Perceptions of the factors of organisational culture that positively influence employee engagement in a South African organisation

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ABSTRACT

Organisational culture is becoming increasingly important and organisations are re-imagining and re-focusing on the culture which exists within their businesses as well as the effects these factors have on employee engagement. This report identifies some key feature of organisational culture which can affect employee engagement by looking at one organisation specifically.

A qualitative approach was taken within a South African organisation, based in Johannesburg, to identify the perceptions of factors of organisational culture which positively influence employee engagement within this organisation. The literature review highlighted various factors of organisational culture which were believed to influence employee engagement and through the interview process, many of these factors were identified and emphasised as being important in creating positive employee engagement.

The research concluded that within this organisation, reward and recognition was the leading factor in creating positive employee engagement and was closely followed by leadership's role and building relationships.

Since employee engagement has been proven to be related to several positive work outcomes, it would be a viable option for businesses to increase levels of employee engagement by improving their organisational culture. Thus, some recommendations for establishing various factors of organisational culture within this business have been offered.

DECLARATION

I, Zaifa Schlegel, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

_____

Zaifa Schlegel

Signed at ……..

On the …… day of …….. 2017

DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to my family for their inspiration, help, guidance and on-going support through my entire academic career. I am truly grateful for their support, encouragement and help. Special mention must be given to my fiancé who has taken on so much more so that I could focus on my studies.

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I would like to thank my research supervisor, Mr. Conrad Viedge, for his guidance and advice throughout this process. Special mention must be given to Mr Geoff Verschoor who, although not my supervisor, has dedicated time to reading through my research, giving me valuable suggestions, guidance and support.

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1 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to determine the contributing factors of organisational culture that can lead to positive employee engagement within an organisation in South Africa.

1.2 Context of the study

Today's competitive and rapidly changing business environment requires continual improvement in an organisation's performance, however, the ability to achieve and maintain this high performance is a key challenge facing many businesses (Al-Khouri, 2010). Markos (2010) states that employee engagement is a strong predictor of positive organisational performance, adding that engaged employees are emotionally attached to their organisation and thus highly involved in their jobs with a greater desire to see their employer succeed. Performance is also linked to organisational culture with Dizik (2016) stating that an organisational culture that engages and motivates employees, improves a company's bottom line. This report aims to establish which organisational culture factors will have a positive impact on employee engagement within one organisation in the Johannesburg area.

In recent years, employee engagement has become a topic in which organisations have shown a great deal of interest. Rich, LePine and Crawford (2010) state that employee engagement is not an obligation for organisations. They note that organisations are not obliged to choose between pushing performance to meet business objectives and ensuring employees are engaged in their jobs (Rich, LePine & Crawford, 2010), yet each impacts the other and plays an important role in the organisational system (Rich, LePine & Crawford, 2010). Thus, this report will try to establish which factors of organisational culture can directly affect employee engagement and in turn, aid organisational performance.

Organisations are beginning to realise that both organisational culture and employee engagement are business matters, not merely HR issues, and that both need to be addressed to achieve the organisation's strategic objectives (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). According to Brown, Cheng, Melian, Parker and Solow (2015), 87% of organisations

cite culture and engagement as one of their top challenges, often stunting the organisation's success in achieving organisational objectives due to poor employee involvement, commitment and drive.

It is essential for managers to know the level of engagement employees have in their work. Organisations also need to foster productive relationships between managers and colleagues (Rich, LePine & Crawford, 2010), but it would be most valuable for leaders to understand the context in which the enterprise operates for leaders to truly understand their organisations and bring about change that can foster better results (Watkins, 2013). If one were to merely focus on employee engagement, without considering the culture in which employees work, then there is the possibility of dismissing some of the strategic strengths and weaknesses within the organisation that influence employee performance and ultimately, organisational performance (Rich, LePine & Crawford, 2010).

There are many unanswered questions regarding the meaning and content of culture, yet it has become an integral aspect of several organisational change programmes (Cooke & Rousseau, 1988). The most commonly used description of organisational culture refers to "The way we do things around here" (Lundy & Cowling, 1996). A more pointed definition may be found in Cooke et al. (1988), who describe culture as the activities and interactions that members of a designated group observe and carry out. These authors also indicate that elements such as the tools and resources used on the job, the symbols that characterise the organisation or its affiliates, as well as communication in forms such as stories, rumours and reported events, convey normative information about the suitability and desirability of certain behaviours (Cooke et al., 1988). These elements that are associated with culture may also have specific connotations linked to them that underpin the way people behave and think (Cooke et al., 1988).

According to Cooke et al. (1988), there are two key attributes of organisational culture: direction and intensity. Direction relates to the authentic content or matter of the culture, demonstrated by the values, behavioural norms, and thinking styles it accentuates. Intensity, on the other hand, is the strength of this emphasis. Cultures that contrast in direction have different behavioural standards and thinking modes;

cultures that have different intensities have different levels of impact on all organisational members (Cooke et al., 1988).

Sun (2008) agrees that organisational culture be considered as the right way in which things are done or problems are understood within the organisation. Culture provides a socially accepted and common environment, which has been approved by leaders, to which the individual must adapt in order to integrate (Cooke et al., 1988). One organisation can have several cultures that exist within it. Thus, an organisation can be categorised by its subcultures as well as its dominant or main culture which is brought about by the internal environment (Cooke et al., 1988). Wilson (2001) highlights that new members in an organisation learn the organisation's culture through cultural socialisation which comes about informally from interacting with existing employees throughout the business, and formally through the induction training employees may attend.

An organisation's culture is defined primarily by the positive behaviour management rewards and the negative behaviours the organisation tolerates (Obasanjo, 2016). When organisations define their strategy, they need to assess the behaviours the organisation will reward to ensure that the culture they promote aligns with this strategy (Obasanjo, 2016). Although it is challenging to foster an environment that encourages engagement and participation, by drawing a clearly defined construct of appropriate practices within the business, employees are likely to feel a greater sense of connection to the organisation, their managers, as well as a sense of belonging which could be related to engagement (Wisdom, 2016).

There have been a number of popular views on employee engagement which suggest that engaged employees not only contribute more, but are also more loyal and therefore more likely to remain with an organisation (Macey & Schneider, 2008). It is also important to note that it is easy for an organisation to have very high engagement scores but to nevertheless face serious concerns about silos, misalignment, or distrust in the larger organisation (Rich, LePine & Crawford, 2010). This indicates that employee engagement measures often say little about how the organisation functions as a whole, which makes it difficult to define a path forward without knowing the broader context of the organisation (Rich, LePine & Crawford, 2010).

Bates (2004) has indicated that employee engagement is weakening and that disengagement among employees is increasing. There is also indication that engagement by managers leads to employee engagement (Bates, 2004). A survey conducted by Public Display Technologies (PDT's) in 2014 revealed similar results indicating that 85% of South African employees wanted more direct, open and frequent dialogue from their companies and 67% noted that they wanted their managers to lead and communicate better (PDT, 2014). In order to effectively attract top talent and outperform their competitors in respect of their human resources, organisations need to create a culture that includes meaningful work, adequate employee engagement, strong leadership, as well as organisational suitability (Brown et al., 2015). Cooke and Rousseau (1988) also highlight that members of various organisations indicate that implementing the ideal factors of organisational culture in their companies, noted by Brennan's model (2015) to be leadership, workload, capability, relationships and controls, would promote achievement-oriented, affiliated, humanistic and self-actualising thinking and behavioural styles. This highlights the importance of assessing the factors of organisational culture that affect employee engagement in order for organisations to achieve strategic targets.

A study conducted by Hayes, Hater and Schmidt (2002) indicates that employee engagement is related to achievement of strategic outcomes. Organisations stand to achieve greater performance and achieve strategic targets from engaged employees as they tend to have an emotional attachment to their organisations and are likely to be more involved in their jobs, displaying greater enthusiasm for the success of their organisations, and often performing tasks which go beyond their employment contractual agreement (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). According to Ducoff (2014), the business outcomes desired by business leaders are productivity, profitability, staff retention and customer loyalty and this is assimilated with results found by Makros and Shridevi (2012) who note that there is a positive relationship between employee engagement and business outcomes, namely, employee retention, productivity, profitability, customer loyalty and safety. This highlights the importance of ensuring employee engagement within an organisation.

Makros and Shridevi (2012) state that increased engagement is linked to positive business results and the performance of organisational leaders is measured on business results. Thus, when we consider that culture and engagement are driven by

the leaders, it may be reasoned that, in order to ensure that leaders are effectively communicating and acting within the confines of the organisational culture, they need to be held accountable for constructing an appropriate culture or a culture that is aligned with strategic objectives and includes listening to feedback and engaging their teams (Brown et al., 2015).

1.3 Problem statement

1.3.1 Main problem

The problem this research addresses is that there is little known about which factors of organisational culture positively influence employee engagement within a case site organisation.

1.4 Significance of the study

Businesses are striving to increase their performance, however fail to fully appreciate the relationship between performance, retention and employee engagement (Markos, 2008). Markos (2008) indicates that engaged employees are emotionally attached to their organisations and are highly involved in their job; they strive to see their employer succeed. Bhatnagar (2007) highlights that for organisations to attract and retain the best talent anywhere in the world, they must have a resilient and positive employer brand. This indicates that employee engagement is linked to important business outcomes and affects business success (Markos, 2008).

Organisations with a clear definition of employee engagement and controlled methods for measuring it are likely to place people at the heart of the corporate purpose and allow for changes to be noted and carried out when necessary (Gratton, 2000). Since employee engagement scores across organisations in South Africa are on the decline, organisations need to take the necessary approach to ensuring staff engagement to produce the business results they require (Bates, 2004). This may seem to be somewhat outdated, but Mann and Harter (2016) have reiterated this point, noting that despite various interventions by organisations, employee engagement has barely improved over the past decade

This study provides guidance to organisations, leaders and managers about the factors of culture which impact employee engagement. Bates (2004) highlights Draker's well-known phrase 'Culture eats strategy for breakfast', which indicates that it is vital for organisations to know how culture drives strategy and can aid in creating positive employee engagement, if designed to do so. It should also be noted that some believe 'Strategy eats culture for breakfast' as noted by Favaro (2014) who states that no culture, regardless of how strong it may be, can overcome poor choices when it comes to corporate strategy. He adds that the impact of organisational culture on an organisation's success is only as good as its strategy is sound, and that strategy should be rooted in the organisation's cultural strengths as well as the cultural needs within that business (Favaro, 2014). Regardless of which view is taken, it is evident that if employee engagement is not addressed in the organisation's strategy or culture, it will not be a key driver within the business.

Literature on the factors of organisational culture which aid in creating positive employee engagement is scarce, with only a handful of relevant articles being found, namely one by Naidoo (2014), yet the effects of creating a culture that encourages employee engagement can produce results for many organisations. The report highlights the effects of specific elements of culture and the underlying effects on employee engagement. As mentioned, there is a limited amount of research in this area and this study could be useful in assisting organisations in improving their engagement results.

With the decline in employee engagement, understanding which factors of culture can aid in creating positive employee engagement may provide guidance to organisations across various industries that wish to understand the factors and importance of organisational culture within their organisations. This would include newly established organisations working towards establishing the culture they would like to create within their businesses, or existing organisations who wish to alter their current cultural state to bring about greater strategic success as well as enhance their employee engagement. Further, academics and students of Human Resources may find value in this study and gain insight into organisational culture and employee engagement.

1.5 Delimitations of this study

- The research is limited to the perceptions of senior management and leadership in the chosen organisation.
- The research is aimed at senior management and leadership teams responsible for the development and design of the organisational strategies.
- The current research has a national focus looking at one organisation in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- The managers within the organisation of choice are mostly male; therefore, the majority of the respondents were likely male.
- The methodology deemed suitable for this research is qualitative research through semi-structured interviews. This approach is taken in order to gain greater insights through in-depth discussions and to allow for a flow of thought through impromptu questions being asked. These interviews were arranged with managers on all levels throughout the organisation.

1.6 Definition of terms

Organisational Culture: This has been defined by Brown (1998, p. 9) as **"**the pattern of beliefs, values and learned ways of coping with experience that have developed during the course of an organisation's history, and which tend to be manifested in its material arrangements and in the behaviours of its members." This can be seen as a system of shared assumptions, values and beliefs which govern how people in organisations behave. The definition, as presented in the interviews, is the values shared by the people in a business or the behaviour people within the organisation are encouraged to follow which governs how things are done within that business. Put simply, organisational culture can be described as 'The way we do things here' and encompasses the way an organisation treats its people and expectations with regards to performance.

Employee Engagement: This has been defined by Rothbard (2001, p. 22) as a psychological presence that involves two critical components: attention, which refers to "cognitive availability and the amount of time one spends thinking about a role"; and absorption, which "means being engrossed in a role and refers to the intensity of one's focus on a role". The definition, as presented in the interviews, is the extent to which

employees feel passionate about their jobs, put discretionary effort into their work and are committed to the organisation which is seen in their intention to stay with and how hard they will work for the organisation. Simply, this is their level of ‘happiness’ or ‘content’ in being part of, and associated with, an organisation.

Organisational performance: According to James (2012), organisational performance refers to how successfully an organised group of people, with a particular function to perform, act within the confines of the business. She states that this is essentially what is referred to when one discusses organisational performance and achievement of successful outcomes.

1.7 Assumptions

The following assumptions have been made in this study:

- The researcher assumed that organisational culture and employee engagement are terms that are understood by the managers who were interviewed, despite being explained by the interviewer
- The respondents discussed the issues honestly, without fear of unwelcome consequences, and did not merely give a socially desirable answer.

2 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The identification of a sound organisational culture can establish a foundation for effective employee engagement in organisations, and the inclusion of these principles within the business strategy is highly likely to positively influence organisational behaviour and organisational performance (Seijts & Crim, 2006). Studies by Klein (2008 as cited in Krog, 2014) indicate that organisational culture has a strong link to employee engagement and thus, the factors of organisational culture which positively influence employee engagement in the case site organisation are being sought.

This literature review seeks to identify the attributes that are typically common in organisational culture and are likely to positively affect an employee's level of engagement. Engaged employees are seen as a source of positive work environments which result in employees being more effective in helping the organisation achieve its objectives (Jinoy, Tanakinjal, Ruth & Siganul, 2015). Studies by Klein (2008 as cited in Krog, 2014) indicate that organisational culture has a strong link to employee engagement. Employee engagement surveys assist leaders in understanding how engaged their work force is, how they feel about their work situation and if designed to do so, provide a perspective on the organisational culture and how it affects employee's attitudes towards their jobs (LSA Group, 2017).

The LSA Group (2017) also indicates that high levels of employee engagement are an outcome of a healthy organisational culture, not the cause. This idea is reinforced by The Denison Group (2015) who conducted a study on organisational culture and employee engagement and found that there is a significant relationship between how employees perceive the organisation's culture and their employee engagement.

Human capital is the important resource which is utilised to make decisions, create innovative solutions, initiate and maintain customer relationships and aid the organisation in achieving its targets (Krog, 2014). In order to achieve these targets, businesses need employees who are stimulated by their work and dedicated to achieving the desired outcomes. Thus, they need employees who are engaged (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). To encourage engagement, many organisations focus on what research has shown will drive it, yet not many studies have investigated the

circumstantial factors, which are measured at an organisational level, to drive employee engagement (Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011 as cited in Krog, 2014).

This paper assesses the perceptions individuals within one organisation have of the factors of organisational culture which influence employee engagement. The review highlights definitions of culture and employee engagement, identifies constructs and characteristics of both, discusses the impact of culture and engagement and its organisational determinants as well as assesses their effects on one another. At the end of this report, the reader will have an understanding of the perceptions individuals in one organisation have on the factors of organisational culture which influence employee engagement.

2.2 Organisational Culture

2.2.1 Definitions of organisational culture

According to Wilson (2001), culture describes patterns of behaviour which, over time, are passed from one group of employees to another. Wilson (2001) further explains that culture tends to form a steady system that is slow to change. Over the years, organisational culture has become part of management thinking and has been linked to an assortment of outcomes such as performance and internal integration and has been used to achieve managerial effectiveness and control (Wilson, 2001). Some basic definitions of organisational culture include “the feeling in the organisation” (Tagiuri & Litwin, as cited in Wilson 2001) or “the rules of the game” (Van Maanen, as cited in Wilson 2001) and also “how things are done around here” (Drennan, as cited in Wilson 2001). At a deeper level, culture denotes the values shared by a group or the behaviour that new employees within organisations are encouraged to follow (Wilson, 2001).

Historically, culture lay in the realm of anthropology which suggested various thoughts on systems of meaning and values (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson, 2000 as cited in Krog, 2014). Siehl and Martin (1983) proposed that organisational culture be described as a set of values and social ideas or beliefs that members in the organisation share. An organisation’s culture is learned and encompasses the way one solves basic problems, and is communicated to new employees as the

appropriate way to think, perceive and feel when responding to certain problems (Schein, 1990).

Denison (1991) reiterates that culture influences the structure of the organisation which is embedded in the values, beliefs and assumptions which are held by the members of the business. The values, beliefs and principles which one abides by in the organisation lay the foundation for the organisation's management system and practices that epitomise and support those basic behaviours (Denison, 1991).

Another definition on culture is offered by Kotter and Heskett (1992), who state that it is an established set of beliefs, behaviours and values. They also suggest that culture consists of two levels that differ according to their visibility and resistance (Kotter et al., 1992).

Bellot (2011) highlights that there is a lack of consistency in regard to the definitions of organisational culture, however throughout the years, there has been some consistency in thought. Bellot (2011) names the following consistent factors:

- Organisational culture exists
- It is socially constructed
- It is the creation of groups, not individuals, and is based on shared experiences
- Cultures are intrinsically vague in that they include contradictions, paradoxes, ambiguities and confusion
- An organisation's culture is fairly distinctive, flexible and likely to change

For the purposes of this research, the definitions of culture as posed by Wilson (2001) and Drennan (1992) is used. The definition for organisational culture is: The values shared by the people in a business or the behaviour people within the organisation are encouraged to follow, which governs how things are done within that business.

2.2.2 Overview of organisational culture

Organisational culture has been shown to be an important aspect within a firm, as it affects an employee's behaviour, motivation and values, and hence, performance (Ehtesham, Muhammad & Muhammad, 2011).

