reality of employee disengagement could potentially be realised by the organisation. This observation, together with the acquisition, therefore prompted the researcher to investigate employee disengagement as numerous factors have an impact on this, leading to its occurrence.

Many factors can impact employee engagement negatively or positively. Factors that affect employee engagement negatively often result in employee disengagement. Such factors include unpleasant work environment, changes in the work environment that employees perceive as negative, absence of rewards, lack of motivation, negative employee relationship with management, lack of career development, and absence of job satisfaction to mention a few. These factors impact employee performance as well as their well-being at the workplace. The opposite of the above results in enhanced employee engagement. Factors that result in employee disengagement should not be ignored by management as the mental and physical well-being of co-workers will be one of the important facets that leaders of organisations need to focus on if they are to survive and rise above the rigid competition (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014).

This chapter reviews and discusses some of the available literature that was reviewed by the researcher to gain a vast understanding of the factors that influence and result in

employee disengagement especially since the organisation is undergoing an acquisition so these factors can be eliminated.

2.2 Elements relating to employee disengagement

There is a fine distinction between an acquisition and a merger. An acquisition is defined as a transaction that occurs whereby the acquiror, which is 4Packaging Africa, absorbs the business operation of the acquiree, being Amcor Flexibles Origination Centre, which then ceases to exist. A merge differs in the sense that two organisations get together to form an entirely new entity. Unlike an acquisition whereby the acquiree ceases to exist. However, acquisitions are more common than merges (Junni & Teerikangas, 2019).

The organisational leadership and cultural change that is brought about by an acquisition create a huge mental shift and change in the affected employees. Hence, it is prodigious when a newly acquired organisation takes an initiative to improve employee engagement. It is even better when the organisation does not stop there but takes a further steps to measure it. This is the first step organisations must embark on before they can implement meaningful actions to improve engagement. However, if an organisation fails to measure the right things in the right way, those actions are immaterial, and they won't have a measurable impact on the business outcome or the bottom line. The fruition of concentrating on employee engagement can benefit organisations withstand, and possibly even thrive, in tough economic times. Another benefit is that engaged employees are a lot closer to the best ideas (Sorenson, 2013). According to Khorasani and Almasifard (2017) employee engagement, customer satisfaction, and continuous improvement are the main key factors of quality management.

Engaged workers have bought into what the organisation is about and are trying to make a difference. This is why they're usually the most productive workers even in a tough economy, employee engagement continues to be an important predictor of company performance. Gallup researchers conducted a study on the differences in performance between engaged and actively disengaged employees. In this research study, it was discovered that those scoring in the top half on employee engagement nearly doubled their odds of success compared with those in the bottom half (Sorenson, 2013). The study

further found that businesses with a critical mass of engaged employees outperformed their competition.

According to Johnson (2019) factors such as high employee morale, training opportunities, strong leadership, teamwork, effective sharing of goals, adaptability to changes, and opportunities are all key indicators in determining a company's health and its growth potential. 4Packaging Africa Durban can gain a competitive advantage by ensuring a healthy work environment that will keep the organisation moving forward by concentrating on measuring and managing employee engagement during the transition period.

According to Khorasani and Almasifard (2017) as previously quoted by Kahn and Kartz (1966) studies on organisational engagement began in 1960. According to Mason (2019) Kahn was the first person to conceptualise engagement at work as the "harnessing of organisational members' selves to their work roles". He added that in engagement "people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances". According to Blose (2008) as previously quoted by (Shuck and Wollard, 2009:8) Kahn (1990) was the first to define employee engagement. A grounded theory of personal disengagement and personal engagement was developed by Kahn (1990).

The value of this research study particularly is to provide ample concepts and literature to understand the outcomes of employee disengagement which is harmful to organisations and employees. The study seeks to suggest some measures that can be implemented to enhance the level of engagement of employees in the organisations during a business acquisition.

In a world that is everchanging, almost every day, organisations are witnessing volatile business events. According to Kular *et al*. (2008) research recently conducted in countries outside South Africa, confirm that there are more disengaged employees than there are engaged employees in today's organisations. Employee engagement is a strategic approach towards directing organisational excellence by way of actively engaging employees through an emotional connection facilitating organisational change and

growth. Hence, engaging employees beyond their prearranged work sphere is gaining rapid importance.

The growing interest in global competitiveness and persistent pressure linked to globalisation has paved a way for the reality of acquisitions. The acquisition of organisations continues to be the most popular strategy to grow business amongst multinational corporations (MNCs) around the world (Wilson & Vencatachellum, 2016). According to Kular *et al*. (2008) given the rising number of multinational organisations, it is worthwhile to study employee engagement at a global level.

According to Junni and Teerikangas (2019) as well as Achim (2015) the growing movement into acquisitions is driven by the increasing need to:

- Reach a larger customer base
- Exploit present competitive advantages
- To allow for better access to raw materials
- Increase overall market share
- Access to location-specific advantages
- Increased financial power

According to Aujla and Mclarney (2020) organisational changes can position a challenge and impact workers, particularly on their physical and mental well-being. Many organisational leaders are faced with the tough challenge of ensuring that when co-workers clock in to start work, they do not only clock in physically but are present mentally and emotionally. Organisational leaders must certify that co-workers are truly engaged (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). The organisation can expect both positive and negative effects to be felt by employees as it journeys on an acquisition. Major changes to an employees' scope of work may bring about job insecurity and may lead to more serious symptoms of stress over the long term. An increase in negative effects experienced by employees can result in employee disengagement whilst an increase in positive effects could result in employee engagement.

On the contrary, Macey and Schneider (2008) state that there is no set definition of employee engagement or disengagement as it appears as a "folk theory". Macey and

Schneider (2008) further state that in the past it was questioned empirically. According to Bedarkar and Pandita (2014), there is a lack of a universal and unanimous definition and measurement of employee engagement. Considered the academic parent of the employee engagement movement W. A Kahn, according to Bhebhe (2020) the source of "the concept of disengagement can be found in the groundbreaking work of Kahn (1990) who distinguished disengagement from engagement". According to Bedarkar and Pandita (2014), the concept of employee engagement has gained significant importance over the past fifteen years.

According to Gopal (2006) as well as Kreisman (2002) the working population can be categorised into three types of employees: the first type being engaged employees, followed by disengaged employees, and lastly actively disengaged employees.

2.2.1 Engaged employees

According to Law (2014) as previously stated by Gonzalez-Roma, Schaufeli, Bakker and Lloret (2006) and Kahn (1990) employee engagement, "is commonly defined as the extent to which an employee is physically, cognitively and emotionally involved in the performance of his or her job, and demonstrates this involvement through energy, dedication, and absorption in the job itself".

Rai (2012) describes engaged employees as those who are builders. They constantly strive to move the organisation forward. They are keen on understanding the company's desired role performance so they can meet and exceed them. Every day, whilst at work, these employees want to use their strengths and talents. Their performance is on a consistently high level. Engagement is perceived by many organisations as a dominant source of competitive advantage (Kular *et al*., 2008). Employee engagement is also about an environment that is created by the organisation to motivate co-workers to connect with their work and care about doing an excellent job.

This type of employee is accountable, industrious, and ethical. They feel a profound connection to their organisation and work with a passion. This type of employee drives innovation and has the vision to move the organisation forward (Gopal, 2006). Engaged

employees are people who employ their duties with a strong desire to succeed and feel attached to their work. A highly engaged co-worker will consistently set new standards whilst outperforming unswervingly (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Engaged employees are valuable assets in business today as they are perceived as a tool for strategic partners in the organisation (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). During tempestuous times, employee engagement is understood as a powerful source of competitive advantage.

Fleming and Asplund (2007) defined employee engagement as, the skill to capture the hearts, souls, and heads of co-workers in the organisation with the aim to impart a fundamental yearning and appetite for excellence. According to Bedarkar and Pandita (2014) engaged employees tend to display three behaviours: Stay, say, and strive. The first behaviour is referred to as stay, these co-workers exhibit a strong desire to be employees of the organisation, and they are loyal to the organisation. The second behaviour exhibited by engaged co-workers is referred to as say, this behaviour involves co-workers speaking positively about the organisation both internally and externally. The final behaviour is referred to as strive, this behaviour involves co-workers exerting extra effort as well as engaging in behaviours that result in the success of the business.

According to Kular *et al*. (2008) as previously stated by Kahn (1990) defined employee engagement as "passion for work". This involves feeling positive about one's job and going the extra mile to make sure a job is done to the best of one's ability. The study further distinguishes three dimensions of employee engagement: Emotional engagement is the first dimension; this involves a co-worker being tangled emotionally with their work. Cognitive engagement is the second dimension; this involves a co-worker maintaining high focus at work. Lastly, a physical engagement involves a co-worker's willingness to go the extra mile for the employer.

Engagement should not be confused with satisfaction, motivation, organisational culture, and mental health. Engagement is displayed by employees through the level at which they are willing to go beyond their job description and put their own time and effort to attain a work goal. Employees with high levels of work engagement have a positive attitude towards their work and have fun performing their duties.

A poll conducted in 2014 by Gallup in the United States observed that only 31% of employees were “Engaged”, working with full enthusiasm, and engaged in their work (Allam, 2017).

Employment value proposition according to Brian and Heger (2007) is suggested as a determinant of employee engagement, retention, and a source of competitive advantage.

2.2.2 Disengaged employees

The second type of employees are the ones that are not engaged, they are often referred to as disengaged. Disengaged employees portray a careless attitude towards their work and doing the work within the specified period. They don’t stay at the workplace beyond the stipulated period not unless they get compensated for the extra time worked. They don’t want to revisit their work after finishing a day of work (Allam, 2017).

This type of employee is sleepwalking through their workday, putting in the work hours but not the required energy and passion into performing their duties, they are less interested in their job (Gopal, 2006). Pech and Slade (2006) refer to disengaged employees as those who have mentally quit but remain on the job. Although employees decide to remain with the organisation amid disengagement, their hearts and minds have disengaged from their daily duties and responsibilities (Gopal, 2006). According to Towers Perrin (2007-2008) disengaged employees are classified as those who have disconnected rationally, motivationally, and emotionally. Employee disengagement is evident through symptoms displayed by co-workers such as a lack of interest in work, low morale, poor decision making, minimal performance, lack of energy, and absenteeism. The result of this is affected the productive output of the disengaged employee, and the reputation of the organisation can be tarnished by these employees due to their negative behaviour (Pech & Slade, 2006).

Disengagement is a serious problem in today’s competitive business environment as there is a growing dependency on an engaged workforce for organisations to succeed. Hence disengagement of employees is considered an epidemic in the organisation. Disengaged employees cost not only the organisation but the economy at large in lost productivity

(Gopal, 2006; Wolff, 2019). An individual with power and influence but who is lacking in leadership abilities may be responsible for creating a climate of disengagement (Pech & Slade, 2006).

A poll conducted in 2014 by Gallup in the United States observed that only 51% of employees were “not engaged” (Allam, 2017).

2.2.3 Actively disengaged employees

The third type of employee is referred to as actively disengaged. Rai (2012) describes actively disengaged employees as “cave dwellers”. Employees in this category are unhappy at work and they are against almost everything proposed by management as they consistently act out their unhappiness. Employees in this category can cause extreme damage to the organisations’ performance. This type of employee shows their unhappiness at work, and they end up sabotaging the work accomplishment of the engaged co-workers as unhappy workers can meddle with the attitudes of other workers (Gopal, 2006).

Previous research has indicated a loss of $300 billion per year amongst US businesses due to workplace disengagement (Ram & Prabhakar, 2011). Aslam *et al*. (2018) state that organisations with a higher percentage of employee engagement have a high percentage of greater productivity as opposed to organisations that have lower work engagement levels.

A poll conducted in 2014 by Gallup in the United States observed that only 17.5% of employees were “actively disengaged” (Allam, 2017).

According to Pech and Slade (2006) irrespective of the exact number, there seemingly is an increasing trend of disengagement developing within the workforce and it should be a cause of major concern for organisations. This issue has reached the level that managers are starting to take note of and state their concerns around this matter. However, some managers seem unwilling or don’t have the discretion to do anything about it. According

to Wolff (2019) for many years, companies in America have invested billions of dollars per annum in effect to resolve this problem.

Table 2-1 Types of employee engagement

Description of employee	**Nature of employee**
Engaged	1. Accountable, industrious, and ethical 2. Physically, cognitively, and emotionally involved in the performance of their work 3. Vision to move the organisation forward and drives innovation
Disengaged	1. Display a careless attitude towards their work 2. Quit mentally but remain on the job 3. They put in the hours but not the required energy
Actively disengaged	1. Unhappy at work 2. Display their unhappiness at work 3. They sabotage the work accomplishments of the engaged workers

Source: Author

2.3 The research gaps

If developed countries like America and Canada are faced with the challenge of low work engagement levels, previous researchers have revealed that developed nations have an alarming percentage of employee disengagement. What is the situation like in an organisation like 4Packaging Africa Durban located in South Africa, which is a developing country, taking on a completely new workforce from the acquiree. A survey of eighty-five thousand employees was conducted by Towers Perrin (2007-2008) in sixteen countries where it was discovered that employees from Asian countries have a high level of disengagement when compared to western countries. In an organisation like 4Packaging Africa, taking over employees from the acquiree, one of the keys to success

is to address past issues of this nature and eliminate any factors that result in employee disengagement.

Employee disengagement is a subject matter that is relevant in all organisations irrespective of the organisations' geographical location hence employee engagement needs prompt and systematic attention. Failing to uncover the catalyst of disengagement the disengaged employees are unlikely to recover, however, if they do, it will only be for a short period or inconsistently (Gopal, 2006).

