



**An Investigation into employee engagement and its impact on
organisational performance: an employee's perspective**

Research report presented to

**Graduate School of Business Leadership
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By

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Masters of Business Administration

Module code: MBA5929

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Consent Letter


MBA5929

CONSENT TO SUBMIT RESEARCH REPORT FOR EXAMINATION 2022

Consent is hereby given to:

Student name: Thomas Taylor Zitha

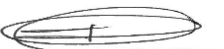
Student number: 10317856 to submit her research report in its final form.

Supervisor Signature: 

Date: 22 December 2022

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The student acknowledges that sufficient feedback was provided by the supervisor and that s/he took the responsibility to attend to the feedback in a way that satisfies the requirements for a research dissertation on the MBA and MBL level.

Student signature 

Date: 22 December 2022

Declaration

Name: Thomas Taylor Zitha

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I declare that the Investigation of employee engagement and its impact on organisational performance is my own work. Moreover, all sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software (Turn it in) and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality. I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

Signature:



Date: 22 December 2022

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my gratitude to God for guiding me through all the hurdles and obstacles. He's the one who made it possible for me complete my degree. I shall continue to believe in His Love and everlasting Guidance.

I would like to acknowledge and give my warmest thanks to my supervisor, Dr Magocha who made this work possible. His guidance and advice carried me through all the stages of writing my project. I would also like to thank Ms. Helen Richter for your unwavering support, guidance, for your brilliant comments and suggestions, thanks to you.

Special thanks to my life partner, Tlangelani for her continuous support and understanding when undertaking my research and writing my project. Thanks for your prayers and unwavering support.

Dedication

I dedicate this research study to my daughter Khanyisa; may it serve as inspiration that when you combine the following: God, Assiduity, and Faith, nothing is impossible; and so light shall prevail (Khanyisa).

An Investigation into employee Engagement impact on organisational performance: An employee perspective

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of employee engagement at the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA). The study will be guided by the following research questions: What is the impact of employee engagement on the organization's performance? Which factors are affecting employee engagement levels? What recommendations can be offered to improve employee engagement at public sector organisations? A questionnaire comprising closed-ended questions and responses rated on a 5-point Likert scale, was administered to respondents through the 'drop and pick' method; with a descriptive approach used to analyse data collected with the measurement instrument, to allow conclusions to be drawn. Data coding was followed by data presentation via tables and figures. Quantitative data collected were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software and presented through percentages, means, standard deviations and frequencies.

The public entity referred to as CETA has been burdened by operational and people issues. Overall, the organisation is essentially locked in underperformance. It is suggested the situation could improve should employee engagement levels be enhanced. The survey was administered to 50 CETA employees. The central argument in the research is that employee engagement is critical in determining employee, and organisational performance.

Findings reveal low employee engagement levels that, consequently, result in below-standard performance by the majority employees. The fundamental point of the research is that employee engagement is crucial in determining employee and organisational performance. The findings indicate low employee engagement levels at the CETA, which results in low performance levels among the majority employees. Although attempts have been made to improve the work environment and employee motivation, recent interventions have been insufficient.

Keywords: Employee engagement, organisational performance, public entity.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction and Problem overview

Employee engagement has been a topic for discussion in the public sector, because as much as managers believe they comprehend the concept accurately, they find it difficult to implement correctly. In return, this could compromise smooth business operations. According to Gemma (2016), employee engagement can be defined as the state at which employees feel valued, with their views taken into consideration, satisfied, and trusted by the employer. It is believed engaged employees remain loyal to the company, thus continually finding some smart ideas to refine the value chain of the organisation.

The end results of engaged employees are simply high performance, where people are enjoying their job while meeting the targets as per key performance indicators set by the organisation (Catteeuw et al., 2007 p. 152). As stated by Smith (2009), employees who are engaged tend to be attached to the organisation they are working for, which infers they will always be positive regarding their employer. The concept of employee engagement can be considered as one of the most crucial concepts in both employee and business performance, as it has the capability to either uplift or destroy the business when not practiced in a correct manner.

In relation to employee engagement, knowledge has become an essential component, when compared to property or assets owned by the company. Therefore, knowledge must be shared among all employees, which can be achieved through engaging the staff in decision-making. Research shows where employee engagement is not actively common among employees, their intellectual resources will remain constrained within the team. When knowledge is not shared among team members, it is not only the employees who suffer as the organisation itself will suffer the consequences. For example, a manager who does not share knowledge or engage with his or her subordinates will find it difficult to achieve departmental or organisational goals.

It should also be noted, although many companies, including their HR department and organisational development professionals, are aware of the employee engagement concept, many are uncertain on how best they can create/develop a strategy to enable employee engagement conditions to flourish (Fraser, 2008). Furthermore, a study has

also revealed that a most people in managerial position are not certain on how to go about in enabling a work environment for engagement to manifest (Pech and Slade, 2006).

As a result, the purpose of this study was to look at the impact of employee engagement on organizational performance. This study will seek to close the gap between engaged or disengaged employees by suggesting/proposing corrective actions or recommendations.

Concluding from the definitions stated above, employee engagement is undoubtedly an important concept, which needs to be provided the attention it needs. Employees who are engaged are committed, positive, dedicated, and content, which translate to the success of the organisation.

1.2 Research background

The organisation (CETA) funds and facilitate training and development programmes within the construction industry, in order to fulfil the goals of National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS III) requirements and ensure people are equipped according to their relevant skills development needs. In addition, the organisation is also responsible to identify the skills gap within the construction sector, allowing it to appropriately use the knowledge to address the identified skills need.

The organisation thus funds several learning programmes such as learnerships, apprenticeships, short skills programmes, and candidacy programmes, as well as bursaries, internships, and work integrated learning, and more. This is achieved through partnership with private and public institutions, companies, and service providers. The organisation generates its revenue through collection of levies from companies within the construction sector, with these collections used in day-to-day administration, training programmes, and any other related functions of the organisations.

The organisation has grown rapidly in the past few years with a good track record of great performance, which has led to consecutive clean audits. The current personnel complement is one hundred and six (106), made up of administrators, data capturers, officers, and specialists, as well as managers, and executive management. Although the organisation has been doing well, with a great record of accomplishment, due to

mismanagement of funds and poor corporative governance, the organisation was placed under administration in January 2020, which severely affected both employees and the image of the organisation.

Measuring employee engagement with management, colleagues, and the organization is one method for attempting to understand the level of employee's performance. The researcher saw a need to investigate the employee engagement level and its effect on organisational performance with the hope of coming up with amicable solution or recommendations depending on the research results. The study hopes to measure the level of current employee engagement and how it is affecting organisational performance.

According to (Ashton and Morton, 2005), whether employees are engaged or disengaged can be a deciding feature in an organization's growth. Employee engagement has a significant role to play in any organisation including but not limited to productivity, and loyalty. It also has a direct impact on customer satisfaction, company reputation, and overall stakeholder value. Therefore, organizations are turning to HR to set the agenda for employee engagement and commitment to gain a competitive edge.

The global character of work and the diversity of the workforce are undergoing extraordinary transformation in today's society and business, as businesses all over the world advance into a boundary-less environment. Having the right talent in pivotal roles at the right time, is of strategic importance, making a difference to revenues, innovation, and organisational effectiveness (Ashton and Morton, 2005). The ability to attract, engage, develop, and retain talent will become increasingly important in gaining competitive advantage. Thus, companies are competing for talented people who demonstrate high performance and high competence in the workplace (Berger, 2004).

Competition is worldwide in the modern economy, capital is plentiful, ideas are developed rapidly and cheaply, and people are eager to change employment frequently. In other words, organisations that cannot create a pleasant working environment for their employees will lose their talented employees. Engaged employees may be the key to gaining a competitive advantage in this situation, because engaged individuals have high levels of energy, are enthusiastic about their

work, and are often completely immersed in their task, meeting deadlines with ease, Macey and Schneider (2008).

Gemma, (2016) concurs to say that it is commendable for companies to invest on their employees and to act in ways that are consistent with organizational objectives, as employees are more likely to be confronted with unanticipated and ambiguous decision-making situations. Moreover, many employees prefer to work in environments where they can be engaged and feel they are contributing to something bigger than themselves. It is believed companies, by putting workers at the forefront and making them to feel valued or engaged may also assist achieving company's objectives and be in greater position where competitors will find it difficult to imitate.

1.3 Significance of the study

Public entities in South Africa are under extreme pressure to maintain and improve performance and service delivery, while ultimately doing more with less. Improving engagement is one "tried-and-true" solution to this problem. When those who work in government are engaged and perform well, the government institutions where they work will also perform well.

The study conducted by to Lavigna (2017), through the engagement value chain diagram (Fig. 1.1) illustrates why engagement is important in governance. Engagement does not only drive performance; it can also help influence public opinion positively regarding the South African government and its public entities as a whole.



Figure 1.1: Employee engagement value chain (Lavigna 2017)

This study is relevant because the topic of employee engagement remains relevant and requires extensive research to assess its impact on organizational success. This is particularly important in terms of how organisations may implement useful best practices to better serve employee needs, to promote employee engagement and ensure organizational success. It should also be observed, although the findings will be confined to a small sample size, the findings can aid similar organizations to decide which employee engagement best practices should be prioritised in boosting employee engagement. Moreover, the findings will open the door to further research and debate.

1.4 Problem statement

According to Lavigna (2017), failure of managers to understand their supervisory and administrative duties, which include concerns regarding other employees, tasks at hand and a lack of support may have a detrimental impact on the intention to continue with the organizational approach to job satisfaction and employee engagement. Managers do not always take subordinates' beliefs and feelings into account, which negatively impacts the company. As a result, organizational creative competition will not provide positive results due to a lack of empowerment and satisfaction, both of which could contribute to the organization's aims and goals.

Engagement can affect employees negatively, leading to high employee turnover, negative attitude towards their job, and poor performance, which consequently ruins the organisation's reputation (Fraser, 2008; The Conference Board, 2006). In contrast, organisations who consistently engage their staff positively tend to also benefit as the result is low employee turnover, higher performance, and more financial returns, leading to a conducive environment for all. It is also believed organisations that practice engagement correctly tend to be more attractive (Baumruk, 2006).

Any organisation aims to gain competitive advantage and employee engagement is the best option to achieve such. This is because employee engagement is the most powerful tool to measure the success or future endeavours of a company. Although employee engagement is an excellent tool for any business, organisations tend to focus more on measuring employee engagement as opposed to developing amicable solutions to improve performance. Companies tend to fail to generate ideas to improve employee interaction, which has a huge impact as far as business success and employee satisfaction are concerned, Gallup (2017).

Working in the public sector has never been an easy job with the constant expectation to provide service(s) to the public and meeting their expectations. However, disengaged employees may not perform to an optimum level as they may detach themselves in performing their roles due to issues related to employee engagement (White, 2019). Disengaged employees also have a pessimistic attitude toward their work and the company at hand, which may in turn affect the company negatively.

It can therefore be concluded that challenges related to employee engagement can affect the overall performance of an organisation, which consequently leads to the central problem statement:

The study sought to investigate employee engagement and its impact on organisational performance. This research will focus mainly on a public sector organisation, where such research gap has been identified.

1.5 Research questions

1. What is the impact of employee engagement on the organization's performance?
2. Which factors affect employee engagement levels?

3. What recommendations can be offered to improve employee engagement at a public sector organisation?

- **Research aim**

The primary aim of this research study is to analyse the impact of employee engagement and its effect on organisational performance.

1.6 Research Objectives

1. Investigate how employee engagement influences organizational performance.
2. Ascertain the factors affecting employee engagement levels.
3. Offer recommendations to improve employee engagement when threats to organisational performance are expounded.

1.7 Abbreviated Literature Review

- **Employee engagement concept**

According to Allen (2014), employee engagement is to be emotionally connected to the organisation and efforts for the organisational success. Allen further explains engaged employees always demonstrate care, dedication, portray discipline and display accountability in actions taken. The author adds when employees are engaged, they take care of other colleagues and tend to go the extra mile to meet organisational goals, which includes working extra hours to meet deadlines and targets. In addition, engaged employees tend to stand firm for the company they are working for as they are proud to be a part of it. In terms of problem solving, they also find solutions and create ideas to improve business operations.

- **Types of employee engagement**

According to findings by Manjunath and Chandni (2020), two-way communication and transparency are some of the ways to raise awareness in relation to building trust and to determine the level of discretionary effort that comes with a higher degree of engagement. Employee engagement, therefore, can be considered as one important factor for the success of an organisation. Organisations should also note the findings which revealed that although employees may, at first, be positive when they join an organisation, but as time passes, they may easily feel disengaged Robertson-Smith & Markwick (2013:1). The authors thus distinguish three categories of employees

namely: the engaged employees, not engaged employees and those who are actively disengaged; with the last two being of concern, as they may put the brand or image of the organisation at risk.

As determined by Gupta, Acharya, and Gupta (2015), high employee engagement increases performance, and engaged individuals will voluntarily provide more service to their customers. Likewise, Karatepe (2013) discovered employee engagement can improve individual performance, and individuals who feel motivated to work will be driven to provide more services to clients in addition to their core profession.

Below are the three types of employees in as far as employee engagement is concerned by Robertson-Smith and Markwick (2013:9).

- **Engaged employees**

The authors suggest that when employees are engaged, they are more likely to stay with the company, perform 20 percent better than their peers, and act as champions for the corporation, Robertson-Smith & Markwick (2013:9). Furthermore, engagement may increase bottom line profit, while also enabling organizational agility and efficiency in implementing change projects. Individuals who are engaged in their work actively invest in their work, which leads to higher self-efficacy and a positive impact on health and well-being, which leads to increased employee support for the business.

- **Not Engaged**

While on the other hand, employees who are not engaged are effectively 'checked out.' They are sleepwalking through the workday, putting in time but lacking drive and desire.

