

ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to explore the influence of managerial coaching behaviours on employee engagement. Organisations need to retain engaged people who are productive and energetic to achieve the organisational success within an ever-changing environment. This might be enabled through the coaching behaviours of managers. While extensive research has been conducted on managerial coaching as a tool to support people to achieve performance, attain goals of the organisation, manage organisational transitions, and, achieve learning, research is limited on how managers can create engagement through utilising managerial coaching behaviours. Organisations need sustainable interventions that will positively impact the overall engagement of people. The manager is a crucial point of contact with people, and is able to create or destroy people's engagement.

This research has a constructivist or interpretivist approach and uses a case study methodology where five cases were analysed and cross-case analysed by interpreting the experiences of managers and two of their team members selected by extreme or purposive sampling on their engagement levels; in other words, one engaged and one disengaged person was interviewed per case as well as the manager.

The findings established that engaged employees have a higher perception of their manager's coaching behaviours than disengaged colleagues, and that all the managers were highly engaged yet varied in how they perceived their own coaching behaviours, and in turn, how they influence engagement. The managers' use of a more empowering coaching style enhances engagement and their coaching behaviours influence fluctuating engagement levels, while a reflective practice within managerial coaching enables deeper understanding of perspectives, and in turn, engagement, but is not a common practice amongst managers. Engagement levels were also influenced by; coaching conversations which occur on a continuum from informal to formal; the manager's coaching ability to create a sense of accountability and ownership; an agile or flexible managerial coaching approach in response to learning or business needs; and, the relationships and presence of the manager. The expertise of managers was valued irrespective of the perception of coaching behaviours or levels of employee engagement. Positive feedback and praise from the manager makes people feel recognised and significant, while the predominant managerial coaching behaviours falls within the performance coaching paradigm. Organisations need to develop the coaching behaviours of their managers to impact on the organisation's and the individual's performance, longer term development, skills acquisition, and wellbeing.