Organisational managers have a role to inspire, influence, and motivate employees to produce results but also a concern for those who are disengaged in their work seems to be true. Organisational processes, leadership, and management plays a key role in improving employee engagement levels. This is evident in how employees are treated. It is important for organisational leaders and managers to understand that people are unique and need to be managed as individuals (Gopal, 2006).

On the other hand, it is worth noting that it is not always the case whereby the faults for disengagement lie with the organisation or management. The employee may also be liable and responsible for the initial problem. However, it is the managers' responsibility to manage the situation as not addressing the situation could become embedded within the firm's culture (Pech & Slade, 2006).

The literature presented elaborates on the concept of engagement from engaged employees, to disengaged employees, to actively disengaged employees as well as on the phenomenon of acquisitions.

2.4 Theories underpinning the study

Previous studies conducted on employee disengagement indicate a link between employee disengagement and motivation. Since motivation is concerned with needs satisfaction as well as preferred ways of this kind of satisfaction. The following theories of motivation: Herzberg's theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, McGregor's Theory X -

Theory Y, and Kahn's theory will provide the framework for this study of business acquisition and employee disengagement.

Since the study is inductive in nature and the findings will emerge from the data shared by the participants of the study. The theories underpinning this study will not impose. The purpose of these three theories is to present an explanation of motivation in the workplace and address the factors that contribute to the roots of disengagement or engagement. A link between job satisfaction and motivation seems to be evident in studies conducted on job satisfaction. Theories on job satisfaction and motivation were developed during the 1950s by both Frederick Herzberg and Abraham Maslow. This research study considers Herzberg's theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and McGregor's Theory X - Theory Y in assessing how employees can be prompted to be engaged or motivated in effect to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement. Therefore, the theories underpinning this study are based on motivation, human behaviour, and job satisfaction as the study is grounded on eliminating any factors that result in employee disengagement in the presence of a business acquisition.

Organisational leaders of 4Packaging Africa Durban should evaluate how to best apply these theories to specific work situations as they show different motivation styles.

2.4.1 Herzberg's theory

Frederick Herzberg (1966), an American psychologist, after interviewing approximately two hundred engineers and accountants in Pittsburgh, derived a conclusion that there are motivators that lead to satisfaction, therefore, motivating people (Pride *et al*., 2017). Hygiene factors did not motivate people, therefore leading to dissatisfaction and thus demotivation (Cartwright, 2002). According to Alshmemri *et al*. (2017) as quoted by Jones (2011) the two-factor model of work motivation which is also known as motivation-hygiene theory was published by Herzberg and his associates Snyderman and Mausner in 1959, therefore giving rise to the development of the motivation-hygiene theory. This theory was influenced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Herzberg conducted studies on job satisfaction to decide the factors in employees work environment which produced dissatisfaction or satisfaction. Herzberg is of the opinion that motivation is created from

the job done. According to Sachau (2007) Herzberg stated that employees would be more interested in their jobs if management focused on job enrichment. This involves improving employees' jobs to experience more factors that lead to motivation. Management has a huge role to play as they are responsible for examining the type of job task given to employees. A two-dimensional paradigm was created by Herzberg, of factors influencing people's attitudes towards work. Herzberg's theory mainly suggests that certain factors lead to positive attitudes whilst others lead to negative attitudes towards work.

According to Alshmemri *et al*. (2017) as quoted by Herzburg (1966); Herzburg (2003), the need for self-actualisation or growth was associated with the first category which became known as the motivation factors. This factor included recognition, achievement, actual work, growth opportunities, advancement, and responsibility. Motivation factors are popularly known to lead to positive job attitudes. The presence of motivational factors only operates to advance and surge job satisfaction. However, the absence of these factors leads to a lack of job satisfaction. Herzberg further classifies motivation factors as intrinsic to the job (Alshmemri *et al*., 2017).

The second category became known as the hygiene factors. Hygiene factors are related to the need to side-step unpleasantness. This factor included a relationship with senior management, conditions of work, remuneration, company policies, interpersonal relations, and administration. Hygiene factors are centered around the execution of the job (Alshmemri *et al*., 2017) as quoted by (Herzburg *et al*., 1959) and (Stello, 2011). The purpose of hygiene factors is to be responsible for the type of environment employees are exposed to during business hours. Hygiene factors are designed to minimise job dissatisfaction. A lack of hygiene factors can result in job dissatisfaction. A positive correlation was discovered, in a study by Linz and Semykina (2012) between job security and job satisfaction that tended to occur amongst employees who desire job security. Whilst improved hygiene factors can't result in job satisfaction or decrease dissatisfaction. Herzberg further classifies hygiene factors as extrinsic to the job (Alshmemri *et al*., 2017). Extrinsic factors are beyond employees' control. A study previously conducted by Kumar and Raghavendran (2013) found that intrinsic motivators

are crucial in improving employee performance as well as employee behaviour in an organisation.

Table 2-2 Factors in Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory

Hygiene Factors (Extrinsic)	**Motivation Factors (Intrinsic)**
Working conditions	Growth opportunities
Supervision	Recognition
Salary	Achievements
Interpersonal relationship	Work itself
Company policies and administration	Advancement
Job security	Responsibility
Status	
Relationship with subordinates	
Relationship with supervisor	
Relationship with peers	
Personal life	

Extremely dissatisfied ⟷ Neutral ⟷ Extremely satisfied

Source: Author

The theory that the opposite of satisfaction is not necessarily dissatisfaction was developed by Herzberg (Pride, 2017). The traditional view was challenged by Herzberg by stating that satisfaction versus no satisfaction. Whilst with dissatisfaction, the opposite of dissatisfaction is proposed to be no dissatisfaction. Herzberg views it as no dissatisfaction versus dissatisfaction (Alshmemri *et al*., 2017) as quoted by (Herzberg *et al*., 1959). Based on Herzberg's theory, if employees were to be motivated, it would be essential to ensure that the hygiene factors are addressed to eliminate dissatisfaction. This is essential before the motivators can be effective. The purpose of following this approach is to advance the employee to a satisfaction, alternatively extremely satisfied mode (Pride *et al*., 2017).

Herzberg's theory suggests that different sources lead to job dissatisfaction and satisfaction. However, eliminating the sources that kindle dissatisfaction doesn't assure that an individual will become motivated.

Herzberg's theory formulates the groundwork of all the studies done on job satisfaction. To identify and determine the level of job satisfaction, Herzberg's theory continues to be used in research. Extraneous conditions evoke feelings of unhappiness, not necessarily from the actual job. Extraneous conditions which are referred to as hygiene factors include areas of job security, supervision, company policies, interpersonal relations, benefits, and administrative practices. If not addressed appropriately at an acceptable level, they become a source of job dissatisfaction or disengagement. The hygiene factors possibly seem to be the factors that are a constant source of employee disengagement, dissatisfaction, and poor job performance. Hygiene factors are significant in ensuring that the individual does not perceive an undesirable work environment resulting in dissatisfaction. According to Shikalepo (2020) factors that lead to positive job attitudes or employee engagement as described by Herzberg are those that lead to self-actualisation as denoted in the hierarchy of needs. Ensuring people's happiness in the workplace as well as people's attitudes towards their jobs is considered very crucial by Herzberg. Herzberg's hygiene factors run parallel with Maslow's psychological needs, belongingness needs, safety needs, and security needs.

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory: hygiene factors are related to the psychological context of the job, which are relevant in this research study. The absence of a positive relationship with management, changing work conditions, job insecurity, and a change in company policies dissatisfy employees. When hygiene factors are in place, there is a presence of general satisfaction, therefore, preventing employee dissatisfaction (Sello, 2019).

2.4.2 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

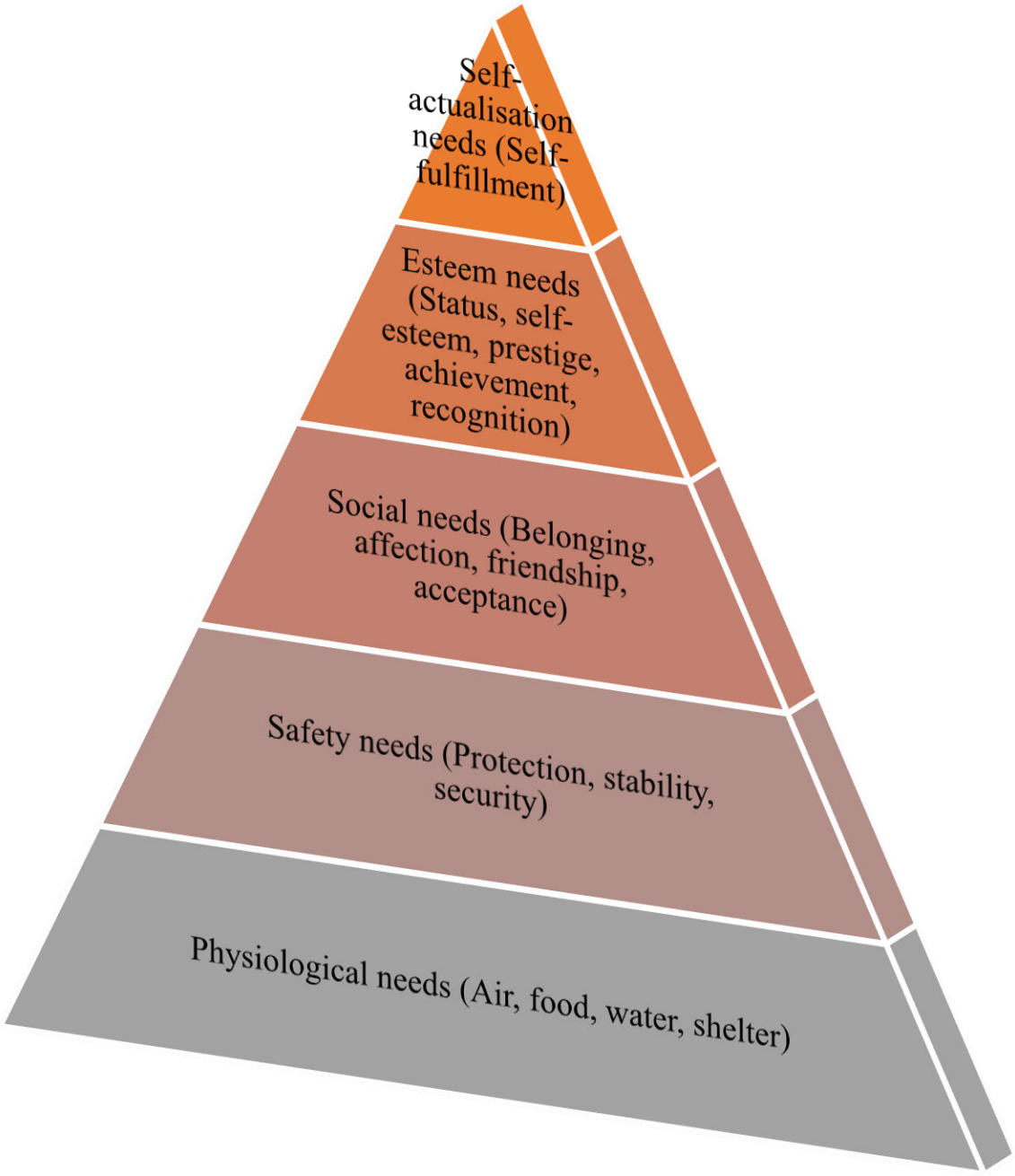

Figure 2.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Source: Schiffman and Kanuk (2010)

Maslow's hierarchy of needs has been identified as a potential framework, as it is useful in allowing us to distinguish between levels of needs, amongst Herzberg's theory as well as Theory X and Theory Y for addressing factors that result in employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban during an acquisition.

Dr. Abraham Maslow (1970), a clinical psychologist, developed a theory called Maslow's hierarchy of needs. A need is an individual's personal requirement (Pride *et al*., 2017). This theory has been referred to for decades yet, to this day, Maslow's concept remains relevant. This widely accepted theory focuses on human motivation based on the concept of the universal hierarchy of human needs. Maslow suggested that needs were hierarchical in nature. People are motivated by unmet needs as stated by Maslow. These unmet needs are in a hierarchical order that prevents people from being motivated by a need unless some lower-level needs have been met. Lower-level needs are characterised as follows: physiological needs, safety needs, and social needs (love and belonging). No need is ever completely satisfied hence there is some overlap amongst the levels (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010)

The theory states that people are motivated by five levels of needs, which are physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs which are the five basic categories of needs. This theory holds that higher-level needs begin to emerge when people feel they have adequately fulfilled the previous need in the hierarchy (Cartwright, 2002).

2.4.2.1 Physiological needs

Maslow identified physiological needs as the most fundamental and most basic human physical needs as we all need these basic needs to survive. These needs include food, air, rest, shelter, water, and mental health. According to Maslow, once the basic needs are fulfilled, people seek to get higher order needs to be met (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010).

2.4.2.2 Safety needs

Once physiological needs are attained, the succeeding need that ascends is a safe environment. Safety need and security need, focus on contemporary issues such as those of financial, health, and personal security (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010).

2.4.2.3 Social needs

Social needs are human requirements for a sense of belonging, affection, and love. Belonging is shared with other social animals. Identifying with a specific group was believed by Maslow to be an essential human need. The organisation can prioritise wellness by creating an encouraging work environment. Organising gatherings such as team building and year-end functions, and offering employees flexible work schedules which allow for time with family can assist with fulfilling this need. Some situations in the workplace result in stress on loved ones as well as family members. Inviting significant others and family members to these gatherings and other social events fosters inclusiveness, allowing loved ones to be acquainted with each other (Pride *et al*., 2017).

The extrinsic factors appear to be prevalent at levels that are lower on the hierarchy of needs.