Culture affects various elements within an organisation and yet it is understood and applied in different contexts by various users (Engelke, 2011). The term “culture” was originally used to describe societies and the interactions between the people within them (Engelke, 2011). It took into consideration elements such as language, values, attitudes, customs and beliefs (Engelke, 2011). Similarly, an organisation is a social system and the notion of culture can be used to get to know and influence employees’ learned behaviours in order to assist the organisation in achieving its goals (Engelke, 2011).

Hewitt (2009) indicates that culture is often entrenched and slow to change as it involves fundamental human values. This stems from research conducted by Barrett (2006) who highlights that employees are most productive when their personal values are closely aligned with their employer’s values. Brennan (2015) states that our ability to manage workplace relationships constructively, defines our organisational culture. He also highlights that culture has little to do with the type of work which is performed, but how effectively we resolve internal tension and the impact that this leaves on all involved (Brennan, 2015).

There are various factors that contribute to the culture within an organisation, namely, reward and recognition, leadership and autonomy, to name a few (Brennan, 2015), yet the output elements of culture, after internalisation by employees, will likely vary as cultural indicators are shared or obligatory in an organisation. These factors, which exist within the organisation’s culture, will be adopted by the workforce to varying degrees (Engelke, 2011). Employees preserve the cultural elements with which they have an association and these elements will then affect their actions (Engelke, 2011). The factors that affect this process include the cultural link between the organisation’s culture and an employee’s personal cultures, as well as the way in which the cultural indicators and stimuli are shared (Engelke, 2011).

The outcomes of a study conducted by Alston and Tippett (2009, p. 8) demonstrate that “the culture of an organisation is related to the level of trust found within that organisation”. These authors suggest that the construction of cultures that maintain trust should be regarded as a main concern for all organisations as trust functions as a catalyst for productivity.

Kotnour (as cited in Roos & Van Eeden, 2008) indicates that organisational culture has been associated with the rise and fall of organisations. Acknowledging the common factors of culture which exist within an organisation will allow for the detection of those factors which aid in avoiding difficulties and will allow management intervention in order to avoid the expensive cycle of rise and fall in organisations.

Culture has an important influence on how organisations function (Morrison, 2005). This view was supported two decades before Morrison (2005) by seminal studies conducted by Peters and Waterman (1982) in their best-selling book *In Search of Excellence* which indicates that organisations that only have financial goals, are not likely to perform as well as companies that have a wider set of business goals that include human, technical and creative goals and may include values. A “strong” culture that encourages the participation and involvement of members within an organisation appears to be one of the most important assets within the business (Denison, 1984). Organisations that are successful at gaining productivity through their people usually have a predominant organisational culture that values the worth of their employees, whilst firms without such a supportive culture are usually unlikely to maximise their productivity through their people (Barney, 1986).

An organisation’s culture can be a source of sustainable competitive advantage if that culture is valuable, rare and imperfectly imitable (Barney, 1986). According to Barney (1986), this is evident as valuable and rare organisational cultures are difficult, almost impossible, to imitate as those experiencing the culture may not be able to pinpoint the element of culture which adds value to the firm. Valuable organisational cultures are often bound to a firm’s history and this too adds to the competitive advantage (Barney, 1986). It must be noted that a difficulty with this imperfectly imitable organisational culture is that it may not always be able to be transferred to other units as the business grows.

Organisational culture is particularly difficult to change (Roos & Van Eeden, 2008). DeRoche (as cited in Roos & Van Eeden, 2008, p. 48) highlights that the difficulty in changing culture does not lie in its complexities, but in people’s tendency “to cling tightly, even irrationally, to their values and beliefs”. The change in an organisation’s culture must be done with ample planning and resources to ensure that it is done successfully and competently (Engelke, 2011).

2.2.3 Factors of Organisational Culture

Within an organisation, culture is a feature of the relations between the people who work together (Brennan, 2015). Brennan (2015) identified five main factors of organisational culture:

1. Leadership: According to Brennan's definition, leadership relates to how important status is in an organisation, how close or removed top management are from the shop floor, what and who gets rewarded and recognised by leaders and how leaders communicate with their employees. This builds a trust in the leaders and the leadership team within the business.

2. Workload: This is based on the amount of work each employee is expected to carry, establishing whether workload is distributed equitably. If an employee feels that he/she carries most of the load whilst others are left with little to do, this can create conflict and unhappiness at work.

3. Capability: Are employees given the right tools to fully function at work? Employees need to be given the training and learning tools which will allow them to reach a level where they can function in an autonomous way.

4. Relationships: Organisations need to encourage relationship building and establish the social norms of the workplace. In order to achieve success, employees need to be able to depend on one another.

5. Controls: In order to ensure that the right processes are followed and that the desired outcomes are achieved, employees should be given regular constructive feedback on their performance and adherence to organisational policies and procedures.

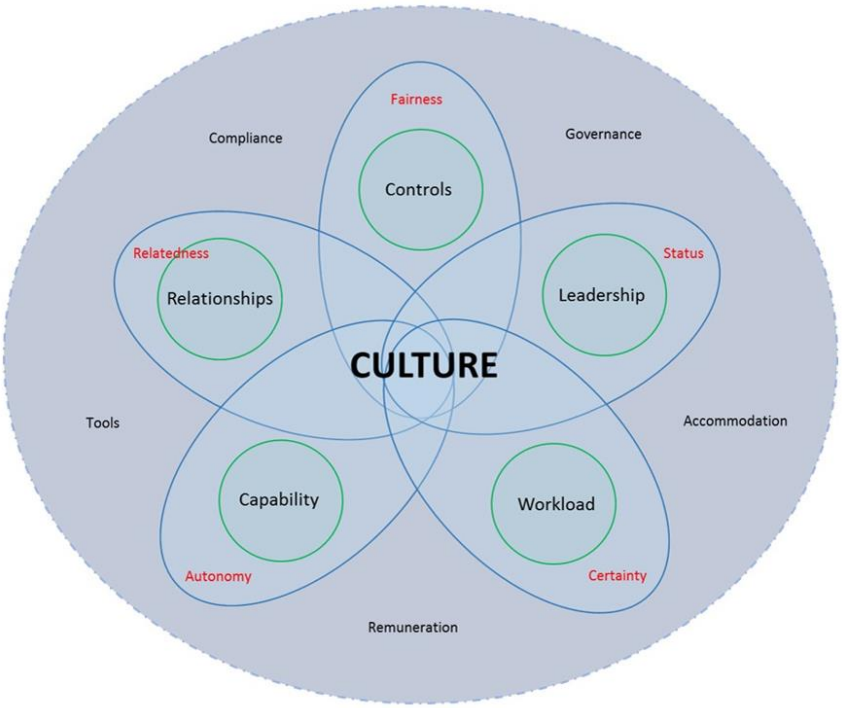

Figure 2.1: Leading Culture Model (Brennan, 2015)

This figure illustrates that culture is influenced by a number of factors such as those encapsulated in the diagram, by leadership, workload, capability, relationships or controls. However the manner in which employees are able to express their feelings as well as the capability of the organisation to resolve these issues, in a way that demonstrates genuine concern and respect, is a large component in determining its culture (Brennan, 2015). “Organisations that engage constructively and invest in each of these factors report far more productive cultures than those who do not” (Brennan, 2015, p. 2).

Around the Leading Culture Model as presented by Brennan (2015), are other aspects of organisational life such as certainty, autonomy, relatedness, fairness and status which are also relevant, however, these play a more static role in culture, rather than the dynamic role experienced by the five key factors. The tools, accommodation, remuneration, organisational governance and its commitment to adherence to legal compliance also play a significant contributory role, but only really become factors in influencing organisational culture when they are sub-optimal (Brennan, 2015).

It is difficult to deny that organisational culture significantly impacts all members within an organisation (Champoux, 2010). The concept was discussed by Pettigrew (1979)

in an article entitled '*On studying organisational culture'* which then sparked an interest and popularity in the subject. The literature which stemmed from this, indicates the importance of organisational culture in business and its ties to organisational effectiveness (Ott, 1989) as well as factors such as leadership and governance (Schein, 1992).

Ott (1989) claims that organisational culture gives one a sense of inclusiveness and commitment to organisational values and beliefs. The underlying message in this view is that the implementation of a sound organisational culture, will lead to success (Ott, 1989). Ouchi (1981) notes that culture is considered to be important in improving productivity, but also assists in building supportive work relationships.

2.2.4 Functions of Organisational Culture

Ott (1989) names four functions that organisational culture serves:

1. Offers shared patterns of cognitive interpretations so that members are aware of how they are expected to think and behave
2. It presents shared patterns of affect for organisational members to recognise what they are expected to appreciate, value and feel
3. It delineates and upholds boundaries, allowing identification of members
4. It provides as an organisational control system, which advocates and prohibits certain behaviours.

One cannot ignore the internal processes which are at play and assist in ensuring that the organisation can continue to function, within the changing environment, and continue to achieve business objectives. The internal issues include:

- Creating a common language and conceptual categories: communication is key in ensuring common understanding among a group
- Defining group boundaries: there must be a mutual understanding of what condones membership
- Distributing power and status: there must be consensus on what the hierarchy consists of and rules on how one obtains, maintains and relinquishes power.

- Developing norms of intimacy, friendship and love: a common consensus on peer relationships, the relationship between differing genders, and the way in which openness and intimacy are to be handled when it comes to completing the organisation's tasks.

- Rewards and punishments: all members of the organisation must acknowledge what constitutes heroic and sinful behaviours. There must also be agreement on what constitutes rewards and punishment.

- Explaining the unexplainable: there must be some meaning to unexplainable events so that members can act in response to them and avoid the anxiety of dealing with such events which are often uncontrollable.

There is no doubt that organisational culture is a complex issue, thus leaders who develop and model constructive behaviour around the five key factors will find that organisational culture becomes a much simpler issue to understand and master (Brennan, 2015).

2.2.5 Who is responsible for driving Culture in an organisation?

Hewitt Associates (2009) highlight that leadership actions, operating systems and processes that influence employee and organisational behaviour are the drivers in creating and maintaining culture. Ehtesham et al. (2011 as cited in Aycan et al., 1999) indicate that an organisation's internal environment is represented by its culture and is constructed by the assumptions and beliefs of the managers and employees.

Companies can have multiple cultures that are associated with different groupings (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). The culture of an organisation is an intangible concept relating to deep-seated, sometimes intuitive, belief systems present within the company. The culture is observed through the organisational attributes and is communicated and continuously reinforced through imagery, language, actions, objects and interpersonal associations (Dobni, 2008).

One must acknowledge that organisational cultures are likely to change over time, albeit slowly (Wilson, 2001). This change is brought about by the change in group members, fluctuations in the company's market environment as well as variations in society (Wilson, 2001).

Culture is driven through the leader, thus a critical task for a leader is to create an environment that enables employees to unleash their potential (Seijts & Crim, 2006). Ralph Stayer, CEO of Johnsonville Sausage, explains that “it is not a CEO’s job to make employees listen to what you have to say; it is about setting up the system so that people want to listen. The combination of the right environment and a culture that creates ‘wants’ instead of ‘requirements’ places few limits on what employees can achieve” (Stayer, 1990, p. 3). The management of an organisation’s culture should be one of the essential elements of an organisation’s strategy for staying in business (Denison, 1984).

Going against Denison’s (1984) view, Kilmann (1990) states that although culture may be a functional source by being part of strategy or structure, it should become distinct from formal strategy, structures and reward systems within the organisation as well as from workers and top management. He believes that culture should not be managed at a micro level or functional level but rather at the macro level and be aligned with the needs of the market, and this should then be aligned with the organisation’s culture (Kilmann,1990).

Morrison (2005) disagrees with this earlier view and assumes that culture is created through shared experiences of a group and the activities carried out by the organisation’s management team. Authors such as De Witte (2005); Egan, Yang and Bartlett (2004) and Moynihan and Pandey (2007) (cited in Roos & Van Eeden, 2008) all reflect on the relative degree of managerial influence on workplace attitudes. Alston and Tippett (2009) indicate that the practice of shaping culture is an important role for management to fulfil, thus managers should not only focus on the tangible aspects of business but also on the intangible as they are the creators of symbols, languages, ideologies, rituals and beliefs that shape the organisation’s culture. The management teams within organisations are also required to select the “right fit” employees to ensure that the impact on the organisational culture aligns with the culture required and built by management in order to achieve its business goals (Roos & Van Eeden, 2008).

Cook and Hunsaker (as cited in Roos & Van Eeden, 2008, p. 130) believe that “organisational culture can be communicated visually and verbally and that they can be implied by the symbolism, feelings and the meaning behind behaviours, language

and physical settings". Others such as Locker and Kaczmarak (2004) indicate that organisational culture is learned through mimicking those who have come before you and watching how those around you operate.

Peters and Waterman (as cited in Roos & Van Eeden, 2008) indicate that an employee's commitment to an organisation's culture is vital to the company's success.

2.2.6 Key factors in organisational culture

Various views on organisational culture and the factors which affect it have been discussed. The key factors which appear to positively affect employee engagement according to Brennan (2015), Morrison (2005) and Jiony, Tanakinjal, Gom, and Siganul (2015), used in this research to assess the relationship are:

- Involvement
- Relationship building
- Trust
- Reward and Recognition
- Communication
- Coaching/Mentoring
- Adaptability
- Collaboration
- Autonomy
- Transparency

Leadership has been identified as a key factor in building a desired organisational culture and many of these factors are evident in the leadership ideals and styles which should be displayed by the managers who wish to bring about a more desirable culture within their businesses. The authors mentioned in this review have all had similar views on the factors of organisational culture which would bring about a greater level of employee engagement and the factors mentioned below were the most consistent.

A view on organisational culture and the factors which affect employee engagement has been discussed in detail. To fully assess the link between organisational culture and employee engagement, an overview of employee engagement is discussed below.

2.3 Employee engagement

2.3.1 Definitions of employee engagement

Employee engagement may mean different things to different people but has often been defined as emotional and intellectual commitment to an organisation, or the amount of unrestricted effort displayed by employees within their daily tasks (Saks, 2006). This definition is built around the research by Khan (1992) who identifies employee engagement as being psychologically present when fulfilling an organisation's function. Schaufeli et al. (2002, p. 74) explain engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption." They further indicate that engagement is not a fleeting state, but rather, a persistent state that is not focused on a particular event, person, object or behaviour (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Another definition proposed by Saks and Rotman (2006), indicates that employee engagement is not an attitude, but rather the level to which an individual is focused and captivated in their work environment. They found organisational engagement to be a stronger predictor of intentions to quit than job engagement (Saks & Rotman, 2006). Job engagement seems to be the level of engagement one feels in relation to their job – one who is highly engaged in their job is able to identify personally with their jobs and is motivated by the work they do (Roberts, 2002). Organisational engagement refers to the values and actions of the organisation aligning with those the individuals regards as important – if these are aligned, employee engagement is likely to exist but if not, the employee may feel a sense of not belonging and be more likely to leave (Roberts, 2002).

It is important to note that employee engagement does not point to team building initiatives, organisational outings, work functions and parties as these are all fun and assist in building morale and making employees happy, but these activities do not engage people (Swatee & Srivastava, 2012).

An amalgamation of Schaufeli et al., (2002) and Saks and Rothman's (2006) definition of employee engagement is used for this study. The definition used is: The extent to which employees feel passionate about their jobs, put discretionary effort into their work and are committed to the organisation.

2.3.2 Factors of Employee Engagement

Rich et al. (2010) note that when individuals are engaged, they are investing their hands, head and heart in their performance. Seijts and Crim (2006) offer several avenues leaders can pursue to engage their employees' heads, hearts and hands and create a competitive advantage.

- **Connect:** Leaders must show their employees that they are valued and this can be done through employee-focused initiatives, such as profit sharing and implementing work-life balance initiatives. There must be a sense of reality when leaders proclaim things like "Our employees are our most valuable asset". Bakker and Schaufeli (2008) reiterate this point by stating that by providing work-life benefits, there is a positive exchange between the employee and employer which is related to the employees' feelings of perceived organisational support and effective commitment which lead to higher levels of task and contextual performance behaviours.
- **Career:** Meaningful and challenging work activities that offer opportunities for growth need to be offered by leaders to ensure task engagement and work fulfilment. It is important for leaders to provide the appropriate coaching and tools to ensure that employees are successful in their activities and motivated by their work.
- **Clarity:** A clear vision that encompasses the organisation's goals, why these are important and how they will be attained must be communicated by all leaders.
- **Convey:** Processes and procedures that will assist employees in mastering tasks and facilitating goal achievement must be conveyed.
- **Congratulate:** Employees often attested to the fact that when their performance is poor, they receive immediate feedback however they are less likely to receive praise and recognition for strong performances. Seijts and Crim (2006, p. 4) argue that "exceptional leaders give recognition, and they do so a lot; they coach and convey."
- **Contribute:** Humans on all levels want to know that their contribution matters and that in some meaningful way they are adding to the organisation's success.

- **Control:** Leaders cannot have full control over the decision-making process, they need to involve employees in this process, especially those decisions that will directly affect the employees. This gives employees the feeling of “being in on things”, and, according to Seijts and Crim (2006), can assist in reducing stress, creating trust, and building a culture where employees are likely to take charge of problems and their solutions. This confirms the earlier comment by Denison (1984), who stated that by involving employees in decision making opportunities makes them perform better than employees in firms that do not.
- **Collaborate:** When employees are encouraged to work in teams and have trust and co-operation in their team members, they are likely to outperform teams that lack good relationships. A survey discussed by Seijts and Crim (2006, p. 5) indicates that “being cared about by colleagues is a strong predictor of employee engagement”.
- **Credibility:** High ethical standards need to be maintained throughout all organisations, and employees want to be proud of their jobs, performance and their organisations. Thus, the business needs to give them reasons to feel this way.
- **Confidence:** Creating confidence in an organisation is accomplished through their leaders, thus leaders need to be exemplars of high ethical and performance standards at all times.

Woodruffe (2006) listed non-financial factors that he believed contribute to employee engagement, namely:

- Autonomy
- Opportunities for career development
- Recognition
- Support structures
- Exposure to senior management
- Working environment
- Commitment by the employer
- Civilised treatment
- Work-life balance
- A challenging job role

- The need to be trusted by the organisation
- The success of the organisation
- Feeling useful

In addition to these factors, accountability is a key contributing factor to employee engagement. Baumruk (2006) states that people are more engaged if the organisation's leaders hold them and their teams accountable for results as opposed to a determined target. He also emphasises that constant communication, clear definitions of job roles, and the leadership team's ability to listen attentively to their employees were more likely to result in employee engagement (Baumruk, 2006).

