Measuring Employee Engagement of South African Managers

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ABSTRACT This paper reports the level of employee engagement exhibited by managers in South Africa. The model employed to measure employee engagement was validated as a measuring tool, and consequently the selection thereof as a measurement tool. The paper provides a brief rationale of the validation process, where after it continues to provide the demographic profile of the respondents and the level of employee engagement as measured by the model. The model employs seven employee measurement criteria, namely *management and leadership, behavioral engagement, change management and stress-free environment, career growth opportunities, emotional engagement, nature of the job* and *feeling valued/involved*. 260 employee responses were collected by means of a structured questionnaire from a stratified sample of 300. Although all the factors showed high levels of importance towards employee engagement, behavioral engagement was deemed to be the most important factor. Furthermore, correlational analysis indicated that none of the demographic variables significantly influence the employee engagement factors, suggesting that stratified managerial interventions are not required to improve employee engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Khan (1990) originally described the concept of *employee engagement* as a unique and important motivational concept, stating that employee engagement is *"the harnessing of an employee's full self in terms of physical, cognitive and emotional energies to work role performances."* Yadafa et al. (2015) include the emotional commitment of the employee to the organization and its goals in their definition. Shuck et al. (2011: 428) expanded on Kahn's theory stating that employee engagement may be seen as *"an individual employee's cognitive, emotional and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes"*. More recently, research by Schaufeli (2015) indicates that work engagement and employee engagement are used interchangeably.

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Crabb (2011: 28) then defined employee engagement as:

…A positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values. An engaging employee is aware of the business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. The organization must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between the employer and employee.

Resulting from the formalization of employee engagement as a managerial concept, employee engagement has gained momentum as the focus of the management in recent management literature and as a focus of human resource management publications (Lewis et al. 2012: 19). Presently, the modern approach to the concept *emotional engagement* can be defined as:

The emotional connection is what an employee feels toward his or her employment organization, which tends to influence his or her behaviors and level of effort in work related activities. The more engagement an employee has with his or her company, the more effort they put forth (Business Dictionary 2015).

While exact definitions of employee engagement differ, all include the line of thought that employee engagement is concerned with the employees' emotional commitment to an organization, taking into account the magnitude of discretionary effort they are willing to expend on behalf of their employer. Yadava et al. (2015) agree and state that most of the literature to date has approached engagement from either the individual or group level, while there has been little effort to understand the employee engagement process across the organizational levels. Highly engaged employees go above and beyond their core responsibilities as outlined in their job descriptions, innovating and thinking 'outside the box' to help move the organizations forward.

Problem Statement

The performance of organizations, as indicated above, is positively influenced by an engaged workforce. The heightened emotional connection between an organization and its employees positively contributes to organizational performance because employees take less sick leaves, actively engage in organizational problems, commit to achieving a company's goals at their own volition, and are willing to contribute their time, talents and abilities for the success of the organization, extending their discretionary efforts to go above and beyond their management's acceptable performance standards (Jackson 2011: 18). On the other hand, research by Hewitt Associates (2009) found that low-engagement organizations' total shareholder returns are up to forty-four percent below average. Business performance is the responsibility of management, and their ability to unlock the human capital, as a performance driver in the organization, is crucial (Smit and Beatie 2010: 267). In this regard, Gallup points out that in their research, fifty-four percentof employees were not engaged, seventeen percent were actively disengaged, and only twenty-nine percent could be considered as engaging their time and talents. It is therefore clear that employee engagement could provide a competitive benefit that managers cannot afford to ignore. However, understanding employee engagement as an universal concept seems to differ between organizations and managers. The resolution to such managerial uncertainties is embedded in scientific studies aimed at employee engagement. These studies should also indicate the differ-

entiation in management practices between employee engagement and other near-similar management concepts. Crabb (2011: 30) supports this differentiation drive and is of the view that recent research into employee engagement was largely informative, and although useful, has focused largely on what management in organizations can do to engage their employees. In this regard, Crabb (2011: 31) states that employee engagement is dependent on how the level of engagement can be measured to identify the internalized drivers of engagement that people hold within themselves. However, it is there that the core of the problem surfaces, namely, *How to measure employee engagement scientifically and apply the results to improve engagement as performance driver in the organization?* This paper addresses this specific problem of measuring employee engagement among managers with a validated model, and to apply the results to managerial interventions so that engagement levels can be improved for the benefit of the organization.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this paper is to measure the employee engagement of managers in South Africa.

To achieve the primary objective, the following secondary objectives have been formulated.
- Perform a theoretical study to discuss the model employed to measure employee engagement.
- Determine the demographic profile of the respondents.
- Measure the employee engagement of the respondents.
- Determine whether significant correlations exist between the demographic variables and employee engagement factors.
- Draw conclusions and present recommendations to managers in South Africa.

A Model to Measure Employee Engagement

Development of the Model

The model to measure employee engagement was developed through a set of eight steps proven to be successful and useful in a number of social sciences studies (Moolla 2010; Chummun 2012; Hamid 2014). These steps are discussed below.

