



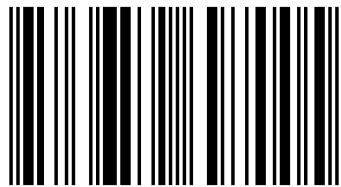
Evidences from South Africa

The focus of the study is to determine the levels of employee engagement at Company XYZ to identify the factors that contribute to employee engagement as well as examine the impact of employee engagement in improving employee performance. The study revealed that employees at Company XYZ are moderately engaged. Furthermore, respondents are satisfied with the regularity of departmental meetings, training, involvement in decision making, problem solving and planning of processes and satisfaction. However, respondents are not satisfied with communication, work-life balance, growth opportunities, remuneration, fair treatment, job fit and they do not have a future in the organisation. In addition, the study revealed that there is an impact in improving employee engagement. The research suggested that leadership and management should commit to employee engagement. Employee engagement should form part of organisational core values and be linked to the overall organisational strategy.

Busisiwe Hlalukana  
G. Ritacco

# Exploring Employee Engagement at Company XYZ

an accomplished Safety, Health, Environment, Risk and Quality (SHERQ) Lead Assessor for South African National Blood Service having 15 years of experience. played a crucial role in ensuring that organisation has appropriate framework for strategic choices that lead to the success of the organisation.



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# **Exploring Employee Engagement at Company XYZ**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Employee engagement is an important contributing factor in the success of an organisation. Employee engagement is the level of involvement and commitment an employee has towards his or her organisation and its values. The focus of the study is to determine the levels of employee engagement at Company XYZ to identify the factors that contribute to employee engagement as well as examine the impact of employee engagement in improving employee performance.

A quantitative method was applied. The questionnaire was developed using the Gallup Q12 existing model. The questionnaires were distributed to employees of Company XYZ from different departments. However, out of 170 questionnaires that were distributed only 117 were returned and 108 were used in the analysis of the study.

The study revealed that employees at Company XYZ are moderately engaged. Furthermore, respondents are satisfied with the regularity of departmental meetings, training, involvement in decision making, problem solving and planning of processes and satisfaction. However, respondents are not satisfied with communication, work-life balance, growth opportunities, remuneration, fair treatment, job fit and they do not have a future in the organisation. In addition, the study revealed that there is an impact in improving employee engagement.

The research suggested that leadership and management should commit to employee engagement. Employee engagement should form part of organisational core values and be linked to the overall organisational strategy.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CLC	Corporate Leadership Council
HRM	Human Resource Management
ISR	International Survey Research
IT	Information Technology
SHRM	Society for Human Resource Management

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The concept of employee engagement in particular has been generating a lot of interest in both research and practice (Robertson, Birch & Cooper, 2012: 224). Employee engagement is about the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards his /her work. For organisations, literature has proved that employee engagement is a strong factor for organisational performance and success (Ologbo & Sofian, 2013:1) and for employees it either bonds employees to an organisation or drives them away. Furthermore, employee engagement does not only have significant potential to affect employee retention, employee loyalty and productivity but also customer satisfaction, organisational reputation and the overall stakeholder value. Engaged employees are likely to have greater attachment to their organisations and thus a lower tendency to leave the organisation as they are aware of the business context, and work with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004:298). Therefore organisations today are increasingly challenged to establish an engaged workforce.

### **1.2 Background to the study**

Engagement can be measured by the commitment levels of the employee, his/her beliefs in the organisation's values and his/her enthusiasm to deliver outstanding service to the organisation's customers. The Gallup Organisation (2004) report on the statistics for workforce engagement reflects that 29% of employees are actively engaged in their jobs, 54% are not engaged and 17% are actively disengaged. Researchers have found that there is a direct relationship between employee commitment and business improvement when employees are engaged. The Corporate Leadership Council (2004) revealed that employees who are most committed perform 20% better and are 87% less likely to leave the organization. This is the indication of the significance of the engagement to organisation performance.

Given the link between engagement and organisational performance, it has become essential for organisations to find a way to take advantage of all available manpower for the purpose of sustainability and further growth. Organisations must work to develop and nurture engagement.

Company XYZ is a non-profit organisation that strives to be a centre of excellence in the discipline of Health. It is a national organisation with a presence in all the South African provinces, except for the Western Cape. In 2011, the Company adopted a business goal to build and develop an engaged employee community, by aiming to become an ‘employer of choice or great company to work for’. To date employee engagement initiatives at the Company have been passive and the levels and nature of employee engagement at the company are still unknown.

### **1.3 Problem statement**

The role of employee engagement in organisational success and individual well-being have received a lot of academic attention in the last decade resulting in a proliferation of academic and pragmatic literature and evidence (CIPD, 2007). Employee engagement can be understood as the connection people feel to their work that results in loyalty, dedication and high performance levels. Given these positive results, there is a lot of interest in current levels of employee engagement, and ways in which engagement can be increased. According to Lockwood (2007: 3), organizations who have not focused on increasing their employee engagement levels have suffered decreases in organizational performance. Given this, it is important that management creates an environment that encourages engagement as this is likely to boost employee commitment and productivity. At Company XYZ, employee engagement initiatives have been largely absent despite a strategic commitment to becoming an ‘employer of choice’ through the engagement of employees. In order to achieve its strategic objective as well as increase employee performance it is important to investigate the levels of employee engagement, the factors that contribute to employee engagement and the extent to which employee engagement contributes to improved employee performance. From this, suitable recommendations can be made to management n how to enhance employee engagement at the company.

### **1.4 Aim of the study**

The aim of the study is to explore the levels of employee engagement, to explore the factors which contribute to employee engagement and to ascertain how employee engagement can be maximised within company XYZ in order to achieve its organisational objectives.

## **1.5 Objectives of the study**

- 1.5.1 To assess the current levels of employee engagement at Company XYZ;
- 1.5.2 To identify the factors that contributes to employee engagement;
- 1.5.3 To examine the impact of employee engagement in improving employee performance at company XYZ;
- 1.5.4 To make recommendations to senior management on improving employee engagement at Company XYZ.

## **1.6 Research questions**

- 1.6.1 What is the level of employee engagement at Company XYZ?
- 1.6.2 What are the factors contributing to employee engagement?
- 1.6.3 What is the impact of employee engagement in improving employee performance at company XYZ?
- 1.6.4 What recommendations can be made to senior management at company XYZ on improving employee engagement?

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

The literature has proven that there is existence of gaps in the study of employee engagement. This study will add value to the management of Company XYZ. This study will provide insight and information on employee engagement and also provide management with the present level of employee engagement that is prevalent within the company. This study will also identify factors contributing to employee engagement and the impact of employee engagement in improving employee performance at Company XYZ. Furthermore, the knowledge gained of these drivers and factors can be used by other organizations to promote engagement and to ensure that their employees are committed to achieving the goals of the organization and possibly decreasing levels of disengagement. This will consecutively impact positively on retention of skills, productivity and high levels of commitment.

## **1.8 Chapter organisation**

This study is presented in the following five chapters and is focused to the study of employee engagement at Company XYZ:

- **Chapter One - Introduction**

This chapter presents an overview of the study, the problem statement, research objectives and the chapter organisation including the whole overview of the study.

- **Chapter Two - Literature Review**

This chapter reviews literature on employee engagement, categories of employee engagement and other research studies on employee engagement. The ways of maintaining and sustaining employee engagement as well as the impact of employee engagement on employee performance is discussed.

- **Chapter Three - Research Methodology**

This chapter shows how the research was conducted. It provides insight into the sampling method used, data collection techniques, and various other techniques that were used to analyse the data.

- **Chapter Four - Results, Discussion and Interpretation of Findings**

This chapter presents all the results that were gathered from the research questionnaires in graphical and tabular form. Arguments are raised and comparison of the findings of the study and previous related studies is undertaken. .

- **Chapter Five – Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter comprise presentation of the findings in relation to research objectives and questions with reference to the findings of the primary and secondary research. Furthermore, recommendations to management of company XYZ on how to mitigate the research problem are highlighted. Lastly, recommendations for future research and conclusion are stated.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter provides the introduction to the study, the aim and the objectives of the study, the problem statement as well as the outline of the study. The following chapter presents a literature review on employee engagement.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Employee engagement is important for organisations, as a result most organisations are increasingly recognising that engaged employees in the workplace do not only add value but are also the key to the success of the organisation. According to Nel, Werner, Du Plesis, Ngalo and Sono (2011:303), employee engagement focuses on the all-involved psychological commitment of an employee to the role he or she fulfils in the organisation and taps into employees' motivation to try harder and put in an extra effort.

This chapter reviews the literature of employee engagement by highlighting definitions of the employee engagement; discussion of the different levels of employee engagement as well as the drivers and models of employee engagement. Finally, impact of employee engagement in improving employee performance in organisations is discussed.

### **2.2 The concept of employee engagement**

Employee engagement as a concept is a vast topic in literature due to the fact that there is no one universally applied definition to cover the topic. The interest in employee engagement and proliferation of research in the field has led to the development of various definitions of employee engagement. The definitions often overlap to a large extent but also contain conflicting elements, which has as a result added to the expansion of research literature.

Although employee engagement is complex, however, for the purpose of this study the following definitions are considered as relevant:

Employee engagement is defined by Khan (1990:694) as “the harnessing of organisation members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performance”. This means that engaged employees are physically involved in their tasks, vigilant cognitively and emotionally connected to others when performing their jobs. Khan (1990) argues that engagement means to be psychologically present and to exert effort when occupying and performing organisational roles.

Rothbard (2001:656) agrees with the definition of engagement as psychological presence and further elaborates that the term “psychological presence” is made up of two critical

constituents namely; attention and absorption. Attention referring to “cognitive availability and the amount of time one spends thinking about a role while absorption means being engrossed in a role and refers to the intensity of one’s focus on a role” (Rothbard, 2001:656). In contrast Khan (1990:694) also defines disengagement as “the uncoupling of selves from work roles, which involves people withdrawing and defending themselves physically, cognitively during role performance”.

Influenced by Khan’s (1990) definition, Corporate Leadership Council (2004:3) defines employee engagement as “the extent to which employees commit rationally and emotionally to something or someone in their organisation and how hard they work and how long they stay as a result of that commitment”.

This is supported by Lockwood (2007:2) who refers to engagement as “the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organisation, how hard they work and how long they stay as a result of that commitment” and Hewitt (2012:5) who emphasizes that employee engagement is an emotional and intellectual commitment from employees. When an employee speaks positively of his job, organisation and his employer, this will help in recruiting and image creation. Furthermore engaged employees will walk an extra mile in ensuring that the organisation sustains success and show respect and loyalty to the organisation.

Saks (2006:602) views engagement as “the distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional and behavioural components that are associated with individual role performance”. He discusses how employee engagement differs from organisation from organisational commitment, stating that organisational commitment refers to the person’s attitude and connection to the organisation (Saks, 2006:602).

Furthermore, Robinson, Perryman and Hayday (2004:9) argue that engagement “is a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organisation and its values”. An engaged employee understands the business environment, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organisation. Therefore, it is imperative for the organisation to put extra effort in developing and maintaining engagement. In actual fact, a two-way relationship between employer and employee is required.

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004:295) assert that engagement is not a monetary and specific state but a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any

particular object, event, individual or behaviour. Bakker, Demerouti and Xanthopoulou (2012:15) conceive engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigor, dedication and absorption”. Vigor meaning that employees are highly energetic and persistent when facing challenges, dedication representing employees’ feeling of pride, significance and enthusiasm while absorption implying that employees have a determination to focus entirely on their tasks. Therefore, engagement is an energetic level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards his organisation. Engaged employees who are energetic and take their work as a challenge appear as the opposite to burn-out employees who are stressed and see their work as demanding (Bakker, Schaufelli, Leiter & Tarris, 2008:190).

With all the definitions of employee engagement, it is observed that there is no single and generally accepted definition of employee engagement. However, the definitions derive that employee engagement is about the involvement, enthusiasm, passion and commitment of people to an organisation. Macey and Schneider (2008:6) noted that engagement shares significant overlap with job satisfaction, organisation commitment and feelings of empowerment, along with organisation citizenship behaviour. Engagement has both attitudinal and behavioural components which benefit the organisations.

In order to understand elements of engagement Macey and Scheiner (2008:6) developed a framework conceptualising that employee engagement is developed from trait engagement, state engagement and behavioural engagement. Trait engagement involves positive views of life and work, state engagement involves feelings of energy and absorption and behavioural engagement involves extra-role behaviour. This means that trait engagement leads to state engagement which leads to behavioural engagement which of course can benefit the organisation. It can be concluded from the literature of these elements that employees have an obligation to present psychological presence, activation and show high behavioural energy level towards an employer. However, organisations need to create a sense of trust that enables employees to be able to benefit from the psychological and behavioural contract built up during the employment (Macey & Schneider 2008:25).

To summarise, it is evident that the way in which engagement is defined, lacks consistency. However, there are various definitions of engagement with common characteristics that can enable one to come up with one definition which combines all these definitions. In view of the definitions above, it can be concluded that employee engagement is having a

psychological behaviour and commitment towards the assigned tasks, loyalty to the organisation and job satisfaction. For a person to be engaged, he or she must be vigorous, dedicated and absorbed in his or her job.

### **2.3 A Global research on employee engagement**

Employee engagement levels have been measured nationally and internationally by several international consultancy companies using different models of engagement measure. In 2013 Gallup organisation released a report on the study conducted in 2012 on the global analysis employee engagement levels in the Employee Engagement Index. One hundred and forty two (142) countries were surveyed using Gallup's own Q<sup>12</sup> engagement survey. Gallup (2013:7) discovered that 13 percent of employees worldwide are engaged, 63 percent not engaged and 24 percent are actively disengaged. Disengaged employees distance themselves from the rational and / or emotional components of work while engaged employees are emotionally dedicated in their organisations and they focus on creating value on a daily basis for their organisation while disengaged employees distance themselves (Gallup, 2013:6). It is observed from Gallup (2013) reports that Northern America has the highest levels of engaged employees (29 percent), followed by Australia and New Zealand at 24 percent. The highest level of actively disengaged employees is found in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Sub-Saharan Africa at 35 percent and 33 percent respectively. Interestingly, Gallup (2013) report reveals that South Africa has one of the highest percentages of actively disengaged employees in the world with 45 percent and 9 of engaged employees. This is because the important source of employment in South Africa that is the mining industry has been overwhelmed by violent and destabilizing labour unrest in recent years.

A comparison study conducted by Hewitt Associates (2013) in 12 nations revealed that levels of employee engagement among the surveyed nations rose by 2 percent in 2012 to 60 percent compared to 2011 which was 58 percent. The largest increase in engagement was found to be in Europe by 5 percentage point (from 52 percent to 57 percent) followed by Latin America from 71 to 74 percent. North America declined by 1 percent and Asia experienced no change (Hewitt 2013:6). The survey highlighted that although the levels of the engagement are on the rise globally they vary across the region. In their research Hewitt Associates discovered that four out of ten employees are still not engaged and two out of ten are actively disengaged.

Furthermore, Towers Watson (2013) found disconcerting findings again in the USA in a 2012 Global Workforce Study. Two thirds of the American workforce was found to be disengaged resulting in lost in economical productivity. The survey involved about 32 000 full time employees who worked for large and mid-sized organisations. It was established that only 35 percent of all employees worldwide were highly engaged and 26 percent were actively disengaged in their jobs. The survey also indicated that highly engaged, moderately engaged, and actively disengaged employees' percentages considerable vary on a country by country.

The Corporate Leadership Council (2004) reported that organisations can experience an increase of up to 20 percentile points in employee performance by only increasing employee engagement level. A survey of over 5000 employees by Corporate Leadership Council (2004) revealed that engaged employees demonstrate an 87 percent reduction in the probability of leaving the organisation.

These findings demonstrate that employee engagement can be a deciding factor for organisational effectiveness. Accordingly, it is imperative for the corporate executives to consistently rank the development of an engaged workforce as an organisational priority.

## **2.4 Categories of employee engagement**

According to Gallup (2013), there are three categories of employees namely engaged employees, not engaged employees and actively disengaged employees.

### **2.4.1 Engaged employees**

Engaged employees are enthusiastic and passionate about their jobs and they feel a profound connection to their organisation. They are more likely to stay with their organisation. They have a clear understanding about the desired outcomes for their roles. They work consistently at high levels of commitment. They use their strengths and talents every day at work and come up with innovations to improve the performance of the organisations. Engaged employees treat their colleagues with respect and help others to perform efficiently and effectively (Robinson et al., 2004:5).

### **2.4.2 Not engaged employees**

Not engaged employees focus only on completing their assigned tasks without going the extra mile or providing support to team members to achieve a common goal, because their passion for work has died out. They never volunteer for extra work or projects. According to

Vazirani (2002:5), they tend to concentrate more on the tasks than to the goals and outcomes that the organisation is trying to achieve. They perceive nobody acknowledges their contribution and thus emotionless towards their senses of achievements. Not engaged employees have great potentials that often go unnoticed and untapped as a result of poor working relationships with their line managers. They become disengaged because of a lack of promotion, career growth and development, job dislike and or distrust in their management.