Khan (1992) indicates that engagement can be reflected in two varying contexts: the employee's role at work or their role as a member of an organisation. This is reiterated in Saks and Rothman's (2006) research which highlights the variance between organisational and job engagement where organisational engagement showed a stronger predictive value as opposed to job engagement towards achieving organisational outcomes.

A lack of resources has often been associated with employee disengagement and has been researched through the job demand resource model (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). The job demands resources model suggests that strain is a response to the imbalance between the demands on the individual and the resources he or she has to deal with those demands – an imbalance between these can lead to employee's feeling disengaged (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001).

The degree to which people are true to themselves in performing their roles is referred to by Khan (1992 as cited in Saks & Gruman, 2014) as "self-in-role". Thus, when people are engaged, they are more likely to maintain their true selves within their daily roles.

Saks and Gruman (2014) refer to Khan's (1990) evaluation of employee engagement as a function of the experience of three psychological conditions: meaningfulness, safety and availability. Khan claims that people experienced meaningfulness when they felt worthwhile, valuable and when they were not taken for granted (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Safety is the ability to express one's true self without fear of negative

consequences to one's self-image, and availability refers to the belief that one has physical, emotional and psychological resources required to invest oneself in a role (Saks & Gruman, 2014).

Job resources have been found to be important in employee engagement, along with leadership, especially transformational leadership, empowering leadership and leader-member exchange (Saks & Gruman, 2014).

Trust in management, especially during times of ambiguity, can influence the level of engagement within an organisation (Malinen et al., 2013). If trust in the organisation's management team is high, employees are likely to anticipate apt business decisions to be made by the management team which will in turn, make the business more stable (Malinen et al., 2013). Higher levels of trust allow employees to focus on their daily tasks while feeling confident that their business's operations are taken care of which will in effect, increase their task engagement (Malinen et al., 2013).

The Hewitt Associates (2009) assessed the interaction between Engagement and Entropy and acknowledged that cultural entropy represents the degree of dysfunction in a culture. They have stated that this is a measure of energy which is devoted to or consumed by unproductive work. The Hewitt Associates' (2009) research found a strong inverse relationship between entropy and engagement. They gauged that entropy is shaped by an inconsistence in the values stated as well as the behaviours which result in systems and structures that do not support efficient operations and achieving the organisation's goals. Time spent in this state of entropy destroys employee engagement (Hewitt Associates, 2009).

2.3.3 Drivers of employee engagement

It is vital for organisations to understand what triggers employee engagement and to measure the increase in employee dedication, well-being and involvement within their daily roles (Krog, 2014). Many studies have focused on job resources and demands yet few have considered organisational culture which is fundamental in any analysis of an organisation (Krog, 2014).

Context on the various drivers of employee engagement can aid in the understanding of how culture can impact employee engagement (Krog, 2014). According to Bakker et al. (2011), work related resources are the most influential drivers of engagement

while job related resources are situational and thus become an important driver when needed to complete a task.

There is evidence which demonstrates that it is in an organisation's interest to familiarise themselves with the drivers of employee engagement (Robinson, Perryman & Hayday, 2004). Robinson et al. (2004) note that the strongest driver of employee engagement is feeling valued and involved which has several components namely:

- Being involved in decision making
- Employees feeling comfortable in voicing their ideas and acknowledging that their views are being listened to by leadership who value their views
- Opportunities being made available for employees to develop in their jobs
- The organisations being concerned about employees well-being and health

Managers have an important part to play in fostering an employee's sense of involvement and value which emphasises the importance of the employee-manager relationship (Robinson et al., 2004)

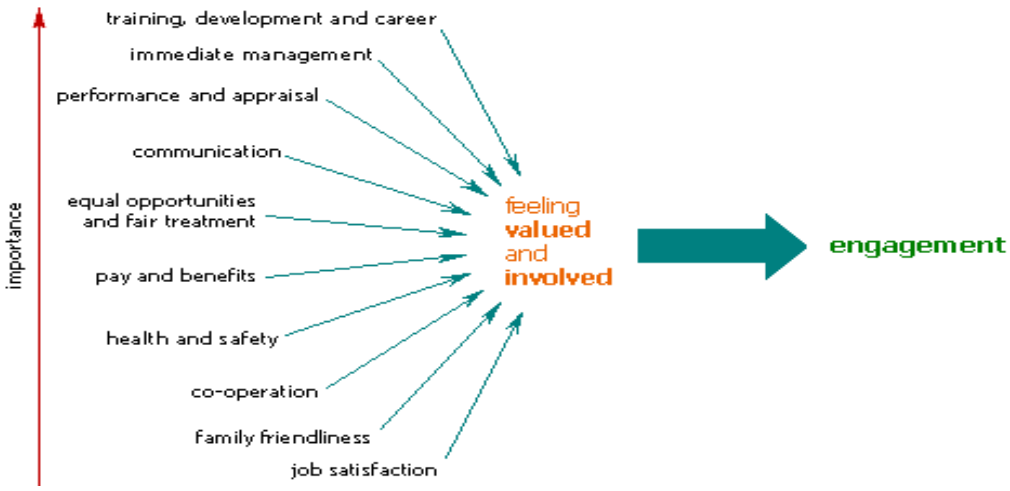

Figure 2.2: IES Diagnostic Tool (Robinson et al., 2004)

The Diagnostic Tool in Figure 2.2 highlights the important drivers which result in feeling valued and involved and result in engagement (Robinson et al., 2004). These drivers will aid in identifying the factors of organisational culture which result in employee engagement.

Pignatelli (2016) says that leaders within all organisations need to focus on five key drivers to ensure that employees feel that they belong. He lists the key drivers as:

1. Connected: Here there is a need for building relationships as Pignatelli (2016) notes that when one has relationships with people at work, there is a greater sense of trust and loyalty. These relationships also fulfils the need to belong and therefore employees are likely to give more of themselves (Pignatelli, 2016)
2. Contributing: When an employee's daily work is assimilated with doing something meaningful and they feel that they are making a difference, they are likely to feel more engaged (Pignatelli, 2016)
3. Freedom: A significant amount of autonomy in their daily interactions will allow employees to feel empowered and give them the ability to make decisions (Pignatelli, 2016)
4. Growth: If employees do not see any progress in their development plans they may seek alternate options (Pignatelli, 2016). When employees are challenged and can see a growth path towards which they can strive, the more engaged they will be (Pignatelli, 2016). Managers also need to recognise and give feedback to ensure that employees feel competent and motivated (Pignatelli, 2016)
5. Having fun: A sense of enjoyment and fulfilment in coming to work is important and this is done by adding some fun into the work environment (Pignatelli, 2016). Pignatelli (2016) also notes that including fun into the workplace allows for the relationship building which has been mentioned as a driver of employee engagement.

Riche (2017) offers a different view and states that the following four drivers are effective in ensuring employee engagement:

1. Relationship with manager: Gallup states that employees leave managers more than they leave organisations thus the actions of line managers can enhance engagement.
2. Belief in the leadership: Open, frequent and clear communication from senior leadership, which encompasses the views and ideas of employees along with positive growth and performance statistics, are drivers of employee engagement

3. Pride in belonging: If an employee feels a sense of pride in what the organisation stands for and has a firm sense of belonging, employees will be more engaged and are more able to acknowledge how their contribution makes a difference.
4. Having a voice: As mentioned by Pignatelli (2016), when employees feel that they able to voice their opinions, contribute and take ownership, there is a greater sense of their contribution to the organisation.

A culture that encompasses the appropriate factors and drivers of employee engagement is likely to produce the desired organisational outcomes (Krog, 2014).

2.3.4 Who is responsible for driving employee engagement?

The concept of employee engagement cannot be driven down the organisation if the leaders themselves are not engaged (Welbourne, 2007). Leaders need to ensure that employees are aware of how their jobs impact the organisation's overall strategy and goals and that employees are adding value to the organisation's overall objectives (Welbourne, 2007).

To fully succeed, leaders need to identify the level of engagement within their organisations, pinpoint the reasons behind the lack of engagement, work towards eliminating those reasons and then implement behavioural strategies that will facilitate the desired engagement outcomes (Seijts & Crim, 2006).

An organisation's leadership team is responsible for employee engagement and a content state will not be achieved through selected activities or initiatives, but is attainable through a change in the organisation's culture – altering the way business leaders lead, what they take charge of as well as the important decisions they make (Swatee & Srivastava, 2012). In order to be successful, employee engagement needs to become part of an organisation's philosophy and ingrained within the attitude and behaviour of their leaders, or else it will become "just another initiative" with little weight (Swatee & Srivastava, 2012).

2.3.5 Employee engagement and Shared Values

To better understand an organisation and its processes, culture has been evaluated as shared values and beliefs that exist within a culture and guide behaviour (Alston &

Tippet, 2009). Hewitt Associates (2009) state that values are often manifested in organisational and employee behaviours and affect how employees are likely to approach their work and make relevant decisions. They go on to mention that individual values are expressed through personal behaviour while organisations reflect their values through systems and processes (Hewitt Associates, 2009). An individual's values shape corporate culture which defines an organisation's competitive advantage in terms of being resilient and adaptive, in attracting and keeping talented people and in building and sustaining high performance (Hewitt Associates, 2009). Interestingly, they also indicate that the perceived difference in an organisation's espoused and executed values impacts on individual values and employee engagement (Hewitt Associates, 2009). When there is alignment between the values of the organisation and those of the individual, a superior level involvement is guaranteed and is likely to result in greater levels of accountability, trust, innovation and performance (Hewitt Associates, 2009).

Hobfoll (2001) states that employees' actions are shaped by the resources available and the limitations of the organisation's culture. Thus, employee's behaviour and attitudes form part of the shared values which is the organisational culture of the business (Hobfoll, 2001).

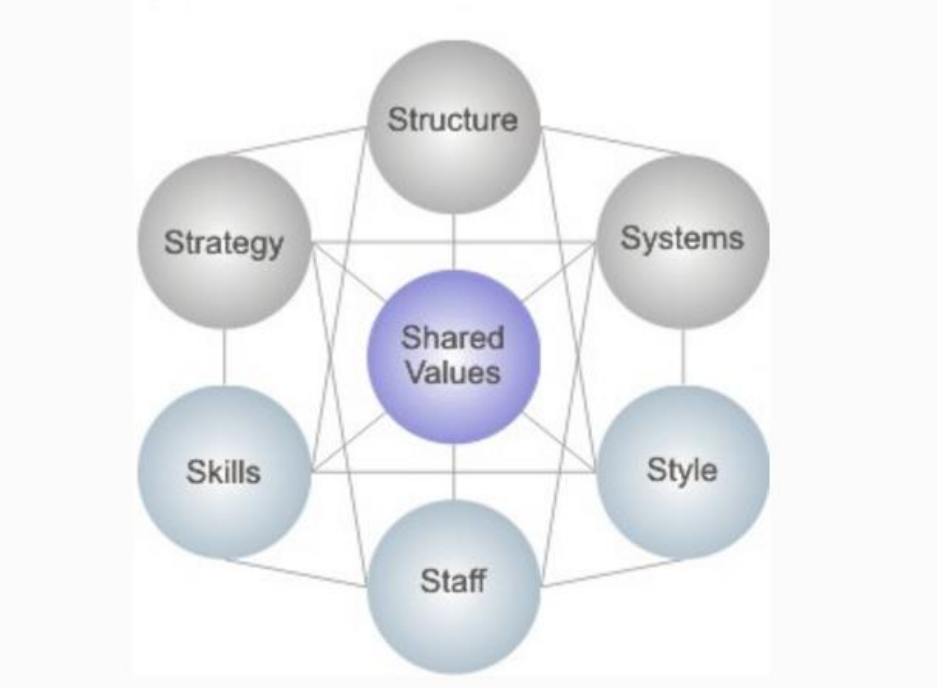

Figure 2.3: The McKinsey 7S Model (Jurevicius, 2013).

In this figure, the popular 7S Model, one can see that all of the S's lead into one common factor, namely Shared Values which can be interpreted as the Culture element. If the shared values component is not intact, the other S's are likely to fail in achieving the outcomes the organisation desires. This shared values component, which can be seen as the organisational culture element, helps to link the important connection between employee engagement and organisational culture.

In a study conducted by Hewitt Associates (2009), it was established that employees in both large and small organisations share the same top personal values and eight of the top ten desired values. This indicates that there is a strong alignment between values individuals support and the culture they seek when they join an organisation.

Below is a list of key engagement drivers as assessed by Hewitt Associates (2009):

- Company reputation
- Managing performance
- Recognition
- Brand alignment
- Career opportunities
- People HR practices
- Leadership

Hewitt Associates (2009) also identified factors that employees desire in their organisations, namely, employee fulfilment, adaptability, leadership development, recognition, continuous improvement and accountability, as well as coaching and mentoring.

Three main drivers of engagement have been identified by Development Dimensions International (2005), these are: employee job fit, visionary leadership and healthy organisational systems and strategies.

2.3.6 Employee Engagement and Performance

Various literature suggests that important organisational outcomes such as business performance and employee turnover are related to employee engagement, which have significant benefits for organisations (Malinen, Wright & Cammock, 2013).

It has been argued that an engaged workforce can create competitive advantage for all organisations across the globe, thus it is imperative for leaders to identify the level of engagement in their organisations and to implement strategies that will facilitate full engagement (Seijts & Crim, 2006). The reasoning behind this is simple; disengaged employees are less likely to assist in attaining the business objectives that are critical in improving organisational performance (Seijts & Crim, 2006).

Gallup (1999, as cited in Seijts & Crim, 2006) states that engaged employees drive more profits as they are more productive, focused on their goals, enjoy work, and are likely to stay with the company. According to Harter et al. (2002), engagement is closely linked to the attrition of employees, increased satisfaction of customers, internal and external client loyalty, enhanced productivity, improved standards of safety and sustainable profits. Various studies have linked the same to the customer impact and financial results, indicating that they are not just committed and satisfied, but are passionate about their work (Harter et al., as cited in Seijts & Crim, 2006).

Seijts and Crim (2006) describe an engaged employee as a person who is fully involved in and enthusiastic about their work. They go on to state that actively engaged employees help to move the business forward and produce the bottom-line growth (Seijts & Crim, 2006).

In a study conducted by Seijts and Crim (2006), only 14 percent of all employees across the world were highly engaged in their jobs – this indicates a real crisis in organisations across the world. This study also found that Mexico and Brazil have the highest percentage of engaged employees, while Japan and Italy had the largest percentage of disengaged employees (Seijts & Crim, 2006). These findings were interpreted to indicate that there is little commonality between employee engagement and macro-economic conditions, however the unique elements of the work environment and experience are most likely to have an impact on engagement (Seijts & Crim, 2006).

It seems obvious that engaged employees would outperform their disengaged counterparts, and the extent of this was established in the New Century Financial Corporation statistics where it was evident that employee engagement does not only show a relationship with the bottom line results but drives the results (Seijts & Crim, 2006).

Regardless of the effects on performance, employee engagement also affects employees' mind-sets in that they believe in their ability to make a difference within the organisation for which they work (Seijts & Crim, 2006). They gain confidence in their knowledge, skills and ability (in themselves and others) and is a strong predictor of behaviour and succeeding performance (Seijts & Crim, 2006).

2.3.7 Key factors in employee engagement

Employee engagement is an important element in ensuring that members of the organisation are working in an environment which enables them to thrive in an environment which meets their needs and adds to their sense of purpose (Baumruk, 2006). The key factors of employee engagement used in this research to assess the relations are:

- Leadership
- Recognition
- Career opportunities
- Sense of belonging
- Feeling that contributions are acknowledged and required
- Clarity on the organisation's visions
- Confidence in the organisation's leadership
- Work-life balance
- Trust
- Feeling useful

It is evident that many of these factors are closely related to the most prominent factors of organisational culture. This leads one to surmise that there is a close relationship between organisational culture and employee engagement.

Associations between organisational culture and employee engagement have been identified. This relationship is discussed in more detail below.

2.4 Organisational Culture and Employee Engagement

A leader's ability to engage with and appreciate the source of employee engagement is essential in order to maintain the success and functionality of an organisation

(Amburgey, 2005). Employee engagement can be affected by the culture within an organisation (Amburgey, 2005).

The world of work is constantly changing – this can be seen in that employees today are likely to work more hours and are able to continuously be connected to their jobs through the use of various technologies as opposed to those in the same environment 15 years ago (Brown, et al., 2015). Today's employees work in challenging cross-functional teams that bring people together quickly and thus flexibility, empowerment, development, and mobility all now play a big role in defining a company's culture (Brown et al., 2015). Three perspectives on organisational culture were discussed by Martin (2004), namely; integration, differentiation and fragmentation:

- The integration perspective states that there is one dominant culture that is present within the organisation. Through this lens, culture brings togetherness, clarity on work experiences and certainty in situations.
- The differentiated perspective takes into account the subcultures that exist throughout the organisation. The subcultures can differ widely and take into account the shared values, beliefs and norms within those groups.

  The fragmentation perspective highlights the evident ambiguity that exists throughout organisations. There is often an unclear understanding of whether a culture or subculture exists.

When individuals within an organisation verbalise their discontent, there are often rippling effects throughout the organisation which could lead to a breakdown in the organisation's culture (Amburgey, 2005). Organisations that contain large groups of dissatisfied employees are likely to form a work culture that does not encourage employees to perform to their peak ability (Amburgey, 2005).

Culture plays the role of lifeblood for an organisation (Amburgey, 2005). The 'personality' an organisation represents to internal and external customers can best be viewed through its culture (Amburgey, 2005).

When establishing an organisation's culture, one must be cognisant of the size of the business and this plays a large role (Amburgey, 2005). The organisational culture for large organisations can be viewed as a cluster of smaller subcultures which can range

in depth and breadth (Amburgey, 2005). An employee learns to function in one or many of the subcultures in order to achieve their goals/objectives (Amburgey, 2005).

According to Amburgey (2005), a positive culture occurs when an organisation shares a vision and purpose. Conversely, a toxic culture is created through the omission of a clear purpose or mission (Amburgey, 2005).

Organisational culture is the representation of the collective relationships, ceremonies, and rituals present within the organisation (Amburgey, 2005). If leaders and employees understand the composition and components of the organisation's culture, they will both be better prepared to create and enjoy the most positive and productive culture possible (Amburgey, 2005).