- **Actively Disengaged**

This kind of employee is not merely dissatisfied with their daily duties, they are also dissatisfied with their own performance. Every day, these employees sabotage the efforts of their more engaged co-workers, which results in poor organisational performance (Robertson-Smith and Markwick, 2013).

- **Employee engagement and employee involvement**

According to Robinson's 2022 research, there is substantial evidence that many employees are underutilized in the workplace due to a lack of participation in work-

related decisions. Employee participation is considered to be an important principle in human resource management, with the emphasis on gathering employee ideas and securing their commitment, Beardwell and Claydon 2007). However, employee involvement is deeply rooted in unitarist ideas of organizations, as it presupposes those managers and employee share the same goals, cooperating in pursuit of the organisation's aims and values. Critics contend employee involvement places management firmly in charge, with employees having very little meaningful impact (ibid).

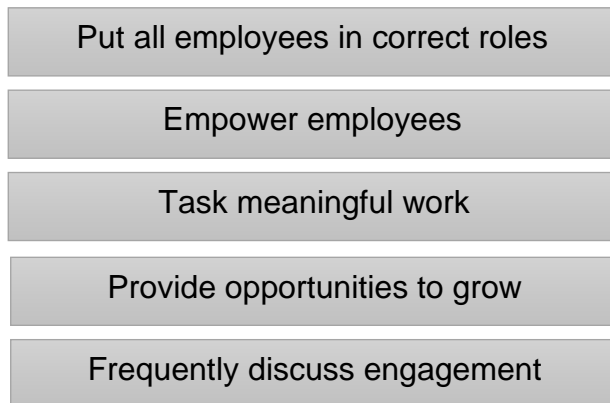
- **Factors Influencing Employee Engagement**

Researchers such Gleeson (2017) have investigated the area of employee engagement to determine the factors that will enhance employee engagement in the organisation. The researcher concurs to say that employees are happy to work in workplaces where they can contribute to the betterment of their environment. The workplace is a prime location for workers and employers to become closer for mutual benefit; since the employee feels a sense of community, a comfortable space for themselves, and opportunities to contribute to the organization's growth.

Employees are more often regarded as a company's most important asset, according to most corporate leaders. Conversely, this is only true when most of the workforce is entirely engaged in their task. Otherwise, they are either providing minimal value or actively working against the organization.

Gleeson (2017) states the steps for engaging people are not difficult; they simply need to be emphasised. As a result, engagement must be a crucial element of the manager's role. The researcher is thus of the opinion the below steps can be used as a catalyst for employee engagement, as illustrated in the below figure.

Figure 1.2: Steps to enhance employee engagement (Gleeson, 2017)



As Gleeson (2017) asserted, it is believed the above listed steps (Fig. 1.2) have a greater positive impact where employee engagement is concerned. Moreover, some companies are negatively affected due to their inability to implement the above factors.

1.8 Research Method

A research methodology is the rationale for using a specific procedure, method, or technique to generate a specific research design (Kothari, 2004:31).

This study will utilise a quantitative research technique. Quantitative information-gathering tactics are far more organised than qualitative information-gathering strategies.

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2008:8), a quantitative research approach is used to characterize situations, analyse linkages, and examine cause-and-effect events. To gather evidence that can be quantified and statistically analysed to support or refute different knowledge assertions, the quantitative technique was chosen for this research project.

There are several reasons which support the use of quantitative empirical research, which include its simplicity, the quickness with which the research may be conducted, and the relative ease with which its research instruments can be administered and evaluated, Rahi (2017).

- **Research design**

A descriptive research design was used in this research to allow for accurate fact-finding and interpretation. Descriptive research seeks to collect data about a current situation to create a profile of circumstances or persons (Rahi, 2017). As a result, because the research question and aims are focused at improving understanding of

employee engagement and its impact on organizational performance, this study will be characterized as descriptive.

- **Target Population**

The CETA has a total of numbers 106 staff members, comprises administrators, data capturers, officers, and specialists, as well as managers, and executive management, who served as the study's population frame. In this study, a non-probability strategy and a convenient sampling technique were used.

- **Sample and Procedure**

The participants of this study consist of randomly sampled full-time employees from a selected public entity organization in South Africa, with a sample of 50 employees asked to voluntarily participate in the study by completing questionnaire.

1.9 Ethical Consideration

Ethics is described as a collection of moral norms that govern personal relationships to serve and meet the needs of all parties also concerned compliance with moral values influences people's decisions and lifestyles (Resnik, 2020). As a result, ethics is concerned with what is good for people as well as society, and its implications lie under the purview of moral philosophy in the broadest sense. As a researcher, it is significant to consider how human participants may feel about the implications and potential ramifications of any given research study as part of the ethical considerations that apply to all professional social science research. The researcher must strive to follow the ethics outlined here. The researcher shall seek to abide by the below mentioned ethics.

- **Confidentiality**

The researcher has read and understood the ethical principles stated in UNISA's research ethics policy and applied for ethical clearance. Furthermore, the agreement on means to prevent others from accessing any data that might identify participants is acknowledged as part of the pledge of confidentiality. As a result, the researcher managed this with care, informing all respondents completing the questionnaire, they did not need to reveal their identities at any point during the research, because it was strictly confidential, and they would remain completely anonymous. All data collected

from research participants will be kept confidential by the researcher for at least 5 years and be destroyed thereafter.

- **Protection of integrity**

Clear steps have been taken to prevent unworthy conditions such as scientific misconduct, academic dishonesty, and so on, and various laws have been implemented to promote research ethics as a basis of scientific practice, according to University of South Africa standards (2022). The protection of anonymity and hence, privacy, is a critical issue in the protection of integrity. This necessitates methodologically rigorous replications and testing of study findings, as well as the linkage of data from diverse sources, Unisa (2022).

- **Bias**

Questionnaire bias is a "product of unanticipated communication barriers between the investigator and respondents that yield inaccurate results. This may be due to the way individual items are designed, the overall architecture of the questionnaire, or how the questionnaire is administered or completed" (Bhandari, 2022:).

To eliminate bias in this study, the following measures will be put in place:

- All references and evidence were made available to participants for review to provide clarification on any issues that arose.
- The researcher will treat all the information fairly, and any effects and subjectivity appropriately eliminated.

- **Participation voluntarily and informed consent**

Respondents were informed of the concept of informed consent and their ability to withdraw from the study at any time. The informed consent form was attached to the questionnaire and distributed to participants. This was followed up by email to find make sure the participants understand the voluntary part and willingness to participate freely.

1.10 Format of study

The chapter outline of the study consists of the following five chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction and background

This chapter focused on the concept of the key term “employee engagement” and some background information on the organization involved in the study. The study's background was described in terms of the sort of organization being evaluated—a South African public entity—as well as its personnel makeup and issues relating to employee engagement levels. In terms of organizational performance, the chapter discussed the study question of employee engagement and its effects on employee effectiveness. The advantages of the research to employees were the main emphasis of the research's objectives, questions, and relevance.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter will explore previously published research on the topic under study and provide a theoretical framework for this research. It will include an in-depth review of literature from diverse studies and authors on the definition of the term employee engagement, as well as components, dimensions, impact, and factors that influence employee engagement and organisational performance.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The sampling procedures, research instrument (a structured questionnaire), pilot study, administration of the questionnaire, data analysis, reliability and validity limitations on the research study, and conclusion will all be covered in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and Interpretation

This chapter will present data gathered from the study: “An Investigation into employee engagement and its impact on organisational performance: An employee perspective” for the South African public entity under study and the analyses the data using graphs, pie-charts, bar charts and tables. A discussion and interpretation of the findings will be set out in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, recommendations, limitations, and future recommendations

In the final chapter the conclusions on the study findings are presented per objective, and suggested strategies to the Construction, Education and Training Authority (CETA) management on employee engagement for improved organisational

performance and study recommendations followed by limitations and recommendations for future studies.

1.11. Conclusion

The groundwork for the justification of this research was set in this chapter. Justification for the study was clearly stated through the research background, The problem statement, investigation's goal, and research objectives, as well as the research questions, are all included, as is the significance of the study and a description of its structure. The following chapter will explore further into the topic by doing a literature review to acquire a better grasp of the scholarly literature on employee engagement and its impact in organizations.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the study background, problem statement, and outline of the research process. In this chapter, the relevant literature will be explored to better comprehend employee engagement in an organization and its outcomes, from previous researchers who conducted research on the same topic.

Employees, regardless of the nature of the business, are generally considered one of a company's most important resources. At a time when rivalry for the best specialists is often stronger than competition for clients, the ability to successfully manage relationships with staff can define long-term market advantage. Employers can improve their chances of hiring and retaining valuable employees by creating a friendly, development-enabling workplace that supports employee engagement, Sammi (2022).

Numerous reports indicate a low level of employee engagement, globally. According to the Gallup Institute, only 15 percent of workers worldwide are totally involved in their work, while the other 85 percent are neither engaged nor actively disengaged (Gallup Institute, 2017). “The causes of the deepening “disengagement crisis” lie in the absence of support to employees in achieving what they perceive for themselves as meaningful results (Forbes, 2014:1)”. “The academic community also acknowledges the problem of low employee engagement and its negative impact on business outcomes. According to Teresa Amabile of the Harvard Business School (cited in Forbes, 2014: 1-2)”, it leads to lower company revenue levels and deterioration of its profitability indicators. The employee engagement crisis, in the context of innovation, productivity, and performance, has also been noted by the UK Government.

Blazej (2018), has also confirmed the low employee engagement level in Great Britain and the negative consequences of this situation on the UK economy. The worldwide nature of the problem suggests the need for research on the impact of employee engagement on the performance of the organization, as well as synthesis of the results, to draw practical, universal lessons.

2.2 Definition of Employee engagement

According to Obeidat (2016), the term employee engagement originated from the work of organizational psychologist William Kahn, the so-called “father of employee engagement” (Forbes Africa, 2022), who described it as different from individual role constructs, such as job involvement, dedication, and motivation, asserting it focuses on how psychological work experiences shape the process of “people presenting and absenting themselves during task performances” (Sinclair, 2020). Scholars have defined the term in numerous ways; with Marcey and Schneier (2008:3) stating employee engagement is “the pleasant feeling that employees have about their jobs, as well as the motivation and effort they put into it.” However, engagement entails more than mere happiness and dedication; to be fully engaged in one's work means to be actively involved and enthusiastic about it (Sinclair, 2020).

2.3 Importance of Employee engagement

According to Leekha (2011), “engagement is a critical and effective approach for attracting, expanding, retaining, and appreciating employees, as well as managing them. Engaged employees boost an organization's competitive advantage and foster a welcoming atmosphere for business. The authors also claimed that married employees are more engaged than single employees. Employee engagement has also been proved to be vital for any organization, including healthcare and hospitals, with a diverse workforce and a bigger number of persons working in a single firm”

Employee engagement defines a company's ability to succeed. It has the potential to extensively impact staff retention, productivity, and loyalty, as well as customer satisfaction, corporate reputation, and total shareholder value (Sundaray, 2011). Engaged employees bring a variety of benefits to the company, including increased productivity, higher quality, better customer service, and employee cooperation, as well as lower employee turnover, absenteeism, and fewer conflicts (Wilson, 2009; Mortimer, 2010). Organizations all over the world are increasing employee engagement to achieve a competitive advantage in the form of increased productivity, profitability, decreased turnover, and organizational safety in today's business environment (Mani, 2011).

2.4 Theoretical Frameworks of Employee Engagement

A wide range of theoretical frameworks have been used to explain employee engagement. Different researchers explain employee engagement from different

theoretical perspectives in their own empirical studies. Below some theoretical frameworks are discussed, which includes Kahn's theory, Job Demands theory and Social Exchange theory.

2.4.1 The needs-satisfaction theory

According to a study by Rheem (2018), states that Kahn's research is focused on settings that allow employees to bring their "whole selves" to work. The researcher identified three major criteria that influence whether an employee can connect effectively with the organizational mission, company culture, and everyday activities of the role, namely: meaningfulness, safety, and availability.

Meaningfulness: The purpose of the work is referred to as meaningfulness. An employee who understands how a company's product or service benefits society and sees him/herself as a significant contribution to that objective, is more inclined to make a substantial effort.

Safety: An employee who feels psychologically safe at work, who does not dread facing condemnation or consequences from teammates or upper management, is more likely to contribute and feel happy about those contributions.

Availability: Availability refers to an employee's ability to perform a role both physically and mentally. Every human being has boundaries. While challenge is important for growth and contentment, a worker should feel the demands of the role are reasonable and achievable. Work-life balance is one aspect of availability.

Khan also described three types of engagement: physical, cognitive, and emotional. Workers can show different levels of commitment by their actions and attitudes, such as daily activity levels and confidence in routine tasks, creative contributions and decision-making, as well as esteem for the organization and work loyalty.

The premise of employee engagement described by Kahn in 1990 advocated for a more comprehensive approach to employee engagement and a better understanding of worker requirements. Therefore, instead of encouraging short-term motivational tactics, businesses are required to adopt more holistic strategies to assist employees in all aspects of their lives.

2.4.2 Job Demands-Resources Model

The main assumption of the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2011) is that each occupation has its own specific risk factors associated with job-related stress. These characteristics can be divided into two broad categories (work demands and job resources), culminating in an overarching model applicable to a wide range of occupational conditions, irrespective of the specific demands and resources involved.

“Job demands are those components required by a job, whether physical, psychological, social, or organizational, that necessitate intensive physical and/or psychological (physiological and behavioural) effort or attributes; thus, they are associated with particular physiological and/or psychological costs. High job pressure, an unpleasant physical environment, and unpredictable working hours are all examples. Although job expectations are not necessarily unfavourable, they might become job stressors when meeting those needs, requiring a significant amount of labor from which the individual does not recover adequately” (Els, Mostert, & Beer, 2015).