Step 1: Literature Review on Employee Engagement Measurement

The literature review focused on identifying the relevant drivers to measure employee engagement. Validated models of employee engagement are studied and extensive literature searches were conducted by means of the electronic databases of the North-West University and also the Internet. From this study, a list of employee engagement drivers, their measuring criteria and origins are tabulated (Moolla 2010).

Step 2: Purification of Engagement Drivers

The list from Step 1 is purified by scrutinizing and eliminating duplicate drivers, merging duplicate or similar drivers and structuring the drivers in order to ascertain whether the more important drivers (as determined by their use and frequency in previous employee engagement measuring studies) are included, while also eliminating the less important drivers (Moolla 2010). This process requires literature support to ensure a proper purification process (Chummun 2012). The purified list of drivers, the measuring criteria and the origin thereof are then tabulated.

Step 3: Questionnaire Development

The purified list with the drivers and their measuring criteria were converted into a questionnaire. Additional measuring criteria were formulated where insufficient measuring criteria were present, and indicated as such (Hamid 2014). A Likert scale was added and the questionnaire was professionally proofread and tested in a focus group to ensure easy understanding and clear instructions (Basson 2014).

Step 4: Validity and Data Collection

The questionnaire was subjected to experts to ensure face and content validity. The advice from the experts was applied to the questionnaire, where after the data was collected. A total of 260 completed questionnaires were received. The data was statistically tested to be suitable for a multivariate data analysis by means of the Bartlett's test of sphericity, while the adequacy of the sample was determined using the Kaiser, Meyer and Olkin test of sampling adequacy (Field 2007: 668).

Step 5: Reduction of Measuring Criteria

The statistically approved data was subjected to exploratory factor analysis to weed out the less important measuring criteria and confirm or reconfigure the employee engagement drivers. As successfully applied in studies by Fields and Bisschoff (2013a: 46; 2013b: 47), and Bisschoff and Moolla (2014: 1113), a measuring instrument can be simplified and purified by means of an exploratory factor analysis. A total of seven new factors were identified as drivers of employee engagement. The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) employed a Varimax rotation because of its ability to maximize the variance explained (Field 2007: 642). The decision criteria for analysis were (Bisschoff and Moolla 2014: 1116) that factor loadings should exceed 0.40, and the cumulative variance should exceed sixty percent, while the sample remains adequate and the sphericity also remains below 0.05 (Fields and Bisschoff 2014: 48-49). The data required four rounds of purification to eliminate all non-loading criteria as well as the criteria that cross-load strongly on more than one factor. This improved the validity of the model (Hill and Hughes 2007: 7; Gaskin 2014) and simplified the results into an operational model that can be used to measure employee engagement in practice (see also Step 7).

Step 6: Statistical Validity

The validity of the model to measure employee engagement was determined by applying the validity measures of external validity (using both population and ecological validity), internal validity, criterion validity (using both concurrent and predictive validity), content validity, construct validity, and criterion-related validity (using both construct and discriminant validity) (CSU 2014; CollegeBoard 2012). The exploratory model did not predict outcomes at present to prove criterion validity (Shuttleworth 2013), as this is a future objective. Resultantly, external and internal validity was statistically proven.

Step 7: Reliability

Reliability as measured by Cronbach's alpha was found to exceed 0.70 (ideally), with a secondary lower limit of 0.57 (Cortina 1993; Field 2007: 675).

Step 8: Refined Model Presentation

The presentation of the final model after the elimination of unreliable and invalid elements within is applied to measure employee engagement (Fields 2013:149). The model's measure of employee engagement appears in Figure 1.

Factors Measuring Employee Engagement

Factor 1: Employees' Perceptions of Management and Leadership

Factor 1 consists of two sub-factors, namely *employees' perceptions of management* and *an engaged leadership team.* Resultantly, these two sub-factors are discussed below.

Sub-factor 1: Employees' Perceptions of Management

Managers and leaders in an organization are entrusted with employees whom they must work with to realize organizational objectives. In organizations, the perceptions of leaders, managers and employees shape the climate and effectiveness of the working environment. Perception is the way all experiences are interpreted. Having the right perception is a significant skill for any effective leadership skill. It is important to understand that perception is often portrayed through communication in any organization, be it big or small, and therefore, it is a pertinent tool in leadership (Otara 2011: 21).

Lee (2012) states that to improve employee engagement, boost employee morale and maximize employee productivity, management cannot simply just 'do the right things' (being efficient). More advanced managerial interventions are needed, and as such the management needs also to identify and eliminate the 'wrong things' (inefficiencies), such as organizational and managerial practices that squelch employee engagement and crush employee morale. Lee (2012) claims that it is important to note that the human brain is hardwired to notice and remember negative issues more effectively than positive issues. This claim is supported by Tugend (2012), who states that some people do have a more positive outlook, but almost everyone remembers negative things more strongly and in more detail. It is therefore imperative to identify these negative and engagement damaging issues in order to improve employee engagement.