2.4.2.4 Esteem needs

Esteem is the fourth level of needs in Maslow's hierarchy, people require recognition and respect. Esteem needs are categorised into two types, namely internal and external. Internal esteem needs to address professional wellness such as fairness, achievement, control, responsibility, and respect. Whilst external esteem needs to address rewards and status. (Pride *et al*., 2017).

2.4.2.5 Self-actualisation needs

The most difficult need to satisfy, Maslow, defined self-actualisation as the realisation of one's full potential which is fulfillment and personal growth. McGregor's Theory Y matches Maslow's self-actualisation level of motivation as it is based on the assumption that self-control, self-direction, and maturity control motivation (Pride *et al*., 2017). According to Maslow, the unsatisfied need is a critical factor in motivation. Maslow believed that self-actualisation, which is at the top of the pyramid, is the most important need in the hierarchy.

The research study looks at all the need levels as they are interdependent and overlap. Maslow's theory is relevant in this study as it encourages managers to take cognisance of motivation to keep employees motivated. Maslow's work also explains human conduct during changing work conditions such as in the case of this study (Sello, 2019).

2.4.3 McGregor's Theory X - Theory Y

A theory by Douglas McGregor, an American business professor, considered that Theory X and Theory Y were the two positions that managers could implement when considering their employees. Matters of work motivation were seen as the results of work and personal needs. McGregor's contribution to Theory X and Theory Y represent contrasting assumptions that underlie management's beliefs and attitudes about workers' behaviour. Theory X and Theory Y describe two opinions of employees. According to Khorasani and Almasifard (2017), McGregor's theory X – theory Y and Maslow's hierarchy of needs are classified as two humanistic approaches to management.

According to Coccia (2018) as previously stated by McGregor (1960) Theory X and Theory Y are two beliefs about human behaviour. The first assumption around Theory X is that the average human being dislikes work. The second assumption around Theory X is that to achieve organisational goals, employees have to be directed, controlled, coerced, and threatened with punishment to put forth adequate effort in attaining organisational objectives. The third assumption around Theory X is that the average human being has little ambition, avoids responsibility, and prioritises security. With all this being said, before the human relations movement, Theory X was a widely accepted managerial approach (Coccia, 2018) as previously stated by (Ivancevich *et al*., 1977). Theory X assumes that employees have a dislike for work and that work is viewed as an economic necessity. Theory X can be summarised as an assumption that employees seek to avoid responsibility, are lazy, inherent dislike of work, and require pressure to perform. Therefore, a Theory X style of management requires tasks that pay high salaries as motivating factors, clearly specified, firm and close supervision as well as threats of punishment. Under certain circumstances is Theory X considered appropriate in an organisation in the short-term as it is unlikely to make contributions to job satisfaction (Cartwright, 2002).

Coccia (2018) as previously stated by Ivancevich *et al*. (1977) the first assumption around Theory Y is that the average human being learns. The second assumption around Theory Y is that commitment to organisational objectives is a function of remuneration allied with employees' achievements. The third assumption around Theory Y is that employees can practice self-control as well as self-direction to attain organisational goals. The final assumption around Theory Y is that the intellectual potential of the average human being is only moderately exploited. Concerning Theory Y, employees will make an effort of their own in the organisation especially during a work situation, if they are devoted and dedicated to the organisations' objectives. Theory Y can be summarised as conventions that employees seek responsibility, can exercise self-direction, and are creative.

According to Van Tonder (2006) as previously quoted by Biesheuvel (1984) a pessimistic or optimistic view of human nature determines whether one supports Theory X or Theory Y. Whether the organisation chooses Theory X or Theory Y there must be an influence on job satisfaction.

McGregor's theory X and theory Y is relevant in this study as employees prefer Theory Y managers. Theory Y management attempts to create a work environment that harmonises the organisational objectives with the needs and objectives of individuals (Coccia, 2018). In relation to motivation, a democratic leadership style would be most suited during the business acquisition. Therefore, creating a platform for participative leadership, two-way communication, and the empowerment of employees.

2.4.4 Kahn's theory

Kahn (1990) was the first researcher to define employee engagement while simultaneously developing a grounded theory of personal engagement and disengagement. It is for this reason that Kahn's theory is relevant to this study. Kahn's theory, which is also referred to as Kahn's model of employee engagement, was developed from prevailing theoretical concepts. Kahn's work operates from a major premise that states that there are three psychological conditions that are associated with personal engagement and disengagement of work: safety, experienced meaningfulness of

work, and experienced availability. The three psychological conditions need to be attained for engagement to manifest. Kahn's model illustrates that when employees are engaged, they are emotionally, physically, and cognitively immersed in their work tasks. When employees are disengaged, they withdraw emotionally, physically, and cognitively from their duties. Engaged employees are inspired to work above and beyond their normal call of duty to attain organisational goals.

There is a connection between Kahn's psychological conditions and Maslow's need hierarchy, as both allude to safety. However, in the case of Maslow the lower-level need, which is the physiological need must be satisfied first before the next need is attained.

Table 2-3 Three psychological conditions

Dimensions of Psychological Conditions	
Safety	Sense of being able to express and employ self without the terror of harmful consequences to career.
Meaningfulness	Sense of return on investment of self in role performances.
Availability	Sense of owning the psychological, physical, and emotional resources necessary for investing self in role performance.

Source: Kahn (1990)

2.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to study the impact of a business acquisition on employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban. The aim is to understand the effect on employees' level of engagement and disengagement which could be intensified by the business acquisition and change in organisational leadership. Further explanation will be given as to the impact these effects have on employees' commitment to their jobs and the organisation. Furthermore, this study aims to receive employees' perspectives through interviews and benchmark common best business practices for the organisation, therefore, providing recommendations to improve employee engagement and eliminate any factors resulting in employee disengagement during times of change in the organisation.

The dominant assumption is that employee disengagement leads to employees who are not fully committed to their jobs, impedes performance, and lowers employees' level of energy. They don't go the extra mile and they are the inactively involved workers in the workplace. In pursuit of this study, the researcher seeks to examine whether there is such an effect on employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban and if there is, how are the employees affected.

In the past five years, there hasn't been ample literature around the topic of employee disengagement compared to employee engagement which seems to be most researched as a vast majority of scholars have rather focused on this topic. An in-depth understanding of employee disengagement and further research is required in an attempt to bridge the gap in the limited literature on employee disengagement in the workplace. However, there has been an increase in literature on the consequences of employee engagement with researchers highlighting the value of employee engagement in improving in-role and task performance (Eldor, 2017). Further research on employee disengagement in the South African context is imperative as employees can also become disengaged in the workplace.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter three covers a comprehensive explanation of the research design methodology that is adopted in collecting primary data for this research study. Furthermore, this chapter details how data was analysed. It continues by providing information on issues of validity, reliability, credibility as well as the truthfulness of the study and concludes by discussing the ethical considerations.

3.2 Research objectives

The research study explores the impact of the business acquisition to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban.

The study focused on the following research objectives which were identified as pertinent and conversant to the methodology adopted:

- To evaluate 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' readiness for a changing environment.
- To investigate the effectiveness of the acquisition process on employees at 4Packaging Africa Durban.
- To examine 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' views, experiences, and opinions on business acquisition.
- To evaluate 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' perception of the acquisition leading to demotivation of employees' which results in disengagement.
- To determine a conducive work environment that promotes organisational commitment at 4Packaging Africa Durban.

Employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban were the primary source of gaining information in fulfillment of the above objectives. The overall objective of this chapter is to highlight the research methodology applied in collecting primary data to understand the factors that

result in employee disengagement, as 4Packaging Africa Durban acquired the business from AFOC.

3.3 Research Paradigm

The researcher seeks to understand the context or social action from the 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' point of view through personally gathering the relevant information. Thereafter, interpreting the findings as shaped by the participants' experience.

To address the research problem and answer the research questions as well as due to the small population, the study utilised a qualitative research approach. Constructivism is a qualitative research approach. It is structured on the notion that meanings are constructed through the communication of the researcher with the study participants. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) constructivism which is also known as social constructivism, stems from the belief that people, such as the employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban, want to understand the world they work and live in. People have varied viewpoints hence the development of the subjective meaning of their individual experiences. Bryman *et al*. (2011) constructionism asserts that social phenomena are constructed from the actions and perceptions of social actors through social interaction. The researcher wanted to make sense of the experience that 4Packaging Africa Durban employees had during the business acquisition and whether it affects their level of engagement in the workplace. Constructivism allows for the investigation of employees' perspectives.

Since the study employs a qualitative method approach, the researcher together with the participants of this study, took an active role in constructing the research reality. Knowledge is socially constructed, in this research study, as the researcher investigates 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' point of view.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) as previously quoted by Crotty (1998) the following assumption was identified in discussing constructivism: meaning is created by

humans as they engage with the world they are interpreting. Qualitative researchers are inclined to use open-ended questions to afford participants to share their views. Through the use of open-ended questions, employed via in-depth interviews, both face-to-face and telephonic, 4Packaging Africa Durban participants shared their views regarding the topic under study. Thereafter, the data collected was utilised to generate meaning.

3.4 Types of Research design

There are three research design approaches or methods namely: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method.

According to Corbin and Strauss (2015) qualitative research is a form of research amongst quantitative and mixed-method research. It utilises an open and flexible design. Through qualitative research, the researcher, as much a part as the participant, is part of the research process as the researcher collects and interprets data.

According to Silverman (2020) qualitative research approach implicates verbal descriptions of real-life situations. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) a researcher selects qualitative research to explore and understand the meaning participants attribute to a problem. Contrary to the former, the quantitative research approach implicates numerical analysis of the connection between variables, testing objective theories. It utilises numbered data which is then analysed using statistical procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Lastly, the mixed-method focuses on both qualitative and quantitative research approaches as well as on collecting and analysing data in a single study source (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The assumption with this approach is that it yields additional insight since it integrates both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Since the research paradigm is established, this study will employ an applied qualitative research approach. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) qualitative research studies individuals and things in their natural surroundings, whereby the researcher attempts to illustrate the denotation of the findings from the standpoint of the population

under study. The scientific reasoning adopted, for this research study, is deduction. Since there are no barriers between the study participants and the researcher, the researcher actively participated in the study to understand the experience of 4Packaging Africa Durban employees. The research study was planned, and the research process was followed. A research problem was identified, the research questions were posed in chapter one, and data was gathered in chapter four.

The cognitive interest applied is empirical. Empirical studies can employ either qualitative or quantitative methods. Primary data was collected to answer the research questions posed in this research study. The research study is hands-on and seeks to richly describe the 4Packaging Africa Durban reality of a business acquisition and its impact on employees.

Table 3-1 Differences between qualitative and quantitative research approaches

Qualitative research approach	**Quantitative research approach**
Concerned with and interprets processes	Concerned with behaviour
Open-ended	Close-ended
Tries to find understanding	Tries to find relationships and clarifications
Utilises words	Utilises numbers
Exploratory	Descriptive
Deductive	Inductive
Nonprobability sampling	Probability sampling
Interviews	Questionnaires

Source: Silverman (2020)

The researcher prefers qualitative over quantitative methods to explore participants' inner experiences, to discover areas not yet researched thoroughly, and to discover how meanings are formed and transformed (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Table 3-2 Advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research approach

Advantages	Disadvantages
Research study naturally unfolds	The data analysis process is not easy
Focuses on context and how it affects the respondents	Researchers' presence is required
Collection and interpretation of non-numerical data	The researcher is highly involved throughout the process
Data is obtainable from both primary and secondary sources	The researcher presents findings in their biased view

Source: Sekaran and Bougie (2016)

To gather data, this study utilised in-depth interviews, telephonic and face-to-face, to provide a unique view and understanding of the impact of the business acquisition to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban. Traditionally qualitative interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis as opposed to the present option of telephonic interviews. The benefit of face-to-face interviews is that they offer a natural encounter enabling the researcher to build and sustain understanding. The researcher is also able to observe the participant's body language which adds to the researcher's understanding (Farooq & De Villiers, 2017).

Farooq and De Villiers (2017) argue in favour of telephonic interviews, that this choice potentially encourages interview participants to speak willingly due to the balanced power distributed.

Table 3-3 Advantages and disadvantages of interviews

Advantages	Disadvantages
Allows for adaptability and clarity in questions and responses	Possibility of interviewer bias
Able to detect respondents' facial expressions and body language	Time-consuming
Able to spot nonverbal cues from respondents	Costly when a wider region geographically is covered
	Interviewees may generally be concerned about the confidentiality of the information shared

Source: Sekaran and Bougie (2016)

3.5 Justification of the chosen methodology

According to Sello (2019) as previously quoted by Creswell (2014) qualitative research is a research process emanating from philosophical assumptions involved in studying human as well as social problems. Qualitative research was preferred as the researcher actively engaged with the participants. This method is rigorous and widely accepted, providing a unique contribution to human-centered research.

There are various common types of qualitative analysis namely: Content analysis, which is also known as thematic analysis, grounded analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, and phenomenology/heuristic analysis. Conceptual content analysis was best suited for this study as the purpose of the research study was to collect primary data from the study participants and use the participant's words from interview transcripts to determine the existence of certain themes (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Thereafter, look at the occurrence of the identified themes to analyse the meanings and relationships of these

themes. Manifest, mainly coding and keywords, was employed to examine the content. Thematic analysis is commonly used for qualitative data analysis. It is the most thorough form of analysis for large volumes of qualitative data (Kara, 2019).

Qualitative data was analysed using Nvivo 12 pro, which is explained in section 3.9 Data analysis.