According to Amburgey (2005, p. 48) "multinational organisations that experienced better performance placed an emphasis on an organisational culture that focused on performance-oriented values, continuous improvement, and long-term employee commitment." Amburgey (2005) adds that successful organisations highlight the significance of having a leader who champions creating a nurturing and supporting organisational culture.

These items are related to those identified by Ehtesham et al., (2011) as being important in building a positive culture that drives performance within an organisation and also those identified by Seijts and Crim (2006) as vital in building employee engagement. This can assist in linking the effects of culture on employee engagement.

The following figure shows the relationship between the fundamental characteristics of an organisation and those characteristics an employee possesses. When there is similarity between the organisation's characteristics and those of the employee, supplementary fit exists (Kristof, 1996). The Person-organisation fit essentially argues that people are attracted to and selected by organisations that match their values, and they leave organisations that are not compatible with their personalities (Robbins & Judge, 2009).

Esty and Gewirtz (2008) offer a visual which depicts the cultural aspects within an organisation which result in employee engagement and produces desired outcomes. The diagram presented by Esty and Gewirtz (2008) has been edited by the researcher

to encompass the cultural aspects and positive outcomes as presented by various authors throughout this review.

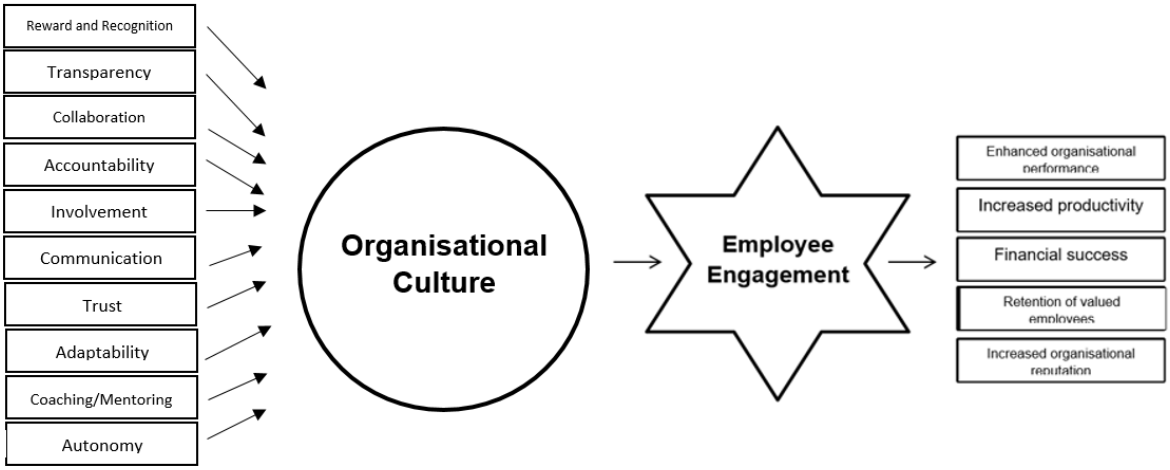

Figure 2.4: Factors of organisational culture that lead to employee engagement.

Organisational culture has been acknowledged as an apt predictor of employee satisfaction (Cook & Hunsaker, 2001). Roos and Van Eeden (2008) have supported this view by pointing out that employees perceive the culture of their organisation as having bearing on the level of satisfaction they experience and their motivation. Job satisfaction and motivation were highlighted as vital determinants of organisational success, and it was concluded that both were influenced by the organisational culture (Roos et al., 2008).

2.5 Conclusion of Literature Review

The main influences on engagement, as identified by the Corporate Leadership Council (2004), are all affected by the leadership and culture of an organisation. For an organisation to thrive, it needs to create a culture that is aligned and engaged (Hewitt Associates, 2009). According to Hewitt Associates (2009), organisations know that there is a link between an organisation's values and those held by the individual – if there is a misalignment between these, this could lead to low engagement.

Culture and engagement are no longer topics maintained by HR, they are imperative for every leader to address (Brown et al., 2015). Studies show that highly engaged companies can hire more easily, deliver stronger customer service, have the lowest

voluntary turnover rates, and are more profitable over the long run (Brown et al., 2015). Engagement starts at the top, thus should be made a corporate priority and the process of measuring and evaluating engagement throughout the company should be modernised (Brown et al., 2015).

In Bates (2004), he notes Drucker's famous saying; "Culture eats Strategy for breakfast" and indicates that this applies to all organisations. Therefore, business executives need to understand that organisations with highly engaged staff attract the best talent, have the lowest voluntary turnover rates and are more profitable over the long run (Brown et al., 2015). Brown et al. (2015) is convinced that companies can improve execution, retention and financial performance by focusing on driving engagement through the right corporate culture.

Various studies suggest that organisational culture enhances inherent motivation, employee commitment, job-involvement and job-satisfaction (Woodruffle, 2006). Employees also perceive a sense of worth and belonging if there is constructive communication from superiors, subordinates and colleagues throughout the business (Woodruffle, 2006). Studies undertaken by Towers Perrin (2003) and Watson (2006) reflect that communicational climate and styles of supervision impact employee engagement. According to Saks (2006), organisations striving to enhance engagement levels of employees should aim at capturing the perception of employees towards support and encouragement provided by the organisation through appropriate channels and suitable cultural practices. This indicates that to engage employees, organisations need to address their needs and provide support in areas employees deem most important.

Research conducted by Krog (2014) indicates that there is a moderate link between employee engagement and organisational culture

2.6 Research Question

What are the perceived factors of an organisation's culture that positively affect employee engagement in a South African organisation?

3 CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section gives insight into the research methodology used to assess the perceptions about factors of organisational culture that lead to employee engagement in a South African organisation. The following piece outlines the paradigm that is used for the methodology and then provides a rationale for the specific approach chosen. The second section uncovers the appropriate research design used, followed by details regarding the population and sample selected for this specific study.

Also discussed is the research instrument used to gather the relevant data and analyse it accordingly. What follows is a discussion of the approach used for data analysis and interpretation pertaining to the study being assessed. Lastly, a review is provided concerning the clarification of the limitations and validity of the selected methodology.

3.1 Research methodology / paradigm

Qualitative research is largely exploratory research which is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations which provide insights into various problems, and it assists in developing ideas for research (Wyse, 2011). Qualitative data collection methods vary using unstructured or semi-structured techniques with small groups of respondents through methods such as focus groups, individual interviews or observations (Wyse, 2011). This differs from quantitative research which is used to quantify a problem by using general numerical data that can be transformed into statistics (Wyse, 2011). These data collection methods include online polls, website interceptions and telephone interviews to name a few (Wyse, 2011).

The purpose of this research required qualitative measurement for the factors of organisational culture that lead to employee engagement. The outcomes of qualitative research can be classified into four categories, namely, description, interpretation, verification and evaluation (Peshkin, 1993). Since organisational culture is not tangible, the data collected in this study is likely to be richer, due to the chosen measurement technique. This facilitates a better understanding of the topic under

investigation through the identification and analysis of the detail and complexity that would potentially have been missed if quantitative methods were chosen.

Gathering information on culture is challenging as it is intangible and subjective in nature (Cope, as cited in Morrison, 2005: 117). Many researchers believe that organisational culture should only be studied qualitatively, but more recently there has been quantitative research done in this field (Morrison, 2005). The quantitative questionnaires used in this research use cultural variables as an indicator as opposed to assessing actual culture and argue that quantitative methods merely offer a reflection of the underlying assumptions and omit any empirical substance on the interaction with and between deeper layers of culture (Engelke, 2011). Organisational culture is intangible, subjective and dynamic and has an array of definitions. These factors undoubtedly affect a researcher's ability to measure the construct of organisational culture and, in the end, may influence the interpretation of the results. These challenges in the measuring of organisational culture must be considered when assessing the results this research report yields.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher chose to do qualitative interviews with semi-structured interview questions that were conducted with middle and senior management within a South African organisation. This approach was selected in order for the interviewees to actively engage in the discussion and put forward their own ideas and opinions in this regard.

The questions that were investigated in this study required detailed insights into the manager's experiences and opinions, therefore a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate.

3.2 Research Design

To attain the required information, thematic content analysis using a sequence of semi-structured interview questions was used to assess the relevant perceptions about culture within an organisation. This section focuses on the semi-structured interview approach and highlights some challenges of the method that should be avoided.

A sample size of 12 eligible participants, based on their influence and decision making ability, is adequate to allow for in-depth discussions with an assortment of managers and senior leaders.

The advantage of conducting semi-structured interviews is the ability to schedule a specific time and location in advance as well as the fact that these interviews are generally arranged around predetermined open-ended questions paired with additional questions which emerge during the interview process (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). These interviews allow the interviewer to delve into specific areas of the research, and enables the interviewee to share her knowledge and experiences on the subject at hand. Since qualitative research is usually less structured than that which is carried out within a quantitative study, the use of semi-structured interview questions provides more flexibility during the interviewing process (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013).

A challenge faced when conducting interviews is that assumptions may be made around the meaning of words, where both the researcher and the interviewee may be using the same words but not share a common understanding of the meaning of these words (Dumay & Qu, 2011). To diminish this challenge, the researcher started the interview by clarifying specific terms which were restated during the process.

Another challenge associated with this technique is that certain qualitative researchers may regard the empirical data derived by interpretive methods as somewhat unreliable or not objective, where the interviews may seem more like casual conversations (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

Rowley (2012) highlights the importance of eliminating all verbiage that could potentially cause confusion for the interviewee, thus ensuring that the research questions are adequately addressed while maintaining a natural flow.

To mitigate these challenges, the researcher ensured that proper preparation and careful planning of the questions, along with intensive listening and note taking skills, were conducted during the interviews (Qu & Dumay, 2011) over and above the use of an audio recorder to have captured as much information from the interview as possible. The researcher also conducted a trial interview in which the relevant questions, as posed in Appendix B, were asked and assessed for their applicability,

appropriate wording and understanding. Once this trial had been completed, various changes were made to the questions to avoid these errors in the 12 official interviews that took place.

3.3 Population and sample

3.3.1 Case site

The case site from which interviewees were selected is part of the financial services sector and produces benefits for Southern African businesses and has been doing so since 1901. The company serves both consumers and businesses through several operating divisions. Their national headquarters is located in Johannesburg, but provides service and support throughout South Africa (RSA) and in Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

The company's vision is to be recognised and highly regarded by all those they serve—to give consumers and businesses the power to achieve, and in doing so help to build stronger economies, worldwide. The organisation's core values and the foundation for their actions and behaviour are; Integrity, Service, Reliability and Performance.

3.3.2 Population

The population for the study was middle and senior managers within one organisation in South Africa. The interviews were scheduled across one organisation but aimed specifically at managers who had knowledge about the culture and engagement issues within the organisation. Their views and decisions directly impact the strategic design of the business activities and the greater organisation. The extent to which the results are representative of the general population was not known (Baily, 2012). Since face-to-face interviews are restricted by time constraints, a limited sample size can be selected which should reduce the generalisability of the findings of this study (Rowley, 2012)

The targeted stakeholders for this research were executives, senior directors, directors and senior managers across the business and it is essential that their organisational profiles reflect the following criteria:

- Senior member of the leadership team
- Good level of work experience
- Have been with the organisation for a minimum of two years

3.3.3 Sample and sampling method

According to the literature, there are elements of culture that are important in achieving positive employee engagement. For the purposes of this study, these factors of culture have been narrowed down to ten and were used to assess which of these, if present and effective, would positively influence the organisation's employee engagement. To attain the required information, selected candidates from the sample frame of members in the organisation's senior management team were asked to participate in one-on-one interviews based on their ability to provide input relevant to the research question. Rowley (2012) refers to this method as purposive sampling. This sampling strategy allowed the researcher to examine the similarities as well as the differences among interviewees' perceptions about culture within the organisation.

The reason behind selecting managers for this research was that managers are able to affect employee engagement through their interactions with their teams. Also, managers have a better understanding of the relationship between culture and employee engagement and would be more articulate in answering the relevant questions. This was a narrowly focused study on managers' perceptions on the factors of organisational culture which positively influence employee engagement in one company.

A challenge with qualitative research is establishing the number of people who will be interviewed from the onset of the research. There is no definitive number of interviewees required for qualitative research, however, one must ensure that there is a balanced approach to ensure that deep case-orientation can occur (Bryman, 2012). For meaningful research to occur, a minimum of 10 purposefully selected participants should be targeted (Rowley, 2012). This study had a target of 12 interviews with managers throughout the organisation which lasted approximately 40 minutes each. The semi-structured, in-depth interviews were relatively easy to set up due to the researcher's existing relationships with the interviewees. An email was sent to each of

the required individuals within the organisation to explain the purpose of the researcher's request and the objective of the research and the interview.

The proposed profile of interview candidates is tabulated below:

Table 3.1: Target profile of respondents

Respondent Type	Respondent Level	Proposed Sampled
Executives	• COO • Senior Directors	3
Senior Management	• Directors	2
Middle Management	• Manager 2	3
Management	• Team Leader • Manager 1	4
	Total	**12**

3.4 The research instrument

Organisational culture was adequately assessed through in-depth qualitative semi-structured interviews. To better understand the organisational culture within the business, the researcher needed to fully understand whether the activities in which the organisation participates meet the criteria of employee engagement.

The theory, as discussed in the literature review, was used to compile a set of semi-structured interview questions which typically had between 6 - 12 carefully planned and articulated questions which would be delivered in a specific order but allow for flexibility within the questions in order for the necessary probing dependant on the context of the interview. The questions asked were intended to probe the findings in

the literature review and answer the research question whilst encouraging open dialogue about the topic at hand. The interviews were recorded for referencing, with the consent of the interviewee, so that the researcher could go back for further details when required. Due to the nature of this research, face-to-face interviews were the most appropriate for this study.

Appendix A highlights the draft cover letter that was sent to respondents upon accepting to participate in the research study. This letter detailed the purpose of the study as well as the anonymity of the participants in this research. Appendix B gives a brief explanation of the relevant terms and posed the questions that would be asked. Appendix C was presented to the respondents before the end of the interview for them to rank the factors of organisational culture they felt are important for employee engagement to occur. The ranking ranged from 1-10 with one being the most important and 10 being the least important. These organisational factors were drawn from the literature review as discussed in chapter 2. It is important to note that this ranking activity did not form part of any quantitative data exercise but was merely used by the research to solidify the literature findings.

3.5 Procedure for data collection

Initial contact was made with the organisation's HR Executive to gain approval for the research purpose and process. With the support of the executive sponsor, the interview requests were sent out to a targeted audience across different levels of the organisation, and contact was initiated via an email. The initial request letter specified the purpose of the research, the structure of the research, and the expected interview time frame. Thereafter, the interview was scheduled at a time convenient to the interviewee (Rowley, 2012).

As mentioned above, the data collection procedure was conducted through in-depth, face-to-face semi-structured interviews through one-on-one discussions with the targeted population. The advantage in conducting qualitative research is that participants can provide historical information relevant to the research and the researcher has some control over the process of questioning (Rowley, 2012). This is despite the possibility for subjectivity, bias in responses, information filtered indirectly

through the views of the interviewer, and not all participants being perceptive and able to articulate effectively.

Considering the ethical considerations of this research, protection of personal information and individual privacy, the assurance of confidentiality and voluntary participation was vital (Dumay & Qu, 2011). Participation in this research was voluntary and thus all information provided remained confidential. This was made clear to all participants in the cover letter and throughout the process.

Interviewees were approached by the researcher to introduce the context of the study and outline the framework of the interview requirements, including the length and appropriate time required. The interviews took place at the respondent's offices in Johannesburg, which assisted in creating a more comfortable environment for the interaction. All interviews were audiotaped with the permission of the participants.

Scheduling issues may have arisen and in these instances, alternate electronic means of conducting the interviews such as Skype or telephonic discussions were considered (Rowley, 2012). Rowley (2012) also highlights the importance of the researcher being open to altering the research process to accommodate unexpected occurrences such as late or cancelled interviews, disruptions or any other extraneous variables.

3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

Thematic content analysis was applied to identify and link key themes emerging from the interviews, which was followed by a process of interpretation (Rowley, 2012). Key statements and relevant quotes were analysed straight after each interview to allow the researcher to become more familiar with the themes which emerged from the interviews. These themes were used to gather further data throughout the process. Since a semi-structured interview approach was used, insights gained from one interview were assessed and included in other interviews to establish if similar themes are raised. All interviews were also audio-recorded (with the permission of the respondent) and were transcribed directly after the face-to-face discussion. Key points were highlighted and the relevant information analysed to ensure accuracy and to avoid interviewer bias/assumptions. Recordings were saved to ensure that all details can be accessed at a later date as needed.

The details identified were shared with respondents, who were asked to rank these in perceived order of importance, and results were presented based on these scores. Note, however, that this ranking criterion was not used to form a quantitative section to this research but was used by the researcher to assess the employee's evaluations of cultural factors, as identified through the literature, which affect employee engagement. This was only used to assess what was deemed as important to the interviewees within the organisation and focus was placed on what was said by each candidate and not on what the results show.

3.7 Limitations of the study

The limitations of the research refer to the potential shortcomings and disadvantages of the qualitative methodologies used in the study. The limitations that were identified were:

- The research was conducted in a single organisation and thus a limited number of respondents were interviewed within this context.
- As the research conducted was qualitative in nature, the information attained may not be representative of all organisations across South Africa, though there could be instances where the findings are generalised across similar organisations.
- Qualitative research can be perceived as being subjective and relies on the researcher's own views on what they deem to be important.
- The research, once conducted, would be challenging to replicate due to the semi-structured approach in data collection. The interpretation of the findings is very subjective to the researcher.
- Limited opportunity for extrapolation as the geographic location is limited to one location in Johannesburg, Gauteng.

3.8 Validity and reliability

While validity and reliability are widely and more commonly used criteria for assessing quantitative data, the criteria can be adapted by reducing the factors of measurement when assessing qualitative data (Bryman, 2012). Authors such as Lincoln and Guba (1989) proposed alternative criteria such as trustworthiness and authenticity when applying to qualitative data analysis.

Due to the nature of qualitative research, one is unlikely to replicate the results found within a study. Thus, the validity, verifiability and reliability of the details of the study must be intact while factors such as credibility, transferability, dependability and conformity must be implicit (Lincoln and Guba, 1989).