This mental processing also refers to the perceptions employees have of their managers. Therefore, it is imperative to quickly identify and eliminate engagement-damaging and morale-damaging practices before focusing on implementing positive best practices. Therefore, when it comes to improving employee engagement and morale, if an employee feels negatively about his/her manager or the organization as an employer, it is important for managers to find out how they are creating these perceptions and what they can do to eliminate those actions.

Sub-factor 2: Engaged Leadership Team

Biro (2014) claims that leaders set the tone for engagement in the workplace. This claim is in support of research by Gerard and Crim (2006) who state that to engage employees, an organization must capture their hearts and minds by sharing and communicating its strategic direction and goals and by rewarding and recognizing performance. This is only possible thorough effective leadership.

Biro (2014), in support of Gerard and Crim (2006) (in Mani 2011), highlights 'alignment' as one of the essential skills that leaders must have if they are going to succeed in increasing employee engagement. He describes this 'alignment' of engaged employees feeling aligned with their organization's purpose, values and vision, where they find their work meaningful because their leader helps them see the connection between what they do and the success of the organization. Clearly then, employee engagement is strongly driven by the immediate manager and his/her ability to meet the employees' emotional requirements (Insyncsurveys 2009).

The analyses of a research conducted by Mendes and Stander (2011) on "the role of leader behavior in work engagement and retention showed that a leader's behavior is related to the employees' experiences of the work environment. A higher level of development was related to higher role clarity. Therefore, when a leader focuses on the development of the employee, he/she is more aware of the expectations that are placed upon them. Higher levels of development relate to higher levels of impact; therefore, an empowering leader ensures that employees feel they can influence their work (Nielsen et al. 2008). Furthermore, the research indicated higher levels of authority to be correlated with higher lev-

els of self-determination, indicating that when a leader delegates authority appropriately, employees will experience autonomy in determining how to fulfill the expectations placed upon them. Based on the results of the research, it becomes clear that leader empowering behavior has a strong relationship with role clarity and psychological empowerment.

Factor 2: Behavioral Engagement

Warner (2013) notes that the term 'employee engagement' can have a variety of different meanings depending on how it is used and within what context it is implied. Employee engagement can describe someone's disposition (trait engagement), current feelings (state engagement), or how they perform their job (behavioral engagement). Trait and state engagement leads to observable behaviors that can be described as engaged. It is commonly defined as 'putting forth discretionary effort' or 'going the extra mile'. Some other examples of behavioral engagement include:

* Extra-role behavior
* Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)
* Proactive/personal initiative
* Role expansion
* Engagement with others (team, leaders)

Shuck and Reio (2013:159) reason that behavioral engagement is the most overt form of the employee engagement process. It is often what one can see someone do. Understood as the physical manifestation of the cognitive and emotional engagement combination, behavioral engagement can be understood as increased levels of effort directed toward organizational goals. Resultantly, behavioral engagement can be described as the broadening of an employee's available resources displayed overtly.

Factor 3: Change Management and Stress-free Environment

Employee engagement refers to a situation where all the employees are engaged in their own work and take a keen interest in the organization's activities. Research by MMG (2013) shows that an employee who keeps him/herself busy with his/her work, tends to stay away from nasty office politics such as backstabbing, gossiping and undermining co-workers, which is a major source of stress at the office. All workers favour a stress-free environment at the workplace and tend to leave the employment only when there are constant disputes. An engaged employee does not participate in unproductive tasks, but instead finishes assignments on time and benefits the organization (MMG 2013). Individuals at work, who are able to trust one another, have good working relationships, feel more comfortable at work, and experience less stress at work (Sixsigmaonline 2014). Healthy relationships require trust as the central and important aspect in the relationships with the coworkers and management.

The work environment often requires change and uncertainty. Change and uncertainty are major stressors to employees. Change not only influences trust between the employees, but could also result in mistrust of management, leading to more stress. Although the source of stress is change, with change being unavoidable, managers and leaders should effectively manage change according to change in management principles to ensure that employees stay engaged and achieve new heights of engagement and productivity in the workplace (Marko 2015).

However, due to the nature of the work environment, stress is a part and parcel thereof, and resultantly, the challenge for managers and leaders is clear, but not easy to facilitate. Management should therefore, continue to manage towards increased employee engagement.

Factor 4: Career Growth Opportunities

A seemingly solid strategy to increase employee engagement involves providing employees with opportunities and resources for career development and mobility within the organization. Getting employees engaged involves satisfying their needs to learn, advance, and make progress for themselves. Broadening the scope of an employee's duties and providing more complex, meaningful tasks are important to keep employees engaged in their work and committed to the organization. Meaningful work inspires engagement and enthusiasm in employees, motivating them to take ownership of new challenges and broaden their experience and skillsets (Insala 2015). This ultimately gives employees a sense of progress and the experience required to fill more advanced positions in the organization. Additionally, providing employees with meaningful work, opportunities to develop skills

and experience, and opportunities to take on new roles and greater responsibilities within the organization contributes positively towards employee engagement (Insala 2015).