Narrative analysis was not suited for this study as the research study focused on a change or cause, which is the business acquisition, and its impact or effect on multiple employees (Sekaran & Bougie 2016). Phenomenology analysis was not suited for this study as the purpose of the research study was not to generalise or describe what the participants have in common as they experience a business acquisition but rather to discover what can be done to eliminate factors resulting in employee disengagement. Grounded analysis was not suited for the study as the purpose of the research study was not intended to develop a theory. Discourse analysis was not suited for the study as the purpose of the research study was not to understand how the participants use language or construct meaning (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.6 Study Site

A study site as stated by Sekaran and Bougie (2016) is a specific business unit or plant in this case, where permission is gained by the researcher and participants are selected. The researcher then acquaints themselves with the research settings. The study will take place in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, in the city of Durban, a suburb of Pinetown. This is where 4Packaging Africa Durban was located as well as where data was obtained from the study participants.

3.7 Study population

According to Salkind (2012) the group of potential participants to whom the researcher wants to generalise the outcome of the research study is referred to as a population. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016) the complete group of people that the researcher desires to study is referred to as the population. Therefore, the population of this study consists of the employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban that participated in the study. The populations consist of twenty-four employees. A population can be finite or infinite. Finite means limited in size and infinite meaning unlimited in size (Difference Between Finite and Infinite Population – Global stats Academic, 2021). Therefore, the population of this study is finite as there is a fixed number of employees at 4Packaging Africa Durban. All shop floor workers and managers of 4Packaging Africa Durban consisted of the target population of the study. The selected population had experienced the impact of the acquisition hence their knowledge was of critical importance in determining any factors that result in employee disengagement in the organisation.

A subset of the entire population where data is collected by the researcher is referred to as a sample (Salkind, 2012). Often it is difficult for the researcher to collect the relevant data from the entire population. However, in this circumstance, it was possible as the population was small. The population size was small and easily accessible hence the researcher decided to interview the entire population. The study became a census, as there was no need to select a sample. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016) census is a count of all elements in the population. It is for this reason that the study does not focus on sample size and sampling techniques.

3.8 Data collection tools

After careful consideration by the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Committee, approval was obtained from the in-house research committee for the researcher to embark on data collection. This is the first commandment according to Salkind (2012) of data collection. Data collection methods can be categorised into primary as well as secondary data. Data can be obtained by a researcher through primary or secondary sources (Sekaran

& Bougie, 2016). As the word suggests, primary data collection occurs when new information is gathered. This new information is referred to as nontechnical literature (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Whilst secondary data occurs when applying previously collected information. Both primary and secondary sources were utilised for the purpose of this study. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) state that primary data speak to information gathered first-hand by the researcher on the variables of interest specifically for the research being conducted. Primary data can be gathered through interviews, focus groups, administered questionnaires, or by means of observations (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The following secondary data was used in this study: journal articles, books, reports, and websites.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016) data collection methods form an integral part of research design. Survey research is collected in a variety of ways including interviews which is the preferred method for this study. Interviews can be conducted in various ways including face-to-face, telephone, computer-assisted as well as electronic media.

In a qualitative study, interviews are the primary method for data collection. Interviews have been deemed as one of the most effective methods of data collection. This is because the researcher has the ability to ask the respondents direct questions to gather information on the variables of interest (Cummings & Worley, 2008). Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or open-ended (unstructured) allowing the interviewer to explore by asking open-ended questions and standardised questions whilst recording responses to aid in reducing errors (Silverman, 2020). Quantitative research most commonly adopts structured interviews whilst semi-structured or open-ended interviews are more common in qualitative research. This study will adopt open-ended interviews as there are twenty-four participants and the researcher had the required skills which are active listening, flexibility, and rapport with the interviewee (Silverman, 2020). Advantages of interviewing include the flexibility of adopting and changing questions as the interview progresses (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Structured, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews are means of collecting data.

Table 3-4 Types of interviews

Interviews		
Structured	**Unstructured**	**Semi-structured**
Common in quantitative research	Common in qualitative research	Common in qualitative research
Pre-tested questions	Prepared question	Prepared questions
Large sample	Small sample	Small sample

Source: Silverman (2020)

The researcher reads the questions as written and gives explanations to avoid bias. Interviews provide the benefit of collecting sound and trustworthy data that relates to the research questions and objectives hence providing social cooperation between the researcher and the respondent.

The researcher benefits from using structured interviews as it demands minimal interview skills. Structured interviews are not difficult to analyse as questions are asked in a fixed sequence to all the participants, therefore, providing consistent information and enabling comparison of data.

The balance of the ten commandments of data collection was followed. Assisting in ensuring that data for the study was collected and potential errors are avoided (Salkind 2012).

3.8.1 Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted using open-ended questions which aimed at exploring various perceptions, ideas, and feelings of 4Packaging Africa Durban participants. During the interview proceedings, questions were asked and recorded whilst the participants were responding. The interviews were conducted between the 6th of September 2021 till the 21st of September 2021. Nine in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted on-site. Whilst eleven in-depth telephonic interviews were conducted at

home. Appendix B indicates the demographical information of the participants that were interviewed.

3.9 Data Analysis

The identification of a variable that the researcher wants to analyse statistically is referred to as data analysis (White, 2009). After data is collected, it requires processing before it can be analysed. Analysing data includes preparing data, coding data, analysing data to produce findings. Thereafter, interpreting the findings (Kara, 2019). Responses from questions on the interview schedule form the data for the study as qualitative data is made from words. A qualitative study was conducted on the employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban, during the acquisition period, investigating any factors that resulted in employee disengagement. The focus of this study is set on eliminating any factors that resulted in employee disengagement during and post-acquisition.

Since this study is qualitative in nature, processing data entails editing, coding, and classification. The data analysis that will be used in this study will be performed on the data collected from in-depth interviews. As qualitative data was obtained using a paper questionnaire, data obtained needed to be transcribed onto Microsoft word so it can be uploaded to the selected computer software for analysis. The results obtained from the interview were captured and analysed using thematic analysis. The qualitative data analysis method involves coding, identifying categories and themes within data, and reporting them as findings (Stringer, 2007). It is suitable for this study as the researcher will examine the content shared by the study participants during interviews. When analysing data, there is a wide variety of software packages for qualitative research that is available to assist researchers to analyse data. The researcher chose NVivo 12 Pro to enhance the capability to be creative and make discoveries (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). NVivo is a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), which assists with storing and managing large volumes of data using conceptualisation and coding of data (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). This software offers a variety of analysis tools that aid the analysis process, developing new theories and understanding the data as well as testing answers to research questions (Zamawe, 2015). Since hand-coding is time-

consuming, NVivo as a qualitative computer software program serves the purpose to assists the researcher to analyse qualitative data as it supports analysing large volumes of qualitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The following steps were carried out by the researcher for data analysis:

Raw data was organised as follows, responses from each participant per interview schedule were recorded via cell phone and transcribed. Thereafter the audio recordings and transcriptions were filed electronically on a laptop. The process of translating from a recording or visual information is referred to as transcribing (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). This assists with preparing the data for analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The audio recordings and transcriptions were also saved on google drive as a backup.

Following the organisation of raw data, the researcher read through all the participants' transcripts to acquire familiarity with the data shared by the respondents. Thereafter, the transcripts were uploaded on NVivo. The researcher started coding the data into emerging themes. The research questions were organised into meaningful themes.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

The degree to which the research results accurately reflect the topic under study and when a concept corresponds accurately when applied in the real world is often referred to as validity. A common issue in research, validity can be undermined by, "research errors, such as faulty research procedures, poor samples, and inaccurate measurement" (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Research may be considered valid if it accurately embodies attributes of the phenomena it is intended to theorise (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

According to Silverman (2020) as previously stated by Kirk and Miller (1986) the degree to which study findings are independent, in their production, of accidental circumstances is referred to as reliability. Reliability refers to the regularity of observations (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Research is referred to as reliable when a measurement of similar results under different conditions are being obtained consistently. This study attained reliability

by being certain that all aspects of data are transcribed whilst recording interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The data presented in this research study hold some form of internal validity and reliability as the collected data is consistent and free from bias.

3.11 Credibility and truthfulness

Eight different procedures for attaining credibility and truthfulness of findings were proposed by (Creswell, 1998) and (Creswell & Miller, 2000) as stated by (Corbin & Strauss, 2015:343).

Table 3-5 Credibility and truthfulness

Credibility and truthfulness
Prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field
Triangulation
Using peer review
Negative case analysis
Clarifying researcher bias
In member checks
Rich thick description
External audits

Source: Author

The researcher was employed by 4Packaging Africa Durban. It is for this reason that the researcher opted to not give an opinion on the study. Therefore, researcher bias was eliminated by purely focusing on the views and opinions of the 4Packaging Africa Durban participants.

Furthermore, the following techniques assisted in attaining the credibility and trustworthiness of the study:

Internal validity was attained through engaging with the study participants. When the interviews began, the objectives of the research study were articulated to the participants. All the recordings and transcripts are archived by the researcher on a personal laptop.

External validity: A clear description of the study and its participants helped attain external validity, allowing the research study to be understood by the readers.

Reliability: A cell phone was used to record data during the interviews and notes were taken concurrently enriching the recording. The audio recording and notes are archived by the researcher on a personal laptop.

Furthermore, qualitative research permits the researcher to include exact responses from 4Packaging Africa Durban participants, evident in chapter four, enabling the researcher to portray trustworthiness by including the research questions and interview schedule (Nkosi, 2020) as previously quoted by (Street & Ward, 2012).

To demonstrate accuracy, replicability and for the researcher to eliminate biasness in the selected qualitative design, the following validations were employed:

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) as cited by Amankwaa (2016) trustworthiness is suggested to strengthen the value of a research study. Trustworthiness is the most common way to establish internal and external validity, whether the researcher measured what was intended to be measured, through credibility, conformability, dependability, and transferability.

Credibility can be established and enhanced using various strategies. To attain apposite responses, the researcher clearly explained the purpose of the study, to all the participants. The researcher employed member checking to ensure the credibility of data interpretation. According to Amankwaa (2016) member checking is measured to be the most important form of credibility. During the data collection process, the participants' were interviewed individually to minimise participants' bias. The researcher ensured that the participants were understood correctly, using clarification and follow-up questions, for data to be

understood and accurately interpreted (Terrell, 2016). The researcher ensured credibility by reflecting the study participants' voice as the most important voice.

To ensure confirmability and avoid researcher bias, the researcher was a neutral observer, considering the data obtained from a neutral perspective. The researcher collected authentic data. Coding was initiated appropriately. The research questions were answered without the researcher's personal influence. The study findings were influenced by the participants and only reflect the participants voice (Amankaa, 2016). The interview notes and transcripts were confirmed with the participants.

Whilst external validity questions whether the research study findings can become generalised to a wider group (Terrell, 2016).

Dependability – The researcher ensured that the study findings were supported by the data. The data analysis process was explained. Displaying that should the study be repeated, the findings would be consistent. Should another researcher take on the same research, they would obtain similar results (Amankwaa, 2016).

According to Sello (2012) as previously quoted by Terrell (2016) transferability validates that the study findings can be applied to a similar setting. The researcher safely stored details of the participants that were interviewed, recordings, handwritten notes, and transcripts. The research setting was described, date and time the of interviews were noted.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is defined as the study of right and wrong (Pride *et al*., 2017). All data analysis whether it is for qualitative or quantitative data encompasses an ethical aspect. Hence data must be analysed ethically, in the most thorough and fair approach (Kara, 2019). According to Corbin and Strauss (2015) the three major areas that call for ethical consideration are research, researcher, and participants.

3.12.1 Research

The researcher has several ethical responsibilities such as respecting the needs, rights, values, and desires of participants. Furthermore, to ensure the integrity and safeguard participants' rights, the researcher obtained the consent of ethical consideration for the nature of the study. Approval was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Committee as well as a Gatekeepers letter was obtained from the MD of 4Packaging Africa Durban. The researcher ensured that they are familiar with the University's plagiarism policy by visiting the necessary website and reading the plagiarism policy. Ethical responsibility further continues as the researcher owes it to the participants and the research process as a commitment was made to follow through on the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

3.12.2 Participants

The researcher reiterated that participation was voluntary. The study participants had full information and knowledge of what the study entailed before the interviews. Thereafter, the researcher took measures to obtain consent from participants since interviews were face-to-face and telephonic, developing an atmosphere of mutual trust. To ensure that human dignity was upheld the researcher sought informed consent from respondents and allowed them to decide to participate based on adequate knowledge of the study they were being given. Confidentiality of the interview and post-interview process was stressed before the participants signed the informed consent form. Privacy and confidentiality were upheld by reminding participants of their right to keep from the public certain information about themselves and agreement to limit access to private information. Names of respondents were not mentioned whilst the interviews were in progress keeping the data anonymous even during data analysis. Respondents remained anonymous and no names except pseudonyms were used in this study. The participants were informed that the data they shared during interviews were handwritten and recorded. Participants' time shared during the interviews was respected and no judgment was made as the purpose of the interview was to gather information (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

3.12.3 Researcher

The researcher did not take the research study lightly from an ethical point of view. The research undertaken was done because a question was raised hence the researcher wanted to study, understand then answer through doing research, “The impact of the business acquisition to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa, Durban”. The researcher understood the ethical responsibility to the participants, to the university, and self. To not become emotional and involved to produce work of high quality (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter presented the data collection process employed in this study and how data was analysed. Face-to-face and telephonic in-depth interviews were conducted with twenty participants of 4Packaging Africa Durban. As noted in this chapter, research studies are due to have some of the following limitations as biases, threats to validity and, reliability. Based on the interviews conducted, the next chapter presents and provides a discussion of the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter follows the research methodology described in chapter three and it presents and analyses data that had been collected during the research study. Data had been collected from employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban to discover their views on factors that lead to employee disengagement during a business acquisition. Data becomes vital to interpret after it has been collected. Thereafter, this data is presented as well as the findings from the data analysis. This chapter presents the results through thematic analysis.