3.8.1 External validity

While the concept of validity is essentially concerned with the integrity of the conclusions drawn from a study, the actual measurement of validity applies primarily to quantitative research. The external validity of a study refers to the generalisation of the results outside of the context of the research (Bryman, 2012). With regard to this study, one could argue that the research which was conducted would not be externally valid in that it is very difficult to generalise the results across other industries or organisations due to the specific population and small size of the sample.

3.8.2 Internal validity

The internal validity often refers to the existence of a good match between theory and the researcher's observations (Bryman, 2012). The researcher provided the interviewees with a copy of the final report on request, in order to ensure both the credibility of the data collected and a true account of the interviewees' responses. In so doing, the research was validated by the respondents due to the transparency of this study and findings.

3.8.3 Reliability

Bryman (2012) notes that the reliability of a study depends on whether the study can be replicated, which is considered a challenging criterion to meet when dealing with

qualitative research. It is not possible to suspend the circumstances of an initial study to make it replicable, thus one could argue that this research was reliable in that the researcher maintained a clear audit throughout the process. All records of the research process, including notes, transcripts, analysis and final reports, were kept confidential and are accessible should an auditor be selected to audit the process and relevant documents at any point in time.

3.8.4 Ethical Considerations

The names of the respondents and the organisation they represent did not appear in the report, nor did any personal or identifying information per participant appear in the final report, which ensured anonymity for respondents. The organisation in which the research took place, had also given consent for the interviews to take place and for the relevant organisation to be used in this study.

Participants were invited to participate and there were no negative consequences for them if they chose not to participate or if they chose to withdraw from the study at any stage of the process. Permission was also obtained from each respondent before commencing interviews to obtain voice recordings.

4 CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

To avoid repetition, the presentation of results and discussion of results have been combined into this chapter. The chapter hereunder presents and discusses the research findings with regard to the content data analysis and interpretation of the results. This is based on the research proposition, where the perceptions about factors of organisational culture which positively influence employee engagement in an organisation in Johannesburg, South Africa, are interrogated.

This chapter identifies the prominent themes which were identified in the semi-structured interviews. The aim of the research is to determine the perceptions about factors of organisational culture which positively affect employee engagement within a business in South Africa. At the end of the interviews, respondents were asked to rank 10 factors of organisational culture, as found in the literature review, in accordance with their impact on employee engagement. They were also given the opportunity to identify any other factors which came to mind but may not have been discussed. The outcomes of the study display the perceived importance of the factors as they are believed to influence employee engagement from the information received from respondents during the interviews.

The data for this research was retrieved from one organisation in Johannesburg, South Africa. The foregoing chapter discussed the research methodology used for this study and the current chapter provides insight into the culture in this specific organisation and the managers' perceptions on which factors of the culture positively influences employee engagement within the business. The aim in this chapter is to provide details around the manager's feedback against the framework presented in the literature review.

4.2 Proposition

The following factors of culture emerged from the interviews as being important in creating positive employee engagement within this organisation.

Reward and Recognition	Leadership's role
Relationship building	Transparency
Career Growth	Collaboration
Accountability	Involvement
Innovation	Communication
Resources	Trust
Adaptability	Coaching/Mentoring
Autonomy	

The results of this qualitative study are based on the responses received through the semi-structured, open-ended questions (see Appendix A for the interview questionnaire). The discussions were open-ended with a focus on the interviewee's perceptions of the factors of organisational culture which exist in the organisation and then elaborated on with factors of organisational culture which lead to employee engagement. The discussion was flexible enough to allow for new research themes to arise for theory building purposes.

4.3 Demographic profile of respondents

The proposed demographic profile focused on discussing the topic with respondents from varying management levels within the business in order to obtain feedback from across the hierarchy and attain a balanced view of those factors which positively influence employee engagement. The initial plan had a target of 12 interviews with a spread of interviewees from across the management levels. Of the 12 interviewees planned, all 12 agreed to participate in the research and thus all 12 interviews were conducted. The level of interviewees which were targeted remained within the management realm as concepts such as organisational culture and employee engagement may not have been understood and discussed, as intended, by employees below this level. The researcher saw that the number of senior directors

willing to participate was high and conducted more interviews on this level than had been intended.

The final profile of the 12 interviews conducted as compared to the 12 proposed is summarised in table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1: Actual profile of respondents

Respondent Type	Respondent Level	Proposed Sampled	Actual Sample
Executives	• COO • Senior Directors	3	5
Senior Management	• Directors	2	2
Middle Management	• Manager 2	3	3
Management	• Team Leader • Manager 1	4	2
	Total	**12**	**12**

In total, eight women were interviewed and the remaining four participants were men. The aim was to interview a male and a female from each management level however, this was not always possible and thus only women were interviewed in the lower management levels. It is important to note that all respondents have been with the company for a minimum of two years and thus have adequate knowledge on the culture of the organisation and the level of employee engagement throughout the business.

All interviews were scheduled and conducted at the organisation's main building in Johannesburg, South Africa, and were conducted in accordance with the interview questionnaire as presented in Appendix A.

The purpose of the interview and overall research was outlined in an email sent to each participant before the interview was conducted. Confidentiality and anonymity of responses was reiterated and reassurance given to each respondent on the date of the interview.

4.4 Results pertaining to the perception of factors of organisational culture which influence employee engagement

This study deals with a qualitative analysis of the perceptions of factors of organisational culture which positively influence employee engagement. However, at the end of the interviews, the respondents were asked to rank the factors of organisational culture, as presented in Appendix B, which they think are most likely to achieve employee engagement in a rating scale from one to ten. This was done in order for each respondent to apply their mind about what is important. It is important to note that this activity is not meant to change the study from qualitative to quantitative, but to understand each respondent's perceptions in a more definitive way.

The literature used for this study found that there were ten prominent factors of organisational culture which influenced employee engagement. The table below (Table 6) identifies the respondent's subjective rankings of these factors in relation to employee engagement, from highest to lowest, with one being the most influential and 10 being the least influential.

Key themes recognised across each interview are highlighted and alternate factors as mentioned by respondents are noted.

Table 4.2: Respondent ranking of factors perceived to influence culture

Factor	Individual Respondent Rankings												
Respondents	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	
Trust	3	2	3	1	3	7	1	4	2	3	2	1	2.65
Communication	2	6	2	6	6	2	6	9	5	1	4	2	4.25
Involvement	4	1	8	9	4	1	5	6	3	6	1	9	4.75
Accountability	5	9	1	3	8	4	4	5	1	5	9	4	4.83
Collaboration	6	4	5	7	1	5	7	7	4	7	7	3	5.25
Reward and Recognition	8	3	4	5	5	6	9	1	9	4	6	7	5.58
Transparency	10	10	7	2	2	9	2	10	3	2	3	10	5.83
Autonomy	7	8	10	4	7	3	3	2	7	10	10	8	6.58
Coaching/Mentoring	1	5	6	10	10	10	10	3	6	9	8	6	7.00
Adaptability	9	7	9	8	9	8	8	8	8	8	5	5	7.67
	Senior Management					**Directors**		**Manager 2**			**Manager and Team Leader**		**Average**

It must be noted that the factors of organisational culture and their perceived importance as influencers of employee engagement is limited to the context of the organisation in which the interviews were conducted and that table 6 is a reflection of individual perceptions within the context and not a numeric or measurable ranking. The analysis of results are presented in the general order of importance as extrapolated from the respondent responses in the interview process. It must be emphasised that the qualitative methodology is adhered to throughout the study and

the presentation of results according to opinions above should not be construed as quantitative, as mixed method research is not being employed.

The following table identifies the respondent's perceptions about the factors of organisational culture which positively influence employee engagement, based on the discussion had during each interview. The results of this analysis are discussed in this chapter.

Figure 4.1: Respondents perceptions about the factors of culture which positively influence employee engagement during the interview discussion

It is interesting to note that the factors which were rated the highest on the ranking table, were often overlooked and not discussed as favourably in the interview sessions.

4.5 Analysis of results pertaining to the factors of organisational culture which positively influence employee engagement

Employee engagement is an important concept in all businesses thus keeping the motivation going and addressing employee needs is vital in producing the required results. All senior management and director level respondents made mention of the fact that employee engagement was important in the business and that through the engagement surveys and other engagement tools such as focus groups and quarterly surveys, they aimed to improve the overall engagement within the business.

4.5.1 Understanding Employee Engagement within the business

The definition given of Employee Engagement, that being 'The extent to which employees feel passionate about their jobs, put discretionary effort into their work and are committed to the organisation which is seen in their intention to stay with and how hard they will work for the organisation' was agreed to by all interviewees and was used as a basis for the discussion.

The head of Human Resources (Respondent 1) noted in her interview that Employee Engagement is a key driver within the business and that particular focus has been put on promoting engagement. The consensus was that engagement is measured through the annual engagement survey and that recently, a quarterly engagement survey has been initiated in order to give an update on employee's engagement at different intervals and in order to be measured at different stages throughout the year. Respondent 1 also noted that engagement within the business was not where the organisation had hoped it would be.

All interviewees noted that within the business, there is a large project underway that requires extended time/hours, resource capacity and because of the size and duration of this, there has been a decrease in the engagement within the business. Participant 12 noted subjectively that there was a 50% split between engaged and disengaged employees within the business, also citing factors such as 'difficulty doing one's job due to resource constraints, lack of collaboration, duplication of effort, lack of innovation as key resources are all on the project and low participation due to time and people genuinely being busy' as key features of this disengagement. This participant also noted that the business was working at increasing the engagement levels within the organisation by creating opportunities for taking time out via social hours and running interesting one hour seminars in which employees had previously shown interest – the interviewee acknowledged that these initiatives were designed to bring about the increased engagement they had hoped for.

It was noted by all interviewees with a tenure greater than ten years, namely respondents 1, 6 and 11, that the businesses priorities have changed and that where focused attention was put on work-life balance, where families were included in functions and events and employees were made to feel special and showered with

praise for the work that had been done, these items were no longer made available due to financial burdens, changes in leaders across the business and changing competitive environments; thus the activities employees had become used to were no longer available and left them feeling less engaged.

It is important to differentiate task engagement from employee work engagement. Respondent 7 noted that the project which is keeping employees busy is offering a level of task engagement and an opportunity for growth and work fulfilment, however, the time and resource constraints deter the level of employees' work engagement.

One of the respondents highlighted their belief that 'strategy eats culture for breakfast'. This was established as she noted that 'if we get the business right, engagement will come easily. Right now, we are swimming upstream for engagement whereas if we start making money and get the basics right, then engagement will come with this'. This is contrary to the majority of other respondents who indicated that 'culture eats strategy for breakfast' and who noted the need for the organisation to make changes in various key cultural aspects such as communication, coaching and mentoring, and transparency, to name a few. These differing views can be the cause of a decay in the engagement within the business and can continue to worsen the situation and bring about greater disengagement which is against the organisation's aims. As respondent 2 noted, leaders need to tie it all together and steer the organisation in the right direction.

A number of interviewees spoke about the organisation's focus on increasing customer-centricity and the customer experience. They acknowledged that this was only possible by improving employee engagement levels across the business. This helps to identify the importance of employee engagement in achieving the organisation's strategic goals.

There is a duality expressed about what constitutes engagement within the business as well as what the cultural attributes within the business are. Respondents 1, 6, 7,10 and 12 noted that the organisation is made up of great people who are skilled in their roles, work well within their teams and are interested in the well-being of the business. Although this may be the case, respondent 12 also noted that employees want to connect with their colleagues on a personal level and that often the opportunity for this is unavailable. Another respondent, namely respondent 2, gave an opposing view and

indicated that the organisation's success was the key motivator for people's actions and that this would drive people's actions as opposed to the softer elements such as friendships and relationships at work.

The above evaluation of employee engagement within the business gives insight into what the business holds in high regard and what it identified as important. Employee engagement is a key strategic focus in the business and certain actions have been taken to bring about a greater sense of engagement over the years. This is reiterated by respondent 1, who notes the rise of new committees which offer employees the ability to connect with colleagues through various platforms which are of interest to them as well as various mentoring and management training workshops, which facilitate the process of building trust and for adequate reward and recognition. All interviewees noted the importance of employee engagement within the business, with interviewees articulating that 'moving the business forward is easier when you have engaged employees helping you achieve targets' (respondent 2) linking to an experiment conducted by Gallup (2006) who compared the Earnings per Share (EPS) growth of 89 companies and found that organisations with engagement scores in the top quartile had 2.6 times the EPS growth than those organisations who had below average engagement scores (McLeod & Clarke, 2008).

4.5.2 Building a culture of engagement

The interviewees' discussion on culture and employee engagement are assessed below and are used as the foundation of a more detailed analysis of all factors identified in the interviews which have been identified in the literature review as being important in positively influencing employee engagement.

4.5.2.1 Reward and Recognition

Through the interviews, reward and recognition was identified as being the most valuable factor of organisational culture which positively influences employee engagement within the sample organisation. This value was derived from the number of respondents who noted reward and recognition as a key to creating employee engagement and acknowledging that this was utilised within this organisation.

Respondent 5 noted that people become engaged when ‘they enjoy coming to work, they like the people they work with, they feel challenged by their work and when they are properly rewarded when they succeed’. The element of reward and recognition, as acknowledgement for a job well done, cannot be forgotten and its importance is seen in a study conducted by Bartlomiejczuk (2015) which shows that employee recognition is positively related to employee engagement with 41% of the variation in employee engagement being attributed to the strength of the recognition an employee receives (Bartlomiejczuk, 2015).

Respondent 2 stated that people within the business were recognised and rewarded reasonably well through both formal and informal channels adding that ‘I do think that the business is aware of employee well-being and aware of the impact of rewards both monetary and non-monetary’. This relates to Bartlomiejczuk’s (2015) research in which he states that when all employees within a business are adequately recognised for valuable contributions, both formal and informal modes of recognition can allow organisations to create a culture of recognition and to make various types of recognition more valuable. Thus, when practiced appropriately, reward and recognition can become ‘the way we do things here’.

This idea was reinforced by respondent 3 who added that one of the factors in this culture which positively affects employee engagement is reward and recognition. He noted that sometimes ‘we respond in terms of rewards and recognition to people who shout the loudest or position themselves well enough and I think meritocracy is really important because we want to make sure that people know that if you put the extra effort in, you will get recognised’ so, we put in the extra effort to ensure that the people who are rewarded are the right ones across the organisation.

When asked how impactful he thinks the factors of our cultures are on encouraging employee engagement, respondent 4 noted that there has been a large amount of improvement over the years, especially in the area of reward and recognition. He noted that it was not the value, but the attention, that made employees feel appreciated and acknowledged and this aided their engagement. This sentiment was shared by respondent 10.

Respondent 5 noted that recognition is vital and evident within this organisation. This was supported by respondent 7 who stated that the organisation recognises people

appropriately and adds that this recognition ‘does not always mean that it is monetary but some people don’t specifically need monetary recognition, it is just the gesture which they appreciate.’

Respondent 8 referred to the fact that the organisation has great reward and recognition programmes, but that they are often overlooked by employees as they do not see these elements as rewards but focus on compensation. Examples of these other rewards are extended leave programmes for years of service, flexible working hours, study leave, etc. which aid in creating employee engagement but which are often undervalued. She notes the organisation’s aim is to push intangible rewards and not only the tangible ones. This idea was evidenced by the comments respondent 11 added, stating that reward and recognition is practiced in the business but that there is some inconsistency between who gets recognised and the rewards attained for their achievements.

Respondent 12 cautioned, stating that reward and recognition is available and used within the business and although it is effective, the processes are often overlooked and through this can create an opportunity for exclusion thus managers need to be aware of their actions and reward and recognise appropriately.

Having suitable reward mechanisms in place which encompass both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards to recognise employees who perform to the organisation’s standards and embody the values and beliefs as set out by the organisation has been associated with an increase in employee engagement (Kistan, 2015). In line with this, respondent 3 notes that the organisation rewards those who effectively bring new ideas into the business, comply with the values and beliefs and perform above expectations. There is also the inclusion of bonuses and other incentives offered to employees to behave as desired. It is vital to note that the basis of these reward programmes can only be considered effective if implemented in a way in which all employees deem them to be effective, fair and the process for selection being transparent and unbiased (respondent 2).

All respondents in this study noted reward and recognition as a crucial component of an organisation’s culture which would create positive employee engagement. Also, there was sufficient consensus to believe that reward and recognition was effectively

utilised within this business and a contributing factor to the employee engagement within the business.

4.5.2.2 Leadership's Role

"Leaders become great, not because of their power, but because of their ability to empower others (Maxwell, 2015, p. 1). This is a keynote in encouraging or discouraging employee engagement. Respondent 1 noted, 'I think we have a very exciting leadership team' who are 'very results-oriented and set a high standard and there is excitement around who we want to be as an organisation and I think that is inspiring'. She also noted that the introduction of a new CEO within this organisation added a new level of excitement and an opportunity to change the business and introduce various other factors of culture which previous leaders may have excluded. She added that leaders play the most important role in creating a culture which would enable positive employee engagement and that is achieved by them being 'actively involved in defining what [the culture] is, being able to tell the story and create the picture of what it looks like, why we need to change [the culture] and they constantly have to be speaking about this and all leaders within the business need to be aligned and unified' when speaking and practicing these ideals.

One of the prominent features of the leaders in the organisation, which employees like, is that the leaders in this organisation have been effective in creating a non-hierarchical culture where people feel at ease voicing their opinions and speaking up on ideas (Respondent 2). This sentiment was echoed by respondent 8 who also made reference to the fact that this business is non-hierarchical or bureaucratic, which gives employees the opportunity to speak up and get involved as they see fit. She also noted that all employees had access to the CEO and could engage this leader when available without having to go through their managers or other systems, and this added to people feeling more connected and engaged within this business. This was also stated by respondent 6 who stated that a key feature of this organisation's culture is that there are no hierarchical barriers; she notes that leaders within the organisations can be approached and that this factor of the culture aids in building relationships across the organisation. She also states that in order for any culture to stick, leaders need to live the factors and this will aid in the desired factors of culture filtering down to employees – 'If people don't see it, they are not going to believe it.'

Respondent 10 added that by working in an open plan office environment, where one could be sitting right next to an executive, creates an environment in which leaders are seen as approachable and employees are able to converse with them when available and required and she noted that this makes a difference. She also adds that leaders are willing to listen to employees, stating that she has been involved in various workshops and feels confident in voicing her opinion and then after all is said and done, she has seen changes occurring and this builds her trust in the leaders and their desire to make this organisation a better place for all employees.

As previously noted, a new CEO was introduced into this business at the beginning of the year. This gave rise to an interesting comment by respondent 4 who noted that the introduction of a new leader within the business creates an 'unnatural' culture and behaviour in people as everyone wants to show their new leader that they can add value and results in them going into an unnatural state.

'Leaders need to take responsibility for their team's engagement and take the necessary steps to ensure that employees are given the necessary resources to feel engaged at work' (Respondent 2). Interviewees supported the references made about leadership by Ruyle et al. (2009) as being correct and noted that leaders are also required to define the expectations about what is right within the business and hold employees accountable for their actions (Respondent 3). If these desired features of an organisation's culture are not acknowledged and facilitated as they should be, the likelihood of the organisation's achieving its objectives is slim (Respondent 3).

Cohn (2016), in his article entitled '*Transparency principles you can implement now'*, noted that managers need to make themselves available and visible in order for employees to feel that they have the necessary details and are able to perform as expected. This point was referred to by Respondent 12 who noted that leadership visibility, as a feature of the organisation's employee engagement survey, was continuously given a low score when identified as being relevant within the organisation. This is a feature employees in this business wanted more of and could lead to greater employee engagement.

Brown et al. (2015) also note that organisations who are aiming to achieve greater growth, who are experiencing financial stress as well as those going through retrenchments are likely to see a radical change in culture. In order to counteract these

effects, leaders need to hold themselves and other managers accountable for building a strong and stable culture by listening to feedback (Brown et al., 2015). This idea was identified as relevant by respondent 6 who noted that the organisation went through some turbulence towards the end of 2015 when decisions were made to retrench employees throughout the business. This inevitably caused great upset and negatively affected employee engagement (Respondent 6). She went on to note that in this instance and in many other instances, 'messages are communicated via the leaders of the organisation yet they only skim the surface instead of being transparent and sharing the facts and telling people what they want to know' (Respondent 6). This shows the importance of leaders and transparency, particularly when the organisation is facing difficulties. It was also noted that this element of leadership and transparency had improved since the turbulent time and thus engagement levels had improved, according to the quarterly engagement surveys (Respondent 2).

The leaders within this organisation are well regarded by employees and peers, thus it can be regarded as having adequate buy-in from their followers (Respondent 10). If leaders create a shared vision, are able to be transparent and effectively communicate with employees across the business, they are more likely to succeed in establishing a solid environment in which employee engagement will be positive (Respondent 10).

At this case site, the leader's role has been identified as an important part of the business operations. The leaders within the organisation were acknowledged as being relevant and well respected and thus the effects they have on employee engagement would be assumed to be positive.

4.5.2.3 Relationship Building

It was noted by respondent 5 that one of the key features of this organisation's culture is that 'people generally like the people who work here so there is good interaction between employees'. He also noted that this factor was a key feature in creating employee engagement by acknowledging that if people enjoy coming to work and they like the people they work with, they are more likely to feel engaged. This sentiment was echoed by respondent 6 who stated that her favourite part of the organisation's culture is that employees are like family. She adds that 'people are willing to help each

other and behave as one big family. When people leave, they are sad because they are leaving their ‘family’ behind.’

Respondent 7 noted that the relationship building element was one of the key features of this organisation, acknowledging that the environment in which the organisation operates in is ‘friendly’, adding that ‘overall, people are/want to get to know one another and they like to help each other. We are very supportive of each other and it does not matter where you are in the business, we have fun and light-hearted people who really uplift the spirit and make it great to come to work.’ This idea was reinforced by respondent 9 who noted that the people who work in this organisation are always willing to help and stated that ‘we have good quality people here - they are professional and solid and a nice bunch of people.’ This relates to the organisation’s sense of relationships and building connections at work which make it an inclusive and ‘fun’ environment in which to work.

Respondent 8 took the researcher back to the definition of culture which was presented and stated ‘it is the way we do things here’ and noted that the employees within the organisation play a key role in the way things are done within the business. She notes that the friendships formed and the relaxed environment created an opportunity for employees to connect and this added to their sense of being happy to be at work. There was reference by respondent 11 that there is a sense of family within the business and that people enjoy coming to work and interacting with their colleagues. Respondent 12 shared the same sentiments, noting that ‘people across the organisation agree that we work with great people and that teams work effectively together’.

It could be surmise that this relationship building culture is evident within this organisation as respondent 11 highlights that ‘there is a culture of being with your family here’. This was reiterated by respondent 3 who noted that within this organisation, people often pitch in when there is a problem and will assist in resolving the problem – this indicates that people care for one another and will take the necessary steps to assist where they can.

Respondent 6 refers to the ‘informal’ culture of the organisation, where leaders and employees are all addressed on a first name basis. This is possible as the business is medium sized and leaders are accessible to employees across the business, which

helps to build relationships across the business. Respondent 8 added to this by acknowledging that the structure of the organisation aids in building relationships. She notes that 'we are not so bureaucratic or hierarchical, employees know that if you have something to say, you can speak up', and she notes that employees can use these relationships to start carving out opportunities for themselves.

Although an effective tool in creating employee engagement, respondent 4 notes that one has to be careful that the relationship building does not allow people to go into the 'family protection mode' where one cannot appropriately criticise their teams as they are fearful of losing a friendship.

There is evidence of a culture, within this organisation, where employees feel that they belong and where they are able to make meaningful connections with team members, and other employees across the business. This can be seen as a key driver for creating positive employee engagement, as discussed in the literature review.

4.5.2.4 Transparency

Respondent 1 brought to the researcher's attention the fact that one of the organisation's underlying beliefs was 'I say what I need to say' and that this connoted that if 'something needs to be sorted out, speak up and get it sorted'. She added that this was something that is being driven within the business and that it creates the culture of transparency within the organisation. She added by noting that by continuing on this path of consistent transparency and accountability, the organisation would regain the 'swagger' it once had. She said that the business was 'transparent about the bumps and what can be expected on the path' to achieving the desired outcomes and that support was available in achieving those outcomes. This was further reiterated by respondent 5 who stated that he believes the business is 'ethical and transparent' and that these are key features of the organisation's culture.

Respondent 6 noted that leaders across the business are transparent and are willing to share necessary information when needed. She adds that there is feedback to the business via 'Town Hall' sessions and other forums to keep employees updated on the financial details and key focus areas within the business. She notes that this factor of culture is evident, but suggested that in order to further support employee engagement through this transparency, employees should be given the opportunity to

‘ask questions to ensure that they have clarity and that important details are clearly understood’.

Respondent 8 noted that the organisation has always worked towards being transparent and giving employees the necessary details when needed, and in an appropriate way. She did acknowledge though that when the organisation experienced some difficulty, they were less transparent and this created panic and upset, which confirms the effect that transparency, or a lack thereof, can have on employees. Respondent 10 shared the same sentiments, noting that this was a period where transparency was not part of the culture and thus employees felt as though they could not trust leaders or were left feeling insecure about their own job security, but she acknowledges that the organisation has learnt a great lesson from this and has become more transparent since then.

Respondent 7 stated that there is transparency in the business, noting that ‘this is something we have been working on for a while. And it has definitely gotten better and definitely improved employee engagement.’ She adds that when the organisation is transparent, employees are better able to complete work tasks at the desired levels and with a clearer understanding of what is required.

Respondent 11 noted that transparency and trust were closely linked. She indicated that ‘if people know what is happening within the business, have a clear understanding of where the company is going and are given the necessary tools to achieve the desired outcomes, they will be more likely to give more than they are asked for in order to help the organisation succeed’. This sentiment is echoed by Clapon (2016), who notes that when employees are privy to the financial status and feel that the details which are given are honest and correct, they are likely to feel more committed and motivated to achieve the organisation’s mission and goals. He also notes that regardless of the industry, transparency is a vital component to a successful business model and has been proven to aid employee engagement (Clapon, 2016).

Brown, Melian, Solow, Chheng and Parker (2015) indicate that with the rise in social media, corporate decisions are easily exposed and discussed publicly, which makes it more likely for the public and employees to read and thus the organisation’s culture is increasingly visible to the world. If used effectively, this transparency of an organisation’s culture can become a key competitive advantage (Brown et al, 2015).

This point was raised by respondent 1, who indicated that times were changing and that both leaders and employees needed to speak up and remain transparent about the business and the evident changes within it.

The views from respondents, backed by the literature as presented in chapter two, indicates that creating a culture of transparency can aid in building positive employee engagement. Within this organisation, transparency was seen to be evident and thus could be a key contributor to employee engagement.

4.5.2.5 Career Growth

Respondent 2 stated that this organisation values its people and thus 'it's prepared to invest in its employees from a training point of view and a career development point of view.' This was reiterated by respondent 4 who stated that one of the key features of this organisation is that it 'is trying to look after the people in terms of growth. The size of the organisation makes it difficult because career growth is one of the things people are looking for, but career growth is not something that you can map it out, so the expectation is sometimes misaligned to that but the opportunity is definitely there'.

The concept of career growth is evident in this organisation as respondent 1 made reference to the fact that this is a key focus within this organisation and that various training interventions were being conducted with managers throughout the business to ensure that they were able 'to get their people going, be effective on a day-to-day basis, supporting them, helping them grow and creating the employee engagement'. This training and others offered throughout the organisation indicates that the organisation has shown an interest in employee's career growth. As noted by respondent 11, 'the organisation hosts career days and HR is available to have conversations with employees about their career growth and opportunities to advance within the business. This gives people the ability to find a path within the business which makes them feel fulfilled'.

Graham (2014) noted that if leaders offered employees plenty of opportunities to build their skills, they would be more effective in increasing employee engagement. There was agreement with this thought by respondent 1 who noted that the manager needs to play an important role in employees' career growth by stretching their employees and making opportunities for career advancement, in line with employees' aspirations,

available. She added that the manager needs to identify what areas an employee could strengthen and make opportunities to better these aspects available to them. She added that 'if people don't have the sense that they are growing, being empowered and growing their skills, this would be disengaging'. Respondent 10's view aligned with this as she noted that 'knowing your employees and their growth plans and aiding them in achieving those goals that can be reached, is what is going to make employees feel more motivated and feel like they are working towards something greater'.

Graham (2014) also adds that employees do not want to stagnate professionally. They want to advance their skills and thrive in the environment in which they work, thus managers can make growth opportunities available in an array of ways. This was reinforced by respondent 11 who notes that by utilising a culture of collaboration within a business, employees are given an opportunity to learn and interact with other employees across the organisations which also assists in individual growth as well as potential career growth opportunities. Respondent 2 added to this by saying that people do not want to work at an organisation that is not giving them career satisfaction.

The organisation used in this study operates on a global level and respondent 8 noted how this could impact on employees' level of engagement. She noted that the multinationality of the organisation makes career growth opportunities across the globe a viable option for employees and also, makes connecting and interacting with employees more easily available, thus enhancing employee engagement.

Although in agreement with the need for career growth, respondent 9 noted the importance of employees owning their own career growth plans and not being dependent on a manager to map their path for them. This aids in building a sense of ownership for the growth and for taking the necessary steps when required. She gave a personal experience on her career growth and how the opportunities she has worked towards has helped her remain engaged within this organisation.

This indicates that career growth opportunities through training, coaching/ mentorships, and exposure to various parts of the business are available within this organisation and if utilised effectively, could assist in creating positive employee engagement. However, the employee has to own the process and seek the necessary

guidance and support from their managers to ensure that the process is effective and that the desired results are achieved.

4.5.2.6 Collaboration

The initial point by respondent 1 indicates that collaboration is rife within this organisation. She stated that 'We have amazing talent, perhaps potentially unlocked, but we have amazing talent and we actually have people who want to collaborate and work as teams'. She also noted that 'team work and collaborating with others is becoming more important' and that the organisation was getting better at this. Respondent 2 added that he had experienced the culture within this organisation to be one of collaboration and that this had helped teams come together and create wonderful solutions. He added that collaboration was a key feature in this organisation's culture in that 'most of what we do as an organisation requires collaboration throughout the value chain, so whether you selling and dealing with clients, we obviously have to have a variety of associates collaborating and designing what it is we sell, identifying what the solution looks like and how we deliver it.' This interaction between employees on all levels, across the business creates a feeling of being needed and feeling proud of one's capabilities and this aids in creating employee engagement. He added that within society today, people often prefer to work independently when in reality, 'more beneficial work can be done when working in teams with an array of skills sets and opinions at play'.

Respondent 4 also validates this factor of organisational culture within this business by stating that collaboration is a key feature of the organisation's culture, stating that teams are cohesive and that this is built on the trust they have in one another. He also notes that the culture of collaboration is evident in the business but that it is 'frustrating that we don't acknowledge it more widely as the guys who actually work on the ground will tell you they get a huge amount of value from the collaboration factor within the company'.

Respondent 9 made a valuable statement, indicating that the collaboration which was evident throughout the business is an important part of why people want to stay with the organisation. She added that this collaboration gives employees the opportunity to

engage in various tasks and exposes them to work experiences they might find meaningful.

Respondent 12 also noted that one of the key features of this organisation's culture is it is easy to interact with people across the business and one can easily work with people who are good at what they do. She added that 'if you are working closely with someone and you have the opportunity to collaborate with someone who gets things, I think that contributes to engagement.'

Many of the respondents noted that collaboration within this organisation extended beyond South Africa, with employees being able to interact and connect with counterparts who worked within the same organisation across the world. Respondent 9 noted that this collaboration allowed employees some exposure which enabled them to connect with teams across the globe and allowed for learning far greater than that which is easily available within their office. She also noted that this allowed for career development and greater opportunities for each employee. Respondent 4 also stated that 'working with the global team aids the South African team in building their own culture and offers greater opportunities and learnings'.

Respondent 1 also highlighted that 'by collaborating, it allows one to grow their network, gives them a sense of reliability and coming together which creates the sense of fun each workforce needs'. Respondent 3 added to this by stating that 'the benefits of collaborating has been seen through the business and the inclusion of cross-functional teams has created many of the successes we see in our business daily'. This ties into the findings by Peter Grazier (as found in Clapon, 2016, p. 6), who notes that 'everyone has something to contribute, and will if the environment is right'.

The positive features of collaboration, as expressed by a number of respondents, indicates the benefits the organisation stands to gain should this type of working environment be encouraged. The senior leaders across the business showed full support for this factor of culture being encouraged within the business but noted that it was difficult to implement as the workforce and their working habits was changing. Regardless of this, the benefits of this factor of culture was noted as being effective in creating positive employee engagement, within this business, as well as achieving greater organisational results.

4.5.2.7 Accountability

The factor of accountability was mentioned by respondent 7 as being evident in the business by noting that ‘we take ownership of things and we do things with pride – If I put out something, I want to be proud of what I put out.’ This point was further elaborated on by respondent 12 who noted that accountability is evident in the business, especially by managers noting that ‘we ask a lot from our managers and they take full accountability for their teams’

Respondent 8 stated that accountability is a factor of the organisation’s culture as the business has a belief entitled ‘I own it’, which accounts for each employee’s responsibility to be accountable for the work they need to do. She also notes that although this factor is a shared belief, it is not common practice within the organisation and is only adhered to by some employees, and this in turn, creates upset within the organisation. She also noted that leadership themselves need to be accountable and hold their employees accountable in order for this aspect of culture to thrive within the business. These results are aligned with findings by Baumruk (2006), who notes that people are more engaged if their leader holds them and their teams accountable for results.

This sentiment was echoed by respondent 3 who noted the importance of accountability in an organisation’s culture. He acknowledged though that within this business, ‘we are good at highlighting positives but not good at correcting poor behaviour’. He surmised that if both aspects of accountability were accounted for within the business, positive employee engagement would result.

Respondent 5 noted that accountability is linked to your performance. He noted that when one is accountable for their actions and their work, they are likely to perform well above what is expected and do more than is required to get the desired results. Respondent 7 reiterated this point but went on to note that ‘when managers are seen taking accountability for their teams and their work, this builds the culture of accountability throughout the organisation’. Respondent 3 added by saying ‘leadership’s role should include driving accountability throughout the business but it has to be a created and shared view, it cannot simply be driven by HR’.

The details offered by respondents identify accountability as a key factor of culture which positively influences employee engagement within this organisation. Accountability was also noted to improve employee performance. With this factor being alluded to by a number of respondents as being important within the business in creating positive engagement, it should be noted as relevant and effective in creating positive employee engagement within this business.

4.5.2.8 Involvement

The factor of involvement was noted as being part of this organisation's culture. Respondent 2 noted that 'people are quite willing to get involved, put their hand up and take on additional responsibility'. This is can be described as an indicator of employee engagement, as Weinger (2015) noted that disengaged employees are not willing to take on more than is necessary.

Respondent 3 noted that one of the most significant things he likes about the culture within this organisation is that 'people are always willing to pitch in and help resolve any issues'. He adds that it is easy for people to communicate and work towards a common goal.

There is no denying that people like to feel included in decisions and matters which will affect them in the long run. As noted by respondent 7, 'when employees are involved in processes and decisions, they are more likely to buy into the offering and give their all, in order to achieve various objectives'. Another respondent, respondent 2, also noted that there is a difference in the type of involvement each employee can undertake. He noted that Involvement can take the form of:

- Governance – ensuring that the business is doing what it has set out to do, in an ethical and applicable manner
- Innovation – aiding the organisation in its endeavour to move forward, adhere to the changes in the environment and offer a product/service which is new to the market.

Respondent 6 also noted the relevance of involving employees in important aspects of the business and allowing them to make mistakes as, through this, learning takes place and the importance of working as a team is evident. It was also noted by

respondent 11 that by offering employees shares in the business, they are more likely to get involved and ensure that they act with intent as they too have something to gain when the business does well and likewise to lose when the business does not do well. This relates to Clapon (2016) who notes that by involving employees in the organisation's decisions, the business is likely to see long-term retention and a high level of performance as each employee feels responsible for building the organisation's future and also strengthens relationships between themselves and management.

Respondent 10 made reference to a key factor. She noted that 'people want to make a difference in the environments in which they work'. She noted that employees cannot be forced to be involved as various work tasks which form part of their daily business operations, often take preference and deter employees from getting involved and participating, especially when the effects of the involvement are not communicated, rewarded or recognised. This shows that by organisations creating opportunities for people to get involved, and encouraging this kind of behaviour with communication around its benefits and recognition for those who participate, employees are given an extra sense of motivation to act within the confines of the business and are encouraged to play an active part.