Job resources are all those physiological, mental, social, or organisational elements of a job which are either:

- Useful in fulfilling performance targets;
- Lessen occupational expectations and the accompanying physiological and psychological consequences;
- Promote personal development and growth, which means resources are valuable in and of themselves, not just to meet work demands.

This aligns with Towler (2020), whose work characteristics model emphasises the task-level motivational potential of resources such as autonomy, feedback, or task significance. Furthermore, on a more basic level, this agrees with conservation of resources (COR) theory, which claims the human primary motive is to maintain and accumulate resources.

Resources are, accordingly, valued either in and of themselves or as a method of obtaining or safeguarding other precious resources. Job resources can be found at the macro level, in addition to the organisational level, in for example, salaries or wages, career opportunities, and job security, as well as the interpersonal level, such as supervisor and co-worker support, and team climate. Alongside these, the specific

position is also considered a resource, in reference to role clarity and participation in decision-making, with the undertaking offering resources such as skill variety, task identity and significance, as well as autonomy, and performance feedback, Towler (2020:4).

2.4.3 Social Exchange Theory

The theory of social exchange, which was solidified by Blau in his 1964 work titled “Exchange and Power” (Emerson, 1976:335), can also be applied in the workplace. In fact, it is one of the most prominent conceptual frameworks in organizational behaviour. This makes sense as much of our lives are spent at work. Emerson describes the scope of this theory as “defined by the assumption that a resource will continue to flow only if there is a valued return contingent upon it” (Emerson, 1976:359)

In other words, work is a two-way street and it is generally accepted that most employees, at a certain stage, question whether remaining with a firm is worth their while. When employees reach that point and opt to stay, they have plainly judged, despite everything wrong with their employment, the advantages outweigh the risks. Employees who decide they would rather not stay, have determined there are insufficient benefits to justify remaining with the company/organization (Li, 2020).

In agreement with Li (2020), below are some of the reasons for employees to leave or abandon their duties at a workplace.

- **Employees work extremely hard, yet are not rewarded**

Even the most hardworking individual in the world would gradually consider positions at other companies when not told they are doing a good job. What's the sense of flailing your limbs if no one notices?

Findings by Li (2020) indicates that less than perhaps one today's workers feel valued at work. At any given time, regardless of how hard they work, majority of all staff may feel they are working hard but not receiving significant benefit. These echoes key takeaways from the Deloitte 10th annual 2020 Global Human Capital Trends report, which reveal “the need for human focus has catapulted well-being and belonging into top concerns for organisations and the top two trends, respectively” (Deloitte 2020: 3).

- **Employees realise they have to compensate for dereliction by co-workers**

Even when employees work well with their co-workers, a point is reached in the social exchange process when workers who wilfully neglect their duties start annoying those who consistently perform. Consequently, this may have a negative impact of those who are always focused and doing their job satisfactory.

- **Employees give their best, but managers do not deliver on promised benefits**

In essence, it is crucial to follow through on all seemingly minor promises made when initially recruiting an employee to join. This includes providing opportunities for professional development, flexibility, monetary advantages that increase in accordance with performance, and entertaining team events, as well as stipends, and much more.

According to Li (2020), Employees are less engaged at work when these expectations are not satisfied. As many as 71 percent of employees believe they do not receive the recognition they deserve. The first aspect to be remedied at a workplace such as this, is delivering on all promised advantages to regain employee trust.

- **Factors Influencing Employee Engagement**

Kahn identified three key aspects of employee engagement in his work: physical, cognitive, and emotional:

Physical engagement refers to the extent employees invest their energies, both physical and mental, while they perform their general duties. Kahn presented examples of people describing themselves as 'flying around' at work and enjoying high levels of personal engagement during that time.

Cognitive engagement - To be engaged at this level, employees must understand their employer's vision and strategies, as well as the competence required to contribute as much as possible to these. Kahn also emphasised the significance that people placed on their work, asserting the engagement theory suggests more information encouraged more creativity and confident decision-making.

Emotional engagement is built on the emotional bond employees have with their employer. A positive relationship will necessitate the organization learning how to foster a sense of belonging at work, encouraging employees to believe and trust in the company's values and mission.

2.6 Impact of Employee Engagement on Organisational Performance

According to findings by Pillay and Singh (2018) in their study on the effect of employee engagement on firm success on a South African insurance firm, all participants agreed employee engagement does influence organizational performance. Some participants mentioned the positive impact of employee engagement on organizational performance, highlighting performance outcomes such as increased profits, improved bottom line, higher productivity, and employees' proactive nature in finding ways to increase revenue, as well as improved customer service.

Other participants in the study by Pillay and Singh (2018) felt when employees are unhappy, are not given the opportunity to speak up, are not highly valued by employers, and are not encouraged to participate in decision-making, they do not perform to their full potential, resulting in lower individual performance and, as a result, lower organizational performance. Pillay and Singh (2018) argue employee engagement is integral in driving organisational success, since engaged employees are motivated and strive to achieve organisational goals and objectives. In order to remain competitive in the market, organisations should encourage positive employee engagement as a strategic tool to attain competitive advantage for the organisation.

Robertson-Smith and Markwick (2013:1) “found engagement can affect employee attitudes, absence and turnover levels, and various studies have demonstrated links with productivity, increasingly pointing to a high correlation with individual, group and organisational performance, a success measured through the quality of customer experience and customer loyalty. Organisations with higher engagement levels tend to have lower employee turnover, higher productivity, higher total shareholder returns and better financial performance”.

- **Greater productivity**

Employers attempts to enhance staff productivity include providing them with anything from wearable activity devices to a forest of office plants. However, they are bypassing a solution that is right next to them which is employee engagement.

According to research findings by Maidaani (2019:4), engaged employees are 17 percent more productive than their peers. Furthermore, employees who are committed

are more likely to work diligently and put forward discretionary effort in their professions, boosting productivity and innovation.

Businesses now require innovation to be agile and successful but in order to boost innovation, managers must serve as coaches. Nonetheless, one in every five employees is sceptical that their manager will provide regular, constructive feedback. Therefore, prioritising constant, real-time feedback will inspire employees to generate new and better ideas, solutions, and products, all of which will lead to greater productivity.

- **Happier employees**

To motivate employees to higher levels of engagement organizations do not have to use mechanisms such as peer pressure, termination, or other high-stress behaviours. Instead, these organizations drive performance using techniques such as employee recognition, one-on-one meetings, and 360 feedback. Employees are happier when their leaders need not intimidate them, and satisfied staff save their employers money, Pillay and Singh (2018).

- **Lower absenteeism**

Employees who are committed are invested in their jobs and care about the success of their team; it logically follows they would show up for work. These employees are strongly devoted to their organization's mission, and will arrive every day with the intent of ensuring it is achieved. In fact, highly engaged workplaces reflect 41 percent lower absenteeism, Pillay and Singh (2018).

Taking a day off once-in-a-while can indicate engaged staff since they are sufficiently confident in their position that one missed day will not jeopardise the task to be completed. However, when absenteeism tendencies begin to emerge, this should raise concern regarding engagement levels.

- **Higher retention**

Employees are more likely to leave their current employer when they cannot use their capabilities, do not feel challenged, or simply do not love their work (all signs of low engagement). Employees who are engaged are not motivated to hunt for job elsewhere.

- **Greater employee loyalty**

The idea of employee loyalty is shifting when newer generations enter the workforce. What used to be described as long-term commitment to a company's aims now seems to be a reciprocal relationship. Not only that, 46 percent of employees would accept another job offer should the opportunity arise.

On the one hand, simply because an employee is not actively job hunting, it does not imply they will not leave when a better opportunity presents. Employees who are engaged, on the other hand, tend to remain, as employees do not depart when they care about the organization's success and are adequately challenged by their work, Pillay and Singh (2018).

2.7 Drivers of Employee Engagement

According to Kitto (2020), it is important to understand what motivates employees and drives them to be personally invested in their work, in order to improve employee engagement. However, there are no universal drivers of employee engagement, varying from one organization to the next—and even between different groups of employees within a single organization. Drivers can also change over time or due to external, such as an economic depression or public health crisis.

In periods of rapid economic, social, and technological change, it is particularly helpful to return to basics and understand the factors that allow people to focus and do their best work. Employee engagement is the one factor that directly impacts any organizations bottom-line. Below some drivers of employee engagement as described by Sharma (2020), are illustrated (Fig. 2.1) and further discussed.



Figure: 2.1 Drivers of employee engagement

Source: Sharma (2020)

- **Communication**

Employee engagement in an organization will undoubtedly increase when the organization supports an effective and unambiguous communication channel. An open, simple, and two-way feedback process, as well as a clear grasp of the organization's mission and policies, improves employee engagement. This could boost employee engagement at work, thus improving organizational and individual performance, business success, and overall well-being.

- **Organizational Culture**

The overall atmosphere, values, customs, rules, and quality of social conduct at work are referred to as organizational culture. A healthy work culture increases overall engagement in an organization, while a poisonous work culture diminishes engagement and kills productivity.

- **Opportunities for Growth**

One of the most important factors for greater employee engagement is whether employees perceive their organisation offers opportunities for professional advancement. Employees who have the possibility to advance within their company are considerably more likely to participate than those who remain in their current positions.

- **Rewards and Recognition**

At the present time, rewards and recognition play an important role in motivating and engaging employees. Employees will be more engaged and automatically encouraged to find better ways to solve problems or even design a faster way to complete a task, when they have been recognised and rewarded for the work they do.

- **Work-life Balance**

Employees who can effectively balance work and personal commitments are more engaged, thus by inference, employees' overall well-being is influenced by work-life balance. When firms offer flexibility and assist in balancing work and life, employees work more efficiently and perform better. Assisting employees with their personal lives increases their productivity and makes them desire to stay with the firm and go above and beyond. Work-life balance has become the most important factor, nowadays, with the majority of the global workforce continuing to work remotely.

- **Leadership**

Employees have a sense of security once they are confident in their top management's competency and credibility. This is particularly critical when organizations are facing with unexpected challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic or organisational restructuring. Employees are more confident with regard to their future and the future of their organization when they are assured the company is led by qualified leaders.

2.8 Barriers to Employee Engagement

According to Rothwell (2016), there are five possible barriers to employee engagement, including

1. "Unclear understanding among workers or managers regarding what engagement is;
2. Management or employee cynicism about engagement.
3. Bureaucratic work rules,
4. Lack of work-life balance, and
5. Capricious management practices."

- **Lack of Clarity**

The first obstacle is a misunderstanding of what engagement entails. Some people associate employee engagement with job satisfaction, morale, or even happiness.

However, it means much more than that. Workers who are involved are satisfied with their jobs, motivated to do their best, content with the work they do and the organization in which they do it, as well as loyal to their organization, in addition to being willing to say good things about their jobs and their organization to others, and willingness to complete their functions satisfactorily.

- **Cynicism**

It can also be a barrier when management and staff are sceptical about engagement. A cynical viewpoint is often negative, holding that people are constantly selfishly motivated and act in self-interested ways. Those who challenge engagement on these grounds may dismiss it as a managerial trend aimed at getting employees to work harder for less money, security, in fact, less of everything. Therefore, a cynic will not regard employee engagement as a genuine effort, but rather as the newest management ploy to persuade employees to work harder for no reason.

- **Bureaucracy**

Bureaucracy has the potential to be yet another barrier to engagement, because rules and regulations should be followed in bureaucracy, regardless of their relevance to the situation. Above all, control, not outcomes, is cherished. Employees in these environments may lose hope and become alienated, since they must work hard simply to have their ideas acknowledged or acquire approval to make basic changes.

- **Lack of Work-Life Balance**

The absence of work-life balance is a fourth obstacle to employee engagement. Some organizational leaders expect their staff to put their individual affairs on hold in order to promote the organization. When the economy is bad, some employees and managers feel forced to work as many hours as possible to appear productive to their employers.

- **Poor Management Decisions**

The fifth obstacle to involvement is capricious supervisors who make decisions based on who asks, instead of on evidence. These supervisors make judgments, then quickly reverse their decisions, and not necessarily for obvious reasons. Workers who work

with such management are disengaged because they do not believe their thoughts are valued or supported.

2.9 Conclusion

Based on findings from previous studies, it is safe to say engaged employees have a greater positive impact compared to disengaged employees. Engaged employees do not hesitate to come to work every day due to strong bond they have with the organisation they work for, have a high amount of excitement for their work, and regularly produce greater results. Engaged employees have also been proven to stay with their company for longer periods of time, minimising turnover and saving corporations significantly in recruitment and retraining costs. Moreover, engaged employees have been observed to have less workplace accidents (Smith 2016). Motivated employees additionally have a positive impact on the experience of customers and co-workers. Furthermore, it has been established that a greater number of engaged employees in the organization is favourably related to a company's profit margin.

Additional evidence shows, on the one hand, has proven that a lack of employee engagement is financially harmful to businesses across the globe. Organizations that focus on developing engaged employees, on the other hand, can achieve enormous organizational benefits such as greater retention rates, improved productivity, and more profit. Employee engagement is thus crucial for any firm that wants to retain valuable employees. It is critical for successful human resource utilisation and the seamless operation of the organization. Without employee involvement, an organization cannot survive for an extended period. Employees are a company's most valuable asset, and when not given adequate space and time to support work and play, they will become alienated.

The next chapter sets out the research methods followed in conducting this study.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a clear roadmap of how the research was carried out to address the research questions formulated with the aid of a review of literature, which was discussed in the previous chapter. The study aim was to determine the effects of employee engagement on organisational performance and then provide recommendations for improvement to organizations. The study examined the challenges that lead to employee disengagement and low employee engagement at the CETA. The chosen design is included, as well as the sample procedure and size. The chosen research philosophy is discussed, along with the justification for using a questionnaire. While ethical considerations for the study participant were unquestionably an important factor, the research quality plan, including data analysis and quality control, was also reviewed.