The population of this study consisted of twenty permanent employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban. The twenty participants engaged in face-to-face and telephonic in-depth interviews which were used to collect data. In-depth interviews were conducted using open-ended questions which were aimed at exploring various perceptions, ideas, and feelings of 4Packaging Africa Durban participants. During the interview proceedings, questions were asked and recorded whilst the participants were responding. The interviews were conducted between the 6th of September 2021 till the 21st of September 2021. Nine in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted at the 4Packaging Africa Durban site in Pinetown. Whilst eleven in-depth telephonic interviews were conducted at the researcher's home in Durban. Appendix B indicates the demographical information of the participants that were interviewed. The participants did not consist of senior management as they were not available. The researcher was seeking insight into the attitudes that the 4Packaging Africa Durban employees have towards the impact of the business acquisition to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement. Once data was collected, it was analysed using Nvivo 12 Pro.

Qualitative data is analysed through the utilisation of codes thereafter searching for categories and themes. A theme is a concept or an idea. Coded qualitative data is analysed through thematic analysis (Kara, 2019). Qualitative research was adopted by the researcher to characterise participants' experiences and perspectives in great depth. The researcher seeks to unfold what it's like for 4Packaging Africa Durban employees to

experience the business acquisition and explore whether there are factors that resulted in employee disengagement going into the acquisition so they can be eliminated.

4.2 Themes and sub-themes

NVivo 12 pro has a feature that allows the researcher to run a word frequency query which produces a word cloud as presented in figure 4.1. According to Jackson and Bazeley (2019) a "word frequency query" runs a collection of the words popularly used in the data. These words are then visually presented by a word cloud. The bigger words on the word cloud represent the frequency of occurrence of the word during the interviews with 4Packaging Africa Durban participants. The word cloud provides a summary of the main themes which originated from the study.

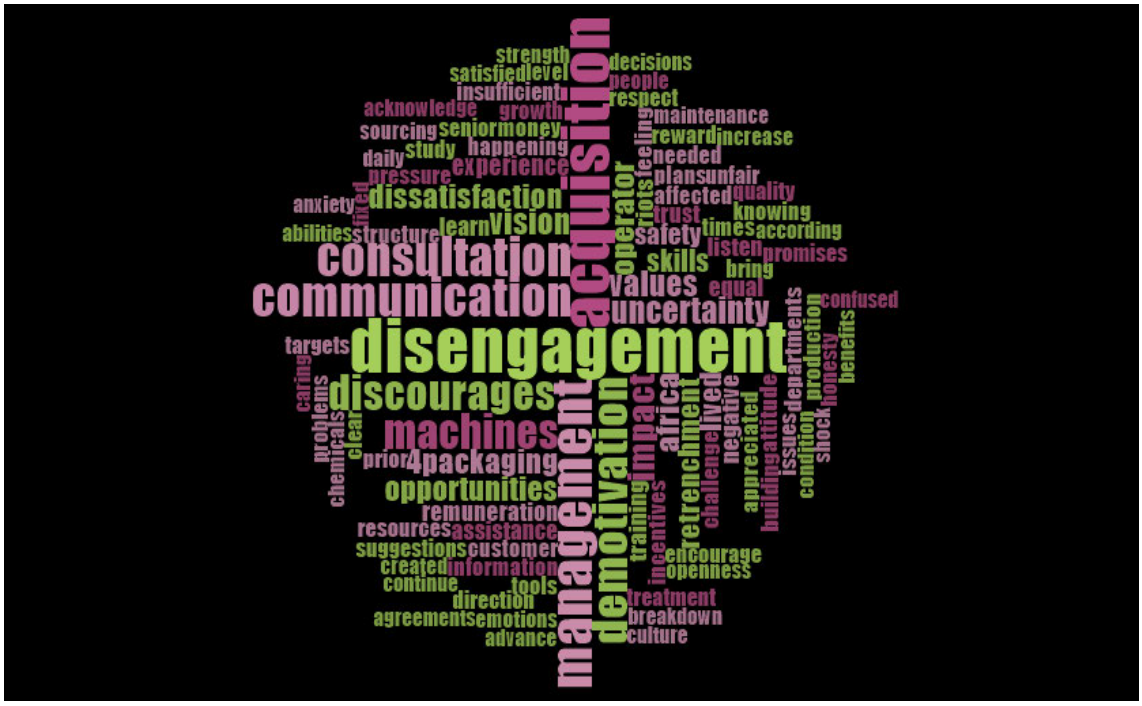

Figure 4.1 Factors of employee disengagement word cloud

As the research sought to establish meaning from the views of the participants. The primary data collected through in-depth interviews assisted in exploring the main themes which were derived from the study. Data obtained from the participants during in-depth interviews was investigated and presented to obtain information of value for recommendations. This data was grouped into themes and subthemes for meaningfulness

and ease of interpretation as follows.

Table 4-1 Themes and sub-themes

Theme 1	Communication
Theme 2	Management
Theme 3	Unequal treatment
Theme 4	Machines
Theme 5	Employees
Sub-theme 5.1	Disregarding employees
Sub-theme 5.2	Consultation with employees
Sub-theme 5.3	Remunerating employees
Sub-theme 5.4	Trusting employees
Sub-theme 5.5	Sources of employee disengagement

Source: Author

4.3 Presentation of Data

4.3.1 Theme 1: Communication

The majority of participants indicated that the key factor contributing to employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban was due to the lack of communication from senior management. Employees become disengaged when there is a lack of communication (Sello, 2019). According to Cartwright (2002) lack of communication is one of the most frequently heard complaints in any organisation. It was interesting to find that majority of the study participants shared the same opinion. Poor communication was emphasised as the main factor, by the study participants, that led to employee disengagement. As they wanted to be part of decision making and wanted to know what was happening in the organisation and how the change would be facilitated. Most importantly, how would the acquisition affect them as employees to aid their readiness for a changing environment. There was a major emphasis on the importance of communication from senior management during the process of selling the business as opposed to informing employees post the sale of the business.

‘*Lack of communication.*’ (P12/I)

‘*Communication.*’ (P13/I)

‘*Timely communication*.’ (P15/I)

‘*More time to communicate*.’ (P16/I)

‘*Poor communication*.’ (P18/I)

Some of the respondents further indicated that senior management facilitating the acquisition from both organisations were perceived to lack clear intentions, lacked transparency, failed to engage employees, and had hidden agenda. Therefore, struggling to lead 4Packaging Africa Durban in the right direction during the acquisition.

‘*Communication, clear intentions, transparency, no hidden agendas, and more employee engagement.*’ (P10/I)

This lack of communication created uncertainty amongst participants which was affecting their day-to-day performance.

‘*Took a toll, under shock, it all boils down to communication, it was mishandled.*’ (P15/I)

Clear intentions, transparency, engaging employees, and no hidden agendas were also perceived as important barriers that could be put in place to reduce employee disengagement. Employees become disengaged when there is a lack of transparency (Sello, 2019). These contribute to factors that can be eliminated to discourage employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban.

The participants were not happy with the way the acquisition was communicated as it felt like they didn’t have a say in the matter. They were not allowed to express their views and opinions. They only had one option which was to accept and not challenge management decisions.

‘*Felt like it was one-way communication.*’ (P11/I)

‘*Senior management left communication about the acquisition for last minute to employees whilst it was known to them for quite some time.*’ (P15/I)

‘*Lack of clear communication which created confusion amongst employees*.’ (P18/I)

‘*Felt fast, not well explained prior, no engagement and lacked communication.*’ (P20/I)

The majority of respondents also viewed communication as a trigger of motivation that positively influences employee engagement. If employees were informed early about the acquisition they would have been positive about the change.

‘*Communication.*’ (P10/I)

‘*Communication*.’ (P16/I)

‘*Good communication.*’ (P8/I)

‘*Regular communication with employees, feedback and regular updates on what is happening in the business, motivation sessions with employees, create a new culture*.’ (P11/I)

4.3.2 Theme 2: Management

The majority of respondents indicated that management did not have a positive vision for the future of the organisation as the business was due to shut down a few months after the sale of the business, following an unfortunate turn of events, the KZN July 2021 riots, without exploring other alternatives. Apart from the business shutting down, participants also felt that management did not have a positive vision for the development of employees. Employees become disengaged when there is a presence of questionable business practices (Sello, 2019).

'*No, the employer didn't have any plans for employees and future plans for the organisation were not clearly stated*.' (P9/I)

'*Management did not follow the law*.' (P1/I)

'*No, there is no room for growth and development for shop floor workers*.' (P10/I)

'*No. Didn't know who to report to. The organisational structure changed but it wasn't communicated to the employees*.' (P13/I)

Some of the participants had concerns relating to the business which were raised to management before the sale of the business. However, management had other plans therefore not attending to participants' concerns. Participants were concerned about job security and the state of the business following the acquisition as management only consulted employees after the final decision was made.

Some of the participants stated that '*not seeing eye to eye with certain leaders in management*' was a frustrating cause of employee disengagement. (P11/I)

'*Discouraged by lack of support from management.*' (P15/I)

Some of the participants indicated that receiving support from management would positively influence employee engagement within the organisation.

'*Inspired by receiving support from management.*' (P14/I)

'*Support from management',* was perceived to be a key driver that the participant expects to motivate them to perform at their potential best.' (P9/I)
'*Direct communication with senior management*, will motivate employees to live and execute the values and the ethos that contribute to organisational success and sustainability. (P16/I)

Another participant stated that '*management should keep jobs inhouse*', as a contributing factor that will motivate employees to live and execute the values and the ethos that contribute to organisational success and sustainability. (P19/I)

'*Lack of engagement between management and employees',* was expressed as one of the frustrating employee causes of disengagement that could be reduced or eradicated within the organisation. (P19/I)

'*Poor management',* was expressed as one of the frustrating employee causes of disengagement that could be reduced or eradicated within the organisation. (P4/I)

'*Management can positively influence engagement by addressing the challenges that employees encounter in the organisation*.' (P4/I)

'*Attitude of management*', was described as a contributing factor that demotivated employees, which could be improved upon. As well as one of the frustrating employee causes of disengagement that could be reduced or eradicated within the organisation. (P6/I)

'*Discouraged by lack of inclusion by management when it comes to decision making in the business.*' (P7/I)

'*Being micromanaged and pressured by managers*', was perceived by the participant to require improvement to reduce personal disengagement in the work environment. (P8/I)

4.3.3 Theme 3: Unequal treatment

According to Jha and Kumar (2016) as previously quoted by Robinson *et al.* (2004) "fair treatment" was identified as a driver of employee engagement. The majority of the participants stated that unequal or unfair treatment resulted in personal disengagement. Shop floor workers mostly experienced unequal treatment. This kind of treatment towards employees is extremely dangerous as it affects employee morale and their productivity levels to plummet. According to Aujla and Mclarney (2020) as previously stated by Hui

and Lee (2000) changes in leadership, layoffs, unclear expectations, and lack of personal growth are conditions that cause low morale in an organisation.

Some of the employees were discouraged and demotivated by not being allowed to grow within the organisation, to learn what other departments were doing, through on-the-job training which was referred to as multiskilling, as well as studying within the organisation. According to Jha and Kumar (2016) as previously quoted by Robinson et al. (2004) "training and development" was identified as a driver of employee engagement.

'*Unfair labour practice by management.*' (P2/I)

Whilst some participants felt that they were restricted and '*not allowed to execute their skills which could have resulted in the production of good quality cylinders.'* (P15/I)

Whilst some participants stated that '*they are motivated to achieve their full potential when allowed to express their full potential'.* (P15/I)

'*Equal and fair treatment of employees*.' (P19/I)

Some participants stated that '*giving employees an equal opportunity to study and treating all employees with equality can mitigate employee disengagement*' within the new organisational environment. (P17/I)

'*No growth and no support. Employees were not allowed to further their studies.*' (P20/I)

Unequal treatment was also identified as a frustrating employee cause of disengagement that could be eradicated within the organisation.

'*Unfairness, business not improving way of working, unequal treatment of employees*.' (P2/I)

One of the participants when asked for factors that will motivate employees to live and execute the values and the ethos that contribute to organisational success and

sustainability, stated:

'*Fairness, equality and approach.*' (P2/I)

4.3.4 Theme 4: Machines

The majority of the participants were not happy with the fact that machines were old and outdated. As a result, there were frequent machine breakdowns yet the participants were still expected to achieve the targets set by the business. Some of the participants mentioned that old machinery contributed to employee disengagement and dissatisfaction. Some participants listed various issues around machines as frustrating employee causes of disengagement that could be eradicated within the organisation.

'*Yes, requires improvement due to Breakdowns in machines, old machines and old computers that cannot install new software.*' (P13/I)

'*Yes. Challenges around old machines, poor maintenance, and lack of service at the right time*.'(P20/I)

'*Work environment (tools and machines).*' (P13/I)

'*Poor maintenance of machines.*' (P18/I)

'*Empty promises (around sourcing new machines).*' (P20/I)
'*Discouraged by obsolete machines when technology has advanced so much.*' (P3/I)

When asked about the duties they are expected to perform that need improvement to reduce personal disengagement, some of the participants further stated that modern machinery so they can work better. Another participant mentioned that machine maintenance will contribute to organisational success and sustainability.