### **2.4.3 Actively disengaged employees**

The actively disengaged employees are unhappy at work. They portray their unhappiness in actions, words and attitudes. Actively disengaged employees withdraw themselves during role performances and can be very defensive. They put no effort to their roles and undermine what their engaged co-workers accomplish (Sundaray, 2011:54). They consistently seem to be against virtually everything in the organisation. They show negativity at every opportunity and always try to influence those around them. They are only physically present at work (Albrecht, 2010:35). Disengaged employees can cause a functioning organisation to become dysfunctional.

Additionally, talent study conducted by Towers Perrin in 2003 used slightly different categories for types of employees according to their levels of engagement. Employees were divided into highly engaged, moderately engaged and disengaged. Moderately engaged employees are quite positive in some areas but provide from neutral to negative points of view about their organisation (Towers Perrin, 2003:6).

### **2.5 Drivers of employee engagement**

The drivers of employee engagement are referred to as “a set of workplace features that, in combination are crucial to fostering high engagement” (Ologbo & Saudah, 2011:571). There are several drivers of employee engagement. However, having a sense of being valued and involved are the only two critical key elements in closing the engagement gap (Robinson et al., 2004:21).

Robinson et al. (2004:21) noted that the strongest driver of employee engagement is having a sense of being valued and involved. It is therefore essential for the organisations to comprehend employees’ voice and understand employees’ needs, issues and values in a diligent manner (Towers Perrin, 2003:29).

Several key drivers contribute to feeling valued and involved. Bhatla (2011:3), Sundaray (2011:55) and Vazirani (2007:7) concur that the key drivers that influence employee engagement are recruitment, job designing, career development, leadership, empowerment, equal opportunities and fair treatment, training and development, Health and Safety, compensation, performance management, family friendliness, communication and job satisfaction as discussed below:

### **2.5.1 Recruitment**

In a recruitment and selection process, employment is offered to employees who show potential skills and knowledge of the job. For this reason, the manner in which organisations attract, recruit and select their imminent employees can conversely affect both current and future employees' commitment and engagement levels. Likewise, sourcing and attracting employees from outside, rarely considering internal staff, is detrimental to the engagement process. This results in employees feeling neglected, demoralised, and less competent and less committed and engaged (Ngobeni & Bezuidenhout, 2011). Hence, levels of engagement can be increased by identifying candidates with necessary knowledge and skills for the job as well as the understanding the culture of the organisation.

### **2.5.2 Job Designing**

Employee engagement is positively related to the characteristics of the jobs (Saks, 2006:604). Stimulating and challenging jobs that give employees opportunities to use different and creative skills are more likely to provide psychological meaningfulness. Accomplishment of psychological meaningfulness is through the provision of variety and challenging work whereby an employee can be allowed to contribute to the organisation by using different skills and decisions (Saks, 2006:604). Additionally, employees' motivation and opportunities to be more engaged and be present at work is stimulated by the uniqueness of the job characteristics.

### **2.5.3 Career Development Opportunities**

Career development influences engagement. Organisations can increase engagement by creating a learning culture and individual development plans with a clear career path for every employee. This will result in employees not feeling stagnant and leaving the organisation. Vazirani (2007:7) also states that organisations with high levels of engagement

offer employees opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills as well as advance their potential abilities. This results into a mutual investment where both employees and employers invest in each other.

#### **2.5.4 Leadership**

Leadership plays a crucial role in the employee's engagement levels. Employees need to be confident in their organisation through the reliability of the leadership. Employees need to be certain that core values for which their organisation stands are unequivocal and clear therefore one of the imperative roles of the leadership is to encompass clarity of those values. Furthermore, organisations have gained their additional success in increasing levels of engagement through acknowledging and demonstrating respect for each employee's qualities and contribution to the organisation regardless of the level of their jobs (Vazirani, 2007:8).

#### **2.5.5 Empowerment**

Every employee is in need of being included in any decisions that affect their jobs. It is for this reason that leaders of successfully and highly engaged organisations encourage their employees to contribute with their views and ideas in resolving challenges that their organisations encounter. This in return builds employees trust and makes them realise that the organisation values their views (Bhatla 2011:3; Sundaray 2011:56).

#### **2.5.6 Fairness**

Maslach and Leiter (2008:500) assert that "fairness is the degree to which decisions are perceived as being fair and equitable". This is in agreement with Bushe (2012:285) who explains that employees perceive a fair organisation by the balance between the input during their task performance and the equal opportunities of growth and benefits which are the outputs. Employees thus feel eased and a fear of discrimination is disappears within the organisation (Sundaray, 2011:56). On the other hand, employees who feel an absence of fairness in the organisation withdraw and disengage themselves from any work activities.

#### **2.5.7 Training and Development**

Ologbo and Sofian (2012:501) assert that training and development of employees has an impact on employee engagement. New skills and knowledge that employers provide to employees benefit the growth of the organisation and thus increase the engagement levels and

decrease the employee turnover. Following the theory of Sundaray (2011:56) one of the reasons for employee turnover is the redundancy of skills. Therefore, it is imperative for employers to provide training, re-training and multi-skill training to employees. By that employees master new challenges and tasks. They also feel valued and are more likely to copiously engage in their jobs (Sundaray, 2011:56).

### **2.5.8 Performance Management**

Performance management processes provide conditions for employee engagement where in the process of goal setting roles and responsibilities of employees within the organisation need to be included (Sundaray, 2011:56). Employees will be highly engaged and feel more valued and hence improve job performance. Employee contributions that go over and above employers' expectations are encouraged and acknowledged through performance management process. In support, Desai, Majumda and Prabhu (2010:84) assert that in order for the managers to influence employees' engagement levels, an environment that will maximise the performance of employee within the organisation need to be created by the managers. This is consistent with the literature by Gruman and Saks (2011:133) who cite that effectively implemented performance management processes assist in creating and sustaining high levels of engagement which leads to high performance levels. Therefore

### **2.5.9 Reward and recognition**

Reward and recognition have a major impact on the conceptions of the relationship between an employer and employee. Rewards include benefits and pay salary which are financial components as well as employee assistance programs, subsidized cafeterias, travel discounts, company picnics non-fiscal benefits. According to Ram and Prabhakar (2011:50) rewards in an organisation play a tremendous role in motivating employees. Employees are more engaged and committed when they are rewarded and recognised for their outstanding performance. This is consistent with Muthueloo, Basbous, Ping and Long (2013:1548) who noted that employers who listen, support and recognise employees' contribution to the organisation are likely to enhance high levels of employee engagement. In other words, the amount of rewards and recognition received may stimulate the employees' engagement. AbuKhalif and Som (2013:43) cite that employee turnover has been inspired by management's lack of recognising employees for their role performance. From this, it is important for organisations to have a proper and sufficient amount of rewards and recognition system or program in place that help employees to be motivated to work for the organisation.

### **2.5.10 Health and Safety**

Employee engagement levels are low if employees feel unsafe while working. Therefore, every organisation should have effective health and safety measures and systems in place to protect their employees and also have strategies to reduce accidents and injuries.

### **2.5.11 Job Satisfaction**

A content employee is an engaged employee. Therefore, it is crucial for an organisation to ensure that the job given to the employee is aligned to the employee's career objectives. This will make the employee satisfied with his job and more appreciative.

### **2.5.12 Communication**

Good employee engagement relies on effective internal communication through the sharing of information between employees and management and employees and employees (Gill, 2011:24). This will help employees to understand their roles and responsibilities within the organisation and thus lead to the success of the organisation. Vazirani (2007:9) suggests that organisations should follow the open door policy. In other words, there should be both upward and downward communication, which is also known as a two-way open communication. This will allow the employee to voice ideas and suggests better ways of doing things. Also, the employee will be kept informed about relevant information. Furthermore, employees whose ideas are heard and acknowledged by their managers during decision making are likely to be highly engaged (Vazirani 2007:9). Survey performed by CIPD in 2006 revealed that employees who feel that they are well informed about the happenings in the organisation and are also given an opportunity to voice their opinions upwards are more likely to be engaged. It is therefore apparent that poor communication results in poor performance.

### **2.5.13 Family Friendliness**

An employee's family life impacts on his work life. Organisations that offer family support to their employees achieve high levels of employee engagement. In other words, employees become emotional attached with engaged.

It is noteworthy that regardless of a sector these drivers are common to all organisations. However, the components of feeling valued and involved and the relative strength of each factor are likely to differ depending on the organisation (Sundaray, 2011:55).

In addition, Robinson et al. (2004: 24) suggest that if the factors discussed above exist in the organisation then employee engagement exist in that organisation. It is therefore important for the management to enhance and maintain these factors so that the employees can be motivated.

## **2.6 Models of employee engagement**

Models of employee engagement aid in understanding factors that determine whether employees become engaged and to what extent they become engaged. Various researchers and consulting groups have proposed a number of models of employee engagement. The next section below will highlight models responsible for promoting and sustaining employee engagement.

### **2.6.1 International Survey Research (ISR) Model**

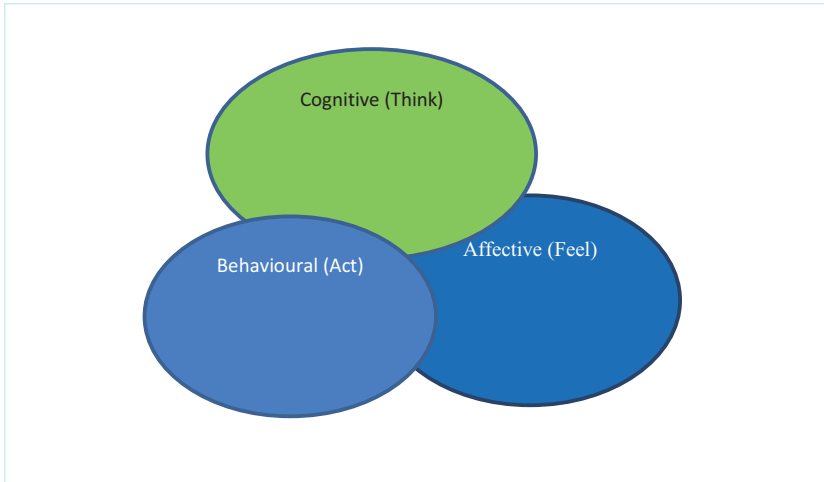
A study carried out by International Research Group (ISR) in 2003 in relation to employee engagement found that an organisation must locate and understand the current components and scope of its employee engagement in order to understand the way to improve it.

ISR developed a three component model (refer to figure 2.1) to assist with clear and concise understanding of the employee engagement at an organisation level as well as establish an achievable technique to increase the levels of engagement. This model consisted of cognitive (think), affective (feel) and behavioural (act) components. ISR (2007) asserts that cognitive (think) elements occur when employees understand the organisation's mission, goals and values and support them. On the other hand, affective (feel) components occur when employees are emotionally involved and attached to the goals and values of the organisation (ISR, 2007). Employees demonstrate loyalty to the organisation and become proud to be associated with the organisation. Thus results in enhanced levels of engagement. Lastly, behavioural (act) component is the third dimension to employee engagement identified by ISR (2007). Behavioural component is regarded as the most critical component as it relates to how much effort is the employee eager to demonstrate for the organisation. According to ISR (2007) employees should take the maximum effort that is consistent with their principles and values. ISR (2007) further reveals the two aspects relating to this component, namely;

- Employees desire to stay and unlikely hood that they consider other options.

- Willingness to put in the extra effort, going above and beyond their normal job in order for the organisation to succeed. (ISR 2007)

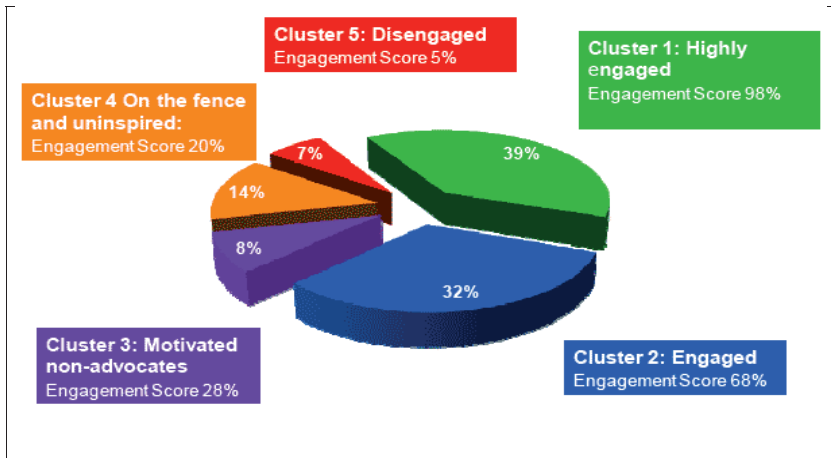
**Figure 2.1: International Survey Research Model**



**Source: ISR (2007).**

ISR (2007) ascertain that a combination of these three components indicate a presence of engagement. Therefore, it is imperative for the organisations to determine the degree to which these components exist in the organisation so that necessary corrective measures can be developed to enhance high levels of engagement. For instance, ISR recommends that a Cluster analysis be carried out, to identify employees whose engagement scores are similar so that intervention programmes can be established to target specific groups with unique issues within subunits of organisations. A Locator Analysis as illustrated in Figure 2.2 should also be conducted to find out where in the organisation the least or most engaged employees are.

**Figure 2.2: Locator Analysis**

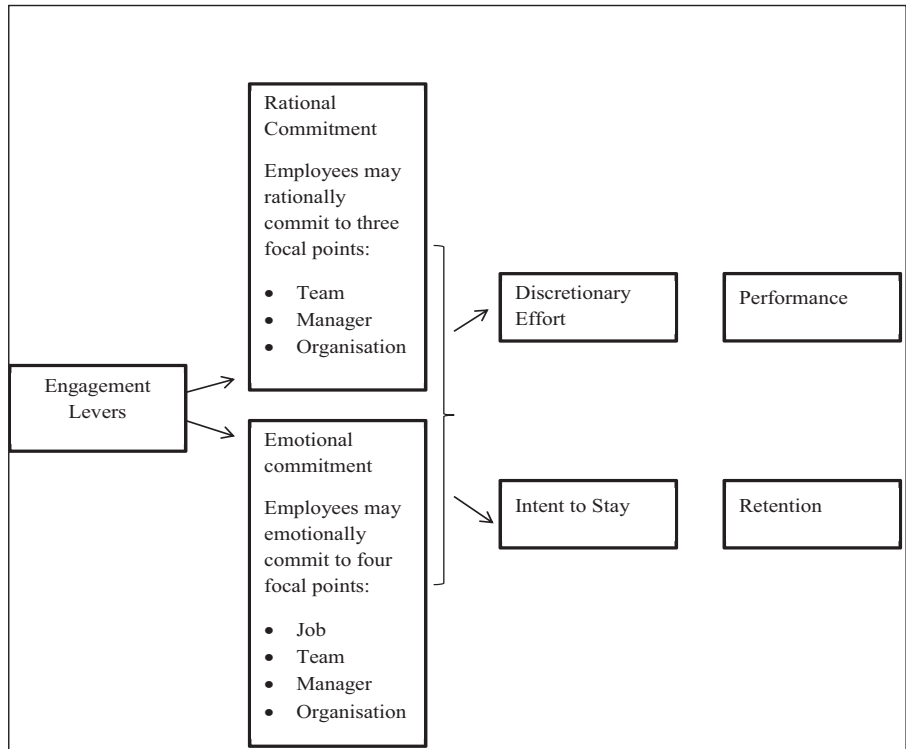


**Source: Scottish Executive Social Research (2008).**

### **2.6.2 The Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) Model**

The Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) engagement model underlines the outcomes or performance of the organisation. CLC (2004) developed this engagement model following a study which encompassed 50,000 employees among 59 global organisations. The study devised an outcome on the key findings illustrated in Figure 2.3 below. The model identifies two categories of engagement drivers: rational commitment and emotional commitment (Corporate Executive Board, 2004). In this model, rational commitment characterises the degree to which employees believe that their managers, teams and or organisation is acting to their interest. Rational commitment leads to employee’s discretionary effort which ultimately improves the performance of the employees. On the other hand, emotional commitment of the employees is facilitated by team manager and the organisation at large. When employees are emotionally committed to the organisation their desire to stay in the organisation is strong and thus fosters a high retention rate (Corporate Executive Board, 2004). Lastly, the study revealed that compared rational engagement; emotional engagement was four times more significant in increasing employees’ levels of effort CLC (2004:10).

**Figure 2.3: The Corporate Leadership Council’s Model of Engagement**

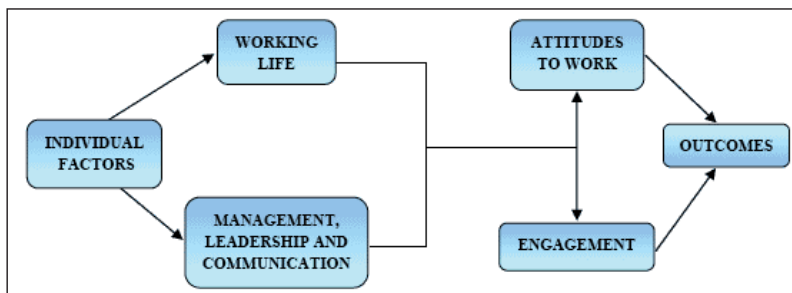


**Source: Corporate Leadership Council (2004).**

**2.6.3 Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) Model**

The CIPD model is a model produced by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (Scottish Executive Social Research, 2007:29). This model (see figure 2.4) illustrates factors that contribute to engagement and how each factor influences the other. The direction of influence is indicated by the arrows.