This study found that involvement is a key factor of culture within this organisation and by encouraging employees to get involved and by creating opportunities for involvement, a greater sense of employee engagement would be seen.

4.5.2.9 Innovation

Respondent 5 noted that one of the key cultural goals the organisation is working on and which he feels is present in the business, is innovation. He acknowledges that the organisation wants their employees to think that they are innovative and encourage them to be innovative too. He notes that 'through our innovation and people, we are winning new clients, we are being recognised for what we do, we are taking market share from the competition' and he associated these gains with helping to motivate employee engagement. Sentiments by respondent 3 noted that one of the key elements of this organisation's culture is the fact that 'we do cool stuff here and there

are cool problems to solve and this permeates through the organisation and makes people want to be a part of it'.

Respondent 6 notes that innovation is an important part of this business and that leaders 'reach out to employees and ask what ideas they have and how they can contribute, how we can do things differently as a company, etc. to continue this culture of innovation'. Respondent 7 added that the business was always coming up with new innovative ideas and that these ideas stem from aiding the organisation's customers in achieving their desired outcomes and making things work best for them.

Creating this culture of innovation and future thinking, could create the opportunity for growth, expressing one's ideas in an open platform and them being listened to as well as giving all employees the opportunity to be innovative in an environment where innovation is required. This factor of culture is evident in the organisation and by the interviewees' responses, can be related to a key feature of engagement within the business. By allowing for this creative space, employee engagement could be on the increase.

4.5.2.10 Communication

Communication is a very broad term and can be used to assess two main features within an organisation:

1) People know what is happening within the business and are aware of what is required of them; thus there is a clarity of purpose
2) Acknowledgement that people are important and recognition is given when tasks are completed according to the desired plan which will result in emotional engagement

Respondent 1 admitted that communication within the organisation was not good. She acknowledged that it has improved over the last couple of years, but that it was still not where it should be. She added that more factual communication was needed in order for people to use the details obtained as opposed to working off assumptions or opinion. She added to this by noting that 'people love facts because it is real and they can see what decisions have been based on'. Although she acknowledged that this was not used as effectively as they had hoped at this stage, it was a key focus and

that already small changes in this regard have been seen to improve the level of robust conversations as opposed to the sidebar conversations which left people feeling unsure of how to proceed.

These sentiments were shared by respondent 3, who also noted that communication across the business, although present, needed some attention. He mentioned that people across the business needed to be made aware of all the good work the business is involved in, how their solutions and offerings were shaping the industry and that the business is involved in great innovation. He acknowledges that sharing these messages and ideas would help motivate people, give them a sense of what the business is striving towards and where it is headed and in return, create a more positive sense of engagement.

Respondent 6 stated that although there is communication through the business, the organisation's strategy and growth plan are often shared in details which are not easily understood by employees in the lower job levels. She adds that this disconnect often leaves employees on this level feeling unsure of the organisation's plans and often leaves them feeling more disengaged. She added that the organisation sends out a weekly newsletter which highlights company-related articles which were shared on social media platforms and gives insight into the business's operations. However, financial performance, strategic plans, legislative and regulatory impacts to the current model as well as achievement of growth objectives were not presented to employees and could aid in creating further, constructive, communication which would assist in building further engagement.

Respondent 8 also noted that the organisation places particular attention on email communication, which results in a 'hit-and-miss' approach. When communication is shared via email, employees are often unable to ask pressing questions and to engage with the details presented to them. This in turn, leaves space for informal conversations and inaccurate information spreading across the business. The respondent noted the need for more top-down, formal setting discussion to take place to allow employees to engage with the details presented and ask questions where relevant. This respondent also noted that whilst the communication of the organisation's strategies is good, the cascading of this information throughout the business needed to be improved in order for employees, across all levels, to know the

organisation's plans and to identify their role in achieving the desired outcomes. This statement aligns with Clapon's (2016) view that clear communication about how valued employees are, where the company is going and how well the company is performing as well as what is coming up next, will help build employee engagement.

If there are any changes in the vision and values of the business, these need to be communicated accordingly (Clapon, 2016). Clapon (2016) further explains that there needs to be a reminder about what the organisation's goals are, what the key principals used in the business are, how each individual can aid in bringing the company closer to achieving its goals. Communicating those key factors, as highlighted by various interviewees, allows employees to connect with the organisation they work for and to understand what is required to succeed.

This study found that internal company communication which consist of details around business results and on-going high-level feedback on the organisation's performance is a vital component of organisational culture which aids in producing positive employee engagement within this organisation. It was identified that the factor of communication was evident, but that some strategic planning was needed to ensure that the right message was being shared and that the mode of communicating was applicable and comprehendible by all employees throughout the business.

4.5.2.11 Resources

Respondent 1 noted that ensuring the right resources are in place aids in building employee engagement. She noted that 'how easy it is for me to get my work done, whether I have the right resources in order to be effective and deliver what I need to deliver,' makes me feel more or less engaged in the environment in which I work. This aligns with the sentiments offered by Makros (2010), who states that by ensuring the right resources are in place is vital in aiding positive employee engagement.

It could be surmised that the relevant resources are in place within this organisation as respondent 3 notes that 'we have the right tools from systems and computers to people and all that' and added that although the processes were not always aligned and in place, that the relevant resources were made available as required.

This was also commented on by respondent 9 who noted that the organisation has the right people resources and that this was attained through vigorous hiring practices which were strictly adhered to as the organisation prides itself on hiring the best people and creating the desired fit in the business. This sentiment was shared by respondent 10 who noted that 'the calibre of people I work with in my team are highly skilled and super-efficient, there is a lot of trouble that goes into the HR process in getting the right people for the right positions and I understand that's why it takes such a long time for certain positions'.

Respondent 3 indicated that the organisation in question is committed to hiring the right people and noted the importance of aligning the organisation's culture with the standards, expectations and values held by all current and future employees. This was reiterated by respondents 1 and 9 who acknowledged that careful consideration is given to who is hired and the role they will play in fostering the culture in the business. Respondent 10 also noted that the HR hiring practices within this organisation were adequate in that they ensured that highly skilled and efficient employees were hired across the business. This reinforces the idea that people as valuable resources are utilised within the business to ensure operations are effective and efficient. "Competitive advantage will lie with the companies who attract the right people and reward them" (Direction, 2010, p. 26). Attracting and retaining the right people within the business is a necessary and effective part of a business's culture which will aid in creating the employee engagement (Direction, 2010).

This shows that having the right resources in place and creating an environment in which these resources can be utilised can effectively aid in creating positive employee engagement within this business. This business has the necessary resources to achieve their desired outcomes and this inclusion of the appropriate resources has been seen to positively affect employee engagement.

4.5.2.12 Trust

What is interesting to note is that in the ranking table, most of the respondents ranked trust as one of the most important factors, if not the most important factor, of organisational culture which would positively influence employee engagement, but only four respondents made mention of trust in their interviews. This would lead one

to surmise that respondents believed that the factor of trust as a form of organisational culture being present in the organisation would create positive employee engagement. Trust has also been noted in the 'Best companies to work for' report as one of the main characteristics required to achieve employee engagement and attain this accolade (Furlonger, 2005).

Respondent 4 noted that 'If I can trust the organisation will look after me, and my manager will defend me and challenge me or my colleagues…..this will determine whether I will go the extra mile or whether I'm going to do things without anybody checking up on me or whether I'm going to leave the organisation'. He adds that the culture of trust is evident in the business but that it is often seen within certain teams and divisions but not necessarily throughout the business. This point is reiterated by respondent 8 who adds that within this business, 'groups work within silos and that there is often a lack of trust between departments'. She noted that working through this, could aid in building the employee engagement the business was seeking to employ. This train of through aligns with those by Margolis (2017) who states that employees who are engaged, trust that the organisation will consider them, meet their needs and treat them fairly.

Respondent 5 noted that there is an element of trust in the organisation's culture. He notes that they 'don't have a culture of 'dog eat dog', like you have to stab someone in the back to succeed or get promoted or that we arbitrarily fire people, there is a congenial aspect to the organisation's culture in that it is not political in that regard'.

Respondent 9 also linked trust to autonomy, noting that 'if employees were allowed their independence and to work on their own accord, this would signify the trust between individuals within the business and stimulate employee engagement'. She acknowledged that the organisation gave the option of flexi-hours or work from home options and that these benefits aided in engaging employees across the business. She also added that in order for this to be offered to employees, there needed to be an element of trust in the organisation's culture.

Hence, increased trust throughout the business and in the organisation's leadership team would be a valuable factor of culture attained within the business in order to achieve positive employee engagement. Although somewhat present, this aspect can

be advanced and encouraged across the organisation, as opposed to within certain divisions, in order to achieve the desired level of employee engagement.

4.5.2.13 Adaptability

Adaptability is a key feature within this business as there are goals and strategies in place for changing the business model from its core offering to provide greater insight as needed as we move into the fourth industrial revolution. In order to align with this strategy, employees need to be adaptable and willing to learn new skills and work within a variety of modes and channels.

Respondent 6 stated that the business has changed over the years and many of the changes have taken place at a rapid rate. She notes that 'we have evolved over the years and the individuals have been evolving with the company' whether it be with systems changes, CEO's, people or the greater environment in which we operate, she notes that they are continuously adapting and changing in the hope of being better and attaining financial growth. She adds though that with all the adapting, leaders cannot forget that employees need to understand the changes and thus need to be taken along on the journey and also given a view of the bigger picture to make them feel comfort in the changes.

Respondent 9 suggested that a positive aspect of the organisation's culture is that it is primed to adapt and is continuously living up to that. She added that people generally do not like change, but that by continuously changing and adapting, ensures that the business remains relevant and allows employees to explore new boundaries, learn new skill sets and ensures that everyone is up to date and able to accommodate the changes needed which are in line with the environment in which the business operates. This offers opportunities for growth and these new opportunities also allow for a greater sense of engagement. She added that she particularly liked this feature of the organisation's culture as 'we want to be a business of the future not close our doors.' This respondent's views align with those by Reeves and Deimler (2011), who state that organisations are realising that a sustainable competitive advantage does not arise from position and scale but rather, from learning how to do new things in a changing market and how to unlock their greatest resources – the people who work in their organisations.

Respondent 12 stated that this organisation has been through a lot of changes and that transformation has been key in keeping the business relevant and making positive changes. This transformation and ability to adapt to the changing environment is a key part of the organisation's culture, according to respondent 12, and will, if pursued appropriately, aid in creating further success and growth opportunities as well as building a leading brand which people will want to work for.

The rapid changes within the environment in which employees work has made organisations realise the importance of adaptability, both in reacting to external environments as well as for employees (Denison, 1990). The factor of adaptability as a factor of organisational culture in this business is evident and from the response from employees as discussed above, it can be seen as a positive indicator of employee engagement if facilitated correctly and if enough information is given to employees beforehand to ensure that they are aware of why things are changing as well as the effect it will have on them.

4.5.2.14 Coaching/mentoring

Respondent 3 noted that coaching and mentorship was available within the organisation and the goal was to achieve this kind of culture to ensure that employees are given the guidance and appropriate opportunity to grow, however, he noted that more of this was needed throughout the business. He acknowledged that 'We need to work on that [mentorship] as it is a really important part of a successful company and also engagement'. He added that 'In order to see the effects, we could monitor the successes of the mentorship programmes available', adding that 'if you just arbitrarily say everyone is going to be mentored, either the mentee or mentor may not buy into it thus it can't be arbitrary, it must be based on a real need or an employee requirement'.

The importance of mentorship was reiterated by respondent 3 who indicated that a good mentor is able to change an employee's frame of thinking and assist in altering their engagement status. He acknowledged that both formal and informal mentoring could be effective in producing the desired outcomes in a business and aiding in building engagement as well as breaking down the silos and gaining different perspectives. He noted that with the changing work environment, mentorship and

guidance has become more of an important factor for employees, ‘I was interviewing someone the other day and when we offered him the position, he made it clear that he would only take the job if he would be offered effective mentoring in the role – this shows that the younger people coming into the business world value this advice more as opposed to just having a buddy to bounce ideas off of’.

Respondent 4 noted the important part a mentor has played in his personal growth and identifies the need for this in all organisations. He acknowledged that this organisation has coaching and mentoring opportunities available but that not enough of this kind of interaction was available to employees or encouraged, but that there were plans to reinforce this factor of culture more strongly within the business. This respondent’s train of thought aligns with a comment by Brown et al. (2015) who state that through mentorship and coaching, organisations can aid in making work more meaningful for their employees.

The comments by leaders who have had mentors throughout their careers and the effects this had had on them, shows the importance of including this factor of culture within one’s business to create positive employee engagement. The comments by respondents indicate that this factor of culture is present within this organisation and can be used more effectively to encourage employee engagement.

4.5.2.15 Autonomy

Respondent 9 noted that there is a sense of autonomy in the organisation’s culture as employees are given the option to work flexi-time and are able to work from home when needed. She added that autonomy was closely linked to trust and that if trust was more widely visible within the organisation’s culture, the autonomy would also grow. Respondent 2’s view adds to this by noting the importance of autonomy and indicated that the business has teams working all over the country and continent, many of which work from home and are responsible for various functions on a daily basis. He acknowledged that this sense of independence was likely to keep people motivated and that often, this sense of independence kept people more motivated and engaged as they felt the business trusted them. This aligns with a comment by Cooper (2016) who states that autonomy makes employees feel more content with their work and increases productivity.

This autonomy does not just apply to individuals. Cooper (2016) acknowledges that the theory of autonomy applies to both groups and individuals by noting that if a work team has the power to make decisions as a group, without approval from higher management, that group has an extent of autonomy and will be more likely to engage with the activity. Lammers, Stoker, Rink, and Galinsky (2016) did a study on autonomy and found that people were two and a half times more likely to accept a job where autonomy was evident than to take a job where they would have more influence. This, along with the comments made by the respondent, highlights the advantages of having autonomy as a factor of culture could have on creating positive employee engagement.

Although not widely mentioned by respondents, autonomy was noted as being part of this organisation's culture and for some employees, part of their employee engagement.

4.6 Conclusion to the results and discussion

The research question was:

What are the perceived factors of an organisation's culture that positively affect employee engagement in a South African organisation?

The research question outlined at the beginning of the research was validated through the interviews with participants across the management level of the business, with factors of the organisations culture that positively affect employee engagement within this business being identified as below, in order of perceived importance:

- Reward and Recognition
- Leadership's Role
- Relationship building
- Transparency
- Career Growth
- Collaboration
- Accountability
- Involvement
- Innovation

- Communication
- Resources
- Trust
- Adaptability
- Coaching/Mentoring
- Autonomy

This research showed that the factors of culture mentioned above are effective in bringing about positive employee engagement. It was established that not all of the factors displayed were evident in the organisation used for this study however, were identified by respondents as being relevant and important in encouraging positive employee engagement.

In line with the outputs of this research, the initial Diagrammatic representation of factors of organisational culture which positively influence employee engagement (Figure 4) was revised during the research process, resulting in a new model being presented (Figure 5). This revised model forms the basis for the discussion as presented in the conclusion of this research.

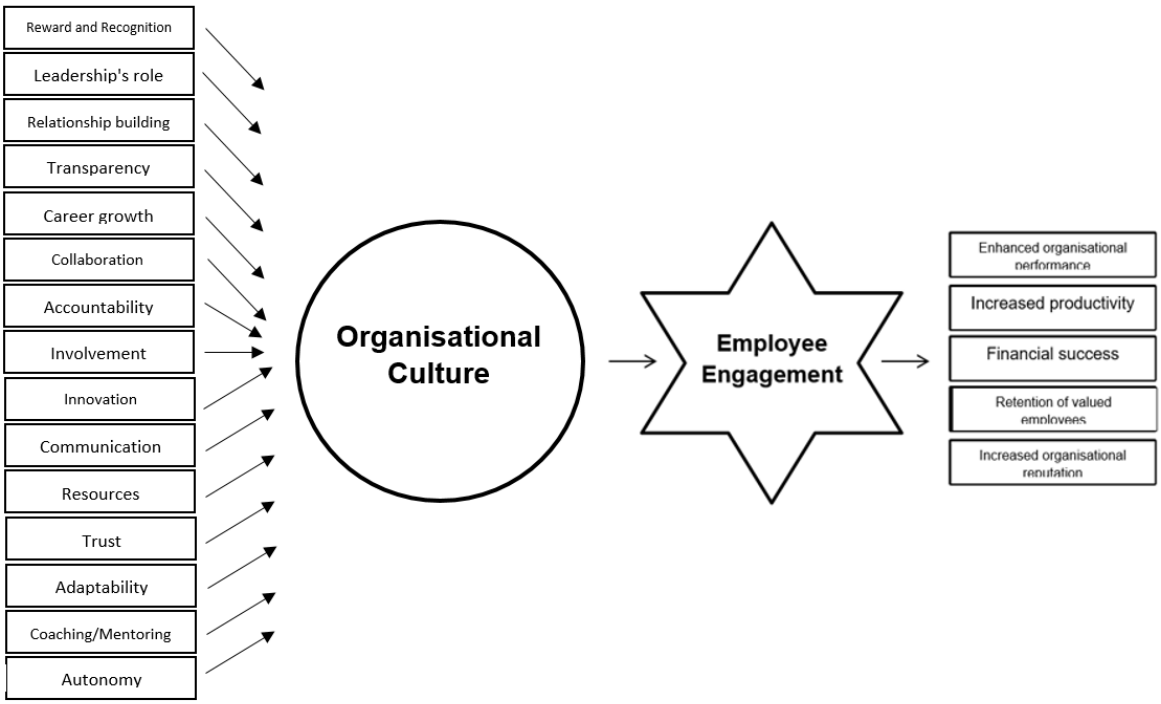

Figure 4.2: Perceptions of factors of organisational culture that lead to employee engagement within the case site organisation.

5 CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Attempts to enhance organisational performance have begun to show the importance of positive organisational behaviour (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). This study aimed to show the effects of culture as a precursor to employee engagement, showing the importance of organisational culture to employee engagement within the case site organisation.

The results of this study show that specific factors of organisational culture are linked to positive employee engagement and further indicate that certain dimensions of organisational culture can aid in the formulation of strategic plans to encourage engagement.