'*Machines not being fixed*.' (P1/I)

'*Yes, change machines*.' (P17/I)

‘*Machines being in good working condition.*’ (P1/I)
‘*Need to improve the condition of machines.*’ (P12/I)

‘*Aged machines.’* (P3/I)

When asked what are the key drivers that the participant expects to motivate them to perform at their potential best to make a meaningful contribution to the organisation? One of the participants responded by saying:

‘*Company investing in new machines*.’ (P13/I)

One of the participants was concerned about their safety as a result of working with old machines.

‘*Working with chemicals, the machines are old therefore exposing us to chemicals. The environment is not safe.*’ (P3/I)

4.3.5 Theme 5: Employees

The opinions of 4Packaging Africa Durban employees as the organisation was going through a business acquisition were explored. To determine any factors that result in employee disengagement, so they can be eliminated. The success of an organisation, like 4Packaging Africa Durban, that is semi-automated depends on the inclusion and active participation of all employees.

4.3.5.1 Disregarding employees

The majority of the participants were of the opinion that senior management was not listening to them. The participants felt a lack of support as their voices and suggestions were not taken into consideration because management render their input invalid. As senior management did not give them a chance to make decisions on critical issues even

before the sale of the business.

Some of the participants identified listening to employees as a barrier that could be put in place to reduce employee demotivation as well as areas of improvement to mitigate employee disengagement.

'*Listen to what employees want.*' (P11/I)

'*Management to listen to shop floor employees and address employee concerns that lead to unhappiness.*' (P1/I)

'*Listen to employees' suggestions and opinions as we have accumulated years of work experience and have the business best interest at heart. Acknowledge and include employees in decision making.*' (P10/I)

Participants described listening to what employees want as one of the contributing factors that will motivate employees to live and execute the values and the ethos that contribute to organisational success and sustainability.

'*Management who is willing to listen to employees and help develop employees.*' (P12/I)

The impact of senior management not listening to employees has resulted in a negative outcome that can impede employee performance.

'*Very negative impact and discouraging due to senior management making invalid assumptions, not listening to ideas and suggestions.*' (P10/I)

4.3.5.2 Consultation with employees

The majority of the participants answered the question of whether there was sufficient consultation by 4Packaging Africa Durban management. The participants conferred that there was not enough consultation between senior management and the employees of 4Packagng Africa Durban. The participants expressed the need to be consulted before the

acquisition.

‘*Not enough consultation*.’ (P1/I)

‘*Consultation was not sufficient, short notice*.’ (P3/I)

‘*Felt like everything happened quickly. Not enough consultation*.’ (P4/I)

‘*Insufficient consultation time*.’ (P7/I)

‘*Not enough consultation*.’ (P8/I)

‘*Insufficient consultation*.’ (P9/I)

‘*No, not enough consultation, lacked engagement.*’ (P10/I)

‘*Consultation was not sufficient*.’ (P11/I)

‘*Not sufficient consultation*.’ (P13/I)

‘*Not enough consultation.*’ (P14/I)

‘*Felt that consultation was late. Consultation occurred in a short space of time, insufficient.*’ (P15/I)

‘*Not enough consultation.*’ (P16/I)

‘*Not enough consultation time with employees*.’ (P17/I)

‘*Not sufficient consultation*.’ (P19/I)

‘*Insufficient consultation.*’ (P20/I)

The lack of consultation around the acquisition brought about concerns and uncertainty. If consultation was open, it could have prevented employees from feeling demotivation, amid change, within the organisation. The absence of timely consultation opened a door for employee disengagement.

'*Consult employees before the sale and allow for questions before the sale.*' (P1/I)

'*Early consultation.*' (P9/I)

'*Lack of consultation.*' (P9/I)

'*The previous employer when it came to safety made rules without engaging or consulting employees.*' (P15/I)

'*Early consultation and management could be courteous about the staff.*' (P2/I)

Participants also attributed that many decisions are being made by senior management without consulting employees. This is a problem area as it contributes to employee disengagement and dissatisfaction.

'*Deciding without consulting employees*.' (P7/I)

'*Timely consultation with workers.*' (P7/I)

'*Yes, people need to be consulted before management can finalise the decision.*' (P17/I)

Consultation could have been employed positively by senior management to positively influence the employees about the acquisition.

'*Consultation to encourage workers.*' (P13/1)

4.3.5.3 Remunerating employees

Participants identified remuneration as a key driver to motivate them to perform at their potential best as well as one of the triggers of motivation that positively influence engagement.

'*Remuneration.*' (P18/I)

'*Increase/remuneration*.' (P19/I)

'*Receiving remuneration according to the job one performs.*' (P2/I)

'*Gain share/remuneration*.' (P5/I)

They further stated that they are demotivated or frustrated when:

They receive '*low remuneration and low annual increase.*' (P18/I)

'*Management does not remunerate employees according to what is due to them.*' (P19/I)

'*No money*.' (P1/I)

4.3.5.4 Trusting employees

Participants were frustrated with the level of trust that management demonstrated towards them during the acquisition. Trust was also identified as an area of improvement as it led to demotivating employees. Furthermore, it was identified as a key driver for performance.

'*There was a lack of trust.*' (P13/I)

'*Lack of employee trust by management. Management to trust employees*.' (P19/I)

‘*Trust*.’ (P8/I)

4.3.5.5 Sources of employee disengagement

Numerous factors result in employee disengagement as mentioned by 4Packaging Africa Durban employees during the interview. Most are mentioned in the above themes and sub-themes. The following are frustrating employee causes of disengagement that could be eradicated within the organisation which were not been mentioned previously.

‘*Feeling like just a number (Not valued).*’ (P10/I)

‘*Not appreciating employees.*’ (P15/I)

‘*Not being able to satisfy the customer.*’ (P12/I)

‘*Lack of sufficient training.*’ (P16/I)

‘*Business not improving way of working.*’ (P2/I)

‘*Poor skills development*.’ (P3/I)

‘*Unions not fully representing employees.*’ (P1/I)

4.4 Discussion of Data

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of the business acquisition to eliminate factors resulting in employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban by providing perception in the mind of employees during a business acquisition. 4Packaging Africa Durban had recently embarked on an organisational change process, through the acquisition of AFOC. Quite often organisational leaders introduce change with the assumption that employees will do as they are told and simply accept the change

(Swindall, 2007). Aujla and McLarney (2020) state that employee acceptance and the success of a change in an organisation depends on the administration of the change process by management. An organisation that fails to take care of its employees might be successful in the short term. However, the organisation could end up losing good employees to other organisations that are more people-oriented. Some of the reasons for the resistance to change are attributed to the employees' lack of involvement during the change process, employees' needs being overlooked, leading to negative perceptions and changes in personalities (Aujla & McLarney, 2020). Consequently, the purpose of this study was focused on mitigating factors that result in employee disengagement during an organisational change process specifically when acquiring a new business as this is a massive shift not just on the employees but also on the employer.

Table 4-2 Comparison of motivators and demotivators

Motivators	**Demotivators**
Communication	Poor communication
Remuneration	Unfair labour practice
Skills development	Not being listened too
Equal opportunities	Not being included in decision making
Growth opportunities	Lack of teamwork
Performance appraisal	Retrenchment

Source: Author

Table 4.2 tables a comparison of motivators and demotivators. This table was gathered from the data collected from 4Packaging Africa Durban employees.

According to Towers Perrin (2007-2008) great communication skills is one of the characteristics of an engaging leader. Employees are not expected to be engaged when they don't have an engaged leader. Factor such as poor communication appeared repeatedly which results in employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban. According to Jha and Kumar (2016) as previously quoted by Robinson et al. (2004) "two-way communication" was identified as a driver of employee engagement. 4Packaging Africa Durban management team should have communicated internally amongst the management team and timely communicated externally to the rest of the organisation which includes machine operators ensuring that there is no noise. The results showed that

4Packaging Africa Durban employees value communication during a business acquisition.

To build consensus towards a vision it is key to help employees find a way through the change (Swindall, 2007). Despite the popular belief by senior management that 4Packaging Africa would benefit from the acquisition, these factors need to be eliminated for the organisation to bear full fruition of the acquisition. If this is not addressed, it can affect organisational performance, in the long run, rendering the acquisition worthless. Traditionally, acquisitions have been generally perceived to create value and generate benefits. However, Vazirani (2012) discovered that this is not always the case, just as is the case of 4Packaging Africa Durban. Sometimes the benefits are not derived. According to David (2017) it is essential for management to gauge employees' readiness for change as well as their perceptions of the acquisition, in order to determine whether the acquisition would be successful.

4Packaging Africa Durban participants have highlighted an absence of three of the top five engagement drivers across generations in the workplace as identified in the Towers Perrin global workforce study which provides input into decision making, improved skills and capabilities as well as senior management interest in employee well-being (Towers Perrin, 2007-2008). Negative relations were discovered in this study, between 4Packaging Africa Durban employees and the employer. The findings from the research study identified several factors that resulted in employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban. Rai (2012) describes not engaged employees as those that are task-oriented rather than goal-oriented. They don't go beyond their scope of work and are often micromanaged. Disengaged employees often don't have a positive relationship with their managers and co-workers. Employees that fall into this category have a tendency of feeling as though their contribution to the organisation is being overlooked by management and their potential is being undermined. Employees become disengaged when there is a presence of worker invisibility (Sello, 2019).

According to Maslow (1998) open-minded management adopts the notion that everyone prefers to be a prime mover rather than a passive helper. Employee involvement is crucial when it comes to changes that are impacting employees. This form of engagement is

imperative as it utilises the input of employees to increase their commitment to the success of the organisation. According to Swindall (2007) most employees will resist an adjusted vision that will bring about change for the organisation. As it is simply not easy to accept change, especially if employees are not part of the initial decision. It further creates a platform for the change process to be more open and transparent. The reasonableness of this lies in the fact that when employees are part and parcel of decision making that affects their well-being and increases their independence and control over their work lives, they become less disengaged, more committed to the organisation, more motivated, more productive, and therefore more satisfied with their jobs which then eliminates some of that factors that have an impact on employee disengagement during an acquisition.

4.4.1 Employee engagement

It is important to note that employee engagement involves both emotional factors, which speak to the heart (what employees feel) as well as rational factors that speak to the mind (what the employees think). According to Kreisman (2002) when the relationship between the employees and management is based on the things that employees need and want, the relationship becomes emotionally rewarding. Rationally engaged employees understand how their work contributes to the overall success of the business (Brian & Heger, 2007). 4Packaging Africa Durban needs to focus on engaging employees during the acquisition so that employees are engaged and have a clear sight of their roles and the organisations' objectives. There was a huge gap after the business was acquired by 4Packaging Africa Durban, the majority of the participants didn't know to whom they were reporting.

The study findings reveal a presence of employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban.
According to Swindall (2007) disengaged employees have three ways of reacting to change. They will either:

1. Ignore and continue with business as usual
2. Not buy into the reason for the change and fight it

3. React in a negative manner

To eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement the organisation can utilise Kahn's work to manifest employee engagement. According to Blose (2008) and Kular *et al*. (2008) Kahn's work operates from a major premise which states that three psychological conditions need to be obtained for the manifestation of engagement. These conditions are as follows:

Meaningfulness - experienced meaningfulness of work addresses the need to feel valued. According to Jha and Kumar (2016) as previously quoted by Robinson *et al.* (2004) "feeling valued" was identified as a driver of employee engagement. According to the study participants, the management of 4Packaging Africa Durban has taken meaningfulness away from employees. To manifest engagement, the organisation needs to focus on making employees feel valued and appreciated by creating an environment for open communication, listening to employees concerns and views, and taking some of the employees' suggestions into consideration.

Safety – Psychological safety refers to having a pleasant relationship with managers, supervisors, and co-workers. Respondents raised the fact that the relationship they shared with management was unpleasant. 4Packaging Africa Durban has to rectify this by increasing positive engagement with co-workers. Sello (2019) states that employee engagement boosts positive organisational performance when there is a mutual relationship between the employer and the employee.

Availability – is experienced when duties are performed psychologically and emotionally. Employees perform their duties well when the above are met. They are psychologically and emotionally engaged when they have a positive relationship with 4Packaging Africa Durban management and when they are recognised for their hard work and commitment to the organisation. 4Packaging Africa Durban employees want to feel valued and appreciated by management. When an organisation rewards employees, they spend hours working collaboratively in the workplace, giving their time and resources beyond formal requests (Guillen, 2021).

4.4.2 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Motivation in the workplace is important during organisational change. Addo (2020) states that Maslow's theory is used to determine what motivates individuals. According to Osemeke and Adegboyega (2017) employees who are sufficiently motivated to perform will be more engaged, feel more invested in their work, and will be more productive. Maslow's hierarchy of needs can assist 4Packaging Africa Durban management to understand employees' level of needs for both parties to win during an acquisition. Utilising Maslow's hierarchy of needs can ultimately assist management to make better acquisition decisions in the future. Management of 4Packaging Africa Durban should be cognisant of the following employee needs given the findings of this study:

Physiological needs

Mallett-Hamer (2005) states that organisational goals and objectives cannot be achieved without communication. The themes of communication and consultation speak to physiological needs as the participants wanted to know what the future holds for them. This is important to 4Packaging Africa Durban employees as they go to work so they can provide basic needs for themselves and their families. 4Packaging Africa Durban study participants wanted to know if they would have their jobs post the acquisitions as the basic need for food, shelter, clothing, and health insurance is provided by being employed by the business (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Without an income, the basic needs of employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban, are not met. The participants wanted to feel valued by being given a chance to share their opinion and suggestions during the consultation and be heard by the management team during the period of change as their basic need revolves around the decisions made by management. One way communication does not allow for their physiological needs to be met. As a result, participants struggled to function effectively due to anxiety and stress.