**Figure 2.4 CIPD Model of Employee Engagement**



**Source: Scottish Executive Research (2007).**

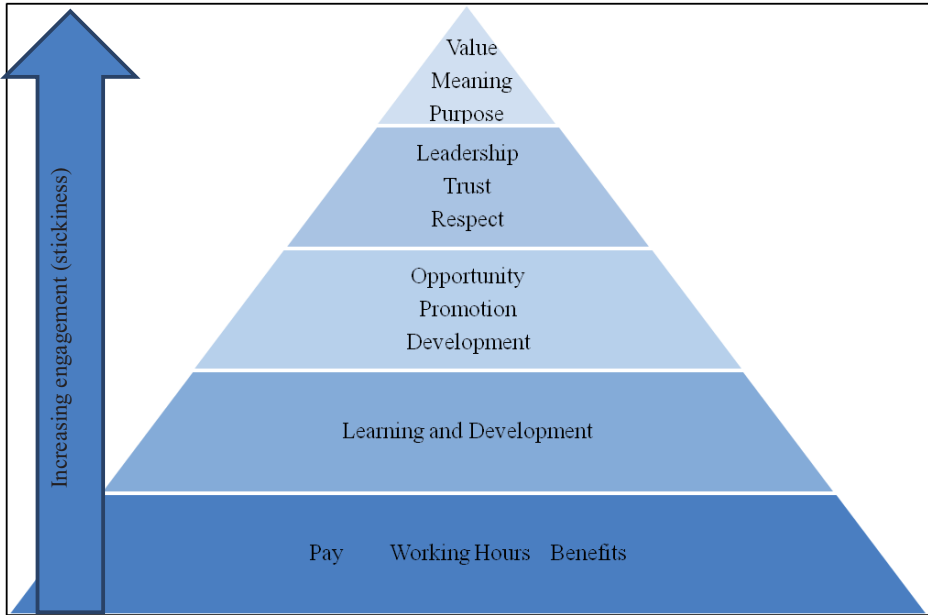
This individual factor in the CIPD model of engagement could refer to gender, age, ethnicity, disability and family background. In this model, issues like job the employee’s position or profession, salaries as well as any other diverse issues are incorporated under working life factor. On the other hand an interaction between employees and managers is represented by “management, leadership and communication” factors. These factors take into account transparency, level of trust between employees and their leaders as well as the amount of opportunities they are afforded to contribute towards the strategic goals and objectives of the organisation (Scottish Executive Research, 2007:29). The CIPD model highlights that these factors impact on the levels of engagement significantly. For instance, CIPD (2009) established that a feeling of trust and fairness in the organisation is strengthened when employers fulfil employees’ expectations and deliver on their commitments to the employees. Furthermore, the attitudes to work in the CIPD model present how employees perceive their jobs, well-being, enthusiasm, commitment and loyalty levels. This means that employees are influenced by the jobs they do as well as their work experiences. The management’s behaviour towards employees, how they communicate with the employees as well as the way jobs are defined have a significant contribution towards engaging employees. Similarly, stress, commitment, loyalty and satisfaction factors affect the levels of engagement in the organisation. Therefore, following from the model it can be established that increased satisfaction and loyalty levels can only be achieved by organisations that engage their employees successfully (Scottish Executive Social Research, 2007:29). Finally, the CIPD model indicates that it is important for the organisations to focus mainly on factors like employees’ work attitudes, management and individual well-being when introducing

innovation strategies to improve engagement. Employees are less likely to quit the organisation instead they will be more engaged.

#### **2.6.4 Penna Model of Hierarchy of Engagement**

Penna (2007:22) as indicated in figure 2.5 represents a hierarchical model of engagement factors which demonstrates the influence each level will have on the attraction, engagement and retention of talent. Meaning at work is at the apex of this model. Bhatla (2011:4) citing Penna (2007) assert that “meaning at work is the situation where a job brings fulfilment for the employee, through the employee being valued, appreciated, having a sense of belonging and congruence with the organisation and feel like they are making a contribution”. In this model, Maslow’s need hierarchy model and Herzberg’s theory at the bottom are characterised. The bottom of this model demonstrates basic needs of pay and benefits. Once the basic needs of employee are met and the employee is satisfied then the employee looks for development opportunities, promotion possibilities, trust and leadership factors. Finally, when all the levels’ aspirations are met and the employee is satisfied, then the employee seeks to the alignment of meaning at work which is demonstrated by commitment and a strong connection to the organisation. Furthermore, the organisation becomes more engaging to existing employees and more attractive to new potential employees (Bhatla, 2011:4).

**Figure 2.5: Penna Model of Engagement Hierarchy**

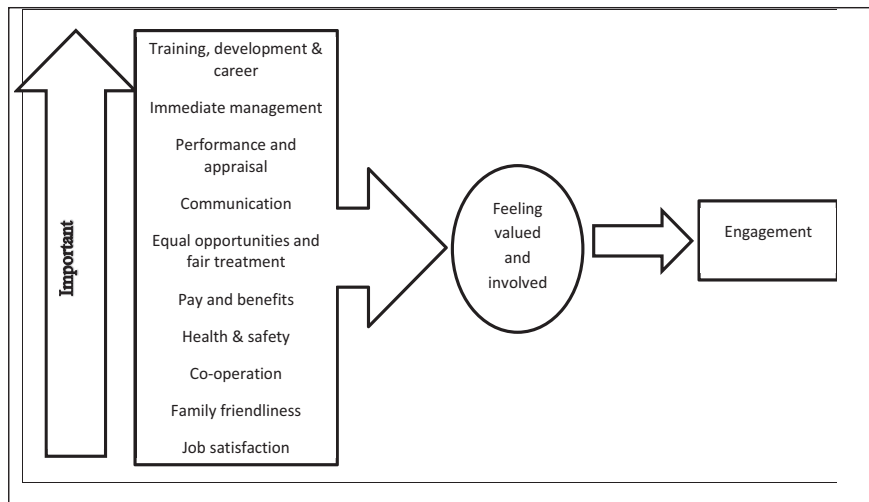


**Source: Penna (2007).**

### **2.6.5 Robinson et al. Model of the drives of employee engagement**

Robinson et al (2004) model of the drivers of employee engagement stresses the importance of feeling valued and involved as the key driver of engagement. There are a number of elements that fall within this umbrella of feeling valued and involved (refer to figure 2.6) and the extent to which these elements impact on the sense of “feeling valued and involved” differs.

**Figure 2.6: Model of the drivers of employee engagement**



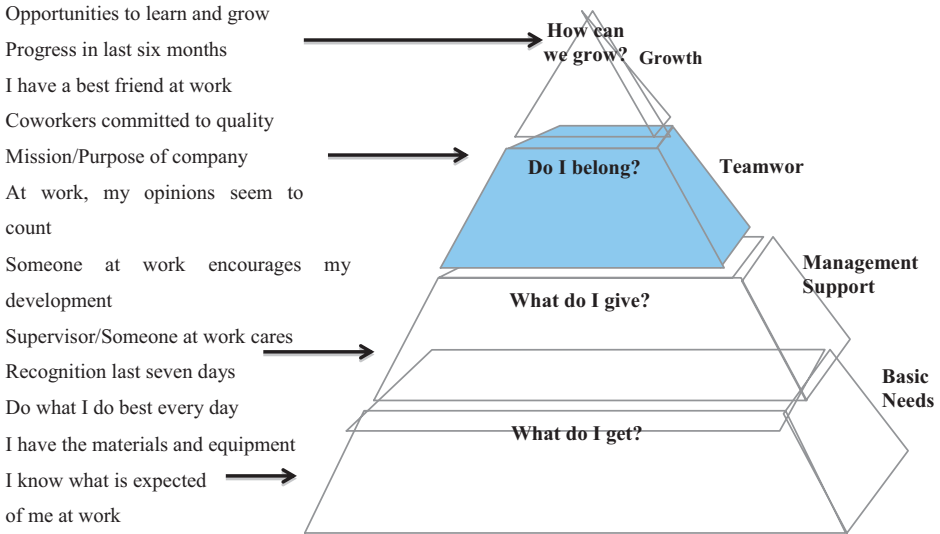
**Source: Robinson et al. (2004).**

In this model, a relationship between feeling valued and involved and engagement is demonstrated. Therefore, to maintain or enhance the levels of engagement in an organisation the elements of this model can be a useful indicator to the working life aspects that need attention (Robinson et al., 2004:23)

### **2.6.6 The Gallup engagement hierarchy**

Gallup (1999) created an engagement hierarchy model (figure 2.7) in order to emphasise the relationship of management and the organisation. This was an attempt to better understand employee engagement and its organisational impact. An organisation needs to identify its strengths, and then determine the best fit for each employee.

**Figure 2.7: Gallup’s Engagement Hierarchy Model**



**Source: Gallup Inc. (2008).**

This model is divided into four sections and developed on the 12 item survey. These 12 items underpins to understand the extent to which employees are engaged (Harter, Schmidt and Killham, 2003:4). The bottom section of the pyramid presents the employees’ basic needs requirements. This includes clarification of job expectations, provision of tools to perform the job. In the next section, employees want to feel that they are contributing to the organisation and that the management recognises their contribution. The Gallup’s model third section refers to the employees seeking to be involved in decision making, having a good working relationship with co-workers and supervisors as well as being part of the organisation. Lastly, the final section represents the employees’ opportunities for personal development (Venkatesh, 2013:90). The model emphasizes that, once the appropriate employee job fit is combined with great managers; the organisation will have engaged employees. However, it does not identify communication as a variable and also does not link employee’s intention to the organisation.

## **2.7 The Impact of Employee Engagement on Employee Performance**

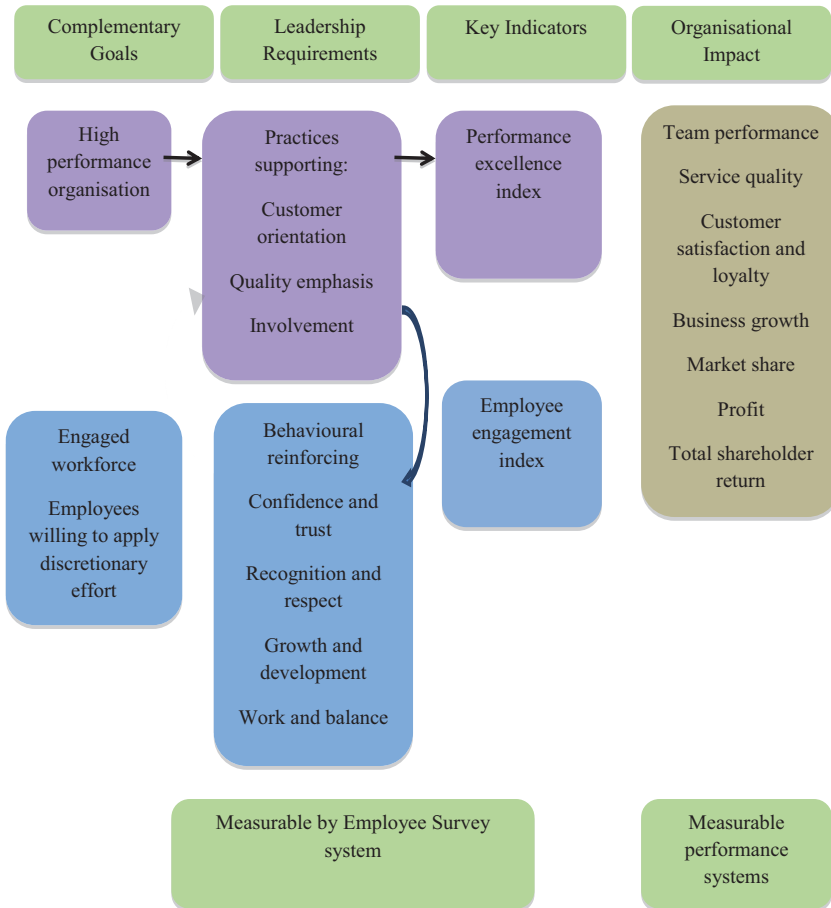
Havard Business Review (2013:3) assert that for the past several years, companies have been increasingly monitoring the employee engagement levels due to the fact that it is believed that highly engaged workforce not only maximises a company's investment in human capital and improves productivity, but it can significantly reduce costs such as turnover, which has an impact on the bottom line. Furthermore, it is indicated that supplying employees with work tools increase their performance. Consequently, a win-win situation prevails.

Job performance is defined by Rich and Lepine (2010:619) as "the aggregated value to an organisation of the set of behaviours that an employee contributes directly and indirectly to organisational goals". In Figure 2.8 below, it is depicted that interrelated performance excellence and employee engagement results into positive impact in an organisation such as team performance and business growth including total shareholder return and market share.

Muthuveloo et al. (2013:1547) state that not engaged employees will affect the organisational performance through higher absenteeism, higher turnover and lower productivity, recruitment and training cost. Therefore, this is an indication that employee engagement has an impact on employee performance. Even so, organisations can improve employee engagement in order to improve performance.

Figure 2.8 below displays the High Performance – Engagement Model. This model emphasises that the responsibility of the leadership in the organisation is not only for designing an effective organisation prepared to deliver superior performance, but is also responsible for creating an engaged workforce through displaying and modelling practices and behaviours known to produce higher levels of employee engagement. Additionally, this model emphasises an impact between employee engagement and performance excellence. In other words, when organisations are high on both constructs, this unleashes a synergistic effect that generates higher levels of organisational performance than could be achieved by attending to or improving on either construct in isolation (Kenexa, 2012:8).

**Figure 2.8: High Performance Engagement Model**



**Source: Kenexa Corporation (2012:8).**

Furthermore, Kenexa (2012:8) and Rich and Lepine (2010:626) findings concur that there is a positive correlation between employee engagement and performance in that the increase of the other impact the positive increase on the other. In other words supervisors reported that highly engaged individuals had higher levels of task performance. Generally, a link exists between employees who are highly engaged in their work and job performance (Rich and Lepine, 2010:619).

## **2.8 Conclusion**

This chapter addressed the concept of employee engagement, global studies done by various organisations on employee engagement. Models of engagement were discussed. The literature revealed many factors that appear to affect the level of employee engagement and the impact of employee engagement on the performance of the employee.

The following chapter outlines the methodology of how this study was conducted.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter elaborates on the research design and methodology which was used for the research. The plan on how the study was approached to maintain the validity of the findings is provided, the type of research design, data collection instruments (questionnaire), the sampling strategy, data management and data analysis is discussed. Validity and reliability of the research are outlined. Furthermore limitations of the study are clarified and ethical issues are discussed.

### **3.2 Rationale for the methodology**

Research methodology refers to the theory of how research should be undertaken, including the theoretical and philosophical assumptions upon which research is based and the implications of these for the method or methods adopted (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009:595). Adding to this, Wisker (2009:88) maintains that a research methodology provides the rationale and justification for the methods that are selected and the ways in which they are used. There are two main research philosophies/ paradigms; namely qualitative and quantitative research.

Qualitative research is subjective and aims at establishing the socially constructed nature of reality to emphasise the relationship between the researcher and the object of study, as well as to emphasise the value-laden nature of the inquiry (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:8). It examines the attitudes, behaviours and experiences of participants through in-depth interviews or focus groups. The information gathered by qualitative method is costly, time consuming and difficult to analyse. The information gathered is summarised and interpreted in a narrative report (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009:147). Analysing qualitative research can be difficult as the results are often influenced by the bias of the researcher.

Quantitative research on the other hand is objective and based on measuring variables for individual participants to obtain scores, usually numerical values that are submitted to statistical analysis for summary interpretation (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009:147). The information is collected by using structured questions. Gathering information that relates directly to the objectives of the survey is easy and cheap. Quantitative research can generate

statistics through using methods such as questionnaires and structured interviews. This type of research can reach more participants and the contact with those people is much quicker than it is in qualitative research. The disadvantage of this method is that the research begins with a theoretical framework and has little diversion from this framework as a result. According to Saunders et al. (2009:152), a quantitative research does not provide for any new concepts to be discovered during the research and does not give participants an opportunity to give in-depth answers to research problem.

Given the discussion above and the research questions of this study, the quantitative approach was selected for the study. Quantitative approach was aimed at ascertaining the levels of employee engagement, factors contributing to employee engagement as well as determining the impact of engagement in improving performance.

### **3.3 The research philosophy**

A research philosophy is a development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge (Saunders et al., 2009:107). A research paradigm is a theory, based on ways in which we view the world, and believe that it is understandable, can be explored, fixed, or interpreted (Wisker, 2009:61). Essentially, there are two schools of thought about science and knowledge namely; positivism and phenomenology (anti-positivism).

Welman et al. (2005:6) describe positivism as the adoption of the natural scientific method in human behavioural approach. It is based on values of reason, truth and validity. The purpose of positivism is to uncover general laws of relationships and causality that apply to all people at all times. The basic reasoning of positivism assumes that the researcher is independent and not affected by the subject of the research (Saunders et al., 2009:114). The researcher is thus not affected by his or her own beliefs. The research is only limited to what can be observed and measured objectively. In other words, the focus is only on facts gathered through direct observation and experience. This approach is taken in value-free way. Positivism is measured empirically using quantitative methods namely surveys, experiments and statistical analysis.

On the other hand, phenomenology attempts to capture beliefs as well as reasons for actions in a social context (Wisker, 2009:146). It implies that people's experience of social reality provide a basis to understand the meaning of that reality. Phenomenology does not exist in itself, and all meaning is based in social activity. Understanding human behaviour from the

perspective of the involved participants' are concerns for phenomenologists. Following strict natural scientific method when collecting and interpreting data is inappropriate to phenomenologists (Welman et al. 2005:6). Therefore, phenomenology is aligned to the qualitative research methodology.

Given the nature of the research questions, this study adopted a positivist paradigm. The aim of this study is to collect the statistical data that explains events. Therefore, positivism helped to direct the focus on the factors contributing to employee engagement at Company XYZ.

### **3.4 The Research Design**

A research design is a procedural plan that was adopted to answer questions pertaining to validity, objectivity and accuracy. There are various types of research designs namely:

- Descriptive research aims to find out more about the characteristics of the existing phenomenon. It tends to produce factual detail and to answer the questions relating to the fundamental characteristics that define the research subject (Wisker 2009:54).
- Exploratory research is concerned with discovering the findings, pursue new insights, ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light. If the researcher is uncertain about the nature of the problem, exploration research approach is beneficial in clarification and understanding of the problem (Saunders et al., 2009:139).
- Predictive research is based on identifying relationships between several variables trying to predict an answer or outcome using knowledge gained from past research and events (Wisker, 2009:55).
- Explanatory research studies a situation or a problem in order to explain the relationships between variables (Saunders et al., 2009:140). It attempts to clarify why and how there is a relationship between two aspects of a situation or phenomenon.
- Empirical research is based on the belief that the world is knowable and can be discovered through the gathering of hard facts from experience, observation and experimental (Wisker 2009:57). The researcher gathers empirical data from experiments or form observations during fieldwork and interprets the data using theory.
- Experimental research is based on the belief that the world is knowable, fixable, testable and much of its effects are identifiable and provable. It is based on the on cause and effect where one variable is changed and the effect is studied (Wisker 2009:57).

- Correlational research is aimed to discover or establish the existence or to establish the existence of a relationship or interdependence between two or more aspects of a situation (Kular 2011:10).

The purpose of this study was to explore the levels of employee engagement, to explore the factors which contribute to employee engagement and to ascertain how employee engagement can be maximised within the company in order to achieve its organisational objectives. A descriptive research design was found to be relevant to this study. As Kumar (2011:10) argues, descriptive research attempts to describe systematically a situation, problem, phenomenon, service, or provide information about, say the living conditions of workers, or describes attitudes towards an issues. Furthermore, descriptive research design portrays an accurate profile of persons, events or situations (Saunders et al., 2009:140). Therefore, the study adopted descriptive research based on the fact that it underpinned the objectives of the research study.

### **3.5 Research strategies**

A research strategy is a plan or an approach that is adopted in addressing the research questions. According to Saunders et al. (2009:141), the appropriate strategy should enable the researcher to answer the research questions and meet the objectives of the researcher. For a quantitative study, the most prominent strategies that can be applied to a research study are experiment, survey, case study.

An experimental strategy is used in exploratory and explanatory research and answers the questions 'how' and 'why'. An experiment can be used to measure the extent of influence that the independent variable is expected to have on the dependent variable. In most cases this involves two groups, an experimental group where intervention is made and a control group where no interventions are made (Saunders et al., 2009:142).

A case study is based upon the assumption that the case being studied is a typical of a certain type and therefore a single case can provide insight into the events and situations prevalent in a group from where the case has been drawn (Kumar, 2011:126). Case study answers *why*, *what* and *how* questions. This type of strategy is useful when exploring an area where a little is known and a researcher wants to have a holistic understanding of the situation. It attempts to learn about a little know or poorly understood situation (William, 2007:68).

According to Saunders et al. (2009:141), the choice of a research strategy is guided by research questions and objectives of the study. Considering the objectives of this study, a survey was adopted. A survey strategy is used for exploratory and descriptive research and answers who, what, how much and how many questions (Saunders et al., 2009:144). A survey strategy helped in gathering a large amount of information about employees' attitudes, opinions to establish current levels of engagement at the company as well as examined the factors that contribute to employee engagement and the performance at Company XYZ. Furthermore, a survey strategy is economical, easy to explain and to understand. In this study a survey gave more control over the research process (Saunders et al., 2009:144). The only challenge with survey strategy is that only a limited number of questions a questionnaire can contain and thus allowing the researcher to collect a limited amount of data.

### **3.6 Target Population and sampling strategy**

In research, the word population implies the total number of people, organisation or groups who can be included in the study. Conversely, a sample is selected from the population and is intended to represent that population (Gravetter & Forzano 2009:128). Sampling is undertaken when time and resource constraints inhibit the measurement of an entire population.

For the purpose of this study, the 'population' was all the permanent employees of Company XYZ. When there is time, resource and access constraints, researchers often have to take samples of the population in order to conduct their studies. In this instance, there was access to the entire population in question and so a census survey was adopted. Precisely, all one hundred and seventy (170) permanent employees of Company XYZ were included in the census survey. Saunders et al. (2009:210) refers to a census as the collection and analysis of data from every possible case or group or member. The population was made of employees from Operations, Medical, Information Technology, Finance, Human Resources, Marketing, Administration and CEO Divisions represented in table 3.1 below:

**Table 3.1: Sample representation of the study**

Division	Number of staff
Operations	75
Medical	41
Information technology	8
Finance	1
Human Resources	5
Marketing	21
Admin	15
CEO	1
Total	170

### **3.7 Data Collection Instrument**

The data collection instrument used in this study was a survey. The survey was used to determine the levels of employee engagement, to ascertain the factors of employee engagement as well as to establish the impact of employee engagement on employee performance at the company.

According to Greetham (2009:199) and Welman et al (2005:178), the advantages and disadvantages of using a survey are as follows:

- They are cheap in terms of time and cost,
- They are to distribute to a large number of people,
- They are not limited to geographical area,
- Questions are the same for all respondents. The way questions are asked and answered is consistent,
- Respondents can work at their own pace and consider their responses for as long as they like,
- If answers are anonymous, it is possible to cover the most cover the most sensitive question. And

The disadvantages are as follows:

- They often have a low rate of response – it is difficult to achieve a high rate of response without spending a lot of time chasing them up,
- They tend to favour the more literate respondents,

- They may introduce bias into the results if not all of the sample responds,
- Simple questions limit the depth of response. Some issues need probing with follow-up questions,
- There could be inconsistency in the way questions are understood which prejudices the validity of the data.

### 3.7.1 Questionnaire Construction

Welman et al. (2005:174) suggest eight aspects which should be taken into consideration when developing and constructing a survey questionnaire:

- A questionnaire must be laid out in such a way that the person who needs to read it is able to follow all the instructions easily and answer all the questions that she or he meant to answer;
- Choose between open-ended or closed-ended questions;
- Take the respondents' literacy level into consideration. The language must be clear in order to ensure that respondents have no difficulty in answering the questions;
- Questions should be brief and to the point. The longer the question, the longer it takes to read and the greater the possibility that it may create resistance in the respondents;
- Maintain neutrality by formulating questions that will encourage respondents to answer in a particular way;
- Use a justified sequence by grouping together questions that are related to the same aspect so that respondents do not repeatedly have to switch their focus and
- The questions should be appreciable to all respondents.

There are two types of questions: open-ended questions and closed questions. Open-ended questionnaire has no prior list of answers. A respondent is free to give a detailed answer or opinion. On the other hand, a closed questionnaire comprised of alternative answers that allow a respondent to choose an appropriate one. The respondent is not free to give any unwanted details (Graveter & Forzano, 2009:128).

The study adopted closed-ended questionnaire to gather the data. The questionnaire consisted of two sections namely; Section A and Section B.

**Section A** consisted of seven questions measuring the biographical information. Questions in this section were framed such that the respondent could provide the information on age, gender, race, division, years of service, job status as well as the current job level.

**Section B** of the questionnaire was developed using an existing model, the Gallup Q<sup>12</sup> (Gallup Inc., 2008) and additional questions which have been constructed on the basis of several models and theories which have been developed within the engagement literature that provide the framework of what can enhance employee engagement and employee performance. Gallup Q<sup>12</sup> is a tool for measuring employee engagement developed by the Gallup Organisation. Gallup Q12 instrument has been administered to more than 15 million employees in 169 different countries. It was based on more than 30 years of broad quantitative and qualitative research and its reliability has been proven. Gallup Q<sup>12</sup> consists of questions addressing issues such as understanding what is expected of employees at work, having the resources to perform well, recognition and praises, encouragement to develop, being listened to and friendship at work. Gallup Q12 model was adopted to provide a comprehensive picture of the perceptions of the employees on employee engagement, to measure the levels of engagement and to identify factors that encourage or hinder levels of engagement at Company XYZ. Additionally, Gallup Q12 instrument was chosen in order to assist in identifying the priorities for improving the employee performance throughout the organisation. Gallup has proven that business units have an 83% chance of having high performance at the highest level of employee engagement. In contrast to this, 17 % chance for those with lowest levels of employee engagement has been proven.

In particular, there were twenty six (26) closed questions which were grouped in order to cover statements relating to three key objectives of the study:

- **Research Objective One:** Measuring levels of employee engagement (represented by questions 1 to 7);
- **Research Objective Two:** Factors contributing to employee engagement (represented by questions 8 to 21);
- **Research Objective Three:** Impact of employee engagement on employee performance (represented by questions 22 to 26).

Furthermore, the questionnaire was represented in a five point Likert-type scale. According to Balasubramanian (2012:65), a Likert scale is an attitude type scale that attempts to determine how an individual believes, perceives or feels. Likert scale comprises of ‘strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree’. Likert scales are easy to construct, easy for the respondents to read and complete and are likely to produce a highly reliable scale (Balasubramanian, 2012:68). However, the scale has been criticised for difficulty in demonstrating validity as well as distance between points on the scale do not present equal changes in attitude for all individuals (Balasubramanian (2012:68). For the purpose of this study, a five point Likert-type scale was used and respondents were requested to indicate the extent to which they strongly agree or disagree with the statements in each question.

### **3.8 Pilot Study**

A pilot study is a ‘test-run’ of the actual research study in which the researcher tests the research instruments to be used in a study. According to Welman et al. (2005:148), the pilot study investigates the validity and the reliability of the research instrument and it should identify any problems with the design of the research so that they can be corrected before the main research is conducted. Jennings (2001:252) states that pilot studies enable the researcher to determine that the categories provided for the questions are valid and reliable measures, the terms are understandable, the question order flows, how long the tools takes to complete, as well as the suitability of the measures for analysis.

For these reasons, the questionnaire was piloted on 10 respondents to establish the validity and reliability of questionnaires. The pilot study confirmed that the questionnaire was indeed suitable for the respondents and no challenges in completion were reported by the respondents. Subsequently, the questionnaire was adopted and distributed to all targeted respondents.

### **3.9 Administration, distribution and collection of questionnaires**

The survey questionnaires were distributed to the target population of 170 participants by email and hand delivered to the departmental managers for distribution to participants. This was to ensure sufficient distribution of the questionnaire to all participants in order to obtain maximum response and maintain confidentiality. The respondents were given ten working days to complete and return the questionnaires. Each questionnaire comprised of a covering

letter indicating the purpose of the study, assurance of the confidentiality and ethical considerations.

The covering letter also indicated the instruction to return completed questionnaires in the sealed boxes that were provided and kept by the departmental managers on behalf of the researcher. Out of the 170 questionnaires that were distributed to participants, 117 were returned. The returned questionnaires were checked for completeness and errors. Nine of these questionnaires were discarded. They were deemed spoilt as four of them had some biographical details missing and five had some of the statements not answered.

### **3.10 Data Analysis**

In order to ensure consistency, accuracy and effectiveness the data was cleaned. The data was then captured to an Excel spreadsheet which was then processed using IBM SPSS 22 for quantitative descriptive analysis.

Descriptive data analysis statistics were used during this study. Based on the recommendation by Gravetter and Forzano (2006:417), descriptive statistics assisted in organising, summarising and simplifying results obtained for the study. It endorsed the number of engaged employees at Company XYZ. Furthermore, characteristics of employees as related to engagement levels, performance and factors were described. Data was presented in a form of descriptions, frequency tables and graphs.

### **3.11 Validity**

Oluwatayo (2012:391) states that validity is the degree to which a measuring instrument measures what it is supposed to measure.

Validity comprises of internal validity and external validity. Internal validity refers to the extent to which the design and conduct of an evaluation are likely to have prevented bias so that the researcher could have confidence in the accuracy of the findings. The external validity refers to the extent to which evaluation results provide a correct basis for generalizations to other people and circumstances (Fink, 2008:195). The four main types of demonstrating validity are:

- Content validity refers to the extent to which a measuring instrument provides adequate coverage of the topic under study (Kothari, 2004:74)

- Face validity is a component of content validity and is established when an individual reviewing the instrument concludes that it measures the characteristic or trait of interest (Kothari, 2004:74)
- Construct validity is an extent to which an instrument measures the trait or theoretical construct that it is intended to measure (Khalid, Hilman and Kumar, 2012:23). Concurrent validity has two types namely convergent and discriminatory validity. Convergent validity results when two variables measuring the same construct highly correlate. On the other hand a device is said to have a discriminatory validity if by using similar measures for researching different constructs results into relatively low inter correlations (Khalid et al., 2012:24).
- Criterion validity is the degree of the correlation of a measure with other standard measures of the same construct (Khalid et al., 2012:23). Criterion validity has two types; a predictive validity and concurrent validity. Predictive validity refers to the extent to which a new measure is able to predictive a future performance. Concurrent refers to the usefulness of a test in closely relating to other measures of the known validity (Kothari, 2004:74).

For this study the validity of data was assessed through face validity which according to Saunders et al. (2009:372) it refers to the ability of the questionnaires to measure what they are intended to measure. Content validity provided a link between the measurement questions of the researcher and the objectives of the study. The instrument used for this study was a questionnaire. Content validity ensured that the questionnaire used was clear and easy to use.

### **3.12 Reliability**

Reliability refers to the extent to which a data collection technique or techniques will yield consistent findings, where similar observations would be made or conclusions reached by other researchers (Saunders et al., 2009:600). According to Gravetter and Forzano (2009:82), the reliability of a measurement procedure is the stability or consistency of the measurement.

Table 3.3 below illustrates various types of reliability tests that can be adopted by researchers.

**Table 3.2: Types of Reliability Tests**

Test-retest reliability	Is established by comparing the scores obtained from two successive measurements of the same individuals and calculating a correlation between the two sets of scores.
Parallel-forms reliability	This is when alternative versions of the measuring instrument are used for the two measurements.
Inter-rater reliability	Is the degree of agreement between two observers who simultaneously record measurements of the behaviours.
Split-half reliability	Is obtained by splitting the items on a questionnaire or test in half, computing a separate score for each half, and then calculating the degree of consistency between the two scores for a group of participants.

**Source: Gravetter and Forzano (2009:85)**

As a result of the level of measurement as well as the research objectives, going to the lengths of establishing reliability highlighted in Table 3.3 above is not necessary. Gravetter and Forzano (2009:85) maintain that it is possible to measure reliability in terms of internal consistency among many items that make up a questionnaire. To do this it is possible to calculate the reliability of the questionnaire by way of calculating the Cronbach Alpha (Welman et al., 2005:147). Cronbach Alpha is a measure of the internal consistency of a measurement or test and it shows the degree to which all the items in the test measure the same attribute. This test was used to test the answers of the participants to all the questions in the questionnaire. Cronbach coefficient alpha produces values between 0 and 1.00. The higher value indicates a higher degree of internal consistency or reliability (Gravetter and Forzano, 2009:461).

### **3.13 Limitations of the Study**

This study was conducted subject to the following limitations:

- The questionnaires were not distributed to all respondents at Company XYZ. This was due to some respondents being on leave at the time of distribution.
- The respondents may fail to understand the significance of the study;
- Fear of confidentiality may influence the response of respondents although they were assured of it;
- Although all respondents had an adequate level of education, some returned questionnaires had errors and were not included in this study.

- The questionnaire was a 5 point Likert scale and did not look at details to answer the why questions.

### **3.14 Elimination of Bias**

In a research study bias can occur. These include the design of the questionnaire, collection of data as well as analysis of the data. In an attempt to eliminate bias in this study, the pilot study was undertaken, content validity adopted. Furthermore, a standard questionnaire was adopted to ensure that the responses obtained from the respondents were from the same questions. In addition, an independent statistician was employed in an attempt to eliminate bias. These offered credibility, reliability, rigour, trustworthiness and validity to the findings through data clarifications in this study.

### **3.15 Ethical Considerations**

Research ethics is important and it refers to the code of conduct which requires the pursuit of organisational interests rather than self-interests. Saunders et al (2009:183) defines research ethics as the appropriateness of the researcher's behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of a research project, or who are affected by it. Ethical considerations were an important aspect in this study due to the nature of the study. The permission to conduct the study was obtained from Chief Operation Officer of Company XYZ.

During the study, the researcher ensured that participants gave their informed consent to participate in the study. According to Saunders et al. (2009:190), informed consent is the consent that is fully informed as well as freely given. Consent was obtained from all participants in writing. Each participant received a letter outlining the research and a consent form for their records, as well as the consent form that the researcher kept. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that there was no harm encountered by respondents. Hence, respondents were given assurance on the acceptance of any withdrawal by the respondents should they not wish to participate in the study. This is in agreement with Saunders et.al (2009:188) as he stipulates that participants have the right to privacy and should not feel pressurised or coerced into participating.