A research approach lends credibility to the study and yields reliable scientific findings. Additionally, a thorough plan is provided to keep researchers on track, ensuring a smooth, efficient, and manageable approach. The approach taken by a researcher aids the reader in understanding the process and steps used to obtain conclusions (Jansen & Warren, 2020).

3.1.1 Research questions

The following questions dictated the study direction and methodology:

- What is the impact of employee engagement on the organization's performance?
- Which factors are affecting the engagement levels of the employees?
- What are the recommendations that can be offered to improve employee engagement at a public sector organisation?

3.1.2 Research aim

The primary aim of this research study is to analyse the impact of employee engagement and its effect on organisational performance.

3.1.3 Research Objectives

- Investigate how employee engagement influences organizational performance;
- Ascertain the factors affecting employee engagement levels;
- Offer recommendations to improve employee engagement when threats to organisational performance are expounded.

3.2 Research design

Research design is the foundation of research; tying all the pieces of a research study together; in other words, it is a blueprint for the proposed research work, Islamia (2016).

This research study adopted a quantitative research method. According to Devault (2020:1), quantitative research is the act of collecting observable data in order to address a research problem utilizing statistical, computational, or mathematical techniques. It is often seen as more accurate or meaningful than qualitative research, which focuses on acquiring non-numerical data. Instead of depending on instinct or opinion, this research method investigates data before making suggestions. As a result, the investigation is closely related to the scientific method.

3.2.1 Applicability of quantitative research study

Below a brief outline is presented of the operational feasibility of a quantitative study design according to Miller, (2020).

- **Collect trustworthy and accurate data**

The results gained will be extremely reliable because data will be collected, analysed, and presented quantitatively. Numbers do not deceive. They provide an honest view of the conducted study that is also incredibly accurate.

- **Quick data collection**

Quantitative research is conducted with a sample of respondents that represent a population. A survey or other quantitative research approach is used on these respondents, and the participation of statistics, conducting, and analysing results is simple and less time-consuming.

- **Wider scope of data analysis**

Due to the statistics, this research method provides a wide scope of data collection.

- **Eliminate bias**

This research method offers no scope for personal comments or results bias. The results achieved are numerical and are thus, fair in most cases.

- **The research performed with the quantitative approach is anonymous**

People are more likely to give an honest perspective when engaging in quantitative research because of the assurance that their input will not be used against them. Personal information is used as a screening tool rather than an identifying trademark in this study, even when interviews or questionnaires are included. Even when surveys are used as part of this effort, the personal information is used as a screening tool rather than as an identifying trademark.

- **Quantitative research can focus on facts or a series of information**

When a number of data are highly sought by a particular population, this method is also useful. It is a process that enables comprehension of the reasons for decisions, actions, or activities from a social point of view.

The quantitative approach enables you to obtain a larger sample size

The more data obtained from this work, the more data there is for the statistical analysis to review, affording the results more validity. A larger sample decreases the risk that outliers in the study group will have a detrimental impact on the results the researcher wishes to obtain in an unbiased way.

3.3 Target Population

The target population consisted of current CETA personnel from all departments, including Core Business, Finance, Facilities, the Education Training and Quality Assurance (ETQA) and Projects Department, as well as Monitoring and Evaluations, and Human Resources. The targeted personnel included those from head office and several regional offices that work under the same roof as the head office.

3.4 Study Area

The research site is the place where the study was conducted including the collection of data. The research site selected for this study is the CETA; an entity that duly exists

to safeguard the construction sector, with its head office situated in Gauteng and remote offices in all other provinces.

There are several reasons the CETA was selected for study:

1. The problem mentioned in this research was discovered at this organisation by the researcher.
2. This organisation has never performed a similar study.
3. The author is familiar with the organisation's operational processes, and the study participants were easily accessible for data gathering.

3.5 Sampling method

"Probability sampling will be employed for the research and while there are four types of probability sampling strategies available to researchers, simple random sampling techniques were used for this study. This assures that every member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen by simple random sampling. The population should be included in your sampling frame. Instruments such as random number generators or other systems relying solely on chance can be utilized to accomplish this type of sampling", Enago (2019:2).

A sample is a subset of data chosen by a researcher from a broader population through a predetermined selection method. Probability sampling, which is mostly utilised in quantitative research, implies every member of the population has a possibility of being elected to participate (McCombes, 2022). According to the researchers, when results need to be created that are typical of the entire population, probability sampling approaches are the best option.

3.5.1 Sample size

A sample can be defined as a subset of the population. "The sample size is the number of people in a sample. The more representative the sample of the population, the more confident the researcher can be in the quality of the data", Enago (2019:9). For the purposes of this study, the sampling technique selected 50 employees. The survey participants were randomly chosen on equal opportunity to provide the information required to unravel the complexities underlying employee engagement.

3.6 Research instruments

A questionnaire comprises a set of questions or items intended to collect information with regard to respondent attitudes, experiences, or opinions. The questionnaire assessed respondent opinions of employee engagement using a 5-point Likert scale, with access to the questionnaire provided via a web link produced online using Google forms.

Questionnaires administered by researchers can:

- Help ensure respondents are representative of the target audience.
- Allow clarification of ambiguous or unclear questions and answers;
- Have high response rates as it is more difficult to refuse an interview when personal attention is given to respondents.

Web surveys, often known as internet surveys, are a form of data collection method in which a survey or questionnaire is given to a sample of respondents via the internet and they respond to the survey via the internet. The main reason for the rise in web survey use is the low cost and convenience provided by the sheer magnitude of reach. Over the last decade, researchers have begun to prefer conducting surveys using internet sources because they can send out surveys from desktops or laptops and their target audience can respond to these surveys whenever they are available. One of the most common ways to disseminate a web-survey is to send the survey to participants with a link (Bhandari, 2022).

Email survey: This email might be sent as an email blast or simultaneous mass mailing to selected groups in a short period of time, making it one of the most successful ways of collecting survey replies (Bhandari, 2022). As a result, an email survey will be employed for this study.

3.7 Control of Data Quality

Data quality assurance is the process of analysing and cleaning research data (Creswell, 2014). Cleaning data involves eradicating outliers, correcting errors, and extrapolating missing data to improve the quality of data to be analysed. The structure of the questionnaire restricted the number of possible errors and outliers. For the sake of integrity, respondents were encouraged to answer all the survey questions.

3.8 Validation of the questionnaire

To validate the questionnaire statements for use in population screening research for employee engagement a pilot study must be conducted. The level of systematic or built-in mistakes in measurement is known as validity. People within the institution who have completed or are familiar with advanced research procedures will be asked to validate the surveys before they are sent to participants for the pilot and main studies. This includes the supervisor appointed by the institution to the researcher. Changes will be made, and the questionnaire improved for users, Anaesth (2017).

After questionnaire validation, five employees will participate in a pilot test of the instrument. As per Anaesth (2017), this will be carried out to ascertain:

- The subject's reaction to the questionnaire.
- To determine whether the items are simple and easy to understand.
- To establish whether more items are needed in areas; or
- To ascertain whether there are any items to which they would prefer not to respond; and
- To learn whether the suggested technique of data analysis for the study is feasible.

3.8.1 Procedure

Each sampled employee of the public entity will receive an email with questionnaire details, a request for informed consent, and a link to the secure website of the survey. After clicking on the link, participants will be able to complete the instrument online.

3.9 Data collection method

“The process of acquiring, measuring, and analyzing correct insights for research objectives using established and recognized procedures is known as data collection. The data collected enables a researcher to evaluate their hypothesis. In most cases, regardless of the subject of research, the first and most important stage is data collection. The approach to data collection varies depending on the subject of investigation” (Cleave, 2021:1).

Data for this research study were gathered via email-based surveys. Use of a questionnaire as data collection instrument is a systematic method that ensures consistency by requiring participants to answer the same question.

“The questionnaire is well recognized as a primary research tool used by researchers to collect data from a specified audience, often through open-ended or closed-ended questions, or both. The combination of the two question kinds allows researchers to collect data that is both qualitative and quantitative in nature, depending on their objectives (Cleave, 2021:1)”.

When compared to other research methods, such as interviews, Cleave's (2021:1) findings imply that questionnaires provide greater structure to any research, which can help maximize the success of whatever the researcher is aiming to examine and answer.

3.9.1 Advantages of Questionnaires in Research

Below some advantages in use of a questionnaire as data collection tool for this study are discussed, in accordance with Miller (2020).

- **Take the pulse of employee engagement**

Surveys are not only for customers; one of their key applications is to measure employee engagement. Employees who are happy will be more productive, produce more sales, and retain existing customers. A questionnaire can reveal how engaged workers are and indicate possible improvements.

Respondents may, for example, state they do not have sufficient training opportunities or their work schedules are too rigid. With knowledge regarding challenges employees experience, managers are able to remedy these promptly and contribute to higher levels of engagement, which leads to higher output.

- **It saves significant amounts of time and money**

When questions are asked over the phone or in person, the time of the person taking the responses is utilised; this is time they could be more productive and add value to the organization.

A survey can be automatically collected via the internet, therefore, all that is required is a series of emails to direct the audience to the survey. The software will collect results and provide these once complete.

- **Respondent anonymity**

An online questionnaire could be a safe location for employees to discuss issues they would otherwise not wish to discuss for fear of repercussions. Since these polls are often anonymous, the responses are likely to be insightful.

3.10 Methods of data analysis

The most important phase of any research project is data analysis, as this is where the collected information is condensed. It entails analysis of data acquired through application of logical and analytical reasoning to identify patterns, correlations, or trends. As previously mentioned, this study used quantitative data analysis. A questionnaire was used as viable tool to collect data and was then analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

The term "quantitative data analysis" simply refers to the examination of data that is numerical in nature or that can be readily "translated" into numbers without losing any of its original relevance. In contrast, qualitative data analysis emphasizes words, phrases, and expressions over quantifiable ones. Furthermore, there are four types of data analyses: exploratory, explanatory, descriptive, and experimental, according to Rahi (2017).

3.10.1 Descriptive Research

This study used a descriptive design to allow for fact-finding and adequate interpretation. Descriptive research is described by Rahi (2017) as the process of gathering data on a current state, thus generating a profile of circumstances or people. Consequently, this study will be classified as descriptive, because the research question and objectives aim to gain improved knowledge of employee engagement and how it impacts the organization.

Levy (2017) concurs with Rahi (2017) to say that descriptive statistics should be used to construct descriptions of social phenomena to describe how they are viewed or experienced. In Chapter 4, for example, information such as the gender, age, race, and tenure of research participants will be reported. Not in references

The research design describes the technique and procedure for gathering the information to address the problem. Descriptive research was used for this research study as it aimed to find a solution to an existing problem, Akhtar (2016). The study's problem is to determine the effectiveness of employee engagement at the CETA.

Descriptive research provides answers to the following questions: what, who, where, how, and when. It is used to investigate the current condition. Descriptive research design is used as it will ensure minimisation of biased results and maximisation of reliability of data collected, Levy (2017).

3.11 Reliability vs Validity

According to Middleton (2019), the principles of reliability and validity are used to assess the quality of research. They reflect the accuracy with which a method, approach, or test measure something. The consistency of a measure is referred to as reliability, whereas the accuracy of a measure is referred to as validity. As explained by, Middleton (2019), when developing a research design, arranging research techniques, and writing up findings, it is critical to keep reliability and validity in mind, particularly in quantitative research.

3.11.1 Reliability

The consistency of a measure to be utilised in a study is referred to as its reliability. It should yield reasonably solid findings each time it is administered. An internal consistency approach was used to manage the data's reliability. This has been done to ensure questions in specific portions of the questionnaire were designed to evaluate related hypotheses. The correlation of responses in this area was then examined to ensure the information gathered is accurate and consistent. In support of findings by Middleton (2017), the following activities were pursued in the context of this investigation to assure increased reliability:

- Careful construction and design of the questionnaire incorporating suggestions from other researchers and their previous experiences;
- A pilot study was performed to ensure simplicity of the questions, incorporating structured sections, and perception from the participants;
- Activities to increase the response rate were considered and rigorously pursued; such as follow up e-mails.

3.11.2 Validity

The degree to which the assessment approach yielded correct information on the research question and objectives, allowing the researcher to draw acceptable

inferences, was based on the following validities (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019; Mukherjee, 2020):

- Considering the participants' level of understanding and communication skills regarding their perception of employee management.
- By ensuring the questionnaire addressed every pertinent aspect of employee engagement, such as staff members' motivation and level of participation.
- Construct validity was based on the questionnaire yielding plausible results regarding the perception of employee engagement for the organisation.

3.12 Inclusion criteria

The criteria for inclusion were:

- The participant should be 18 years or older and must have worked at the CETA during the period under review.
- Be employed permanently.
- Male and female, as well as representatives of all race and age groups.

3.13 Exclusion criteria

- Participants under 18 years of age will be excluded from this study.
- External stakeholders or non-employees of the CETA will not be allowed to participate in this study.

3.14 Ethical considerations

According to Bhandari (2022), ethical considerations in research are a set of principles that influence the study designs and methods. When gathering data from people, researchers must always follow a set of rules. Understanding real-life occurrences, exploring effective therapies, investigating habits, and improving lives are all common goals of human research. What you decide to research and how you perform that research are both important ethical issues. These considerations work to: protect the rights of research participants, enhance research validity, and maintain scientific integrity.

Defying research ethics will also reduce research credibility because it is difficult for others to believe data when techniques are morally problematic. Even should a research hypothesis be valuable to society, it does not justify violating study participants' human rights or dignity. This study addressed ethical concerns by

keeping participants' identities private. Participants remained anonymous; however, their demographic information was revealed (Bhandari, 2022). Responses are stated as a whole, ensuring all responses are kept private. The names of everyone who took part in this survey were kept totally confidential. Information gathered from participants was not duplicated, and replies obtained from participants will be logged and displayed to them once the study is completed.

Informed consent is a situation in which all possible participants receive and comprehend all the information needed to make an informed decision whether to participate. This includes details regarding the study advantages, dangers, funding, and institutional approval.

The study was voluntary; therefore, the participants were able to decide whether they wanted to take part or not. There were no detrimental effects for participants who decided against taking part in the survey for whatever reason. Every participant additionally had the option to leave the research at any time. To help ensure participants' privacy was preserved, individual results were not published.

Study misconduct includes fabrication of data, falsification of data analysis, and inaccurate reporting of findings in research papers. It entails academic dishonesty. Such behaviours are deliberate and can have major repercussions; research misconduct is not a trivial error or a difference of opinion over data analysis. Research misconduct is a severe ethical problem because it can threaten both institutional legitimacy and scientific integrity, with money and resources that may have been employed for different types of study wasted as a result (Bhandari, 2022).

3.15 Conclusion

The research methodology guides the researcher through the entire process, from topic selection through research execution. The entire research strategy is built around the premise of selecting the best research approach. This chapter described the research design and methodologies used to support the research statement. It is critical the findings are collected and organized in a suitable manner to aid in decision-making, while it is crucial that the findings are presented clearly and effectively to assist in proper decision-making (Indeed, 2022).

The following chapter presents the research study findings as well as analysis, linking the research findings to the research topic.

Chapter 4

Data analysis and interpretation

4.1 Introduction

The study's purpose was to look at the impact of employee engagement on organizational performance at the CETA, the chosen public entity under investigation. The empirical literature was reviewed to determine the relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance, ascertaining factors that affect employee engagement and to draw conclusions thereafter. A questionnaire served as an effective instrument for gathering data, which SPSS software was utilized to analyse. The chapter includes the research findings and a discussion thereafter. The study will begin by examining participants' profiles.

4.2 Frequency Analysis

To better understand the study sample, demographic information regarding the CETA employees who participated in the study was gathered. The department they work for, their gender, age, job status, and role of work, as well as ethnicity, and length of service in the current organization are among the demographic factors gathered for the study. Each demographic factor is discussed in the sections that follow.

4.2.1 Employee gender

According to the findings, only 36 percent of the study participants are male, while 62 percent of the participants are female. Two percent of participants were reluctant to state their gender. These disparities mean the study bias will be skewed in favour of women, because more of their perceptions were recorded and examined than those of their male counterparts. The conclusions from this study cannot, therefore, be generalised across all genders.

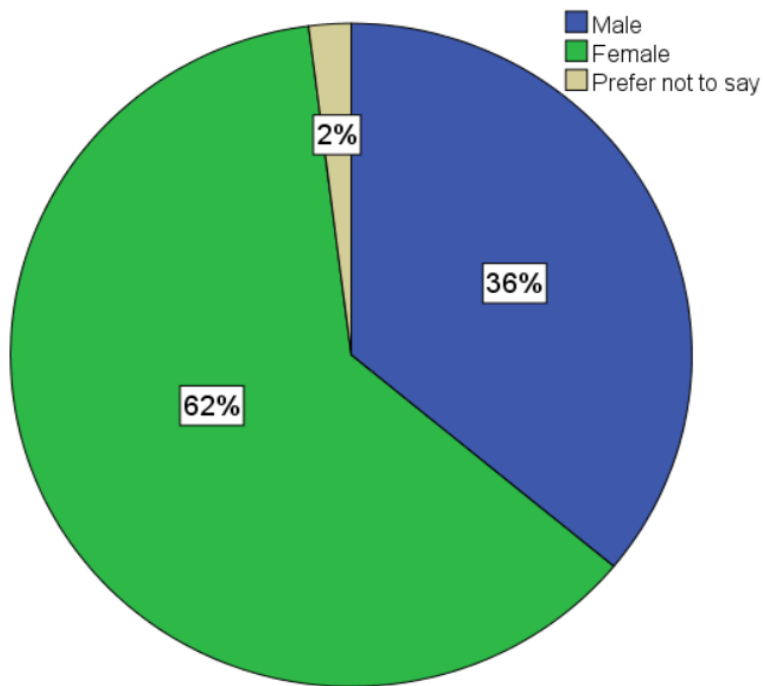


Figure 4.1: Gender of employees

4.2.2 Employee age

Participants were asked to provide their year of birth to determine their age for the study. The outcomes were categorised and assigned the following codes: 1960–1969 were coded with a 1, 1970–1979 with a 2, 1980–89 with a 3, 1990–1999. were coded with a 4, and 2000–2009 were coded with a 5. As a result of the study findings, the age group with the highest representation was that of participants who were born in the 1980s, who made up 43 percent of the total. Next, with a 30 percent representation, were people born in the 1970s. The third-highest percentage of participants (25 percent) were born in the 1990s. Those born in the 1960s, who made up two percent of the population, were the least represented.

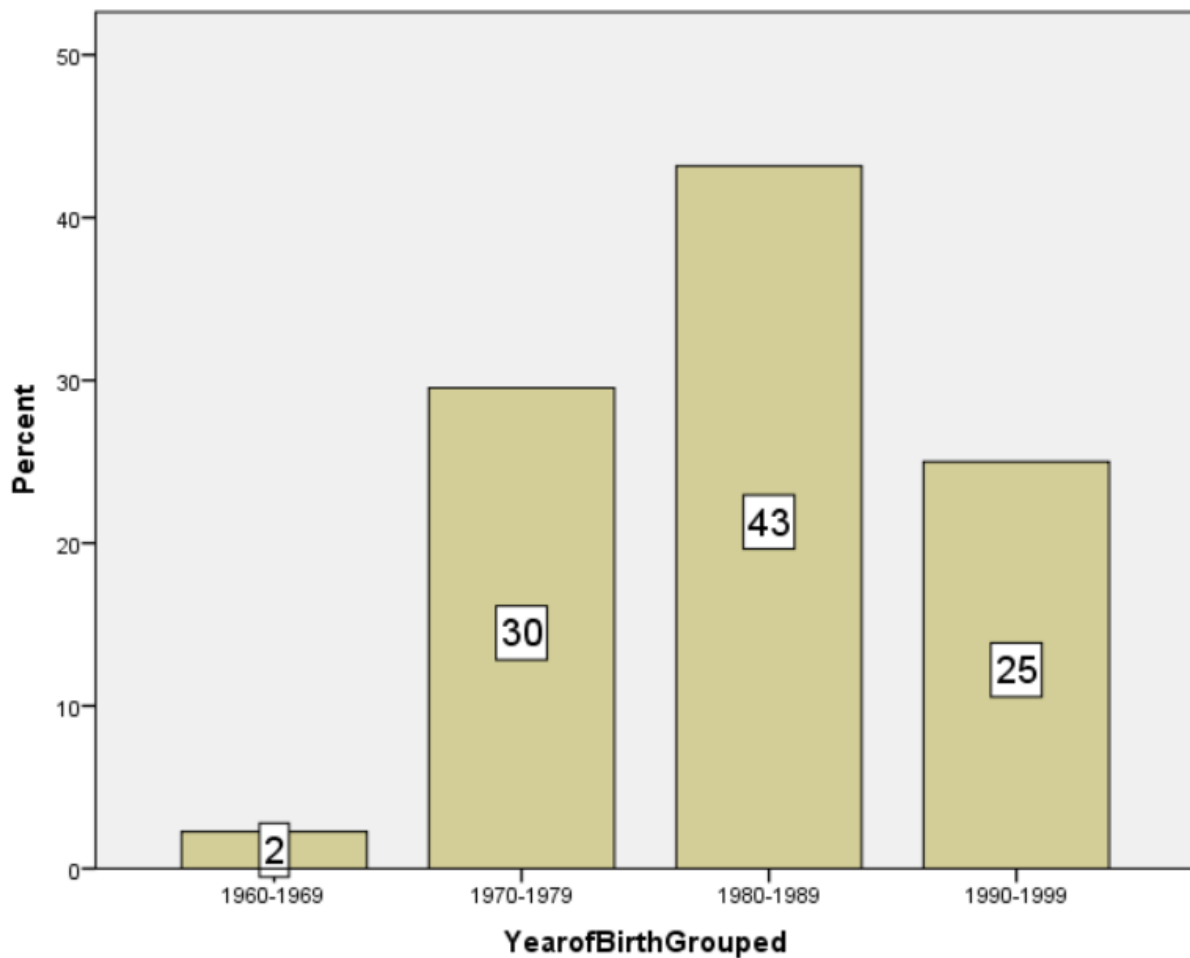


Figure 4.2: Year of birth

4.2.3 Job status

Full-time, part-time, and intern were the choices listed under job status. Figure 4.3 displays the results from the SPSS extraction. Based on the findings, 12 percent of the respondents indicated they are interns, compared to 88 percent that indicated full-time employees. All participants indicated they have a full-time job; none work part-time.

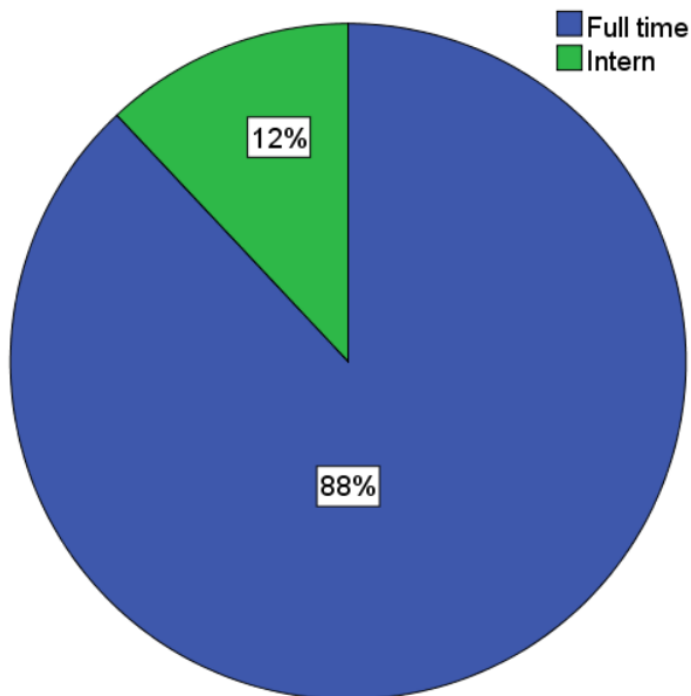


Figure 4.3: Job Status

4.2.4 Employee ethnicity

The study investigated participants' race. Black or African, Coloured, Indian, White, and other races were among the racial groups represented in this study. The results from SPSS are illustrated in Figure 4.4. The findings indicate 92 percent of participants are Black African, with six and two percent of participants, respectively, indicating their ethnicity as Coloured and Indian. No participants represented any other ethnicity. Therefore, this study's conclusions regarding the contribution of different factors to employee engagement and the effect on organizational performance can only be applied generally to Black, Indian, and Coloured people. Therefore, future research that includes the ethnicities this study failed to include should be conducted to determine whether the same results obtained by this study hold for any other races.

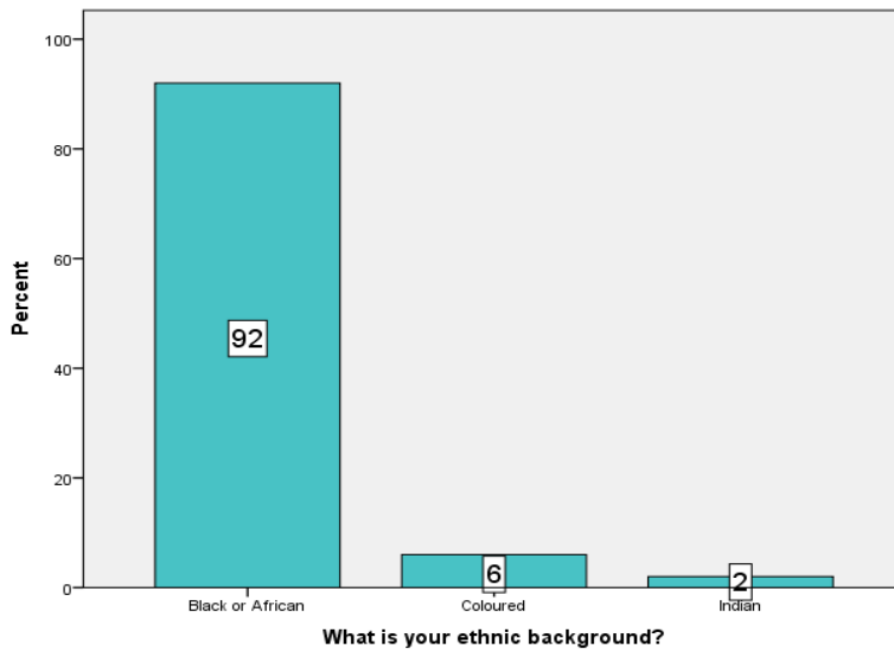


Figure 4.4: Employee ethnicity

4.2.5 Employee's role at work

Participants were asked to specify their role in the current organization. The job roles available to select from are: executive, senior manager/manager, Specialist, officer, administrator, data capturer, and general worker/housekeeper. Those whose roles were not listed were asked to indicate 'other'. The results in Figure 4.5 show 34 percent of the participants were administrators. This was followed by officers, specialists, and senior managers/managers who had 30 percent, 16 percent, and six percent representation, respectively. Data capturers and general worker/housekeeper had an equal representation of two percent each, and were the least represented. Those whose job roles were not listed consist of 10 percent of the total study sample and the job roles they specified were interns and IT technician.

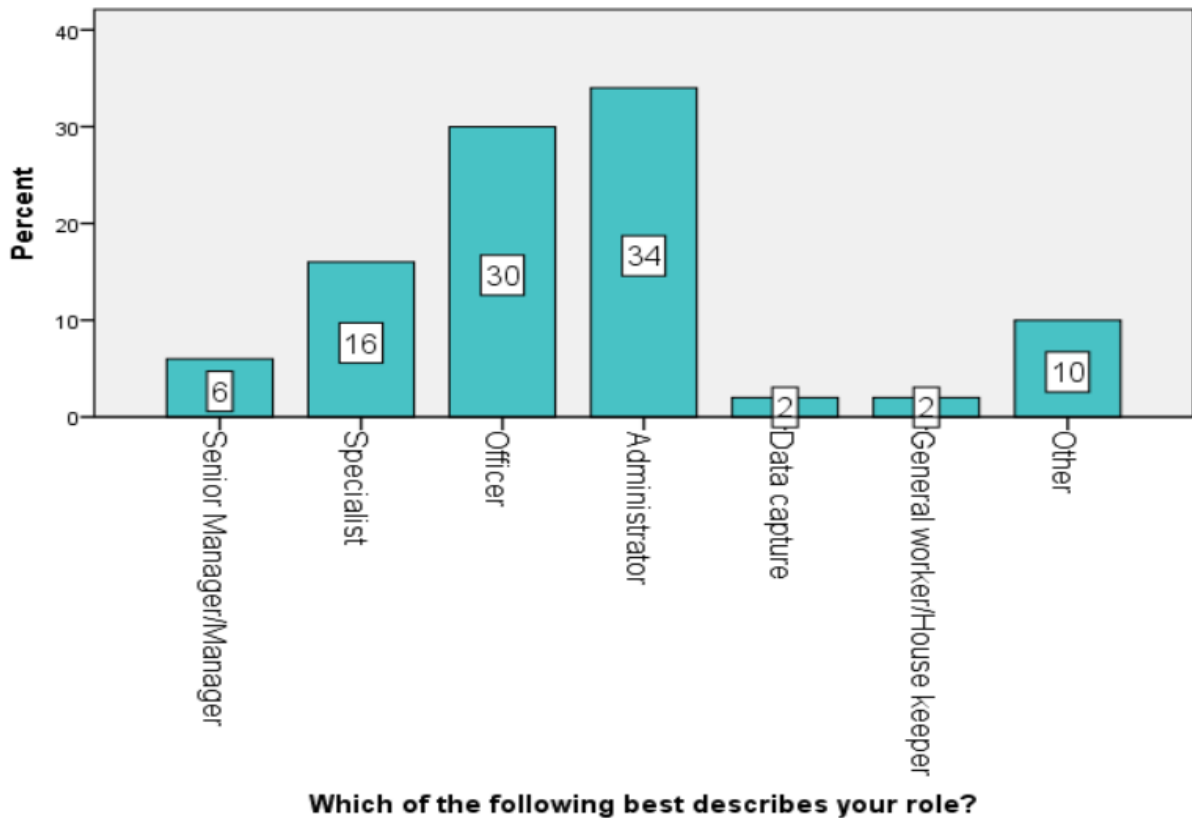


Figure 4.5: Employee's role

4.2.6 Employee's years of working experience

The study investigated how long the employees had been working for the company. The statistics for years of experience are illustrated in Figure 4.6. The figure shows 62 percent of participants have been involved with the organization for five to 10 years or longer. Following this, are 14 and 10 percent of the participants, respectively, who have between one and two years of working experience and more than ten years of experience. Less than one year, between two and five years, and prefer not to answer were the other groups with the lowest representation, with two, eight and four percent, respectively.

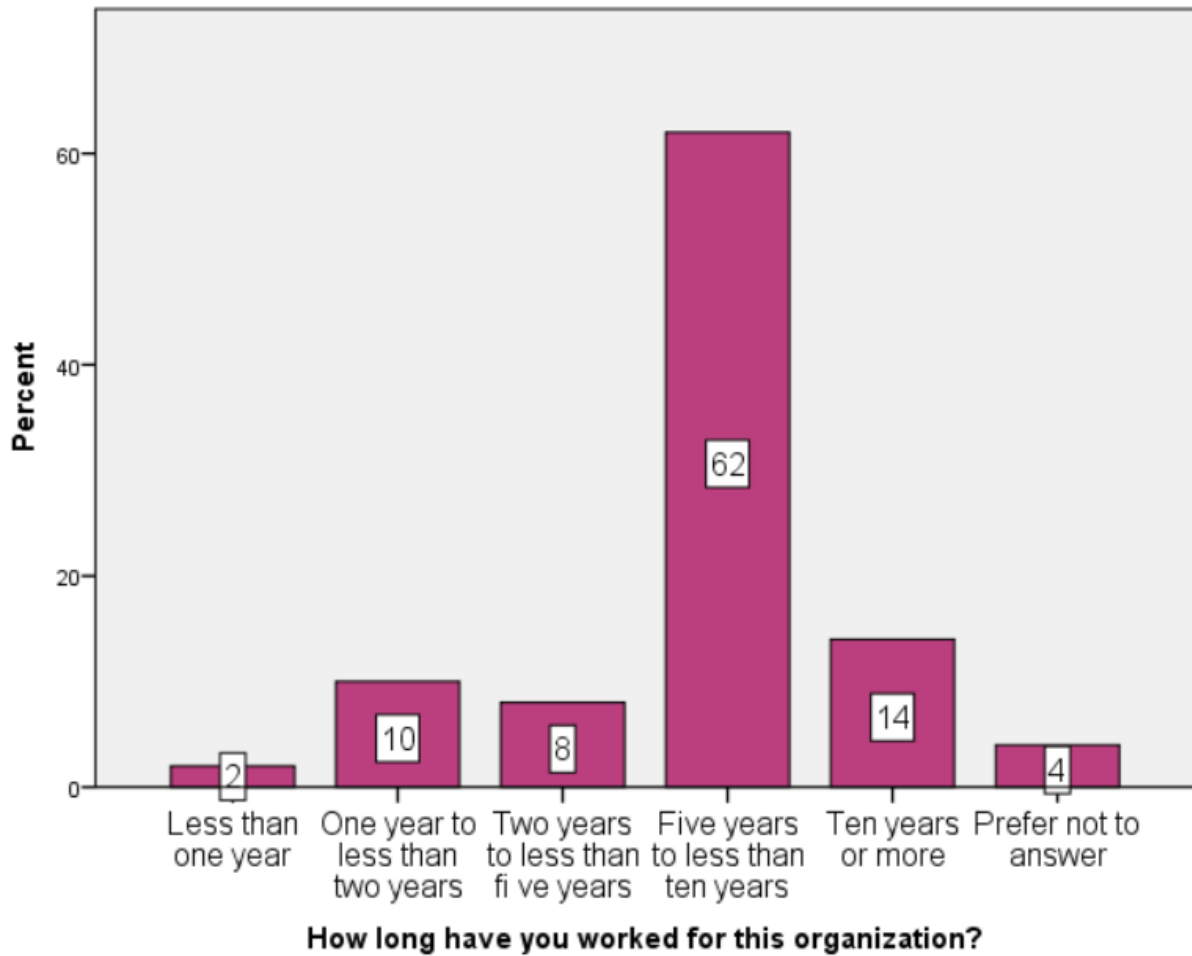


Figure 4.6: Employee’s years of working experience

4.3 Descriptive statistics

The minimum, maximum, mean, and skewness of each construct's central propensity to data were analysed and described using descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics from SPSS are shown in Table 4.1 for each of the constructs. Each participant's response was coded in SPSS according to the following guidelines: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree. These choices imply that when a construct's minimum and maximum values are one and five, respectively, at least one individual will strongly agree and strongly disagree with the questions posed regarding that construct.

When more participants strongly agree with the questions, the mean value will be closer to one than it will be to five, which denotes strongly agree, and will provide information concerning the overall data distribution. Data alignment around the mean is shown by skewness statistics, with two possible values: a positive or a negative

skewness value (Pallant, 2016). A positive skewness value indicates the majority of participants are distributed to the left of the central value, which is a three, while a negative skewness value indicates the data is distributed toward the right side of the central value, which is a three. (Pallant, 2015).

Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics for all constructs

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Skewness
Organizational Leadership	2	5	4	-.597
Organizational corporate Communication	2	5	4	-.619
Employee Role in Org	2	5	3	.597
Work Environment	1	5	3	.267
Relationship With Supervisor	1	5	3	.151
Training Development Resources	2	5	3	.093
Pay Benefits	1	5	3	.311
Overall feelings	1	5	3	-.466
Valid N (listwise)				

Work environment, relationship with supervisor, pay benefits, and overall feelings all had minimum values of one, while organizational leadership, organizational culture communication, employee role in organization, and training development resources all had minimum values of two. The results are tabulated in Table 4.1. This indicates, of the 50 participants, at least one participant strongly agreed with the statements made regarding the work environment, the relationship between the participant and their supervisor, the pay benefits, and the overall feelings of the participant. However, none of the employees strongly disagreed with the statements made regarding organizational leadership, organizational culture, the employee's role within the organization, and training development resources.

Regarding the maximum statistic, all constructs had a maximum of five, which shows there is at least one participant for all the constructs who strongly disagreed with the questions asked about work environment, relationship with supervisor, pay benefits, overall feelings, organizational leadership, organizational culture communication, employee role in organization, and training development resources.

Two constructs, Org Leadership and Org Culture Comm, had mean values of four, while the mean value for the remaining constructs was three. This indicates most

participants were neutral to the questions asked regarding employee role in organization, work environment relationship with supervisor, training development resources, and pay benefits, as well as overall feelings, whereas a majority of participants disagreed and strongly disagreed with the questions asked with regard to organizational leadership and organizational culture.

Most of the data points for three constructs—Organizational Leadership, Organization Corporate Communication, and Overall Feelings—were aligned to the right side of the mean, because they had negative skewness values. This suggests most participants strongly disagreed with the questions posed concerning them. The remaining constructs—Employee Role in Organization, Work Environment Relationship with Supervisor, Training Development Resources, and Pay Benefits—had positive skewness values, which indicates most data points are aligned to the left of the mean. This infers most participants strongly disagreed with the inquiries made about them.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation was utilized to investigate the relationships between two constructs, with SPSS used to generate the Pearson correlation Matrix and the results shown in Table 4.2. A correlation coefficient, which indicates how strongly two variables are related, has a range of -1.00 to +1.00. (Pallant, 2016). The plus or minus sign is used to indicate the direction of a relationship. A positive number indicates a direct relationship between the two variables, implying that when one construct rises, so does the other. A negative value, however, indicates an opposite relationship, meaning as one construct rises, the other construct decreases or vice versa. A correlation value of one indicates the two constructs have an ideal relationship, while a correlation value of zero indicates no correlation exists between the two variables. The relationship is stronger the closer the correlation value is to one.

Table 4.2 indicates the correlation matrix obtained from SPSS. The relationships of concern are those highlighted in yellow, with organisational performance being the dependent variable and satisfaction with employer being the mediating variable. According to Table 4.2, there is no relationship between overall feeling and satisfaction with employee, because there is no asterisk attached to the correlation value. The lack of an asterisk means the relationship is neither significant at level 0.01 nor 0.05. This means satisfaction with employer does not influence organisational performance.

Concerning the independent factors and satisfaction with employer, the results in Table 4.2 show satisfaction with employer had no significant relationship with the following factors: Work environment and relationship with supervisor, at both level 0.01 and 0.05. However, satisfaction with employer and the following factors: organisation leadership, organisation culture communication, employee role in the organisation, as well as Training and development resources, had a significant relationship at level 0.01. Satisfaction With Employer and Pay Benefits had a significant relationship at level 0.05.

Table 4.2: Pearson’s correlation matrix

Construct Number	Construct Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Organizational Leadership	1								
2	Organizational Culture communication	.540**	1							
3	Employee role in org	.405**	.423**	1						
4	Work Environment	.171	.396**	.217	1					
5	Relationship With Supervisor	.011	.184	.019	.151	1				
6	Training Development Resources	.412**	.350*	.307*	.091	.288*	1			
7	Pay Benefits	.070	.207	.136	.179	-.148	.373**	1		
8	Satisfaction With Employer	.644**	.503**	.407**	.064	-.019	.526**	.312*	1	
9	Organizational Performance	.201	.425**	.368**	.101	.101	.471**	.055	.276	1

In terms of magnitude and strength of the relationships, all relationships between Satisfaction with Employer and the two factors, Employee Role in Organization and Pay Benefits, were considered weak, because their Pearson correlation value was below 0.4, which is the threshold for weak relationships. The relationship between Satisfaction with Employer and the two factors, Organizational Culture Communication

and Training Development Resources, was deemed moderately strong because their Pearson correlation values ranged between 0.3 and 0.5. Finally, the relationship between Satisfaction with Employer and Organizational Leadership had a Pearson correlation value of 0.644, which is in the range of strong relationships.

To investigate the contribution of each factor towards Satisfaction with Employer, and the contribution of Satisfaction with Employer toward organizational performance, two regression analyses were conducted. The first regression analysis had Satisfaction with Employer as the independent variable and organizational performance as the dependent variable. The second regression analysis had Satisfaction with Employer as the dependent variable and the rest of the factors as independent variables. The subsequent section discusses the regression results of these factors.

4.5 Regression Analysis

Only the association between two factors can be investigated using correlation analysis; the cumulative impact of many different variables on one dependent variable cannot be investigated using correlation analysis. Chi square and linear regression are two statistical methods of analysis that can be used to determine the overall contribution of each factor to the dependent variable, Pallant (2016). In this study, two linear regression analyses were performed. The first regression analysis used Satisfaction with Employer as the dependent variable, while the other variables—Organizational Leadership, Organization Culture Comm, Employee Role in Organization, Work Environment, Relationship with Supervisor, Training Development Resources, and Pay Benefits—were treated as independent variables.

The second regression analysis used Satisfaction with Employer as the independent variable and Organizational Performance as the final independent variable. Following are the outcomes of linear regression:

4.5.1 First linear regression

The first linear regression with Satisfaction with Employer as the dependent variable produced the results, illustrated in Table 4.3, which displays the summary regression model results between the predictors and the dependent variable. The data demonstrate the adjusted R-square value of 0.499 indicates the model explains 49.9 percent of the data. This R-Square value of 0.000, which is less than the maximum

threshold of 0.05, is indicated by the sig. F change statistic as significant. Together, organizational leadership, organizational culture, employee role in the organization, and work environment, as well as relationship with supervisor, training development resources, and pay benefits account for and explain 49.9 percent of employee satisfaction with the employer. The R-square value is significant, as shown by the Sig. F change statistics, indicating that the model prediction of 49.9 percent can be relied upon.

When compared to other values reported in journals, the Adjusted R-square value of 0.499 is high (Pallant, 2016). According to the Adjusted R-square value, the predictors used in this study can fully explain how satisfied employees are with their employers. The fact that the R-square value is less than 100 percent, however, indicates there may be additional variables or factors potentially overlooked in this study, which can account for the remaining percentage (50.1 percent) of employee satisfaction with the employer. Future research should therefore take these factors into account.

Table 4.3: Regression model summary 1

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.755 ^a	.570	.499	.649	.570	7.959	7	42	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Organization Leadership, Relationship with Supervisor, Pay Benefits, Work Environment, Employee Role in Organization, Training Development Resources, Organization Culture Communication									

Table 4.4 show the coefficients between the dependent and independent variables, which reveal that only one factor, organizational leadership, significantly influenced the prediction of employee job satisfaction, because its Sig statistic value fell below the 0.05 upper limit. Therefore, the remaining variables—Organization Culture Communication, Employee Role in Organization, Work Environment, Relationship with Supervisor, Training Development Resources, and Pay Benefits—contribute negligibly to the prediction of Employee Job Satisfaction. This indicates that in the organization under study, Organization Leadership is the only variable that impacts how satisfied employees are with their employer.

Table 4.4: Regression coefficients 1

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.113	.692		-.163	.871
	Pay Benefits	.119	.093	.153	1.282	.207
	Training Development Resources	.241	.135	.238	1.780	.082
	Relationship with Supervisor	-.080	.109	-.086	-.733	.467
	Work Environment	-.147	.118	-.141	-1.246	.220
	Employee Role In Org	.149	.184	.095	.814	.420
	Org Culture Comm	.258	.182	.194	1.419	.163
	Org Leadership	.484	.154	.417	3.134	.003
a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction with Employer						

4.5.2 Second linear regression

The second linear regression with Organizational Performance as the dependent variable, produced the following results, with Table 4.5 displaying the summary results of the regression model between the predictor (Satisfaction with Employer) and the dependent variable (Organizational Performance). The findings indicate the model accounts for 5.7 percent, as indicated by the adjusted R-square value of 0.057. The sig. F change statistic demonstrates the significance of this R-Square, which has a value of 0.050, equal to the 0.05 upper limit. Thus, 5.7 percent of an organization's performance can be attributed to satisfaction with the employer. The Sig. F change statistics show the R-square value is significant, indicating the model's prediction of 5.7 percent can be relied upon.

When compared to other values reported in journals, the Adjusted R-square value of 0.057 is noticeably low. This value indicates the predictor used in this study is insufficient to fully explain an organization's performance; as a result, the R-square value indicates there may be additional variables or factors this study may have overlooked that can account for the remaining portion of an organization's performance (94.3 percent). Future research should, therefore, consider these factors.

Table 4.5: Regression model summary 2

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.276 ^a	.076	.057	.77387	.076	3.964	1	48	.050

a. Predictors: (Constant), satisfaction with employer

Because Satisfaction with Employer’s Sig statistic value was equal to the 0.05 upper limit, Table 4.6 illustrates the coefficients between the dependent and independent variables demonstrate this variable significantly influenced the prediction of Organizational Performance. This suggests in the organization under investigation, employee satisfaction with their employer affects how well the company performs.

Table 4.6: Regression coefficients 2

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.337	.467		5.006	.000
	Satisfaction with employer	.240	.121	.276	1.991	.050

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

4.6 Comparison: Findings vs Literature

- **Employee dissatisfaction**

According to Gallup (2017), just 15% of workers globally are completely involved in their work, while the remaining 85% are either not engaged or actively disengaged.

The CETA study concurs with the findings by Gallup (2017), majority of participants in this study reported low engagement level with the public entity. 60% of employees are dissatisfied with the CETA, 32% are neutral, and only 8% are satisfied.

- **Lack of support**

According to Forbes (2014), the causes of the developing "disengagement crisis" are the lack of support for employees in accomplishing what they consider to be important results (Forbes, 2014). Based on the researcher's findings, we can conclude that a lack of employee support can actually cause disengagement among staff members.

The study findings highlighted that majority of CETA staff are not given enough authority to make their own decisions.

- **Employee engagement**

According to Neeti and Leekha (2011)'s results in chapter two, employee engagement is a significant and strong approach for attracting, increasing, retaining, valuing, and controlling the organization's personnel. While this is true, the study indicated that it is not be regarded as the super main driver there are other elements that can be regarded as having influence as well. Although most of the employees at the CETA are disengaged, there is still a low turnover rate. The study found that, while employees are dissatisfied with their employer, the majority are satisfied with their employee pay benefits. As a result, whether employees are engaged or not, they may choose to remain with the organization for the sake of retaining wage or benefits package.

Employee engagement and organisational performance

Employee involvement has the potential to make or break a company's capacity to prosper. It has the potential to significantly influence employee retention, productivity, and loyalty, as well as consumer satisfaction, corporate reputation, and total shareholder value (Sundaray, 2011). When compared to previous findings, the findings revealed the same outcomes (Sundaray, 2011). From the CETA research study, with 52% of the respondents, it was found that most of the employees are dread going to work every day while 32% were in a neutral position and only 16% are those in most days looking forward to going to work.

Kahn's study focuses on workplace environments that encourage individuals to bring their "full selves" to work. The study identified three primary factors that influence an employee's capacity to connect effectively with the corporate mission, company culture, and day-to-day activities of the role: meaningfulness, safety, and availability.

- **Unpleasant work environment**

The results of this study support those of previous studies that were also undertaken by authors such as Els, Mostert, & Beer, (2015). Most of the participants mentioned that they feel the organisation has not created an enabling environment where they can do their best. This means that although majority they are willing to do their best, it

becomes impractical for the employees to do so because the environment is not pleasant.

- **Employees not valued**

The CETA study also discovered that employee attitudes toward the employer influence organizational productivity. According to the report, 62% of participants do not feel appreciated in this organization. According to the results from the study conducted by Robertson-Smith and Markwick (2013), employees who are not appreciated will find it difficult to devote their whole attention to assigned activities.

- **Barriers to employee engagement**

According to Rothwell (2016), there are five potential hindrances to employee engagement, including ambiguous definitions of engagement among employees or managers, management or employee cynicism about engagement, bureaucratic work rules, a lack of work-life balance, and arbitrary management techniques. Similar to the study conducted, the results revealed that 72% of the participants feel that senior leaders at the CETA does not leave the core values of the organisation. According to Rothwell (2016), capricious management practices can be considered as one of the possible barriers to employee engagement.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented the study findings by providing a brief explanation on figures presented. Tables and figures were used to present the findings. Analysis was used to provide percentages; with descriptive, correlational and regression analysis used to provide means and standard deviation, while regression has been used for analysis. The next chapter presents the discussion, conclusion and study recommendations.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, recommendations, limitations, and future study recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The presentation of the study findings, the analysis of the data, and their interpretation were the focus of the previous chapter, which outlined what has been achieved and highlighted where findings can be drawn. Chapter 5 provides a summary and recommendations for the study on the effect of employee engagement on organizational performance at the CETA. This chapter also highlights key limitations and recommendations for future research.

5.2 Summary

The findings on data collected for the mentioned topic were found to be negative as far as employee satisfaction is concerned. Based on the study findings, it was evident the CETA does not involve most of its employees in the development of organizational strategy, thus leading to disengaged employees. There is also no obvious link between the roles of the employees and the general aim of the entity. According to the data, the majority of participants were not involved in CETA's core business activities. This is a sign their production levels directly impact the business. As a result, boosting employee engagement levels would have a significant effect on company productivity. The majority participants were either semi-skilled, skilled, or held a professional certificate, suggesting they had some degree of influence inside the organisation.

The research objectives comprised the following:

- Investigate how employee engagement influences organizational performance;
- To ascertain the factors affecting engagement levels of employees;
- To offer recommendations to improve employee engagement when threats to organisational performance are expounded.

5.2.1 Investigate how employee engagement influences organizational performance

The first objective of this study was to determine the impact of employee engagement on organizational performance. Employee satisfaction, demotivation, improper job

placements, and person job-fit, as well as organizational pride were cited as essential factors that influence employee engagement. Job dissatisfaction was discovered to be a significant driver of disengagement at the CETA. There was a high rate of respondents who explicitly highlighted that they do not look forward to going to work most days. This is deemed a high risk for the organisation and is therefore alarming.

Not only does job unhappiness influence work performance and morale, but it can also have a financial impact on the business. Employees who are dissatisfied with their jobs are less likely to be motivated to be productive and provide superior services. When employees are dissatisfied with their jobs, some will leave, while others will stay and remain dissatisfied. This could be due to a fear of change, a lack of updated skills, or a refusal to give up particular benefits (current pay, healthcare, retirement plan, and so on).

5.2.2 To ascertain the factors affecting employee engagement levels

The second objective of this study was to ascertain the factors affecting engagement levels of CETA employees. The study revealed there are, indeed, some factors that affect employee engagement at this organisation. Key findings include lack of trust among the leaders, lack of confidence in leadership, unethical leadership, and poor communication, in addition to fear of expression of views, non-recognition of inputs by some managers or supervisors, and lack of training and development or lack of talent management programmes, as well as lack of employee recognition. This indicates Organization Leadership is one of the main variables that impacts how satisfied employees are with their employer at the organization under study.

5.2.3 To offer recommendations to improve employee engagement when threats to organisational performance are expounded

The third objective was to explore actions necessary to optimise employee engagement at the CETA. These include improved communication, transparency, succession planning, and effective skill development initiatives for employees, as well as employee recognition, employee involvement in decision making, and better compensation packages that are fair. Additional aspects such as equal treatment of employees, management capacitation, information sharing, and clear job expectations are some of the interventions disclosed by the study. This means when management improves on these, they will have a more engaged and productive workforce.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the findings, the CETA should improve its employee engagement level by involving them in decision-making processes. Any company's competitive advantage relies on productivity, therefore, this study aimed to establish engagement factors at the CETA and examine whether employee engagement impacts company productivity. Considering the study results, some key findings were extracted. It was found that employee engagement at the CETA influenced organisational performance. As a result, the employer should consider measures to monitor and improve employee engagement through feedback sessions and employee engagement surveys.

Communication is one of the essential drivers of employee engagement, according to the data. This means internal communication within the organization has an impact on overall performance. The study findings agreed with the reviewed literature (Chapter 2) regarding employee engagement and its causes. According to the analysis, the strong productivity levels of the CETA are hampered by a lack of managerial transparency and existing bureaucracy standards.

It was also noted that at the CETA, the level of staff engagement on organisational performance at the CETA has a detrimental impact. The organisation's management should, therefore, improve and increase its employee engagement strategies through awareness generation. In this way, when employees continue to execute their everyday activities, they can feel proud of working in that organization and discharge their daily duties in a sensible way.

CETA management should allow its staff to engage in organizational decision-making. Conversely, when there is a lack of communication flow in the organization between executives and employees, as well as poor decision-making, and a low level of employee empowerment, the performance of the organization will suffer greatly. It was also noted the public entity lacks employee engagement strategies. Consequently, the organization's leadership should assist its employees in integrating their daily tasks to the organization's overall stated objectives.

5.4 Recommendations

Employee engagement mechanisms urge that executives look beyond the status quo to uncover innovative tools, facilitate job satisfaction, and value-added resources to

remain competitive in this global economic context, thus ensuring employees are fully engaged. The following actions are recommended:

- **Employee engagement strategies at the company**

The company's management and leaders must stress a greater emphasis on engagement strategies that support organizational performance in terms of higher productivity, profitability, quality, and customer satisfaction, as well as employee retention, and more adaptability. The corporation should recognise disengaged employees are not only detrimental to staff morale, but also to the organization's financial condition. As a result, management must constantly monitor employee engagement levels in their organization and make proactive management decisions to ensure middle management understands and supports increasing those levels in order to influence organizational results and engage the disengaged, such as through coaching and dialogue forums.

- **Job Satisfaction**

From the research findings, the majority respondents are not satisfied with the organisation. It is important to note only happy employees can grow into engaged employees. As a result, it is vital for the business to guarantee that an employee's obligations are related to their professional ambitions, allowing everyone to enjoy work and finally be content with assigned duties.

- **Improve communication between management and employees**

The company should acknowledge the significance of communication in developing a culture of friendship between management and employees, to effectively involve individuals in achieving the goals and objectives of the organization. Employees feel more valued and develop a sense of entitlement when they receive broad information regarding the company's business and performance, creating platforms for interactions, making communication modern and dynamic, and providing opportunities for employee participation.

Vertical and horizontal communication channels must be open for communications to flow more effectively. Employees that initiate one-on-one communication on their own initiative are a strong indicator of an evolving workforce in the engagement process. In general, an engagement culture should be developed and established across the organization.

- **Clearly defined succession planning**

Transparent succession planning should be based on a methodical process, with an emphasis on cultivating effective skills, knowledge, and leadership style to promote employee engagement. This can be accomplished by identifying critical positions inside the organization, determining the skills required for these key positions, identifying and evaluating possible successors, and lastly committing to nurturing internal talent, mentoring, and monitoring progress.

- **Employee well-being**

Employees suffer when managers prioritize profits over other important goals such as employee well-being, the environment, or ethical concerns. As a result, relations with the boss are marked by suspicion, dissatisfaction, and a lack of affection. Employees are thus less inclined to fulfil duties at a high level or to go above and beyond the call of duty.

- **Effective skill development initiatives**

Another important factor in relation to employee satisfaction is education and development. Employee turnover has been linked to skill redundancy, highlighting the importance of training, re-training, and multi-skill training. Training will assist new and current employees in gaining the knowledge and skills needed to perform their duties effectively.

Management ought to create a concise, effective skills development program to support succession planning by analyzing skills requirements within the organization, continuing to develop effective action plans for developing employee skills, establishing timelines for the development of each required skill, and finally, implementing skills development initiatives.

- **Employee recognition**

To provide employees with a sense of return on investment, management should create meaningful recognition, incentive, and reward systems. This can be accomplished through employee reviews, staff achievement celebrations, anniversaries, and long service rewards. The organization should also consider celebrating employees graduating from their studies, which will consequently promote a learning environment, as everyone would want to be celebrated.

- **Enabling employee participation in decision-making**

The organisation should provide its employees with possibilities for active engagement in organizational decision-making. This can be accomplished by establishing discussion forums, providing an interactive idea management system, and, eventually, developing an internal social network to help employees realize their full potential.

- **Capacitate managers**

The public entity should implement employee training programmes to help managers perform their roles more successfully. At present, this does not always happen in all sections of the organization. This can be accomplished by proposing and implementing a modern development and training strategy, as well as offering support through coaching and dialogue forums.

- **Value employees**

A sense of being valued by management, as well as an expression of management concern in employee well-being, helps to foster the confidence required for engagement. Further efforts should be made to facilitate more chances for growth.

- **Information sharing**

In the area of information sharing, managers should support information exchange in the organisation. By scheduling and organizing regular meetings, welcoming suggested solutions, and enhancing work practices and procedures through employee surveys, they should deliver practical information to employees in order to achieve organizational effectiveness.

- **Job expectations**

There is a strong need to work hard to make sure that staff comprehend what they are expected to do for their allocated responsibilities. This will boost their production capacity and the quality of service. Furthermore, management should provide opportunities for individuals to practice their finest skills at work. In addition, employees should be routinely recognised or rewarded for their efforts, and steps should be implemented to encourage the care of the supervisor or any other colleague.

- **Ethical leadership prevents toxic work environments**

It should also be highlighted that leaders who use clear and positive communication and provide emotional support to their staff develop the same traits in their employees.

When employee's personal conflicts and demands at work become an impediment within the organization, this is referred to as hindrance stress, Hansen (2019).

Hansen, (2017) further says that ethical leaders, rather than retaliatory sanctions, respond to this type of stress (the potential for poor employee behaviour and social undermining) with warmth and support.

Employees must believe that the basic ideas for which their companies stand are apparent and clear. Successful firms value each employee's traits and contributions, regardless of employment level. The ethical standards of a company also lead to individual engagement.

- **Bullying bosses compromise workplace safety**

Employees who feel devalued or bullied are more likely to disregard organisational values, safety regulations and other organizational policies. Poor treatment by management could make an employee more concerned with their own survival at work, which can also impact clients at large. The study emphasised the need to address this issue as it is critical to control such leader behavior, assist employees who have been wronged, and stop such problems from occurring.

- **Improve employee engagement by utilising two-way communication**

Managers must encourage two-way communication. Clear and consistent communication of expectations paves the road for an engaged workforce, while involving workers and constantly valuing their feedback are essential to engagement. Leaders should share their expertise with employees through participatory decision-making to encourage a feeling of belonging, enhancing their engagement in making it a reality.

- **Provide adequate possibilities for growth and advancement**

The organisation should encourage independent thinking by offering employees more job autonomy, allowing them the liberty to select their own best approach of accomplishing their task, as long as they produce the anticipated outcome. Control by outcomes is thus recommended, instead of attempting to control each of the procedures that lead to that result.

- **Appropriate training**

Employee confidence grows when they are able to work without much oversight from their immediate managers, which builds their self-efficacy and commitment. As a result, it is critical for the organization to support employees in keeping their knowledge and skills current through suitable training.

- **Have an effective feedback mechanism.**

The organization should establish a performance management system that keeps managers and employees accountable for the amount of involvement displayed. Conducting regular assessments of employee engagement levels aids in determining the variables that keep employees motivated. It is critical for employers to focus their efforts on the elements with the most impact on their employees, as it may be impossible to address all issues at once. Managers should support such survey results and build action-oriented plans that are detailed, quantifiable, and responsible.

- **Incentives have a part to play**

Managers should devise both financial and non-financial incentives for employees who demonstrate greater workplace engagement. Several management theories have suggested when employees receive more money, recognition, and praise, they tend to put in more effort at work. There should be a clear correlation between performance and staff incentives.

- **Recognition for work well done**

The findings of the study also revealed little or no recognition for good work. A recognition strategy and mechanisms should be executed by the employer. This can be achieved by instituting awards such as "employee of the month," creating a culture that encourages daily recognition, leaving post-it notes on employees' desks simply to say "thank you" for their efforts and contributions, or highlighting important contributions made by employees during staff meetings. Any system of reward and recognition must also be benchmarked.

5.5 Study Limitations

The research study only focused on a single public entity organisation in South Africa (CETA), this simply means that the results cannot be generalised to other organisations or companies. Although this may not have affected the study findings, other users may find it difficult to comprehend the study results because the organisation or companies are not operating the same nor having similar experiences.

Furthermore, the research method used for this study was quantitative method, this means that results were collected using questionnaires thus analysed and interpreted numerically thereafter. This simply means that the results were only limited to the selected method, and we therefore cannot confirm if similar results were going to be drawn using other research methods. It is therefore suggested that a different research method such as qualitative method should be used in future. Qualitative method may help to understand the feelings, attitude, beliefs, motivation or reality of individuals or society using non numeral data tools.

5.6 Recommendation for further studies

The study's findings, results, and recommendations may contribute to current knowledge and future research on techniques for leaders who need to implement effective employee engagement to reach strategic goals. The participants' inability to explain their knowledge and understanding of the topic was not evident. However, future researchers may choose to engage executives as respondents in interviews to gain a wider perspective and the most relevant evidence, as well as to improve the quality of interview data collected. The relationship between employee engagement and performance should also be studied further to see if similar findings can be made for other industries.

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Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance Certificate

Graduate School of Business Leadership, University of South Africa, PO Box 392, Unisa, 0003, South Africa
Cnr Janadel and Alexandra Avenues, Midrand, 1685, Tel: +27 11 652 0000, Fax: +27 11 652 0299
E-mail: sbl@unisa.ac.za, Website: www.unisa.ac.za/sbl

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS LEADERSHIP RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (GSBL CRERC)

03 October 2022

Ref #: 2022_SBL_MBA_037_FA
Name of applicant: Mr TT Zitha
Student #: 10317856

Dear Mr Zitha

Decision: Ethics Approval

Student: Mr TT Zitha (10317856@mylife.unisa.ac.za, 072 903 3986)

Supervisor: Dr Medicine, Magocha (workhorsejn@gmail.com, 072 598 7395)

Project Title: An investigation into employee engagement and its impact on organisational performance: an employee's perspective

Qualification: Master in Business Administration (MBA)

Expiry Date: December 2023

Thank you for applying for research ethics clearance, SBL Research Ethics Review Committee reviewed your application in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.

Outcome of the SBL Research Committee: Approval is granted until December 2023

The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the SBL Research Ethics Review Committee on the 30/09/2022

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached
- 2) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
- 3) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the SBL Research Ethics Review Committee.
- 4) An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.
- 5) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.

45 years Building leaders who go beyond



Graduate School of Business Leadership, University of South Africa, PO Box 392, Unisa, 0003, South Africa
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Kind regards,

NBW Mlitwa

Prof N Mlitwa

Chairperson: SBL Research Ethics Committee

011 - 652 0381/ wiltonb@unisa.ac.za

Pumelelwele

Prof P Msweli

Executive Dean: Graduate School of Business Leadership

011- 652 0256/mswelo@unisa.ac.za

45

Building leaders who go beyond.



SBL
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BUSINESS LEADERSHIP
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Appendix 2: Questionnaire

CETA Employee engagement questionnaire

The results of this survey will enable you to assess employee engagement within your department and organization. This assessment will also allow you to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the efforts towards employee engagement by your organization. The respondents of this survey will remain anonymous. The results of this assessment will only be used to inform your organization about their effectiveness regarding organizational employee engagement.

The following questions are for classification purposes only. They will not be used to identify any individual. Please fill in only one response per question

Description (optional)

The following questions are for classification purposes only. They will not be used to identify any individual. Please fill in only one response per question

Description (optional)

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

In what year were you born?

Short-answer text

What is your ethnic background?

- Black or African
- White
- Coloured

Which is your job status?

- Full time
- Part time
- Intern

How long have you worked for this organization?

- Less than one year
- One year to less than two years
- Two years to less than five years
- Five years to less than ten years
- Ten years or more
- Prefer not to answer

Which of the following best describes your role?

- Executive
- Senior Manager/Manager
- Specialist
- Officer
- Administrator
- Data capture
- General worker/House keeper
- Other...

How do you feel about each of the following specific matters? (Fill in a single response for each statement below)

Description (optional)

Overall, I am very satisfied with my employer

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Other...

Organisational leadership

Description (optional)

I have confidence in the leadership of this organization

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Other...

...

The leaders of this organization care about their employees'well being

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Other...

Senior leaders live the core values of the organization

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Other...

The leaders of this organization are open to input from employees

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

The organization's corporate culture and communications

Description (optional)

This organization's corporate communications are frequent enough

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I can trust what this organization tells me

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

This organization gives me enough recognition for work that is well done

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

...

I feel I can express my honest opinions without fear of negative consequences

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Changes that may affect me are communicated to me prior to implementation

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Your role within this organization

Description (optional)

I like the type of work that I do

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I am given enough authority to make decisions I need to make

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Deadlines at this organization are realistic

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I feel I am valued in this organization

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

My job makes good use of my skills and abilities

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I am able to maintain a reasonable balance between work and my personal life

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I believe my job is secure

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Your work environment

Description (optional)

I feel physically safe in my work environment

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

My work space has adequate privacy for me to do my job

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

There is adequate noise control to allow me to focus on my work

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Your relationship with your immediate supervisor

Description (optional)

My supervisor treats me fairly

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

My supervisor handles my work-related issues satisfactorily

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

My supervisor acknowledges when I do my work well

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

My supervisor tells me when my work needs improvement

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

My supervisor is open to hearing my opinion or feedback

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

My supervisor handles my personal issues satisfactorily

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Training, development and resources

Description (optional)

This organization helps me pursue a career path that aligns with my skills and interests

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

This organization provides the technology, equipment and resources I need to do my job well

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Technology issues are resolved in a timely manner

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Technology issues affecting my work are communicated to me in a timely manner

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

This organization encourages me to develop professionally or to acquire new skills

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Pay benefits

Description (optional)

My pay is fair for the work I perform

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Overall, I'm satisfied with this organization's benefits package

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Organisational Performance

Description (optional)

Most days, I look forward to going to work

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I am proud to work for this organization

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I feel this organization has created an environment where I can do my best work

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I am willing to give extra effort to help this organization succeed

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I plan to continue my career with this organization for at least two or more years

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I would recommend working here to a friend

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Recommendations

Description (optional)

What can this organization do to increase your satisfaction and productivity as an employee?

Long-answer text

.....

What does this organization do that makes it a place where people would want to work?

Long-answer text

.....

Thank You for Your Participation!

For questions or comments, please email Mr Thomas Zitha: 10317856@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Appendix 3: Authorities Permission to Collect Data

Contact us:
Tel: 011 265 6900

Postal Address:
P.O. Box 1955
Halfway House
1685

Physical Address:
52 14th Road
Nooreshek
Midrand
1687



Attention: Mr Thomas Zitha
MBA Student
University of South Africa (UNISA)

By email
10317856@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Dear Mr. Thomas Zitha,

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT CETA

Please accept this permission granting letter for conducting research on your topic, **Investigating employee engagement and its impact on organisational performance (an employee's perspective)** within the CETA.

You will be requested to present your research report to management for information sharing purposes.

Kindly do adhere to the COVID-19 regulations.

Wish you everything of the very best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mje', is written over a horizontal line.

Ms. Molebogeng Thobela
Executive Manager: Strategic Support

Appendix 4: Turn It in Report



Appendix 5: Certificate of Editing and Authentication

Helen Richter
Advanced Editing, Proofreading
& Copywriting
feefieding@gmail.com
+27 729538189

19 December 2022

To whom it may concern

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING & AUTHENTICATION

I have proofread and language edited the Master's research project titled:

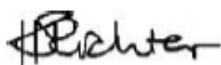
**"An Investigation into employee Engagement impact on organisational performance:
An employee perspective"**

by

Thomas Taylor Zitha

To the best of my knowledge, the work is free of spelling, grammar, structural and stylistic errors and the contents are certified as the author's own work.

With thanks.



H. S. Richter