There is also acknowledgement that engaged employees are likely to outperform their disengaged counterparts as employee engagement has been shown to relate to positive work outcomes. The results of this study suggest that it is in the organisation's best interest to foster a positive organisational culture and ensure that employees remain engaged in their work in order to retain workers and also to enable work initiatives which will promote future growth and success (Alarcon et al., 2010).

If the drivers of organisational cultural which affect engagement are understood, they can be manifested and utilised within the business to produce the required outcomes.

5.1 Introduction

The research undertaken within this anonymous business in Johannesburg, South Africa aimed to identify the perceptions of factors of organisational culture which positively influence employee engagement within the case site organisation.

A qualitative method of research was adopted whereby twelve respondents were interviewed using a semi-structured interview approach and were asked to provide their perceptions of organisational culture which positively influence employee engagement within the organisation for which they work. The penultimate chapter of this research discussed the content compiled from these interviews and provided a

final view of the factors influencing employee engagement, as listed in section 4.6 above.

This chapter concludes this research report and offers recommendations, reflects on the limitations of the study and offers ideas for future research in the fields of both organisational culture and employee engagement. The report concludes with inferences in regard to the attainment of the goals, as set out by the researcher, in this study.

5.2 Conclusions of the study

The researcher has observed that all of the elements listed in the literature review are positively linked to employee engagement. Reward and recognition was identified as one of the most important factors of culture which promotes positive employee engagement within the chosen organisation and is closely followed by leadership's role, relationship building, transparency, career growth, collaboration, accountability, involvement, innovation, communication, resources, trust, adaptability, coaching/mentoring and autonomy.

5.3 Recommendations

The study has identified various factors perceived to influence employee engagement, and the findings from the research are considered important, as per the information outlined in the literature review, in acknowledging the key factors which can encourage positive employee engagement.

It is not easy for organisations to get all the elements of culture right all the time and it is often very difficult to change culture but making minor modifications in the way things are done can make a valuable difference.

To initiate the process, an organisation could increase the nature and the magnitude of what it does well. Leadership and management processes will be perceived positively and have an impact on employee engagement. In order to strengthen the leadership teams and their ability to encourage and create the desired culture particular focus should be placed on talent management practices which will enhance employee engagement.

Recruitment interventions can also prove to be effective in ensuring that candidates with the desired characteristics are hired and that leadership is transparent about the type of candidates wanted in the business and that mimic the aspects which appear to be important to employees.

The implementation of formal change management teams and various methods which can aid with communication, involvement and the likes can foster greater inclination to implementing cultural change and create a platform of transparency and trust.

There was a great sense of employees feeling unsure of the future of the business and commitment to collaborating across teams. In order to counteract this, aspects such as trust, openness, and transparency need to be addressed by the organisation and action plans put in place to mitigate the negative effects of these missing aspects.

5.3.1 Reward and Recognition

To foster greater engagement levels, greater formal and informal recognition programmes could be utilised. In order to ensure the effectiveness of these programmes, employee focus groups could be used to see how employees would like to be recognised and also to establish how those who will be nominated for these recognition initiative will be selected. It is vital to ensure that transparency is evident in the selection criteria.

Consideration should also be given to rewarding those who effectively live up to and abide by the cultural beliefs the organisation holds. Thus, if the desired culture is one of collaboration and involvement, those employees who act within this realm are adequately rewarded to show that the business believes in its culture and acknowledges those who uphold these ideals.

5.3.2 Leadership's Role

Management training can be effective in producing the required outcomes and creating the desired culture in the organisation. A collaborative and interactive leadership style will demonstrate that leaders are interested in employee's well-being and know that is happening on the ground. To address employees within this organisation's concern that leaders are not visible enough, the 'managing by walking

around' concept could be used to encourage that engagement and create greater visibility which these employees would like. These minor yet effective tasks could have an overarching effect on employee engagement and business performance.

5.3.3 Relationship building

Relationship building cannot be forced or effectively implemented by a third party, this element of culture needs to be genuine and relationships need to be initiated by employees, naturally. The organisation can encourage this kind of relationship building by ensuring that through the hiring practices, potential employees are monitored to ensure that they 'fit' within the organisation's culture and that this positive feature of the organisation's culture can continue to flourish. Leaders in the organisation can also practice building these relationships and enforce/create opportunities for employees to associate with other employees across the business and to establish common interests, outside of the work environment.

5.3.4 Transparency

In order to build transparency within the organisation, leaders need to create a clear set of goals for the business which encompass the vision of the business, and let all employees see it so that there is a clear understanding of the bigger picture. This push for transparency promotes a sense of trust and value in all employees within that organisation as well as offering a sense of ownership as all employees then feel as if they have a hand in the organisation's success (Midlothian Economic Development, 2017).

5.3.5 Career Growth

If business leaders want their employees to stay with them for a certain period of time, they need to create a culture where growth in the employee's careers is evident and encouraged (Midlothian Economic Development, 2017). Businesses could invest in career coaches who assist employees with a specific tenure or those who have shown interest in advancing with the business in mapping out a career growth plan according to their desires and skills. In order to 'test the waters' career workshops could be

hosted and attendance and effectiveness of this could be measured to assess the details and success of such an initiative.

Training and development workshops would also account for career development thus the organisation could form relationships with various training providers and offer a series of courses and workshops to all employees, based on their career goals.

5.3.6 Collaboration

In order to create a culture of collaboration, management must be seen to be collaborating and drawing on a variety of resources across the business to achieve the desired outcomes. Initiatives which are designed to create opportunities for collaboration across the business need to be encouraged and measured in order to prove the effect of a multi-dimensional team effort. Again, if leaders and managers are not witnessed creating opportunities for collaboration or collaborating themselves, this culture will not filter through the organisation and create the desired effects.

5.3.7 Accountability

Accountability is about following through on items you have said you would get done and also acknowledging that others within the business are dependent on your work and thus not letting them down (Tanner, 2016). Through showing this accountability and adhering to the commitments you have made, trust is formed (Tanner, 2016).

In order to create an environment in which accountability is evident, leaders need to ensure that they do not practise or tolerate a lack of punctuality, missed deadlines and incomplete work tasks as this creates the idea that these behaviours are acceptable and employees will soon learn that there are no consequences for not taking accountability (Tanner, 2016). Leaders need to practice the principles they want employees to follow and enforce consequences for a lack of accountability which need to be applied strictly in order to ensure that the culture is maintained (Tanner, 2016).

As a start, leaders need to discuss accountability with their teams and identify what accountability means to each employee, thus creating a common base upon which employees operate (Tanner, 2016). In this way, leaders will be making accountability

part of their team's normal way of operating and thus it will form part of the organisation's culture.

Creating this culture of accountability is not easy but the advantages of initiating activities which will create this culture, will be well worth the time (Tanner, 2016).

5.3.8 Involvement

In the research conducted by Atkins (2012), it was noted that a 2012 evaluation of engaged organisations showed that those with a highly engaged workforce had highly involved employees. The findings also showed that high-profitability companies are twice as likely to have high involvement cultures as low profitability companies. This shows the need for creating an environment where a culture of involvement is evident and practiced across the organisation by leaders and employees.

This culture of involvement can be created by the organisation by creating opportunities for employees to get involved and for them to show the benefits which can be attaining by utilising this culture. Leadership is also required in initiating this culture, if leaders and managers across the organisations are seen to be getting involved, this allows employees to acknowledge that 'this is how we do things here' and follow as required. The involvement practices utilised should include both social activities, charity events as well as opportunities for employees to come together, collaborate and share in a learning experience.

5.3.9 Innovation

To create the desired culture, human resource policies need to be created or altered in line with the organisation's goals. By doing this, greater improvements in employee engagement are likely.

5.3.10 Communication

It is no surprise that a lack of effective communication would lead to greater levels of disengagement throughout the business. Without effective communication, employees are left in the dark with regard to the organisation's performance and challenges. In order to avoid this, an effective internal communication strategy should

be implemented whereby important information is shared with all employees via the desired mode to ensure that they are up to date with the organisation's news, have a clear understanding of the organisation's strategy and goals and when questions arise, are able to go to the source to validate, question and enquire.

Clapon (2016) notes that communication via email is less effective, however, communication in this form is better than no communication at all. With the changing workforce and the increase in the use of apps and other more interesting modes of communicating, Clapon (2016) suggests that businesses use bidirectional methods to communicate across the business as they can be tailored to send communication as required, but also to measure the impact of the communication sent. This mode can effectively be incorporated throughout the business by creating a cellular application which employee can connect to and can use as a source for up to date information, news and updates.

5.3.11 Resources

Ensuring the right resources, both people and tools, is important in creating an environment in which employees feel as though it is easy for them to get things done. These resources create a sense of ease and confidence in the employees' ability to complete tasks and to excel within the organisation. Leaders need to assess which tools are needed by employees and create opportunities for these to be made available. Appropriate hiring practices will also assist in ensuring that the right people are in position and are able to assist in getting things done.

5.3.12 Trust

Creating an environment in which trust is evident, does not happen overnight, however, there are important steps leaders can take to create a more trusting environment and the effects will be seen in the business's results (Atkins, 2012):

- **Involve people in the decisions that affect them** – when people are involved in a decision, even if they are not required to make the final call, they are more likely to support the decision. This requires leaders bringing in people from across the organisation, making them feel capable of assisting in a decision will

show that you trust them to be part of good decisions and in turn, they will trust you.

- **Being transparent and consistent in your actions** – we cannot be so focused on outcomes that we forget the process. Understanding the thought process involved in making a decision can affect how people feel about the decision. If one is consistent and transparent, employees will see the motives behind decisions and will learn to rely on leaders.
- **Pay attention to relationships** – The connection/disconnection between employees and their managers affects engagement and involvement to a large extent. If employees know that their managers understand and act on the features which matter to them, they are more likely to trust in the manager's ability to act in ways that align with their interests.

Tanner (2016) also notes that in environments with low trust, people are quick to blame as opposed to seeking a solution however, in high trust environments, people quickly seek solutions as opposed to blame. These features show how trust can be fostered and enforced within the organisation to create a platform for positive employee engagement.

5.3.13 Adaptability

Leaders need to ensure that business adaptability is accounted for and is a normal part of their organisation's culture (Schoultz, *2016).* This can be done by focusing on the people who work for and are hired into the organisation, by creating solid recruitment measurements and accounting for adaptability, leaders could create the right fit that could assist in attaining the desired outcomes.

Leaders could also offer employees the opportunity to acquire new skills which will encourage them to become more adaptable in completing their daily tasks as well as in completing new tasks (Schoultz, 2016).

5.3.14 Coaching/Mentoring

The 'Leadership that works' (2017) team note that creating a culture of coaching and mentoring changes the way people work together and that organisations that have created this culture, have much higher employee engagement.

To create this culture of coaching/mentoring, leaders need to be seen coaching and mentoring employees across the organisation. Where this is not possible due to time constraints and peak seasons, external coaches/mentors could be utilised to encourage this kind of behaviour (Leadership at work, 2017). It is important to acknowledge that this attempt at creating a coaching/mentoring environment cannot become futile or be forced upon employees but needs to be seen as the norm and practiced throughout the organisation as leaders and employees see fit.

5.3.15 Autonomy

Micromanagement can lead to feelings of frustration and demoralisation (Midlothian Economic Development, 2017). Giving employees autonomy gives them a sense of empowerment over their work and allows employees to feel more commitment towards their organisations and motivated to get things done, as they may be able to do them in a way they see fit which is likely to result in greater job satisfaction (Midlothian Economic Development, 2017).

Leaders need to give employees a sense of autonomy but this does not mean free reign to do as they wish, it means laying down the ground rules and boundaries that will offer the structure needed while employees are given the opportunity to handle things on their own and explore their own ideas (Midlothian Economic Development, 2017).

5.4 Limitations of the study

This research report had some limitations. Firstly, only the members of the management of this organisation were interviewed thus perceptions, as presented by employees, were not accounted for and included. Also, the study was conducted within the Johannesburg branch of this organisation with individuals who work within this branch on a daily basis, thus views, perceptions and opinions of those managers from the other regions were not considered. Lastly, this study was conducted at only one organisation in South Africa thus views may not be generalisable across other organisations.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

This research has analysed the perceptions of factors of organisational culture which positively affect employee engagement in an organisation in South Africa and the researcher encourages further examination in the fields of employee engagement, organisational culture, leadership and performance.

The following ideas are suggested for future investigation:

5.5.1 Use more than one organisation

Greater insights could have been gained if this study was conducted across various organisations. Assessing the perceptions of factors of organisational culture across an array of businesses would allow for greater generalisability and provide greater insights into other factors of culture which have a positive effect on employee engagement.

Suggested research question: Factors of organisational culture which positively influence employee engagement with evidence from various organisations across Johannesburg.

5.5.2 Mixed method research approach

There could be great value in conducting the same research as was conducted in this report but using the mixed method research methodology. This is suggested as differing opinions and levels of importance were placed on various factors of culture which were presented in the interviews as opposed to those presented in the rating scale at the end. This could allow for greater discussion and for various other perceptions to arise.

Suggested research question: Mixed method approach to identifying the perceptions of factors of organisational culture which positively influence employee engagement.

5.5.3 Extending the population used to encompass all areas of the business as opposed to the one office in Johannesburg

The current study was limited to respondents within the one branch of the organisation and therefore there exists the opportunity to extend this research to include other regions, key leaders, etc. with the aim of correlating the findings from this study with those from across the organisation.

Suggested research question: Perceptions of factors of organisational culture which positively influences employee engagement within an organisation which has branches in various regions across Africa.

5.5.4 Analyse the differences evident in various subgroups within the business

The study did not focus on the effects of subgroup difference related to age, gender or seniority. One could look at identifying specific aspects of organisational culture which have a strong impact on employee engagement for various groups within the business.

Suggested research question: Factors of organisational culture which have a greater impact on employee engagement based on age, gender and seniority within the business.

5.5.5 Longitudinal studies could be conducted on employee engagement

This study was conducted at an exact moment in time and thus has no comparative capabilities to any other studies conducted on employee engagement within the same business. For future research, a recommendation would be to conduct the research at various points in time to derive greater value from the results thus pre- and post-organisational system changes, leadership changes or policy changes.

Suggested research question: Factors of organisational culture which positively influence employee engagement at different time intervals in the year.

5.5.6 South African variables which could play a part

This study looked at the perceptions of factors of organisational culture within one specific company in South Africa. One could consider investigating diversity, transformation in South Africa and the role this plays in shaping an organisation's culture and building employee engagement.

Suggested research question: The role of diversity and transformation in shaping organisational culture within an organisation.

5.6 Concluding remarks

This research has looked at two vital elements of organisational performance, namely organisational culture and employee engagement. The attempt was made to examine which elements of organisational culture could lead to employee engagement within the case site organisation. There is a need for more research and more in-depth discussion on this matter as the topic of engagement is not yet crystallised.

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APPENDIX A

Cover Letter (Draft)

Dear (Respondent)

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my research for my Masters of Business Administration (MBA) degree. Our discussion will be based on the factors of organisational culture that lead to employee engagement within the organisation you work for. This research is being conducted for academic purposes only, and although the relevant feedback will be made public, as a respondent none of your details or organisational details will be disclosed. This research is based on concepts and is not intended to measure your ability, performance or personal characteristics. .

Context and high level methodology of the research:

An extensive review of current literature has been undertaken to determine the list of attributes that one would find applicable to organisational culture. As part of this research, I would like your assistance to determine which of the attributes are relevant in ensuring employee engagement within your current workplace. This analysis will be done through a semi-structured face-to-face interview where applicable questions will be asked and discussed. Before the end of the interview, you will be presented with a list of the 10 most common factors of organisational culture, as suggested through the literature and asked to rate them in accordance with their perceived impact on employee engagement.

Anonymity

Please note that the results of this exercise will be kept anonymous and neither your name nor your company's name will be disclosed for further purposes of this research.

Kind regards

Zaifa Schlegel

Contact Number: 082 782 8101

APPENDIX B: The proposed semi-structured Interview questions

The following questions will be a used by me to maintain focus during the discussion and to form a base for the discussions.

The purpose behind these questions is to establish the aspects of organisational culture you believe has an effect on employee engagement. These interviews will also allow me to explore certain responses and use literature to assess the underlying value.

Two definitions of “Employee Engagement” and “Organisational Culture” have been listed below. To ensure that there is a common understanding of the terms, these will be read:

Organisational Culture The values shared by the people in a business or the behaviour people within the organisation are encouraged to follow which governs how things are done within that business. Put simply, organisational culture can be described as ‘The way we do things here’ and encompasses the way an organisation treats its people and expectations with regards to performance.

Employee Engagement The extent to which employees feel passionate about their jobs, put discretionary effort into their work and are committed to the organisation which is seen in their intention to stay with and how hard they will work for the organisation. Simply, this is their level of ‘happiness’ or ‘content’ in being part of and associated with an organisation.

Interview questions:

The following questions will be discussed:

1. How engaged do you think our employees are?
2. What would you say are the key elements of our culture?
3. In your view, what are the key factors of organisational culture that contribute to employee engagement? Please give a brief explanation as to why you have listed the various items.

4. How impactful do you think the factors of our culture are on employee engagement?
5. What do you think in our culture influences the level of employee engagement? (If the matters discussed in the literature are not mentioned, I will use one or two of the features below to ask a leading question)

    5.1 The literature suggests that trust, involvement, adaptability, collaboration, transparency, reward & recognition, accountability, communication, coaching/mentoring and autonomy are important aspects which could have an effect on employee engagement. What are your thoughts on this?

6. Is there anything else you can think of in our culture that would affect employee engagement?
7. In your opinion, does your level of engagement affect your level of performance at work?
8. Would you describe yourself as being actively engaged, engaged, disengaged or actively disengaged at work? Please specify the activities/regulations/details around your engagement status.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research.

APPENDIX C

Ranking Table

Details of the respondent:

Date: _____

Time: _____

Respondent name: _____

Title: _____

Instructions:

Please review the list of attributes of organisational culture below and indicate the order (from 1-10) in which you believe these factors are relevant for employee engagement within your current workplace. Number 1 will depict the item you think is most important while 10 will depict the item you think is least important. An open section at the end is provided if you would like to add any comments about attributes that are not featured on the existing list.

Please indicate from 1-10 the factors of organisational culture which you believe are applicable in creating employee engagement within your workplace:

Trust

Involvement

Adaptability

Collaboration

Transparency

Reward and Recognition

Accountability

Communication

Coaching/Mentoring

Autonomy