Confidentiality and anonymity was offered to participant. The researcher ensured that identification of participants and the data collected was protected. The questionnaires did not have names of the participants.

### **3.16 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the methodology adopted for the research study. Research design, data collection instruments, sampling strategy, data management, ethical considerations and data analysis techniques used to achieve the objectives of the study was outlined.

The following chapter four presents the findings of this research form data analysis of the questionnaires.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The findings are presented according to the objectives of the study as presented in Chapter 1 and the literature review in Chapter 2.

Results are presented in the form of tables, figures and graphs and follow the same sequence as in the questionnaire presented to respondents.

The results are presented and analysed according to two sections namely:

- Section A presents participant's demographic information and
- Section B presents respondent's responses based on the three objectives of this study, whilst indicating whether they strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statements.
  - (i) Research Objective 1: Measuring levels of employee engagement
  - (ii) Research Objective 2: Factors contributing to employee engagement
  - (iii) Research Objective 3: Impact of employee engagement on employee performance

Discussions and results analysis will be taken from the valid percent in the tables. For the purpose of the analysis of the results strongly agree and agree percentages will be combined as well as disagree and strongly disagree percentages. Neither agree nor disagree responses will be noted as and when required.

### **4.2 Response rate and reliability statistics**

#### **4.2.1 Response rate**

Out of the 170 questionnaires that were distributed to participants, 117 were returned. The returned questionnaires were checked for completeness and errors. Nine of these questionnaires were discarded. They were deemed spoilt as 4 of them had some biographical details missing and 5 had some of the questions not answered. Accordingly, a total of 108 questionnaires were used in the analysis of this research indicating a response rate of 64%.

### 4.2.2 Reliability

In this study, reliability was tested by using a Cronbach Alpha test which according to Welman et al. (2005:147) is a measure of the internal consistency. It shows the degree to which all the items in the test, measure the same attribute. This test was used to test the answers of the participants to all the questions in Section B of the questionnaire. Cronbach coefficient alpha produces values between 0 and 1.00. A higher value indicates a higher degree of internal consistency or reliability (Gravetter and Forzano 2009:461). Therefore, reliability of Cronbach coefficient alpha of 0.935 (Table 4.1) in this study was considered acceptable.

**Table 4.1: Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.935	26

### 4.3 Section A: Demographic information

This section of this chapter highlights the demographic composition of the respondents in terms of age, gender, race, division, years of service, job status and current job level.

#### 4.3.1 Age of respondents

The Table 4.2 below indicates the groups of ages for the respondents which range from 21 to over 60 years.

**Table 4.2: Respondents' age**

Age	Frequency	Percent
21 – 30	21	19.4
31 – 40	37	34.3
41 – 50	29	26.9
51 – 60	14	13.0
Over 60	7	6.5
Total	108	100.0

The results show that 19.4% of respondents are between the ages of 21 to 30 years, 34.3% are between the ages of 31 to 40 years and 26.9% are between the ages of 41 to 50 years. Only 13% of respondents are between the ages of 51 to 60 years and 6.5% of respondents are over the age of 60 years old (n = 108).

The results indicate that the company has fairly young workforce with 80.6% of respondents less than 50 years old. The majority of respondents (34.3%) being between the ages of 31 to 40 years. Robinson et al. (2004:14) indicates that engagement levels go down slightly as employees get older until they reach the oldest group which is 60 and over where the highest levels of all are displayed. The explanation for this finding is that older employees are more experienced.

**4.3.2: Gender of respondents**

Table 4.3 below on gender simply indicates the respondents into male and female groups.

**Table 4.3: Respondents’ gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	39	36.1
Valid Female	69	63.9
Total	108	100.0

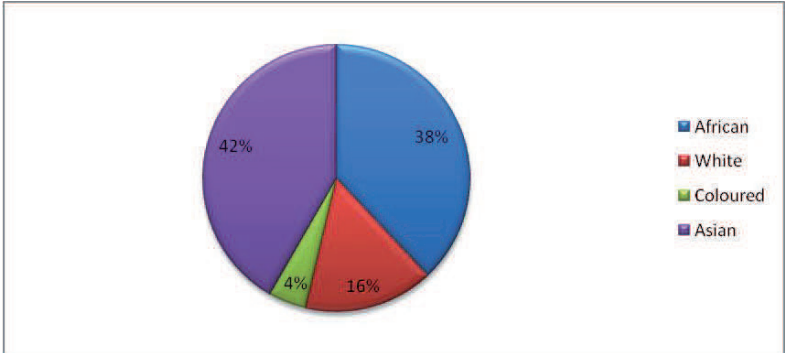
The results in Table 4.3 show that 36.1% of respondents are male, and 63.9% are female (n = 108). This finding demonstrates that Company XYZ is dominated by females.

According to a study conducted by Kong (2009:66), there is a difference between the levels of engagement between males and females. Kong (2009:66) asserts that females value their jobs more than males. This leads to females being more engaged than males. However, Robinson et al. (2004:17) and Mani (2011:22) concur that there is no significant difference in engagement based on gender. Therefore, the fact that females are almost double the males at the company will not affect the employee engagement.

**4.3.3 Ethnicity of respondents**

The graph in Figure 4.1 below presents the race of the respondents.

**Figure 4.1: Race**

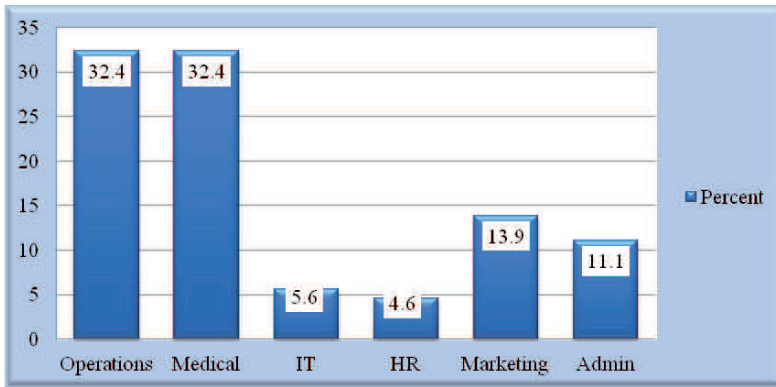


A total of 38% of respondents are African, 16% are White, 4% are Coloured and 42% are Asian. It can be observed from the results that Company XYZ is dominated by Asian populated. However, the significance of race in this study is to provide a complete analysis of results that irrespective of race group, engagement is inevitable in the workplace.

**4.3.4: Division**

As discussed in Chapter 3, the targeted respondents were from all divisions of Company XYZ. Figure 4.2 below illustrate results of respondents according to the divisions.

**Figure 4.2: Division**



The results indicate that 32.4% of respondents are from the Operations division and another 32.4% of respondents are from the Medical division. Only 5.5% of respondents are from the IT division, 4.6% are from the HR division, 13.9% are from the Marketing division and 11.1% are from the Administration division. Almost all departments within the company were represented in the survey. However, respondents from Finance and CEO department did not return the questionnaire as at the time of collection they were on leave.

#### **4.3.5 Length of service of respondents**

The questionnaire separated the respondents by the length of employment at Company XYZ. The groups range from 1 to more than 30 years.

**Table 4.4: Years of service in the company**

Years of service	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 - 5	28	25.9	25.9	25.9
6 - 10	23	21.3	21.3	47.2
11 - 20	21	19.4	19.4	66.7
21 - 30	24	22.2	22.2	88.9
Over 30	12	11.1	11.1	100.0
Total	108	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.4 demonstrates that 25.9 % are between 1 – 5 years of service, 21.3% are between 6 – 10 years, 19.4% are between 11 – 20 years, 22.2% are between 21–30 years of service and only 11.1% are over 30 years of service of employment at the company. It is observed that large percentages (25.9 %) of employees are between 1 – 5 years of service and only 11 % are over 30 years of service.

#### 4.3.6 Current job level of respondents

Table 4.5 below shows the statistics of the respondents in terms of their current job levels.

**Table 4.5: Current Job Level**

Current job levels	Frequency	Percent
Non-management (> Grade 10)	54	50.0
Supervisory Level (Grade 10 – 13)	42	38.9
Junior Management (Grade 14 – 15)	7	6.5
Middle Management (Grade 16 – 17)	4	3.7
Senior Management (Grade 18 and above)	1	.9
Total	108	100.0

Half of respondents (50%) are non-management, 38.9% are at supervisory level, 6.5% are junior management, 3.7% are middle management and 0.9% are in senior management.

### 4.4 Section B: Employee engagement and performance

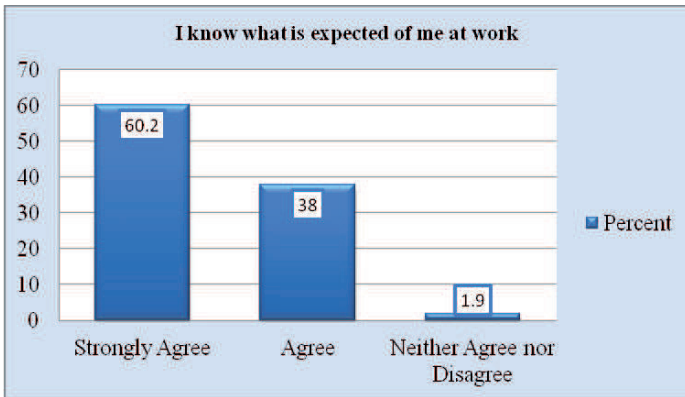
This section analyses and interprets the descriptive statistics for the individual questions of Section B of the questionnaire which addresses the objectives of the study mentioned in the opening paragraph of this chapter.

#### 4.4.1 Measuring levels of employee engagement

Working from Gallup quoted by Harter, Schmidt and Keys (2002:3), measures of employee engagement include knowledge of work expectations, resources to do the job right, recognition and praise for doing the good job, consideration of opinions and suggestions, employee commitment, supervisor care and good working relationship with colleagues.

#### 4.4.1.1 Knowledge of work expectations

Figure 4.3: Knowledge of work expectations

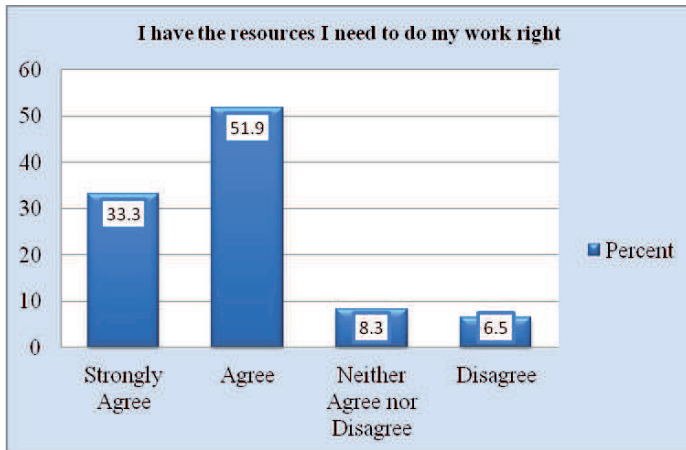


It is revealed in Figure 4.3 that 60.2% of respondents strongly agree, 38% agree and 1.9% neither agree nor disagree that they know what is expected of them at work.

A collective total of 98.2% of respondents are determined that they know what is expected of them at work and none of the respondents disagree with the statement. The assumption behind this enormous positive result is that Company XYZ has clear goals and expectations defined. When expectations are clear positive emotions such as interest may arise and thus lead to high employee engagement (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes (2002:7). Conversely, unclear expectations create stress on employee thus lead to employee disengagement. Managers are therefore compelled to inform and help employees understand what is expected of them.

#### 4.4.1.2 Resources to do the job right

Figure 4.4: Resources to do the job right

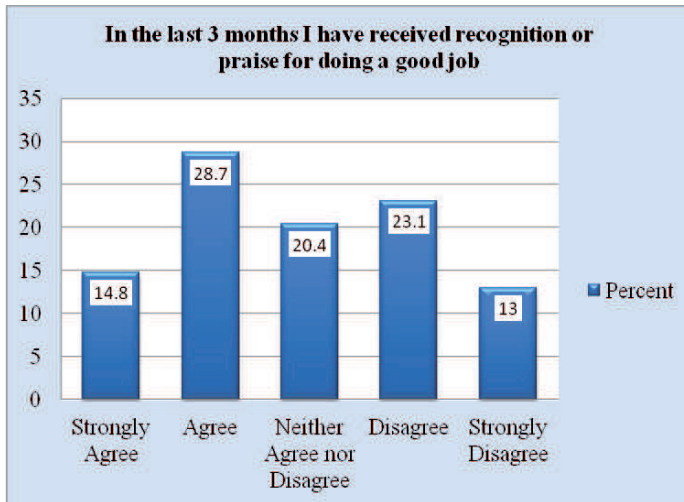


It is indicated in Figure 4.4 that 33.3 % of respondents strongly agree, 51.9% agree and 8.3% neither agree nor disagree and 6.5 % disagree that they have the resources they need to do their work right. It is clear that the majority of respondents (85 %) are confident that the company has provided them with the materials and equipment they require to do their work right however the minority of 7 % of respondents disagree and 8 % remain neutral.

The availability of necessary materials and equipment are one of the important factors to involve employees in their jobs. Harter, Schmidt, Killham and Agrawal (2009:9) assert that getting employees what they need in order to do their work is important in maximising efficiency and achieving organisational outcomes. They further indicate that great managers keep this perceptive objective by helping employees realise how their requests for equipment and resources connect to important business outcomes. In contrast, employees who are not provided with the necessary equipment and materials that they require to perform their tasks get unvalued and disengaged.

#### 4.4.1.3 Recognition and praise

**Figure 4.5: Recognition and praise**



It is illustrated in Figure 4.5 that 14.8% of respondents strongly agree, 28.7% agree and 20.4% neither agree nor disagree, 23.1 % disagree and 13 % strongly disagree that in the last 3 months they had received recognition or praise for doing a good job.

Praises and or recognition are an important aspect of encouraging employees. Frequent recognition and or praise for good work build employee's self-esteem and create strong partnerships (Wellins, Benthall & Phelps, unknown: 15). This results in high levels of performance. Furthermore, lack of praises and or recognition of employees lead to disengagement (Kumar & Swetha, 2011:234). At Company XYZ, this aspect of engagement tool is believed to be insufficient as it is observed that a total of 36 % of respondents disagree that they have received any recognition and or praise for doing a good job in the last 3 months while 20.4% neither agree or disagree. Notably, a high percent rate (20%) of respondents avoided this statement by opting to be neutral. Accordingly, it is significant for the managers to understand how each employee prefers to be recognised and or praised.

#### **4.4.1.4 Opinions and suggestions**

**Figure 4.6: Opinions and suggestions**

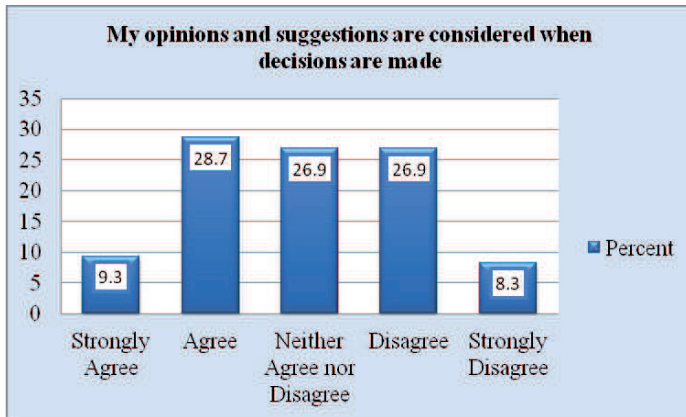
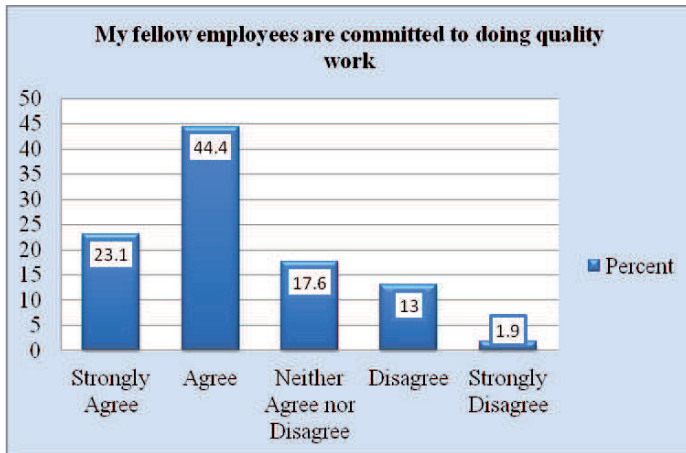


Figure 4.6 reveal that 9.3% of respondents strongly agree, 28.7% agree, 26.9% neither agree nor disagree, 26.9% disagree and 8.3 % strongly disagree that their opinions and suggestions are taken into consideration when decisions are made.

In engagement, employees want to be involved in decisions that affect their work (Devi & Bharathi, 2009:45). Harter et al. (2009:7) support this by indicating that employees are generally hands on to the operational production and systems than managers, and so by asking and considering their input can lead to better decision. However, in this study there is an expression of dissatisfaction by the respondents regarding consideration of employees' opinions and suggestions during decision making process as it is observed that an overall of 35 % of respondents do not feel that their opinions and suggestions are considered when decisions are made and 27% of respondents neither agree nor disagree to this statement. Devi and Bharathi (2009:45) maintain that to move the organisation forward and enhance high levels of engagement, managers need to create a trustful and challenging environment in which employees are encouraged to dissent from the prevailing orthodoxy to input. Furthermore, employees whose ideas are not considered in decision making suffer in terms of engagement.

#### **4.4.1.5: Employee commitment**

**Figure 4.7: Employee commitment**



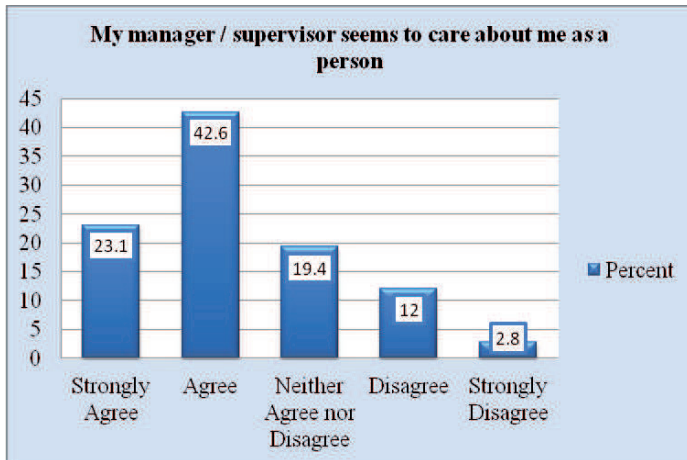
It is revealed in Figure 4.7 that 23.1% of respondents strongly agree, 44.4% agree, 17.6% neither agree nor disagree, 13.0% disagree and 1.9 % strongly disagree that their fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

Commitment is an important component of engagement and is regarded as a psychological state of attachment (Macey & Schneider, 2008:8). Gokul, Sridevi and Srinivasan (2012:30) support this and further indicate that there are three dimensions of commitment; affective, continuance and normative commitment. Employees who are most committed perform 20 percent better than those who are less committed and are 87% less likely to leave the organisation (Swarnalatha & Prasanna, 2013:1).

The results depict that an overall total of 68 % respondents are confident that their fellows are committed to doing the quality job and only 15 % of respondents disagree. This is a positive response for the company as it signifies that employees at Company XYZ are psychologically attached to the company, thus are committed to performing quality work.

#### **4.4.1.6 Manager or supervisor cares about the employee as a person**

**Figure 4.8: Manager or supervisor care**

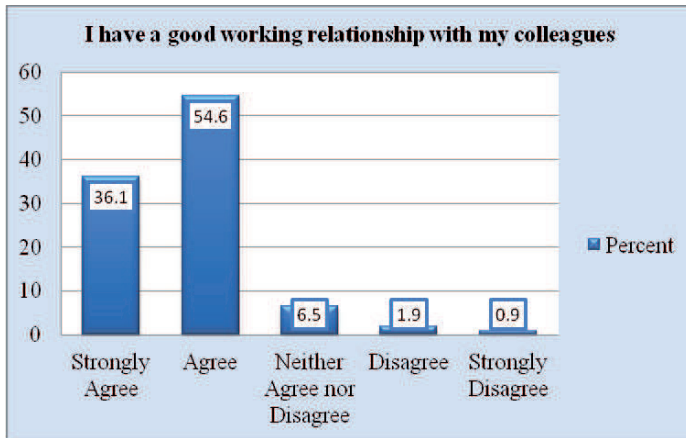


It is demonstrated in Figure 4.8 that 23.1% of respondents strongly agree, 42.6% agree, 19.4% neither agree nor disagree, 12.0% disagree and 2.8 % strongly disagree that their manager / supervisor seems to care about them as a person.

Employee engagement is driven by a caring manager or supervisor. Employees want their manager or supervisor to care about their personal lives, to take an interest in them as people, to care how they feel and support their health and wellbeing (Pillai, 2013:40). In return, employees become more engaged and thus improve levels of performance. It is therefore evident from the results that managers or supervisors of Company XYZ seem to care about employees as persons. Notably, 19.4 % of respondents opted not to agree or disagree with this statement.

#### **4.4.1.7 Good working relationship with colleagues**

**Figure 4.9: Good working relationship with colleagues**



It is illustrated in Figure 4.9 that 36.1% of respondents strongly agree, 54.6% agree, 6.5% neither agree nor disagree, 1.9% disagree and 0.9 % strongly disagree that they have a good working relationship with their colleagues.

This is a positive response for the company as the results demonstrate that only a minority of 3 % of employees do not have a good working relationship with their colleagues while the majority of employees (91%) confirm to have a good working relationship with colleagues. SHRM (2012:34) found that positive relationships at work may make the workplace and work more enjoyable and increased job satisfaction and engagement.

In summary, the findings indicate that the majority of the respondents (98%) are well aware of what is expected of them and 85 % of respondents perceive that they have the resources they need to perform their tasks. However, aspects pertaining to recognition and praise for doing the good work and consideration of employees' opinions and suggestions when making decisions are not effectively and adequately handled. Furthermore, 36 % of respondents disagree that they have received praise or recognition for doing good job in the last three months. Similarly, only 38% of respondents perceive that their opinions and suggestions are considered when decisions are made.

Therefore, the results of this study indicate that employees at Company XYZ are moderately engaged. Towers Perrin (2003:6) indicates that highly engaged employees are those who

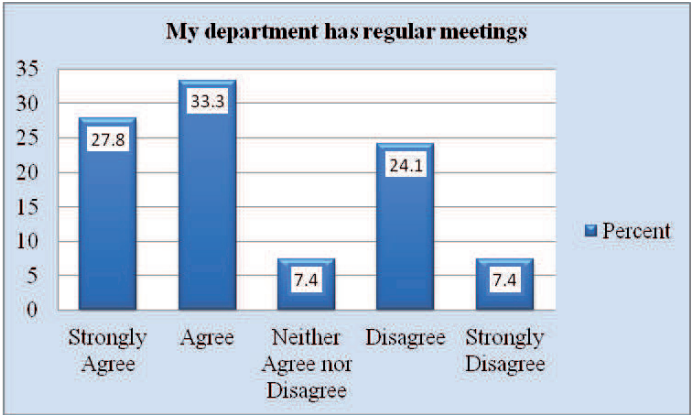
agree to all questions, disengaged are those who disagree to all questions and moderately engaged employees agree and disagree in some questions or are neutral.

#### 4.4.2 Factors contributing to employee engagement

Scottish (2007:11) assert that the factors that determine engagement are primarily driven by the organisation and it is the extent to which the organisation takes these issues on board and addresses them in an effective manner that will influence engagement levels.

##### 4.4.2.1 Regular meetings

Figure 4.10: Regularity of department meetings

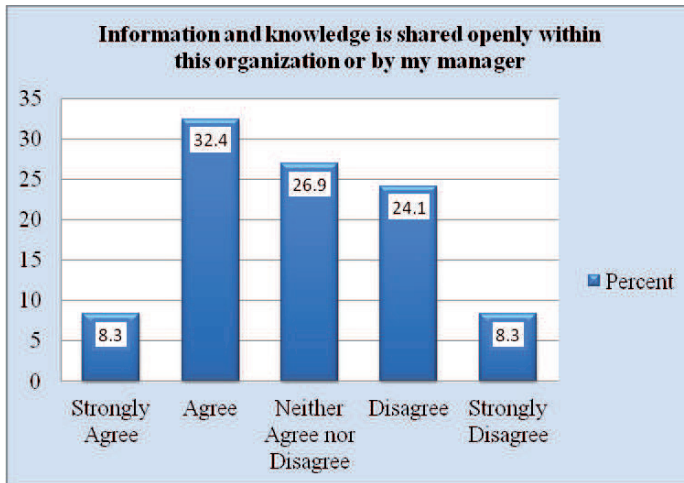


As illustrated in Figure 4.10 27.8% of respondents strongly agree, 33.3% agree, 7.4% neither agree nor disagree, 24.1% disagree and 7.4 % strongly disagree that their department has regular meetings.

A collective of 61% respondents concur that their departments has regular meetings while 32% of respondents disagree and 7% are neutral. According to Allen and Rogelberg (2013:547) meetings serve to demonstrate respect and support for the employee’s efforts on the job as they promote achievement and goal accomplishment. In other words, regular meetings provide employees with information and knowledge they need to effectively carry out their roles. Allen and Rogelberg (2013:547) further cite that regular meetings promote engagement.

#### 4.4.2.2 Information and knowledge sharing

Figure 4.11: Sharing of information and knowledge

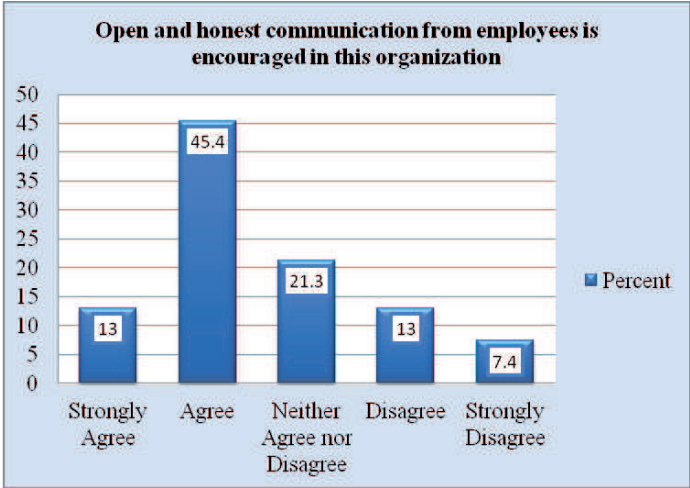


It is revealed in Figure 4.11 that 8.3% of respondents strongly agree, 32.4% agree, 26.9% neither agree nor disagree, 24.1% disagree and 8.3 % strongly disagree that information and knowledge is shared openly within their organisation or by their manager.

The results depict that a collective total of only 40.7 % of respondents concur that information and knowledge is openly shared within the organisation or by their managers. A collective total of 32 % of respondents disagrees and notably 27 % of respondents neither agree nor disagree with this statement. According to Gill (2011:24), good employee engagement is reliant on effective sharing of information between employees and management. This will help actively engage the employees. According to the survey conducted by CIPD (2006), employees are more likely to be engaged if they feel well informed about what is going in the organisation and given an opportunity to feed their views upward. It is therefore important that managers or the management team communicate effectively with the employees. Lack of or poor communication can lead to distrust and dissatisfaction of employees.

#### 4.4.2.3 Encouragement of open and honest communication from employees

Figure 4.12: Encouragement of open and honest communication from employees

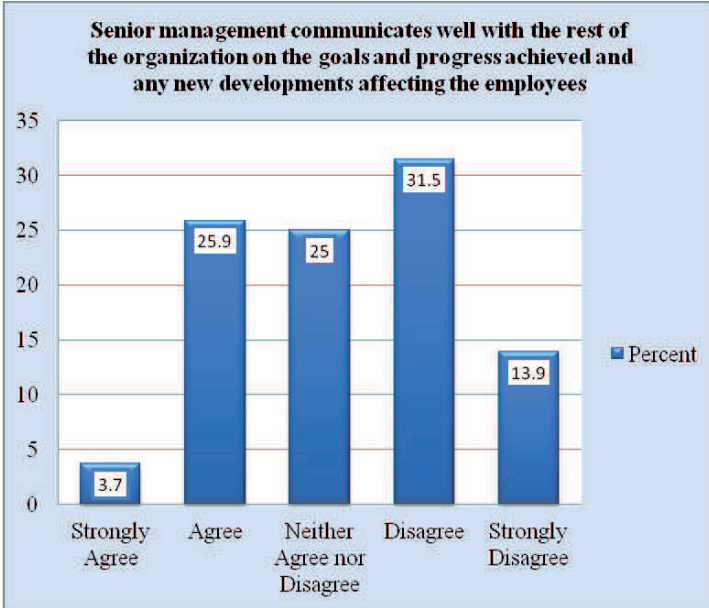


It is indicated in Figure 4.12 that 13,0% of respondents strongly agree, 45,4% agree, 21,3% neither agree nor disagree, 13,0% disagree and 7,4 % strongly disagree that open and honest communication from employees is encouraged in their organisation.

It has been established that open and honest communication is an important management tool for enhancing employee engagement (Shafi, Zaigham, Ahmed, Saeed, Jahangir and Ullah, 2013:22). Swaminathan and Aramvalathan (2013:167) assert that an effective organisation is the one that has open and honest communication channels which allow free flow of information both horizontally as well as up-down the organisational hierarchy. Poorly done and ambiguous communication can lead to unhappiness in employees, distrust and employee turnover. However, comparing these results with the results discussed in 4.4.2.1 and 4.4.2.2, there is a contradiction. It is evident that in theory open and honest communication is encouraged but the management is failing to adhere to this statement. The assumption behind this might be that there are no proper communication strategies in place.

#### 4.4.2.4 Communication on the goals, progress achieved and any new developments affecting the employees

**Figure 4.13: Communication on the goals and progress achieved and any new developments affecting the employees**



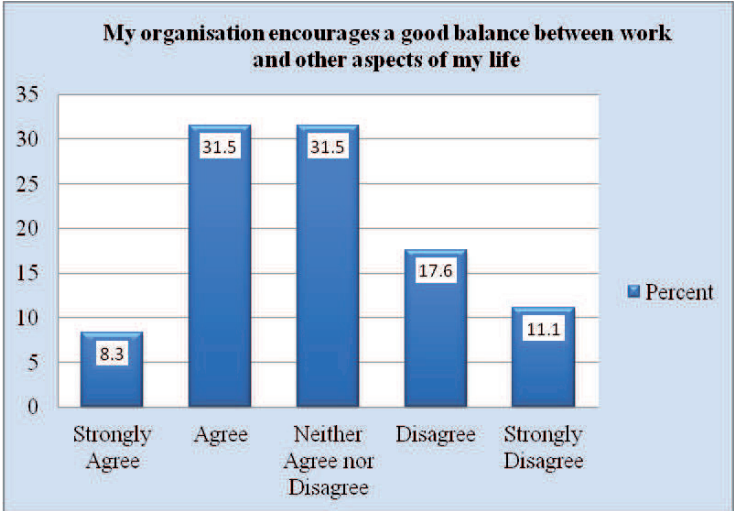
It is depicted in Figure 4.13 that 3.7% of respondents strongly agree, 25.9% agree, 25% neither agree nor disagree, 31.5% disagree and 13.9 % strongly disagree that senior management communicates well with the rest of the organisation on the goals and progress achieved and any new developments affecting the employees.

According to SHRM (2012:15) and Azoury et al. (2013:21), communication of goals, visions and any new and future development of the organisation create clear goals and expectations for employees which in turn foster high levels of performance and engagement. Hence, foster trust and respect and lead to the actively engaged employees and successful organisation.

It is apparent that lack of communication by senior management results in poor performance and disengaged employees.

**4.4.2.5 Encouragement of work – life balance**

**Figure 4.14: Encouragement of work-life balance**

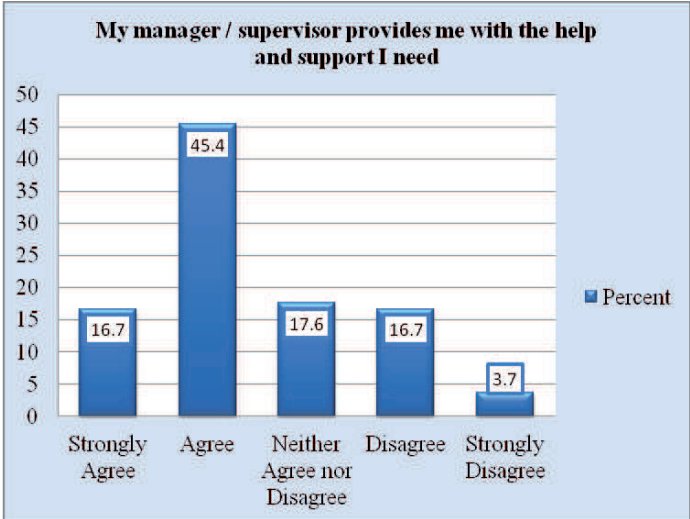


According to Figure 4.14, 8.3% of respondents strongly agree, 31.5% agree, 31.5% neither agree nor disagree, 7.6% disagree and 11.1 % strongly disagree that their organisation encourages a good balance between work and other aspects of my life.

The results depict that a total of 40 % of respondents agree that Company XYZ encourages a good balance between work and other aspects of life. However, 32 % of respondent neither agree nor disagree with this statement while 19 % of respondents disagree. According to CIPD (2012:18), employees’ family commitments, family related needs, flexibility as well as any other non-work responsibilities have an influence on work life. Likewise Penna (2007:5) asserts that being able to leave work early and enjoy a work life balance creates a positive experience at work. It is therefore imperative for organisations to develop work-life balance policies. A lack of these policies in place will lead to dissatisfaction, high absenteeism rate as well as high staff turnover. On the other hand, an employee who realises that the organisation is considering his family’s benefits develops a strong emotional attachment with the organisation Sundaray (2011:56). Subsequently, this leads to commitment to the organisation and increased levels of engagement.