In this regard, Looi (2012) identifies *"having career advancement opportunities"* as a significant driver of employee engagement. Looi's research (2012) reveals that sixty-six percent of employees have a contemporary view of career success, where they define career success as having a job that is challenging and that they are passionate about. This research indicated that the employees also want a job that makes full use of their skills, giving them opportunities for continuous learning, and enables them to make an impact on the people they serve. In addition, the study further revealed that employees consider the alignment of personal and company goals an important element of career success.

In essence, the literature clearly indicates that when employees consider their employment to be successful, aspects such as continual learning, challenging assignments and opportunities to make a difference (rather than just wanting to be promoted) play an important role. These considerations also contribute positively towards engaging employees and retaining them as employees.

Factor 5: Emotional Engagement

Kruse (2012) states that employee engagement is the emotional commitment the employee has towards the organization and its goals. This emotional commitment means engaged employees actually care about their work and their company. They do not work just for a salary, or just for the next promotion, but on behalf of the organization's goals. When employees care and when they are *engaged,* they use discretionary effort in their work.

Chamorrow (2013) supports this view stating that employee engagement levels are three times more strongly related to intrinsic than extrinsic motives. In other words, when employees have little interest in external rewards, their intrinsic motivation has a substantial positive effect on their engagement levels. In this regard, the research by CIPD (2014) found positive associations between emotional engagement and well-being, and negative associations between emotional engagement and work-family conflict and burnout. This suggests that employees who are emotionally engaged in their work are also likely to be happier and healthier (Lewis et al. 2012).

This is in support of research conducted by Insync (2009) who found that when employees are emotionally and psychologically engaged with an organization, they do perform more effectively and efficiently. This has a flow on effect as employees become even more engaged. People take stronger ownership when they are involved in the organization's improved performance and future development. They also become more enthusiastic and supportive about what is happening in their work environment.

It can, therefore, be concluded that those who invest emotional energy into their roles enhance performance through the promotion of increased connection among coworkers in the pursuit of organizational goals (Ashforth and Humphrey 1995). Investments of emotional energies also help individuals meet the emotional demands of their roles in a way that results in more complete and authentic performances (Rich et al. 2010).

Factor 6: Nature of Job

While some argue that employees are engaged if they have a positive attitude towards work, others such as Purcell et al. (2003) (in Kular 2008) suggest that employee engagement is only meaningful if there is a more genuine sharing of responsibility between management and employees over issues of substance. The CIPD survey conducted by Truss et al. (2006) suggests that strengthening employee voice (or influence in decision-making) can make a difference to organizational performance.

Employee voice can be defined as the ability of employees to have an input in decisions that are made in the organizations (Lucas et al. 2006). It has been argued that one of the main drivers of employee engagement is for employees to have the opportunity to feed their view upwards (Truss et al. 2006). Their survey concluded that currently many organizations are not very successful in doing this and as a result many employees felt they lacked opportunities to express their views and be involved in decisions. On the other hand, researchers at Towers Perrin (2003) found employers are doing well in giving employees the freedom to make decisions relating to their jobs; sixty-two percent of respondents argued they have an appropriate amount of decision-making authority to do their job well (Kular et al. 2008).

It is therefore concluded that being aware of the business context and understanding the line of sight between one's job role and the purpose and objectives of the organization, is another aspect that is often seen as a central element of employee engagement.

Factor 7: Feeling Valued and Involved

Lipman (2012) postulates that in the business world an employee's relationship with his or her direct manager is the single most important factor in employee engagement and believes if you dig deeper into employee engagement, there is considerable excellent research that feelings of making continual daily progress are also key. Khan (1990) states that individuals who experience meaningfulness tend to feel worthwhile, useful and valuable, and are able to commit themselves to their work role and to others. According to Khan's successive research (1992), one important influence of meaningfulness is the congruence between the behaviors expected by an organization and the behaviors that individual employees value as a part of their own self-images. That is, when employees find that their roles call for behaviors that are congruent with how they like to see themselves (their preferred self-images), they are more likely to find their roles inviting, valuable and worthwhile and will be more willing to fully engage themselves (Khan 1992). When individuals find that their role expectations call for behaviors that they feel are inappropriate for their preferred self-images, they feel devalued, taken advantage of and less willing to give themselves to their work roles (Rich et al. 2010:618). In this regard, it could be concluded that feeling valued and worthwhile is a major contributor to an employee being engaged.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study consists of a quantitative research following a literature study, which was performed where specific employee engagement drivers (and their respective measuring criteria) were identified. Based on this research, a questionnaire was constructed, data was collected and the data was subjected to Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify the factors of employee engagement. These factors were used to develop a conceptual framework to measure employee engagement. This paper employs this newly developed conceptual framework to actually measure the level of employee engagement.