Safety needs

The theme of remuneration and machines allude to safety needs as the study participants of 4Packaging Africa Durban, wanted to feel safe at work and secure financially so they can take care of their loved ones. The participants want to arrive home safely to their families, and they want to be able to take care of their family's financial needs. Participants wanted to feel free from the fear of what may result post the acquisition as previous acquisitions have resulted in retrenchment. Not being able to take care of their loved ones affects their well-being and the majority of the participants are breadwinners. Herzberg's study submits that a lack of money is a demotivator (Cartwright, 2002). Participants don't want to worry about a salary cut and changed benefits post the acquisition. They want the terms of the previous contract to remain the same and to be respected and acknowledged by the new management team.

Social needs

The theme of disregarding employees relates to social needs as employees want to contribute to the success of the organisation by being heard and recognised for their contributions Addo (2020). 4Packaging Africa Durban management can proactively arrange innovative for sharing business ideas. Also, programs such as employee assistance are important during the change to provide specialised assistance before and during organisational change, as they prioritise employee wellness. Especially since 4Packaging Africa, Durban did not involve the employees. Such assistance is provided to assist the employee to focus and not get injured whilst performing their duties amid the acquisition and after.

Esteem needs

The theme of trust and unequal treatment relate to esteem needs as the participants of this study believe that they are deserving of dignity and confidence in their potential to drive the business to success. The participants wanted to gain more skills so they can take the business to the next level and make business recommendations to management for the betterment of the business. As the acquisition is effective, 4Packaging Africa Durban

needs to create a work environment that promotes respect, personal growth, and rewards greatness, and accomplishment as it nurtures participants wellness and productivity. According to Addo (2020) when trust prevails between the employer and the employee, high levels of employee engagement can be nurtured in the organisation.

Self-actualisation needs

The theme management and sources of employee disengagement best fits self-actualisation needs. In a changing work environment, the participant can fulfill their full potential through management assistance. According to Addo (2020), self-actualisation focuses on making a difference in the world and 4Packaging Africa Durban management can achieve this by making a difference in employees' lives. It is the role of 4Packaging Africa Durban management to identify where each participant is on the hierarchy so they can eliminate any sources of employee disengagement. Poor management is one of the reasons why employees leave the organisation (Kreisman, 2002). A need that is significantly satisfied no longer motivates. Therefore, management can focus on satisfying employee needs at the right level. Participants can attain self-actualisation with the aid of management through education, learning a new skill, starting a new position, or becoming the best at what they do as a way of realising self-actualisation. This cannot be achieved if 4Packaging Africa Durban management does not identify and eliminate possible sources of employee disengagement and promote such opportunities for the participants.

4.5 Conclusion

The research study explored the impact of the business acquisition to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban. This chapter focused on presenting the main findings related to the study, which were identified to be instrumental during the interviews, following data analysis using thematic analysis. Provided in this chapter is a discussion of the results merged with literature from chapter two as the framework for understanding the views, opinions, perceptions, and feelings of the participants on the impact that the acquisition has had on participants. Interview

responses coupled with literature on employee engagement revealed that there was a presence of employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban. The key themes emanating from this study were communication, management, unequal treatment, machines, disregarding employees, consultation, remuneration, and trust. To address issues of disengagement in the organisation, amid a business acquisition, the true root cause needs to be identified otherwise this then becomes a fruitless exercise as disengagement varies across organisations due to differences in organisational culture. Once the root cause is identified and understood, the solution often becomes obvious (Wolff, 2019). The following chapter concludes the study and presents recommendations for 4Packaging Africa Durban.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented findings from interviews conducted with 4Packaging Africa Durban participants. Chapter Five, which is the final chapter of the research study, will present the conclusion as well as the recommendations of the study. The study aimed to identify the impact of the business acquisition to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa, Durban. Various factors lead to employees being disengaged whilst management missed the opportunity to identify and mitigate these factors going into the business acquisition. This investigation was relevant as it examines how identifying factors that result in employee disengagement can be eliminated to improve employee engagement during a business acquisition.

The following are the research objectives of the study:

- To evaluate 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' readiness for a changing environment.
- To investigate the effectiveness of the acquisition process on employees at 4Packaging Africa Durban.
- To examine 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' views, experiences, and opinions on business acquisition.
- To evaluate 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' perception of the acquisition leading to demotivation of employees' which results in disengagement.
- To determine a conducive work environment that promotes organisational commitment at 4Packaging Africa Durban.

5.2 The Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research study was to understand the impact of the acquisition of AFOC by 4Packaging Africa Durban, particularly on employees, to gauge their point of

view, access their change readiness and how effective the change has been on them. Thereafter providing recommendations to encourage organisational commitment, in effect to eliminate any factors that result in employee disengagement in the workplace. This study is important as it seeks to explore and develop an understanding of any factors that result in employee disengagement which inevitably affects the performance of the organisation as the organisation still has to attain customer expectations irrespective of internal changes. Hence eliminating any level of disengagement amongst employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban is crucial for business continuity.

5.3 Summary of the study

Enabling a deeper level of understanding, the literature review focused on engaged employees, disengaged employees, actively disengaged employees as well as motivation theories that were obtained from academic journals and textbooks. The researcher obtained authorisation from the MD of 4Packaging Africa Durban, granting the researcher permission to conduct the study with 4Packaging Africa Durban. The study participants were invited to participate in the study, and they were assured of confidentiality. A qualitative research approach best fits the study purpose as it enabled the researcher to gain insight from the participants being interviewed as well as their perspective of the subject being investigated. Twenty in-depth face-to-face and telephonic interviews were conducted with participants in the study. Thereafter data was analysed and categorised into themes that formed broad descriptions in chapter four of this study.

The emphasis of the recommendations is based on the key findings of the research study. Whereby, recommendations for eliminating factors that result in employee disengagement to improve employee engagement during a business acquisition at 4Packaging Africa Durban are shared. This chapter further discusses study limitations and recommendations for future studies.

5.4 Recommendations

The study examined the acquisition by 4Packaging Africa to investigate the impact that the acquisition had on employees. Therefore, highlighting employees' perspectives as recommendations to eliminate any factors resulting in employee disengagement during a business transition. To eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement during the business acquisition, it is recommended that management establish what the workers want from the acquisition to know how to keep them engaged and reduce employee disengagement.

Based on the perspectives of the employees, through information shared during the interviews, the researcher gathered that 4Packaging Africa Durban can benefit from a successful acquisition by using the themes identified in chapter four. These recommendations are presented to give context to the research questions posed to the study participants, therefore, aligning with the study objective.

5.4.1 Objective One

To evaluate 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' readiness for a changing environment.

Consultation with employees

The participants of this study indicated that there was not enough consultation with employees before the acquisition and after. Therefore, affecting employees' readiness for a changing environment as they were not prepared to be taken over by a new business. Since 4Packaging Africa Durban employees value communication during a change, it is beneficial for 4Packaging Africa Durban management to appoint a change agent. It is recommended that management make use of a change agent to champion and facilitate a smooth transition of the organisation. If this consideration is successful, then a change agent can then be appointed and introduced to the employees before the occurrence of a change of this nature, so employees feel less disengaged when the organisation

implements the necessary process. The change agent does not necessarily have to be someone from outside the organisation as this will incur additional costs, 4Packaging Africa Durban management team can appoint someone within the organisation (Matyesha, 2011). In this manner, the acquisition could be of ease for both employees and the new employer. The effort of a change agent could improve acceptance of the acquisition and reduce employee disengagement during the acquisition process.

According to Matyesha (2011) it is central for a change agent to clearly state the need to change for the employees to buy into the change. The ultimate weapon for any change to be successful is open communication.

5.4.2 Objective Two

To investigate the effectiveness of the acquisition process on employees at 4Packaging Africa Durban.

Disregarding employees

It is the role of organisational leaders to prepare employees for change so that they can be part of the initial discussion, buy into the benefit of the change and accept it (Swindall, 2007). Hence, the acquisition process was ineffective from an employees' perspective. The changing work environment had a negative impact on 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' affecting their level of engagement. The study participants highlighted that management did not listen to their ideas, suggestions, and opinions. They felt a lack of support as their point of view was often rejected by management. To reduce this occurrence, it is recommended that management involve employees in decision making by inviting suggestions and encouraging creativity when addressing issues involving the business. Gopal (2006) states that for the management of 4Packaging Africa Durban to promote employee engagement, employees must feel valued by receiving recognition.

Trusting employees

The findings revealed that participants sought trust from management. The employer should give the employees the benefit of a doubt to make their work more meaningful. In this regard, the study recommends:

- Trust and fairness to be promoted within the organisation.
- Apply ethical behaviour throughout the organisation.
- Create a culture of openness and transparency.

Sources of employee disengagement

Employees don't want to feel like they are just a number in the organisation, they want to feel valued and appreciated. They want to matter and make valued contributions to the organisation. They want to contribute to the growth, sustainability, and success of the business. Management must ensure that all the factors identified in this study are addressed to eliminate employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban. The following is recommended for implementation:

- Encourage employees to give constructive criticism on business matters
- Allow employees to share innovative ideas to grow and sustain the business
- Create a work environment that allows employees to share business ideas without fear or judgment

This study recommends that in the future, these measures be put in place by 4Packaging Africa Durban to improve the effectiveness of the acquisition and mitigate factors that result in employee disengagement before acquiring a new business.

5.4.3 Objective Three

To examine 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' views, experiences, and opinions on business acquisition.

Communication

The success of an acquisition is heavily dependent on the people who are immediately affected by the change by way of their attitude and commitment to the change. 4Packaging Africa Durban employees had been left with extreme uncertainty following the acquisition. A finding from the study with 4Packaging Africa Durban participants was that for the acquisition to be successful, employees would have appreciated being involved during the acquisition process. They indicated a huge communication gap and a lack of evaluation of their perception of the change so that they could guarantee buy-in from the elements of the change that are fundamental to the organisations' success. Participants of 4Packaging Africa Durban emphasised that communication was vain. It was highlighted that since the organisation was going through a major change that involved the employees, communication should have been more effective. Blose (2018) states that it is reasonable for organisations to not stop by monitoring employees' level of engagement. However, they need to take action to increase employees' level of engagement. The study recommends that the employer should place measures to find out what matters to the employees especially since the findings suggest that meaningful communication impacts employees during a change. Gopal (2006) states that for the management of 4Packaging Africa Durban to promote employee engagement, employees must receive regular feedback on their work performance and have discussions around their work progress. This encourages and re-enforces positive engagement, therefore eliminating factors that result in disengagement during a business acquisition. To improve communication during a business acquisition, the following communication strategies are recommended for implementation at 4Packaging Africa Durban.

- 4Packaging Africa Durban leadership should promote and encourage an open and transparent communication environment that allows for employee participation in decision making for the attainment of business goals
- A business update on organisational change must be announced timely and communicated on all channels used for business communication
- Departmental managers should ensure a consistent flow of communication and ensure that appropriate feedback mechanisms are in place

- 4Packaging Africa Durban leadership to communicate the vision and mission of the business
- Management should create an environment with a sense of urgency toward crises response that may arise

Management

Echols (2005) reveals that management forms a critical part in creating a strong workforce over employee salary or benefits. According to Attridge (2009) employee disengagement is associated with experiencing low levels of support from management. The majority of the participants in the study indicated that management did not have a positive vision for the future of the organisation as well as for the development of employees. This heavily contributed to employee disengagement. According to the global workforce study report by Towers Perrin (2007-2008), employees want to learn and grow. Training such as multiskilling which was existing in the business could have been implemented rigorously on employees who wished for the opportunity to gain more skill and competency. Gopal (2006) states that for the management of 4Packaging Africa Durban to promote employee engagement employees must be granted opportunities to learn and grow. A study by Towers Perrin (2007-2008) approves the importance of 4Packaging Africa Durban creating an organisational culture that drives engagement through organisational leadership. This can be attained through ways of their behaviour and actions towards employees as well as through providing learning and development opportunities that the employees have been requesting for years without being granted. Senior management should review the study policy to include everyone including shop floor workers as they felt marginalised. The following recommendations are made:

- Appoint an influential leader to manage the employees and work with human resources to assist with employees' needs
- Grant all employees an equal study opportunity irrespective of their pay grade for skills enhancement
- Create a learning environment that encourages employees to further their studies
- Encourage training and development of shop floor workers in management positions

5.4.4 Objective Four

To evaluate 4Packaging Africa Durban employees' perception of the acquisition leading to demotivation of employees' which results in disengagement.

Unequal treatment

The majority of shop floor workers felt that they were unfairly treated. Employees in more senior positions got all the recognition and they were treated differently than they were. They felt marginalised and without management support. In this regard, the following recommendations are made to management:

- Create a culture of equality and fairness.
- Keep employees motivated through employee support, rewards, and improved working conditions.
- Awareness to be raised on unequal treatment as well as channels of reporting such behaviour.

Machines

Gopal (2006) states that for the management of 4Packaging Africa Durban to promote employee engagement, resources must be available, and employees must have the right tools required to perform their duties. It was clear in the study that the organisation had not invested in new machinery for years as the employees complained about using old and outdated machines yet still being expected by management to deliver excellent results. The consequence of using machines of this nature is constant machine breakdowns and unsafe working conditions. The following is recommended for implementation:

- Hire an engineer to be on-site to fix machines as and when a breakdown occurs and for weekly and monthly machine maintenance
- Senior management to conduct a needs analysis for investing in new machines. Agree on a budget with finance and get procurement to source new machines

- Stop the use of machines that pose a safety hazard

5.4.5 Objective Five

To determine a conducive work environment that promotes organisational commitment at 4Packaging Africa Durban.