**4.4.2.6 Help and support from manager / supervisor**

**Figure 4.15: Help and support from manager / supervisor**

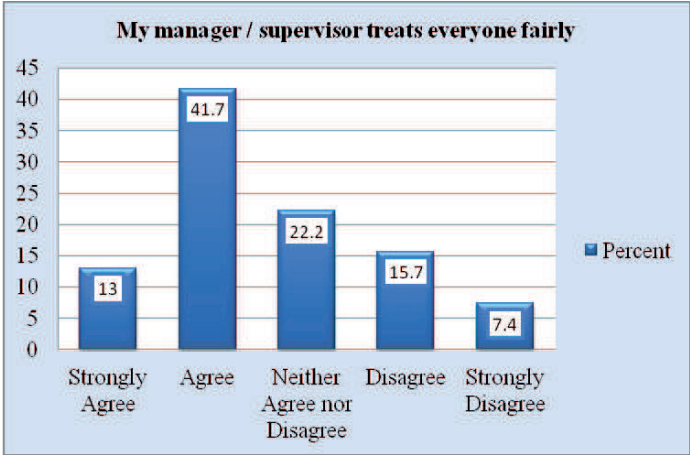


It is portrayed in Figure 4.15 that 16.7% of respondents strongly agree, 45.4% agree, 17.6% neither agree nor disagree, 16.7% disagree and 3.1 % strongly disagree that their manager / supervisor provides them with the help and support they need.

An environment of supportiveness develops when managers or supervisors are there for their employees (Khatri and Khushboo, 2013:612). Manager or supervisor support has a positive influence on engagement. Robinson et al (2004:35) assert that managers are a key to creating commitment in an organisation. Moreover, manager or supervisors who take interest in the wellbeing and interest of the employees by giving them support achieve better commitment results from employees than supervisors who do not care about their employee. Interestingly, 18% of respondents are neutral. A neutral indication can imply that employees disagree with the fact that they are supported by their supervisors / managers.

**4.4.2.7 Fair treatment**

**Figure 4.16: Fair treatment**

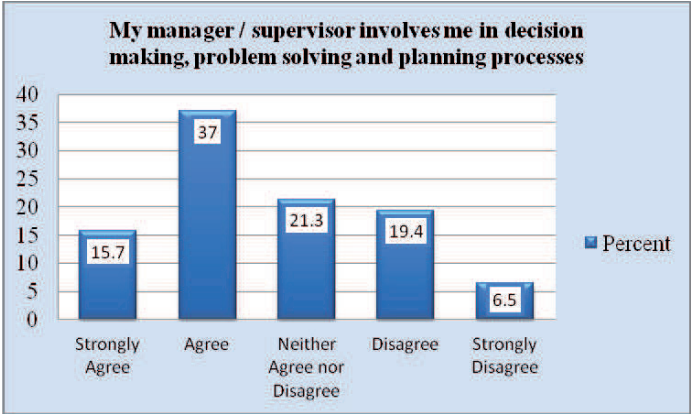


It is shown in Figure 4.16 that 13% of respondents strongly agree, 41.7% agree, 22.2% neither agree nor disagree, 15.7% disagree and 7.4 % strongly disagree that their manager / supervisor treats everyone fairly.

Employees seek a fair balance between what they put into their job and what they get out of it (Bushe, 2012:285). Employees who feel that their inputs are fairly and adequately rewarded experience justice. Consequently, they are happy in their work and motivated to continue contributing to the organisation. On the contrary, employees who perceive unfair treatment experience injustice and thus become demotivated in relation their job and employer (Kontakos, 2007:19) and thus lead to lower levels of employee engagement

**4.4.2.8 Employee involvement in decision making, problem solving and planning processes by manager**

**Figure 4.17: Employee involvement in decision making, problem solving and planning processes by manager**

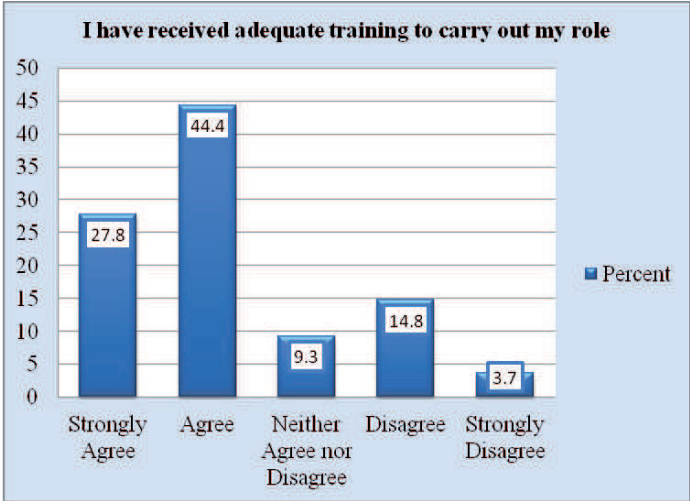


According to Figure 4.17, 15.7% of respondents strongly agree, 37% agree, 21.3% neither agree nor disagree, 19.4% disagree and 6.5% strongly disagree that they are involved in decision making, problem solving and planning processes by their manager/ supervisor.

Involvement of all the employees leads to employees being deeply engaged in their work as they feel appreciated (Robertson-Smith and Markwick, 2009:38). The results demonstrate that the majority of the employees are employees feel that their managers involve them in solving problems, making of decisions and in planning of the processes. Consequently creates an involved workforce and also makes employees feel important and valued (Pandey, 2012:7). Involvement also creates a sense of ownership and responsibility. This leads to engagement.

**4.4.2.9 Adequacy of training received**

**Figure 4.18: Adequacy of training received**

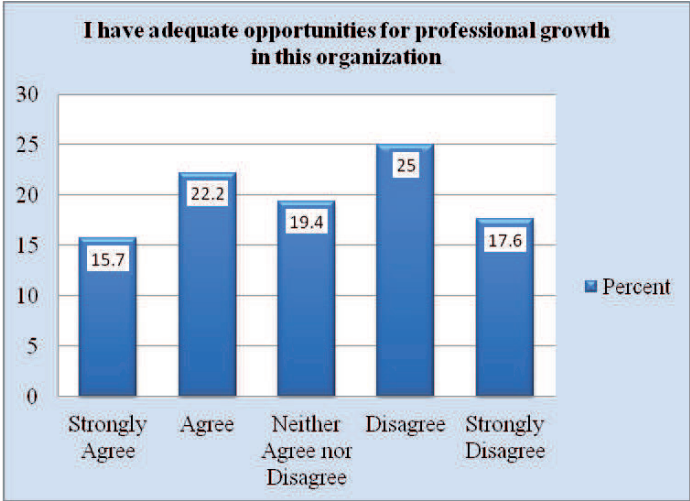


It is revealed in Figure 4.18 that 27.8% of respondents strongly agree, 44.4% agree, 9.3% neither agree nor disagree, 14.8% disagree and 3.7 % strongly disagree that they have received adequate training to carry out their roles.

Training has been found to be one of the most important tools for engagement and developing talent (Ngobeni & Bezuidenhout, 2011:9964). Gummadi and Devi (2013:24) support this by asserting that training enhances the employees’ skills which in turn create more affinity towards the job and the organisation. Therefore, organisations that give employees education and tools increase the business performance (Towers Perrin, 2003:29). It is evident that Company XYZ prioritises on developing skills of the employees in order to make a significant impact on employee engagement. Ngobeni and Bezuidenhout (2011:9964) declare that the more adequately skilled a person is the more able they are to perform their role. Precisely, employees who do not have the skills to achieve the goals set out for them, become frustrated, demotivated and uninterested while achievement and mastery leads to increased performance and engagement and reduces frustration.

**4.4.2.10 Opportunities for professional growth**

**Figure 4:19: Opportunities for professional growth**



It is demonstrated in Figure 4.19 that 15.7% of respondents strongly agree, 22.2% agree, 19.4% neither agree nor disagree, 25.0% disagree and 17.6 % strongly disagree that they have adequate opportunities for professional growth in this organization.

According to Ologbo and Sofian (2013:3) organisations with high levels of engagement provide their employees with adequate opportunities to develop their abilities to acquire new knowledge and skills in order to utilise their potential in performing their best. On the contrary, employees who perceive no opportunities for professional growth become disillusioned and display low levels of engagement (SHRM, 2012:10). It is therefore important for organisations to have employee development programs and planned career paths for each employee. Companies with no employee development programs and planned career path are likely to lose employees to other organisations with better professional growth and development opportunities (SHRM, 2012:10).

**4.4.2.11 Remuneration**

**Figure 4.20: Remuneration**

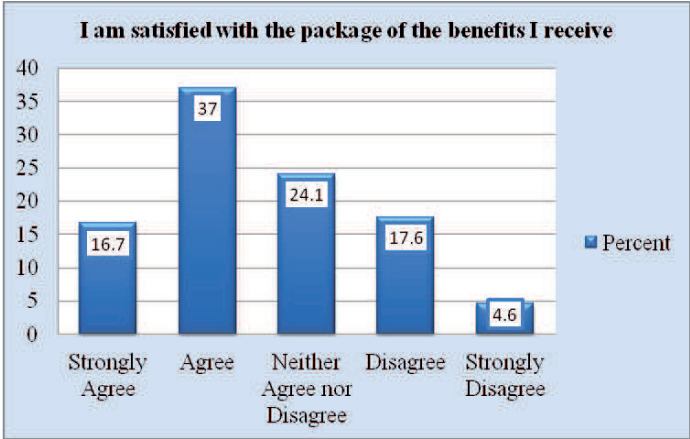


It is illustrated in Figure 4.20 that 9.3% of respondents strongly agree, 27.8% agree, 22.2% neither agree nor disagree, 32.4% disagree and 8.3 % strongly disagree that their salary is fair for the job they do.

According to Tabiu and Nura (2013:251) remuneration plays a motivational role in engaging employees. When employees are not paid or remunerated fairly they feel that they are not acknowledged for the contribution and value they offer to the company. Webb (2012:12) argues that it is difficult for the organisation to motivate an employee to be a top performer regardless of any engagement that the organisation is trying to attempt. Likewise, employees who get paid fair salaries are more engaged and they stay with the company for longer. Therefore, the organisations should have a proper appropriate pay system to motivate employees (Madan, 2011:101).

**4.4.2.12 Satisfaction with benefits received**

**Figure 4.21: Satisfaction with benefits received**



Compensation and benefits can powerfully influence employee engagement (Vance, 2006:14). It is revealed in Figure 4.21 that 16.7% of respondents strongly agree, 37% agree, 24.1% neither agree nor disagree, 17.6% disagree and 4.6 % strongly disagree that they are satisfied with the package of the benefits they receive.

Compensation is the total package of monetary and non-monetary benefits provided to an employee by the employer (Khuong & Tien, 2013:517). SHRM (2012:27) illustrate that benefits that are important to employees include health care, paid time off, retirement and family friendly benefits. Furthermore, these benefits encourage commitment to employers, job satisfaction and engagement. In contrast, if these benefits are unfair and unsatisfactory to the employees, this can lead to job dissatisfaction and disengagement.

**4.4.2.13 Person in job fit**

**Figure 4.22: Person in job fit**

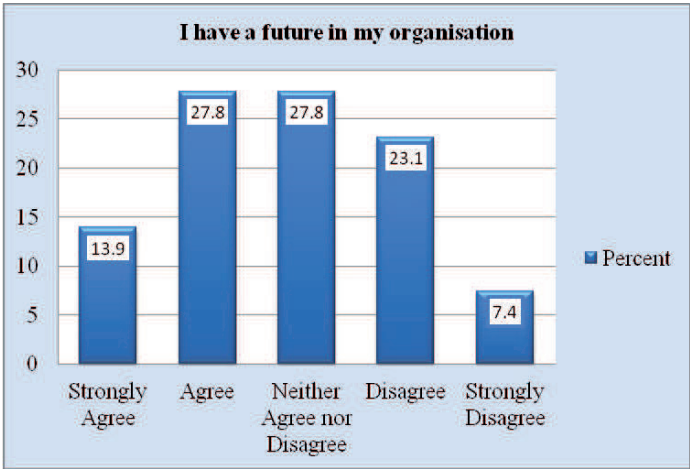


According to Figure 4.22 10.2% of respondents strongly agree, 22.2% agree, 23.1% neither agree nor disagree, 26.9% disagree and 17.6 % strongly disagree that their organisation recognises the importance of employing the right person for the right job.

In engagement, putting the right people in the right position is believed to elevate levels of engagement (Shuck, Rocco and Albornoz 2011:306). In essence, competent and qualified people are psychologically and emotionally present (Kahn 1990:693) when they are performing and thus improves attitude and enhance engagement. If employees are given positions that they do not qualify and know, they become frustrated and less engaged because they cannot accomplish the goals required (Shuck et al., 2010:306).

**4.4.2.14 Future in the organisation**

**Figure 4.23: Future in the organisation**



It is demonstrated in Figure 4.23 that 13.9% of respondents strongly agree, 27.8% agree, 27.9% neither agree nor disagree, 23.1% disagree and 7.4 % strongly disagree that they have a future in their organisation.

According to Priyanka (2012:97), organisations that promote employee engagement create greater motivation within employees for the work they do and increase their commitment to the organisation. In return employees feel a strong emotional bond to the organisation and are strongly engaged to the organisation. According to Suharti and Suliyanto (2012:129), employees with strong engagement have a strong loyalty to the engagement and do not have any intention to leave the company. However, employees who feel that they do not have future in the organisation do not intend to stay instead they look for jobs in other organisation (Robinson et al., 2004:23).

In summary, Swarnalatha and Prasanna (2013:56) noted that there are a range of drivers which are thought to increase employee engagement. Drivers such as regularity of departmental meetings, information and knowledge sharing, encouragement of open and honest communication, communication on the goals and progress achieved and any new development affecting the employees, encouragements of work-life balance, help and support from the manager, fair treatment, employee involvement in decision making, training, opportunities for professional growth, remuneration, satisfaction with benefits, job fit and future in the organisation contribute to employee engagement. These drivers do not operate in

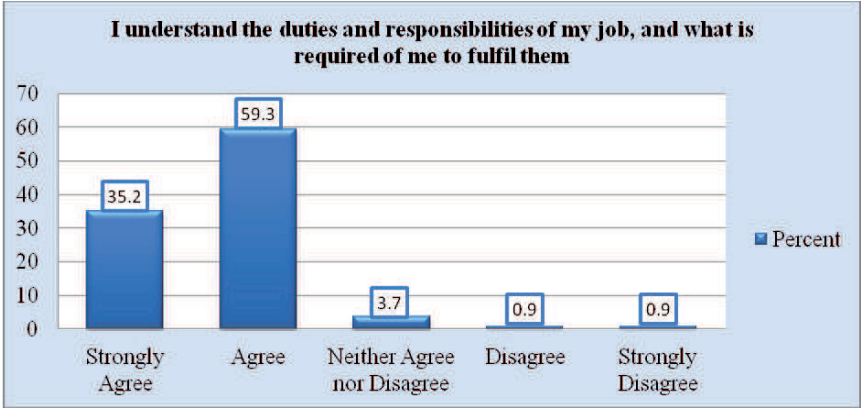
isolation, they are interrelated Hewitt (2012:6). Hence, the results reveal that 72 % of respondents have received training, 62 % have regular departmental meetings and 61 % are supported by their managers. Only 58 % perceive that that the management encourages open and honest communication from employees. Similarly, 54% agree that they receive fair treatment from their managers, involvement in decision making, problem solving and planning of processes (53%) and satisfaction with the benefits (52%). It can be seen that factors like communication of goals and progress achieved, encouragement of work-life balance, growth opportunities, remuneration, fair treatment, job fit and having future in the organisation are major issues. The respondents are not quite satisfied with these drivers. These results indicate that engagement at Company XYZ is partially present.

**4.4.3 Impact of employee engagement on employee performance**

Employee engagement can lead to enhanced performance as a result of various factors (Anitha, 2014:313). Factors such as duties and responsibilities inspire to perform, creation of excellent performing and collaborative team, performance feedback and trust.

**4.4.3.1 Duties and responsibilities of the job**

**Figure 4.24: Duties and responsibilities of the job**



According to Figure 4.24 35.2% of respondents strongly agree, 59.3% agree, 3.7% neither agree nor disagree, 0.9% disagree and 0.9 % strongly disagree that they understand the duties and responsibilities of their jobs, and what is required of them to fulfil their duties.

The roles, responsibilities of the employee as well as expectations of the employer should be clearly clarified. Furthermore, employees should have a clear understanding as to how they contribute to the organisation’s performance (Soni, 2013:51). If expectations are not clear and clarified, an employee may become bored and resentment may result (Swarnalathan and Prasanna, 2013:56). Moreover, the employee may focus on surviving more than on thinking about how he or she can help the organisation.

**4.4.3.2 Inspired to perform**

**Figure 4.25: Inspired to perform**

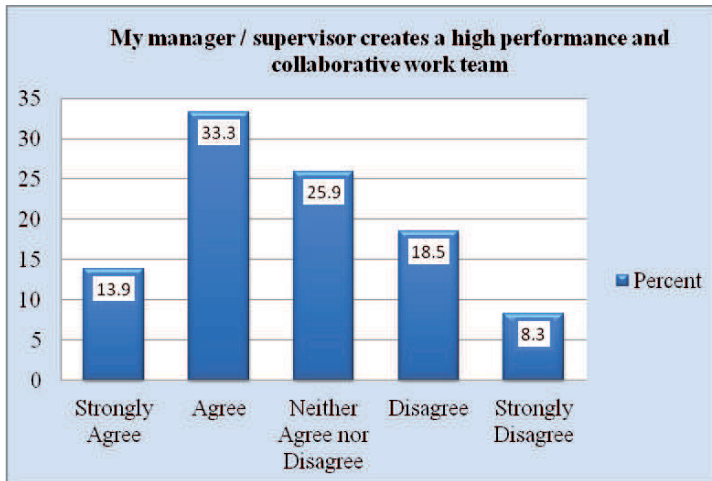


According to Figure 4.24, 22.2% of respondents strongly agree, 31.5% agree, 27.8% neither agree nor disagree, 15.7% disagree and 2.8% strongly disagree that they are inspired to give their best performance.

Shuck, Rocco and Albonzo (2010:306) assert that management practices play an important role in encouraging and inspiring employees. Employees are inspired by the effective implementation of these practises by organisation. Lack of effective implementation of organisational policies will result in withdrawal from the employees and low levels of commitment and inspiration (Shuck et al., 2010:306).

#### 4.4.3.4 Creation of excellent performing and collaborative team

Figure 4.26: Excellent performing and collaborative team

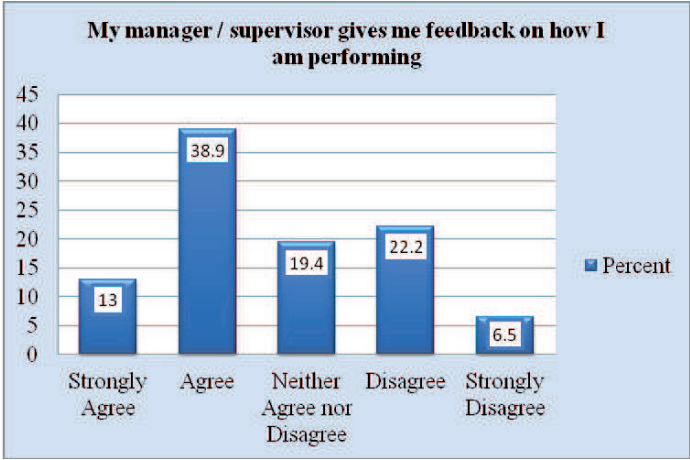


It is illustrated in Figure 4.26 that 13.9% of respondents strongly agree, 33.3% agree, 25.9% neither agree nor disagree, 18.5% disagree and 8.3% strongly disagree that their manager / supervisor creates a high performance and collaborative work team.

It is observed that only a total of 47 % of respondents perceive that their managers or supervisors create a high performance and collaborative work team. In any organisations, management is the key factor in building a high performance and collaborative work team. This is supported by Wellins et al. (2005:14) who reflect that building teamwork and collaboration requires creation and maintaining good relationships, both within the group and across the group.

#### 4.4.3.5 Performance feedback

Figure 4.27: Performance feedback



Literature has shown extensively the role of performance feedback in both increasing performance and increasing employee engagement (Gruman and Saks, 2011:127). In Figure 4.27 13% of respondents strongly agree, 38.9% agree, 19.4% neither agree nor disagree, 22.2% disagree and 6.5% strongly disagree that their manager / supervisor gives them feedback on how they are performing.

Feedback on performance gives employees a sense of how they are doing and where they are going (Swarnalathan & Prasanna, 2013:57). Giving a feedback whether it is positive or negative enhances the levels of engagement. Negative feedback will encourage the employees to improve on their performance whereas a positive feedback will strengthen the performance of employees. Therefore, Company XYZ needs to regularly provide feedback in order to increase levels of engagement. Wagner and Harter (2006) found that employees were more likely to remain at the company when their managers regularly checked in with them.

**4.4.3.6 Trust**

**Figure 4.28: Trust**



It is revealed in Figure 4.28 that 9.3% of respondents strongly agree, 35.2% agree, 34.3% neither agree nor disagree, 10.2% disagree and 11.1% strongly disagree that there is a solid level of trust within their team.

Trust is the integral part of a psychological contract (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006: 205) and has a potential to increase closeness that individuals feel towards their work, managers and co-workers. Importantly, Malinen, Wright and Cammock (2013:98) assert that trust in management is likely to influence engagement in the organization. Lack of trust by employees on their work, leadership and co-workers' mean that there will be a breakdown in the psychological contract between employees and employer. If employees do not perceive that the company will act on their best interest, they are unlikely to act in the best interest of the company. Similarly, low levels of trust affect employees' sense of security and lead them to seek out security in other companies. On contrary, high levels of trust lead to increased commitment, reduced turnover and absenteeism, high performance and highly engaged employees (Chughtai, 2008:64).

In summary, it is observed that 94% of respondents understand the duties and responsibilities of their jobs. However, they are moderately inspired to perform and the performance feedback is not adequately given to employees as the positive response was 53 % and 52 % respectively. Furthermore, only 44 % of respondents indicated that they trust their fellow team members and 47 % feel that their management is capable of creating a high performing and collaborating team.

McLeod and Clarke (2009:11) cite that improving engagement correlates with improving performance. Thus, the performance of the company can be affected by these low levels of engagement. Gruman and Saks (2011:131) suggest that in order to enhance engagement performance employees need to perceive that duties and responsibilities are clearly defined, feedback is provided in a fair manner. Additionally, trust in employers influences performance and effectiveness in the organisation (Malinen, et al., 2013:97). Hence, Kataria, Rastogi and Garg (2013:65) suggest that engaged employees perform their job task with a sense of deep involvement which is a precondition to achieve proficiency in one's work. It is apparent that one cannot divorce employee performance and engagement in any organization. Given the results presented in the study, it is apparent that employees at Company XYZ are not fully engaged and thus are not high performers. Anitha (2013:309) assert that a fully engaged employee is one who agrees to all questions.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the data that were collected in Chapter three in the form of charts and tables. The findings showed that employees of Company XYZ are at moderate levels of engagement. The overall findings with regards to objective one wherein levels of employee engagement were measured point out that the majority of respondents were aware of what was expected of them. Furthermore, they had all resources required for optimum performance. Even so, management was lacking in recognition of praise for performing well including taking employees' suggestions into consideration during decision making. These areas certainly need improvement in Company XYZ.

Similarly, in terms of factors contributing to employee engagement, the study highlighted that there are certain gaps that need to be addressed. Positive responses were established on the availability of training, departmental meetings, help and support from management respectively. Encouragement of open and honest communication from employees, fair treatment, involvement in decision making, problem solving and planning of processes and satisfaction with the benefits received just above 50% of positive responses from respondents. Factors such as communication, work-life balance, growth opportunities, remuneration, fair treatment, job fit and having future in the organisation need to be rectified in order to adequately engage and promote employee engagement at Company XYZ.

Lastly, the study found that employee engagement has a significant impact on the employee performance. On contrary, low levels of employee engagement impact negatively on

employee performance. The findings show that employees know the roles and responsibilities of their jobs. Hence, they are not all inspired to perform. This might be due to the inadequate performance feedback system, lack of trust among team members.

The final chapter concludes the overall study; present findings and offers necessary recommendations to enhance engagement and by doing so increases performance in the workplace.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents conclusion and recommendations from the study by addressing the research problem and questions stated at the onset of chapter one and provides recommendations. Furthermore suggestions for future research are made.

### **5.2 Findings from the study**

This section is presented by highlighting the findings in order to determine whether the research questions were answered. There was an assumption that Company XYZ experienced a lack of employee engagement which subsequently affects employee performance. As a result, the purpose of this study was to explore the levels of employee engagement, to explore the factors which contribute to employee engagement and to ascertain how employee engagement can be maximised within company XYZ in order to achieve its organisational objectives. Therefore, the following discussions present findings from the literature review and study as well as relevant recommendations in order to improve levels of employee engagement.

#### **5.2.1 Findings from the literature review and the primary research**

As indicated above, the first objective of the study was to assess the levels engagement at Company XYZ. Employee engagement can be understood as the harnessing of organisation members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performance (Khan, 1990:694). Similarly, Gallup (2013) asserts that in the workplace employees can be divided into three categories namely engaged, not engaged and actively disengaged employees. Engaged employees strongly agree or agree to all Q12 questions. Engaged employees are enthusiastic and passionate about their jobs and they feel a profound connection to their organisation (Gallup, 2013). They work consistently at high levels of commitment. Disengaged employees do not have energy while performing their jobs, they just focus on completing their assigned tasks without going the extra mile or providing support to team members to achieve a common goal, because their passion for work has died out. The actively disengaged

employees are unhappy at work. They show negativity at every opportunity and always try to influence those around them. Considering the 7 indicators of engagement, where it was expected that were respondents engaged, the majority of respondents would have either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements presented, the findings demonstrate that employees at Company XYZ are moderately engaged. The study reveals that the employees are committed (67%), know what is expected of them (98% rating) and have resources to do the work (85%). However, in terms of recognition and praise, the results indicated that employees were not quite satisfied (36%). As supported by Venkatesh (2013:89) and Bhatla (2011:5), a lack of recognition and praise for doing the good work as well as not considering opinions and suggestions of employees when making decisions indicate a lower existence of employee engagement. Employees also felt that their opinions and suggestions are not considered when decisions are made (35%).

With regards to the factors contributing to employee engagement, the literature reveals that the strongest driver of employee engagement is a sense of feeling valued and involved (Institute of Employment Studies, 2003:21). Furthermore, several key factors contribute to feeling valued and involved. These factors include recruitment, job designing, career development, leadership, empowerment, equal opportunities and fair treatment, training and development, health and safety, compensation, performance management, family friendliness, communication and job satisfaction (Bhatla, 2011:3; Vazirani, 2007:7). Sundaray (2011:55) noted that the strength of each factor and the components of feeling valued and involved are likely to differ depending on the organisation. This finding is consistent with Robinson et al. (2004) as they expressed the how unlikely it is that there is one size fits all approach of engagement drivers. Organisations need to understand the voice need to understand the voice of employees and employees' needs issues and values (Towers Perrin, 2008:1). The findings revealed that Company XYZ employees have received adequate training to perform their job (72%). Similarly, the employees are satisfied with the regularity of their departmental meetings (61%), receive support from their management (62%), feel they are treated fairly treatment (54%), are involved in decision making, problem solving and planning of processes (53%) and are satisfaction with the benefits (54%). However, the results indicated that employees were not satisfied with encouragement of work-life balance (%), growth opportunities (43%), remuneration (41%), and job fit (45%). Also the majority felt that they do not have future in the organisation (31%). It is interesting to note that 58% of employees agree that management encourages open and honest communication from

employees and only 30 % of employees agree that senior management communicate the goals and progress achieved and any new developments affecting employees with the rest of the organisation. These results seem to suggest that communication may not be working as an effective two way process. Also employees have received training for doing their job however Company XYZ does not provide adequate opportunities for employees to develop new skills and knowledge. It is revealed in this study that out of fourteen drivers, only 7 drivers; training, departmental meetings, management support, fair treatment, involvement in decision making, problem solving and planning of processes and satisfaction with the benefits showed a positive relationship with employee engagement. The relative strength of each driver is likely to vary depending on the organisation (Robinson et al., 2004:21). Similarly, Scottish (2007:15) asserts that the factors that determine engagement are primarily driven by the organisation. Scottish (2007) further asserts that it is the extent to which the organisation takes these issues on board and addresses them in an effective manner that will influence engagement levels. Consequently, the organisation has the power to influence these factors.

Employee engagement is one of the key determinants fostering high levels of employee performance (Anitha, 2013:309). Anitha (2013:313) further argues that engagement can lead to enhanced performance as a result of various factors. In order to measure the link engagement and performance, respondents were asked to respond on understanding roles and responsibilities of their jobs, inspiration to perform, creation of high performance and collaborative team as well as the level of trust within the team. A fully engaged employee is one who fully agrees to all the questions (Anitha, 2013: 9). According to the findings it is evident that the employees are not fully engaged and performing optimally. The majority of the employees understand their duties and responsibilities (94%), however they are moderately inspired to give their best performance (53%). This might be due to the fact that feedback on their performance is not adequately provided as indicated by the findings from the study (52%). Similarly, the study reveals that only 44% of employees agree to have a solid trust amongst the team members engaged and only 47 % of employees agree that the superiors create high performance and collaborative teams.

Furthermore, the study established that some employees opted to be neutral as far as trust amongst team members (34%), performance feedback (19%), as well as the managers' capabilities in creating high performance and collaborative teams was concerned. These

shortcomings mean that employees will be exposed to mistrust between themselves and management, which lead to dire effects to the individual's performance resulting to lower levels of productivity and disengagement. This is consistent with the findings of Muthuveloo et al., (2013:1547) who argue that employees who are not engaged will affect the organisational performance through higher absenteeism, higher turnover and lower productivity, recruitment and training cost. This is consistent with the study by Harter et al (2002) in their meta-analysis of 7,393 business units covering 3 companies who also found that there exist a relationship between employee engagement, customer satisfaction, productivity, profit and employee turnover, which ultimately would lead to increased likelihood of business success. This is an indication that employee engagement has an impact on employee performance.

### **5.2.2 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and discussion, employee engagement success should be linked to the overall organisational strategy. In order to increase and maintain engagement leadership and management should commit to employee engagement and it should form part of organisational core values (Society for Human Resource Management, 2013:4). Levels of employee engagement can be increased by ensuring that employee engagement is not a once off project, but should be measured consistently at least biannually and should be linked to the organisational strategy. Employees should be given an opportunity to provide input. This can be done in several ways but the common one which can accommodate all levels of employees equally is to hold quarterly meeting where issues are discussed. Employees can also be given an opportunity to raise their opinions and feedback should be given on issues that directly affect them. Furthermore, Desai, Majumdar and Prabhu (2010:92) suggest that good work should be recognised consistently through monthly and annual staff awards and may be acknowledged publicly through emails or group meetings. A simple "thank you" will increase levels of engagement. Managers should all the time recognise employees for doing for doing the good work.

Employee engagement should be a two way communication (Markos & Sridevi, 2010:5). Abraham (2012:34) reckons that there should be clear lines of communication in all levels in the organisation where in employee contributions are also taken into consideration. Clear communication and participation of all parties pave a way for a success on employee engagement. Clear and consistent communication of what is expected of them paves a way

for the effective organisation. Therefore, a communicated programme or channel that will encourage a two-way communication should be built. The Trade Union is also a good tool in communicating with employees besides electronic communication tools such as notices, intranet, meetings and surveys. This should be incorporated in the strategy of the organisation.

Company XYZ management should promote a strong work culture in which the goals of managers' are aligned with all work sections. This culture of mutual respect can be transferred to all employees including new recruits.

Each employee should have a personal development plan and career path. Employees who have development plans have high engagement levels. They have assurance that their development needs are taken seriously (IES, 2007:2) and feel involved and recognised by the organisation. By focusing on top performing employees, an organisation can reduce levels of turnover and promote the feeling that employees have future in the organisation. This results to the top business performance. Importantly employees should be remunerated according to their performance. If the employees feel that their performance is recognised they will put more effort. In contrast, if employees feel that they are less remunerated they will put less effort and thus affect production. In addition the management of Company XYZ should develop policies that will address work-life balance programs in support of employees' family and out of work life.

The Human Resources Department should up skill management through the management development programme. It is managers who empower individuals and communicate with them in order to improve staff morale. Typical Management Development Programmes comprise of financial management, strategy development, leading teams, people management, operations and supply chain management, technology and information systems as well as management processes. These skills certainly will empower managers to engage their employees to the fullest. Team building activities should be developed in order to alleviate mistrust amongst team members.

### **5.3 Implications of the study and recommendations for further research**

#### **5.3.1 Implications of the study**

It is believed that this study enabled management to see that employee engagement should be cascaded from top to the bottom. It became clear that a two-way communication is the key to

the success of any organisation and employee engagement practices. As recommended, it was clear in this study that leadership should develop management development programmes in order to facilitate the success of employee engagement. In this study, although employees were trained on how to perform their job, there was a lack of feedback on performance. This is an indication that employee engagement should not be practiced in isolation and should include all levels in the organisation.

### **5.3.2 Recommendations for further research**

The findings of this study have led to recommendation that a further research study on employee engagement should be conducted. The study should include all employees of Company XYZ in order to gain a better insight on the levels of engagement.

### **5.4 Conclusion**

This research study aimed to investigate employee engagement at Company XYZ. The first research question addressed the objective of measuring the levels of employee engagement at Company XYZ. The levels of employee engagement within the company were found to be moderate. That is employees were not highly engaged but at the same time not actively disengaged.

The second objective was to identify drivers or factors promoting employee engagement. Training, regularity of meetings, management support, encouragement of open, fair treatment and honest communication from employees, involvement in decision making, problem solving and planning of processes and satisfaction with the benefits came up with positive response however recommendation on improvement on communication of goals and progress achieved by management, encouragement of work-life balance, growth opportunities, remuneration, fair treatment, job fit and having future in the organisation are required.

Lastly, the impact of employee engagement in improving employee performance at the company was shown through lower levels of trust, lack of inspiration from employees to perform and performance feedback is not adequately provided. Recommendation to have team building activities in order to alleviate mistrust amongst team members was raised.

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