The questionnaire captured the data on a five-point Likert scale during the period February 2014 to March 2014. A total of 300 questionnaires were administered independently by the researcher to respondents for completion, and 260 of these were completed. A total of 18 questionnaires were incomplete, while another 22 respondents opted out and did not complete the questionnaires. This resulted in an effective response rate of 86.6 percent. The data was captured by the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University and analyzed with the Social Package for Social Sciences Version 18 (SPSS 2009). Inferential statistics were employed to determine the demographic profile of the respondents as well as the level of employee engagement in accordance with the conceptual framework.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic profile

Items	Classification	Percentage
Gender	Male	86.5
	Female	13.5
Age	<25	2.8
	25-30	20.3
	31-35	32.7
	36-40	21.0
	>40	23.1
Marital Status	Single	32.7
	Married	61.5
	Divorced	3.6
	Widow(er)	2.2
Education	Diploma	13.6
	Degree	46.3
	PG diploma/ honours	32.6
	Master's degree	4.8
	Doctorate	1.1
	Others	1.5
Times Felt Engaged in Job in the Last 3 Months	100 percent	15.7
	90-99	30.0
	80-89 percent	19.3
	70-79 percent	13.6
	<70 percent	21.4
Length of Time With Employer	<5yrs	50.0
	6-10yrs	29.2
	11-20yrs>	14.6
	21yrs	4.4
	Self-employed	1.8

N=300; n=260

The gender dispersion in this study indicates that 238 males (86.5%) made up the majority of the respondents as compared to the 37 female respondents, who were indicative of only 13.5 percent of the respondents, making them the minority in the study. With regard to the age of the respondents, it is evident that 92 respondents (32.7%) were within the 31-35 years age group, and 65 of the respondents (23.1%) were over the age of 40. Some 59 respondents (21%) were between the ages of 36 and 40 making the number of respondents between the age of 31 and 40 the majority, namely 151 respondents in total in this range (53.7%). 57 respondents (20.3%) resided in the 25-30 years age group. Only eight respondents (2.8%) were under the age of 25, making this age group the minority.

Regarding the marital status of the respondents, 171 (61.5%) indicated they are married, making them the largest group among the rest of the respondents who then made up 91 respondents (32.7%) who were single, 10 (3.6%) who were divorced and six (2.2%) who were widowed.

The academic profile of the respondents depicted by the highest level of qualification, indicates that 127 respondents (46.5%) were in possession of a bachelor's degree and 89 respondents (32.6%) had in their possession a postgraduate diploma or an honors degree, indicating a total of 216 respondents (79.1%) who were in possession of a bachelor's degree.

The frequency of employees feeling engaged in their job in the last three months indicate that 84 respondents (30%) felt between ninety and ninety-nine percent engaged and 60 respondents (21.4%) felt that they were less than seventy percent engaged in their job. Only 44 respondents (15.5%) felt as though they were one hundred percent engaged in their job over the last three months. 54 respondents (19.3 %) felt between eighty and eighty-nine percent engaged and 38 respondents (13.6%) felt between seventy and seventy-nine percent engaged in their job over the last three months.

Regarding the length of service with their current employer, 137 respondents (50%) indicated that they have been employed with their current employer for less than five years. 80 respondents (29.2%) have been employed with their current employer for between six and 10 years, 40 respondents (14.6%) for between 11 and 20 years, and only 12 respondents (4.4%) have been with their current employer for more than 21 years.

Measuring the Factors of Employee Engagement

The questionnaire is designed using a five-point Likert scale to measure the employees' perception of employee engagement. They record their perceptions as, 1 = Strongly agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 4 = Disagree; and 5 = Strongly disagree.

The mean values from the Likert scale were calculated and the results on influences of employee engagement were summarized and discussed in the tables below. The mean scores are interpreted as follows (Salim 2012: 42):

- 1.5 and lower: The factor is very important and does influence employee engagement;
- Between 1.5 but below 3: The factor is important in its influence on employee engagement;
- 3 and higher: The factor is not regarded as important and has limited influence on employee engagement.

Employees' Perceptions of Management and Leadership

The mean scores of the employees' perceptions of management and leadership influences and their questions set are summarized in Tables 2 and 3, and indicate the agreement the respondents have with each item on the employee engagement. Table 2 shows the managerial influences, while Table 3 shows the leadership influences on employee engagement.

The mean scores for all ten questions are in the medium importance category (between 1.5 and 3). The mean for employees' perceptions of management is 2.604 (Table 2). This means that employees agree that although management interventions to improve employee engagement are important, these interventions are not regarded to be very important, nor unimportant. Positively viewed, it does show that managers could successfully undertake some interventions to improve and maintain engagement. This is, however, an area that could be improved upon by managerial interventions.

Similar to managerial interventions, the employees perceive the leadership team mean scores for all of the items to be between 1.5 and 3. The mean score for engaged leadership team is 2.527 (Table 3). This means that the leadership team is regarded as important (but not very important, as expected), and does warrant interventions to facil-

Table 2: Mean scores of sub-factor 1: Employees' perceptions of management

Number	Item	Mean
46	My organization's leadership acts with the best interest of employees in mind	2.799
47	Teamwork is encouraged at my workplace	2.358
48	My leader/manager at work encourages my development	2.595
49	My manager/leader cares about their employees	2.586
50	My manager/leader listens to my opinions	2.455
51	My manager/leader is trustworthy	2.599
52	My manager/leader 'walks the talk'	2.763
53	I believe that my senior manager/s have integrity	2.613
54	My manager is someone I can trust	2.623
55	My manager provides me with on-going feedback that helps me to improve my performance	2.649
	Mean: Employees' perceptions of management	2.604

Table 3: Mean scores of sub-factor 2: Engaged leadership team

Number	Item	Mean
36	My leadership team is able to build trust with me as an employee	2.278
37	My leader/manager communicates effectively with me	2.474
38	My leader/manager is responsible for building a fulfilling work environment	2.448
39	My leader/manager is flexible in understanding individual needs	2.513
40	My leader/manager is responsible for developing talent	2.620
41	My leader/manager is responsible for coaching team members	2.639
42	My leader/manager reinforces high levels of performance	2.440
43	My leader/manager is responsible for engaging necessary knowledge	2.498
44	My leader/manager continuously monitors engagement issues	2.683
45	My leader/manager identifies appropriate team members for the team	2.677
	Mean: Engaged leadership team	2.527

itate engaged employees. The employees perceive the interventions of the leadership team to be, as with management, average in attaining employee engagement. In practice, the leadership team should spearhead the employee engagement interventions, and have management follow suit to not only improve their level of importance in employee engagement, but also to lead by example.

Behavioral Engagement

The mean scores of the behavioral engagement influence are summarized in Table 4 and indicate the importance of the items and the factor on employees' engagement.

Although the scores appear to be significantly lower than the management and leader-

Table 4: Mean scores of behavioral engagement

Number	Item	Mean
1	The work I do makes a contribution to the organisation	1.482
5	I believe that my work matters	1.596
6	I believe that my work is meaningful	1.582
11	I take pride in my work	1.605
16	I derive a sense of self-esteem from the company I work for	2.018
19	I really push myself beyond what is expected of me	1.818
20	I work harder than is expected of me	1.759
22	I have a desire to improve my work	1.623
23	I have an understanding of my organization's business strategy	2.102
24	I have the ability to collaborate with my colleagues	1.904
25	I am willing to demonstrate extra effort in my work	1.695
26	I am driven to continually enhance my skill-set	1.648
27	I do more than is expected of me	1.734
	Mean: Behavioral engagement	1.736

ship team scores (signifying higher importance), 12 of the 13 questions fall within the important category with the mean scores ranging between 1.582 and 2.102. One question, however, displayed a mean of 1.482, indicating that the respondents strongly believe that they do make a difference in the workplace. This perception, however, is in contrast with the score of criterion number 27, which states that the respondents "do more than is expected of them". The mean for behavioral engagement is 1.736, signifying that this factor, although marginally falling in the important category, is regarded as an important driver of employee engagement.

Change Management and Stress-free Environment

The mean scores of the change management and stress-free environment are displayed in the Table 5.

The mean scores for change management and stress-free environment range between 2.481 and 2.699. This indicates that these items are perceived by the respondents to be important for employee engagement. The mean for change management and stress-free environment is 2.566, signifying that this factor is scoring high in the important category.

Career Growth Opportunities

The mean scores of career growth opportunities are summarized in Table 6, indicating the importance of career growth opportunities in terms of employees' engagement:

Nine of the items score high in the important category (signifying lower importance), while one (item 77) indicates a mean score of 3.045 (regarded to be unimportant). This clearly indicates that the respondents do not regard management training an important issue for employee engagement. The remaining eight items display high mean scores of between 2.725 and 2.962. The mean for career growth opportunities is 2.841. This means that the respondents perceive career growth opportunities to be a marginally important driver for employee engagement, while training is not regarded to be an important item in attaining employee engagement.

Table 5: Mean scores of change management and stress-free environment

Number	Item	Mean
82	Employees are able to put forth their best efforts	2.515
83	Employees can be innovative	2.558
84	Employees can be creative	2.556
85	Innovation is encouraged in my organisation	2.570
86	Employees are encouraged to be innovative	2.601
87	Employees are encouraged to face new challenges	2.475
88	Employees are encouraged to handle new challenging tasks	2.481
89	Employees are encouraged to be flexible	2.688
90	Employees are encouraged to adapt to new situations	2.526
91	Employees are engaged to their jobs	2.562
92	Employees are attached to their jobs	2.560
93	Employees understand the need to change	2.699
	Mean: Change management and stress-free environment	2.566

Table 6: Mean scores of career growth opportunities

Number	Item	Mean
73	I have opportunities for career growth at my company	2.726
74	I have opportunities for promotion at my company	2.851
75	I have a clearly defined career path	2.871
76	I am satisfied with my opportunities for career progression	2.962
77	I am on an Management Development Programme (MDP) at my company	3.045
78	Efforts are made to develop my skills at my company	2.732
79	There is someone at work who encourages my development	2.725
80	Employees are encouraged to participate in decision-making	2.836
81	This last year, I have had opportunities to grow	2.825
	Mean: Career growth opportunities	2.841

Emotional Engagement

Emotional engagement as a factor is clarified in Table 7.

All eight items of this factor display a level of medium importance (ranging between 2.116 and 2.694). The overall mean sore for emotional engagement is 2.282. This means that although these items are important, they are not very important to enhance employee engagement.

Nature of Job

The final factor of employee engagement is the nature of the job, as shown in Table 8.

The mean scores of the factor indicate that all three questions are deemed to be important, falling between the acceptable range of 1.5 and 3.

The mean for nature of the job is 2.507. This means that although the factor is not very important, it cannot be ignored in striving towards an engaged employee. Item 94 (scoring 2.853) deals with change readiness. This item danger-

ously flirts towards the unimportant category, signifying that change at work is regarded as marginally important.

Feeling Valued and Involved

The mean scores of the feeling valued and involved factor appear in Table 9.

The final factor displays three items, all within the important category. The mean for feeling valued and involved is 2.371, signifying that this factor is regarded by the respondents to be important as a driver of employee engagement.

Importance of Factors in Employee Engagement

The importance of the factors, as perceived by the respondents, in employee engagement is shown in Figure 2. (Note that an inverse scale is used, meaning that the lowest scoring factor is the most important one.)

From the Figure it is evident that Factor 2: Behavioral Engagement, is regarded to be the

Table 7: Mean scores of emotional engagement

Number	Item	Mean
7	I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation	2.273
8	I can identify with my organisation	2.173
9	I am proud to work at my organisation	2.155
12	I feel a sense of pride about my company	2.116
13	I feel my personality matches the image of the organisation	2.213
17	I am proud of my employer	2.404
18	I believe that this is the best company to work for	2.694
21	I believe in the organisation I work for	2.229
	Mean: Emotional engagement 2.282	

Table 8: Mean scores of nature of my job

Number	Item	Mean
60	Employees are trusted with a job	2.175
61	Employees accept the responsibilities that come with a job	2.199
62	Employees complete their jobs in the stipulated time intervals	2.470
94	Employees are ready to deal with changes	2.853
	Mean: Nature of my job	2.507

Table 9: Mean scores of feeling valued and involved

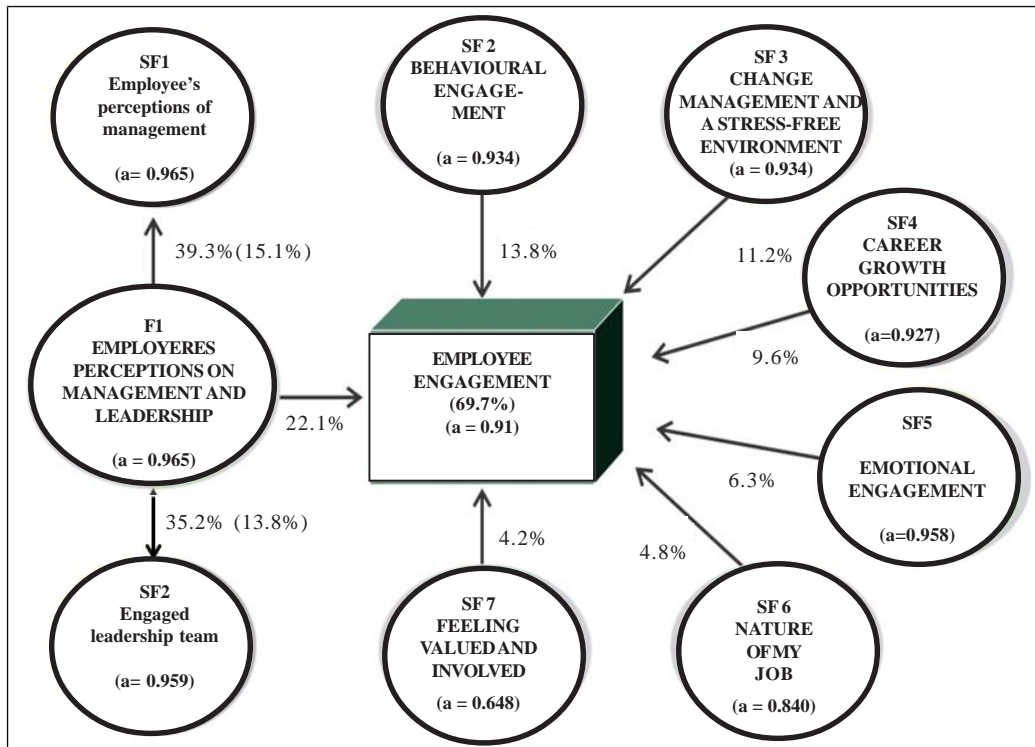| Number	Item	Mean
3	No-one will make fun of me	2.265
4	I have the resources to do my job at the level expected of me	2.288
30	I am involved in decision-making in my organisation	2.560
	Mean: Feeling valued and involved	2.371

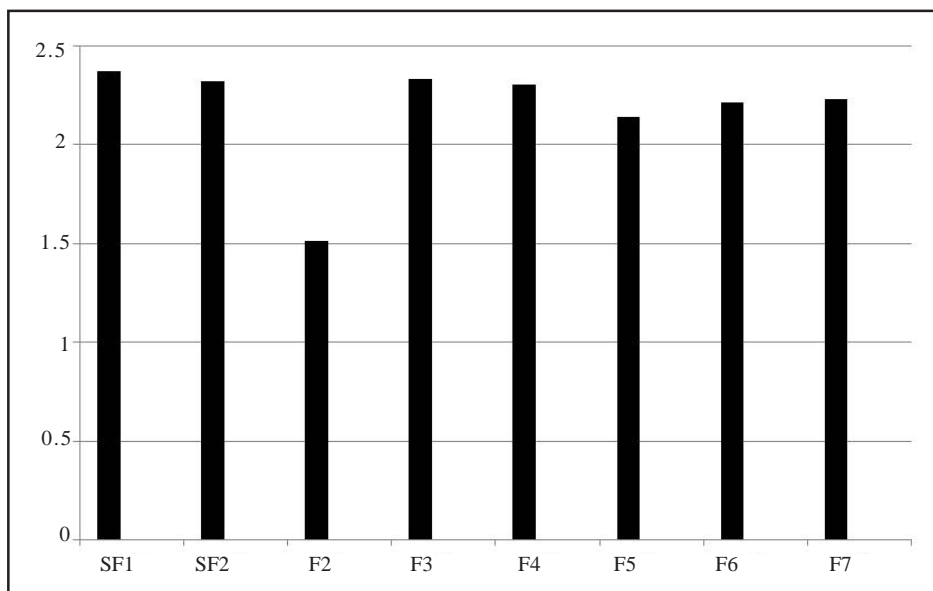**Fig. 1. A Model to measure employee engagement**

Fig. 2. Importance of factors in employee engagement

most important factor. Except for this factor, all the other factors display importance towards employee engagement. This means that managers and leaders should specifically focus on this factor first in their managerial interventions to improve employee engagement. Referring to Figure 1, the fact that factor 2 also explains 13.8 percent of the variance supports the focus on behavioral engagement as the key factor to improve employee engagement. The other factors, including the two sub-factors, should be addressed according to their variance explained because they all fall within the category of being important with marginal differences between the actual mean scores.

Correlational Analysis

In addition to the importance of the factors, a correlational analysis was also performed to determine whether the demographic variables significantly influence the factors of employee engagement. The results appear in Table 10.

From Table 10 it is evident that a number of significant positive and negative correlations ($p<0.05$) exist. Scrutinizing the strength thereof reveals that the two significant negative correlations between the variable 'age' and factors 5 and 7 are weak, and practically ignorable. All the factors, except factor 6, show (as expected) positive correlations with the variable 'level of engagement' with coefficients between 0.25 and 0.36. The results, in practice, indicate that the demographic variables do not influence the factors of employee engagement, and as such, differentiated interventions to increase employee engagement are unnecessary.

CONCLUSION

This paper focused on the actual measurement of employee engagement among managers. The results showed that the typical profile of the respondents in this sample is a male, between 31 to 35 years of age (although a fair age dispersion exists), married, with a degree or postgraduate qualification and employed for less than 10 years. Most were employed for less than five years.

In addition, the respondents regarded all the employee engagement factors to be important. However, factor 2 (behavioral engagement) was regarded to be the most important factor, falling

Table 10: Correlations between the demographic variables and the measuring factors

	SF1	SF2	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
Gender	0.024429	0.030296	0.036558	0.060548	0.044028	0.039063	0.030873	0.081036
Age	-0.017157	0.004574	-0.077438	0.008234	0.008995	-0.129622*	0.065531	-0.132001*
Marital Status	-0.074781	-0.008705	0.014153	0.098154	0.088818	-0.026676	0.038868	-0.071709
Language Group	0.035598	0.060904	0.036898	0.073887	0.018676	0.017032	0.077282	0.064523
Education	-0.077538	-0.042466	-0.004770	0.042694	0.026728	-0.024408	0.026252	-0.052189
Level of Engagement	0.250313*	0.303440*	0.238995*	0.261889*	0.286336*	0.353634*	0.101903	0.343348*
Years with Employer	0.044417	0.013259	-0.006560	-0.085210	-0.095346	-0.079734	-0.052800	-0.075766

Correlations Marked correlations are significant at $p < .05000$ N=242 (Casewise deletion of missing data)

in the category of being 'very important'. Regarding the individual measuring criteria, it is also clear that only one of the criteria was deemed to be unimportant by the respondents (scoring in excess of 3), namely that they are presently engaged in a management development program.

Regarding the correlation coefficients between demographic profile and the factors, the results showed that demographic variables do not strongly influence the employee engagement factors significantly ($p \leq 0.05$).

NOTE

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