Study managerial implication

Employee engagement focuses on both the employer and the employee. According to Addo (2020) engagement is achieved when employees' performance contributes to the organisations' goals and most importantly when employees' personal rewards, growth, and pay aspirations are met. When employees are engaged and managed appropriately, they are considered to be valuable assets to the organisation (Anitha, 2014). Without the employees, 4Packaging Africa Durban would not exist as machines require operators to keep them in operation for the business goals to be attained. The following are recommendations to the management of 4Packaging Africa Durban to reduce employee disengagement in the organisation: Employee motivation, morale, dedication, and organisational loyalty.

Remunerating employees (Employee motivation)

Remuneration is a crucial element of employee engagement. Remuneration can be financial such as salary and bonus. It can also be a non-financial reward such as a year-end function. It motivates employees to attain more whilst directing focus on work and personal development (Anitha, 2014). 4Packaging Africa Durban employees noted that remuneration is a motivator when it is present and a demotivator when there is a lack thereof. 4Packaging Africa Durban employees further stated that they wanted to be remunerated fairly according to the jobs they perform. Recognition is the most basic necessity for employees to remain engaged in their jobs (Addo, 2020). The following are recommended to management to reduce employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban:

- Introduce performance review and performance appraisal
- Give credit to employees when they have done well by issuing vouchers
- Recognise small and big achievements
- Grant employees' reasonable annual increases based on their performance review
- Introduce annual functions that create a relaxed environment as a token of appreciation for employees' contribution to the organisation

If 4Packaging Africa Durban management wishes to attain a high level of employee engagement, they need to recognise their employees and present acceptable remuneration standards (Anitha, 2014).

Morale, dedication, and organisational loyalty

According to Anitha (2014) employee engagement is generally defined as the level of involvement and commitment that the employee has towards their organisation and the organisations' values. When employees are engaged, they go beyond the call of duty as they are motivated to achieve organisational goals. According to Kular *et al*. (2008) engaged employees are characterised by dedication, loyalty, and being productive. To increase employees' morale, dedication, and organisational loyalty, it is recommended that 4Packaging Africa Durban management:

- Adopt a good organisational culture
- Create a pleasant and safe work environment
- Eliminate employees concerns about job security
- Encourage 4Packaging Africa Durban employees to work diligently with the purpose of attaining the vision and mission of the business
- Encourage 4Packaging Africa Durban employees to speak out when they are not satisfied rather than sweep matters under the carpet
- Identify health and wellness programs that address the underlying root cause of disengagement as this can lead employees to healthier behaviour changes that are sustained for the long term
- Follow-up when issues raised by employees are not resolved on time

- Provide feedback and support where necessary

According to Kular *et al*. (2008) as previously quoted by Cooper (1997) properly managing employees' emotions rather than shutting them out, can drive loyalty, commitment, trust, and inevitably great productivity gains. Once employees are engaged, loyalty is inevitable. They are dependable and accountable for their actions (Addo, 2020).

5.5 Recommendations for future studies

There can be further investigations by future studies on employee disengagement as many past studies have been conducted by researchers on employee engagement. Leading to a shortage of investigations on employee disengagement. Future studies can investigate employee disengagement amid an acquisition.

It would be meaningful for more researchers to conduct further investigations to ascertain if the impact is similar or whether the factors are different for other organisations experiencing an acquisition as there is much need for additional research to further build on this topic. Particularly on the factors resulting in employee disengagement during acquisition as employees spend the majority of their time in the workplace.

This research study endeavoured to investigate the impact of the business acquisition to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement across all employees of 4Packaging Africa Durban irrespective of employee grade. However, management was unavailable during this research study. It would be of interest for future studies to gather management opinions, views, and perceptions on this topic.

A study of the next business that 4Packaging Africa desires to acquire could highlight other factors which may have not been covered in this study, that could be used to eliminate employee disengagement during a business acquisition. This study could be recommended for other organisations undergoing an acquisition. Whereby the time frame would be longer compared to 4Packaging Africa Durban, to further understand the impact on employees.

In a study of a completely different organisation to 4Packaging Africa Durban, going through a business acquisition could highlight similar or different factors to be eliminated. This study should be incorporated into future studies.

5.6 Limitations

4Packaging Africa had two-cylinder manufacturing plants in South Africa. Due to the acquisition affecting only the Durban plant, the study focused on the Durban plant which was within the reach of the researcher. Therefore, excluding the employees from the other site. As a result of this exclusion, the population size was small, hence there was no sample. Had the identified population lacked the willingness to participate in the study, further limitations could have surfaced.

Since the study was based on 4Packaging Africa Durban this meant that comparisons with other organisations were not possible as the study was company-specific.

Another limitation identified in this study is that of the limited literature available on employee disengagement when compared to employee engagement which seemed to have greater dominance. According to Brian and Heger (2007) employee engagement has received an explosion of interest over the past few years.

This study relates to the current perceptions of 4Packaging Africa Durban employees on the impact of the business acquisition to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement. Due to time limitations, the study only focuses on the first few months into the acquisition.

The difficulty in populating this research study was that during the time of data collection, 4Packaging Africa was closed temporarily as it was preparing to retrench employees. Four employees were not available at the time of conducting the in-depth interviews as the organisation had issued a notice for employees to remain at home until further notice following the KZN July 2021 riots. Coupled with organisational politics, impacting on

interviewing all the employees. The original population included employees from senior management level to the lowest grade within the organisation. Hence, the total number of participants ended up being twenty against the estimated population of twenty-four employees. When the employees returned to work, time limitations also presented a challenge when interviewing the participants as they were only available for a short period.

Another limitation that surfaced during the study as a result of the KZN July 2021 riots was the limited access to the participants as Zoom, Teams or online surveys could not be used due to participants having limited access to these platforms. Also, the researcher had selected a qualitative research approach and communicated in-depth interviews when applying for ethical clearance. A mixed approach could have worked better in this regard, providing extensive data collection methods.

5.7 Delimitations

The researcher opted not to interview the whole of 4Packaging Africa which includes the branch in Johannesburg although employees' input might have been valuable in terms of allowing further contributions and in-depth understanding of the topic under investigation.

5.8 Conclusion

This study was conducted to benefit 4Packaging Africa Durban employees and the business at large. The purpose of 4Packaging Africa Durban acquiring AFOC was to grow its workforce and revenue. Although the business takeover was new however, the same employees who had been showing signs of disgruntlement prior to the business acquisition, had to adapt to new organisational leadership with unresolved issues that resulted in employee disengagement. The news of the business being acquired as well as insufficient communication around the acquisition did not relieve employees of disengagement. Instead, employee disengagement was aggravated due to a lack of

communication which resulted in ambiguity and uncertainty regarding job security. According to Sello (2019) if job security is compromised, it is challenging for employees to remain engaged. Hence it is important for 4Packaging Africa Durban to conduct a study of this nature as soon as the sale of a business is confirmed. This will assist the new leadership team to address how to mitigate existing and possible factors that result in employee disengagement. As a result of this study, 4Packaging Africa Durban had sufficient data to address employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa Durban. This could have been attained through implementing recommendations outlined in this chapter that enhances employee engagement during a business acquisition. However, since the business was shut down this data can be utilised by 4Packaging Africa to build on, when considering future acquisitions.

Engaged employees are valuable to the organisation as they are highly motived, they are more efficient and productive, loyal to the business, accountable and they have the business best interest. Engagement assists employees with developing pride in carrying out their duties, therefore ensuring good quality in the work produced. Whereas employee disengagement attracts the opposite. It is hoped that this research study has afforded some sensitivity and awareness to some of these concerns and issues raised by participants of 4Packaging Africa Durban.

A study conducted by Blose (2018) on employee engagement revealed that communication, empowerment, training and development, feeling valued and involved are closely linked to engagement giving rise to a feeling of being valued and involved in the organisation. These are important elements for enhancing employees' attitudes and perceptions towards engagement. The outcome of identifying the impact and eliminating factors that result in employee disengagement during a business acquisition at 4Packaging Africa Durban included: Communication, management, equal opportunities, machines, consultation, remuneration, disregarding employees, and trust. Organisational leaders of 4Packaging Africa Durban are better equipped to eradicate employee disengagement by timely identifying and understanding the factors that attribute to employee engagement.

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APPENDIX A: GATEKEEPER'S LETTER

4PACKAGING
AFRICA

4Packaging Africa (Pty) Ltd
35 Apex Road, Apex Industrial Park
Benoni, Johannesburg South Africa 1501

4Packaging Africa (Pty) Ltd PO Box 520, Benoni, 1501

Attention: Boniwe Zungu

GATEKEEPERS LETTER

This letter serves to grant Boniwe Zungu (209523761) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, permission to conduct research for research topic entitled "The impact of business acquisition to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa, Durban", with 4Packaging Africa, Durban plant. Please note that for the purposes of interviewing the employees, you will approach them directly and participation is on a voluntary basis. The study should be conducted within the ambit of good research and ethics as laid down by the University and include confidentiality and anonymity.

We wish you well in your research endeavour.

Sincerely

[redacted]

MR S. SONN
MANAGING DIRECTOR
4PACKAGING AFRICA
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1/7/21
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Vat Reg. No: 4300143670

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Participants	Gender	Position
Participant 1	Male	Machine Operator
Participant 2	Male	Machine Operator
Participant 3	Female	Machine Operator
Participant 4	Female	Machine Operator
Participant 5	Male	Machine Operator
Participant 6	Male	Machine Operator
Participant 7	Male	Machine Operator
Participant 8	Female	Machine Operator
Participant 9	Female	QA Coordinator
Participant 10	Female	Machine Operator
Participant 11	Male	Machine Operator
Participant 12	Male	Machine Operator
Participant 13	Male	Machine Operator
Participant 14	Female	Machine Operator
Participant 15	Male	Machine Operator
Participant 16	Male	Machine Operator
Participant 17	Male	Machine Operator
Participant 18	Male	Machine Operator
Participant 19	Male	Machine Operator
Participant 20	Female	Machine Operator

Source: Author

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL
For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: 28 July 2021

Good day Sir/Madam,

My name is Boniwe Zungu a student from the University of KwaZulu Natal, Graduate School of Business and Leadership (GSB&L). Contact number [redacted] and email address 209523761@stu.ukzn.ac.za

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on the impact of business acquisition to eliminate factors that result in

employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa, Durban. The aim and purpose of this research is to investigate the impact of business acquisition during the change. Thereafter recommending strategies aimed at eliminating factors that result in employee disengagement whilst improving those that lead to increased employee engagement. The study is expected to enroll twenty-four participates, from the Durban site only. It will involve the following procedure, in-depth interviews. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be 30 minutes. The study is self-funded by the researcher.

The study does not involve any risks and/or discomforts. There will be no monetary gains from participating in this research. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the researcher.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number HSSREC/00003174/2021).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher on [redacted], via email at 209523761@stu.ukzn.ac.za or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
RESEARCH OFFICE, WESTVILLE CAMPUS
Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this research is voluntary, you may through verbal communication opt to discontinue participating or withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequence. In a case whereby the participant chooses to withdraw from the study, no penalty will be incurred or loss of treatment or other benefit to which they are normally entitled.

No costs will be incurred by participants as a result of participation in the study. There are no incentives or reimbursements for participation in the study.

Data obtained from the interviews will be protected by a password which ensures data security as only individuals who are authorised will have access to the information. The investigator will only share the password with the supervisors so they can have access to the information when shared via email. Data will be retained for five years thereafter it will be deleted from the computer on which it's stored.

CONSENT (Edit as required)

I (Name) have been informed about the study entitled (provide details) by (provide name of researcher/fieldworker).

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study (add these again if appropriate).

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at (provide details).

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO
Video-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO
Use of my photographs for research purposes YES / NO

_____ _____

Signature of Participant **Date**

_____ _____

Signature of Witness **Date**
(Where applicable)

_____ _____

Signature of Translator **Date**
(Where applicable)

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. How do you feel about the acquisition, and would you confer that there was sufficient consultation with employees?

2. Do you have any concerns or uncertainty as a result of the acquisition?

3. Would you perceive that the management team has a positive vision for the future of the organisation and your development?

4. What would you attribute as the barriers that could be put in place to reduce employee demotivation, in the mist of change, within the organisation?

5. How would you describe the impact that the acquisition has had on you and your performance?

6. How would you perceive your contribution to the organisation in terms of what inspires you and discourages you?

7. What areas of improvement can you identify in mitigating employee disengagement and dissatisfaction within the new organisational environment in comparison to the previous organisational environment?

8. What would you describe as the contributing factors that demotivate you as an employee, which could be improved upon?

9. In a ranking order, what would you describe as the top three frustrating employee cause of disengagement that could be reduced or eradicated within the organisation?

10. Do you perceive that the task and the duties you are expected to perform need improvement in an effort to reduce personal disengagement? Please explain.

11. Do you perceive that the working environment you are expected to perform under requires improvement in an effort to reduce personal disengagement? Please explain.

12. Are you in touch with the expectations that the organisation has bestowed on you and the team?

13. What are the key drivers that you expect to motivate you to perform at your potential best in order to make a meaningful contribution to the organisation?

14. What could you describe as the contributing factors that will motivate employees to live and execute the values and the ethos that contribute to organisational success and sustainability?

15. In a ranking order, what would you describe as the top three triggers of motivation that positively influence engagement that could be employed within the organisation?

APPENDIX E: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

21 August 2021

Miss Boniwe Akhona Mandisa Zungu (209523761)
Grad School Of Bus & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear Miss Zungu,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00003174/2021
Project title: The impact of business acquisition to eliminate factors that result in employee disengagement at 4Packaging Africa, Durban
Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received 02 August 2021 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) 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.

This approval is valid until 21 August 2022.
To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd