

https://dspace.org/

Factors affecting employee engagement in an advertising agency inSouth Africa

malherbe, Riaan

2017
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/23864

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Factors affecting employee engagement in an advertising agency in South Africa

Riaan Malherbe

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration

Johannesburg, 2017

ABSTRACT

Even though the concept of employee engagement, relatively new as it is, has amassed a significant body of research following a number of studies conducted on the topic over recent years, the specific factors that affect employee engagement, both positively and negatively, among creatives in an advertising agency remain vague. As it is generally accepted that creativity remains the cornerstone of a successful advertising agency, little research has been done into the factors affecting employee engagement among creatives in an advertising agency.

This research report aimed to identify the factors that both promote and inhibit the levels of engagement among creatives in an advertising agency in South Africa.

A thematic analysis was conducted on the responses recorded from semi-structured in-depth interviews of twelve respondents, all of whom were working as creatives in an advertising agency in Johannesburg. The common factors and themes from the respondents provided deep insight into the relevance of the factors against the research proposition. The research findings show that creatives in an advertising agency regard certain factors that affect employee engagement in higher regard than others, and not all the factors as proposed by the research proposition are supported in the research findings.

The key message from this research study is that advertising agencies should be aware of the specific factors that both promote and inhibit employee engagement among creatives, and attempt to introduce the necessary programmes and relevant training in the agency to ensure the highest levels of engagement among creatives, as it in turn will drive creativity and meaningful participation in the creative process.

DECLARATION

I, Riaan Malherbe, 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.

RIAAN MALHERBE

Signed at ……

On the …….. day of …… 2017

DEDICATION

This research report is dedicated to JP Malherbe.

Pa, you are my hero on so many levels. Thank you for being a perfect example of dedication and hard work, and setting my personal achievement standards at a high level. Your words of wisdom and encouragement during my formative years will forever stand me in good stead. Thank you for your love, support and encouragement every step of this journey – I will never forget that. I love you dearly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my partner for his unwavering support and understanding during the past two years. Without your encouragement and patience, this final step of the journey would not have been easily achieved. To my parents, my sister, my other family close and extended: every phone call, every word of encouragement, all the thoughts and prayers that I know I was part of, I cannot thank you all enough.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to:

- My supervisor, Conrad Viedge, for your calm support, guidance and motivation. Your direction, words of advice and insight into my field of research have been invaluable in guiding me throughout this process.
- My CEO, co-workers and colleagues allowing me time off to focus on my studies and this research, and participating as sound boards when I needed to test some ideas.
- All my friends whom I have neglected much, I promise I will make it up to you. I did, after all, announce to my entire class at the beginning of this journey that I love wine!
- The great new friendships made in the WBS MBA part-time weekday 2017. We've worked hard and had much fun. Thank you for all your support and kindness.
- The creatives that I've had the privilege of interviewing at the advertising agency. I know you all have been through tough times, and I wish you only the best in your future endeavours.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ii

DECLARATION iii

DEDICATION iv

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS v

LIST OF TABLES ix

LIST OF FIGURES x

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY 1
1.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY 1
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT 2
1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY 3
1.5 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY 3
1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS 3
1.7 ASSUMPTIONS 4

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW 5

2.1 INTRODUCTION 5
2.2 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT 5
2.2.1 A DEFINITION 5
2.2.2 A MODEL TO MEASURE EMPLOYMENT ENGAGEMENT 9
2.2.3 THE DRIVERS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT 13
2.3 INVOLVEMENT, COMMITMENT, MOTIVATION, SATISFACTION AND BURNOUT 16
2.3.1 MOTIVATION 17
2.3.2 SATISFACTION 17
2.3.3 INVOLVEMENT 18
2.3.4 COMMITMENT 18
2.3.5 BURNOUT 18
2.4 CREATIVES 19
2.4.1 INTRODUCTION 19
2.4.2 DEFINITION 20
2.4.3 CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR CREATIVES 20
2.4.4 ENGAGEMENT DRIVERS OF CREATIVES 22
2.5 CONCLUSION 22
2.5.1 RESEARCH PROPOSITION 23

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 24

3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY /PARADIGM 24
3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN 25
3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLE 26
3.3.1 POPULATION 26
3.3.2 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD 26
3.4 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT 27
3.5 PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION 28
3.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION 29
3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY 29
3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY 30
3.8.1 EXTERNAL VALIDITY 30
3.8.2 INTERNAL VALIDITY 30
3.8.3 RELIABILITY 31

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS 32

4.1 INTRODUCTION 32
4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF INTERVIEW RESPONDENS 33
4.3 RESULTS PERTAINING TO THE FACTORS THAT AFFECT EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT 35
4.4 ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS PERTAINING TO THE FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN AN ADVERTISING AGENCY 45
4.4.1 FACTOR 1: LEADERSHIP STYLE AND MANAGEMENT STYLE 45
4.4.2 FACTOR 2: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH 47
4.4.3 FACTOR 3: REWARD AND RECOGNITION 48
4.4.4 FACTOR 4: SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT 50
4.4.5 FACTOR 5: AUTONOMY AND THE ABSENCE OF RULES AND REGULATIONS 52
4.4.6 FACTOR 6: DECISION-MAKING ABILITY 53
4.4.7 OTHER FACTORS 54
4.4.8 CONCLUSION 55
4.5 CONCLUSION TO THE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION 56

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS 58

5.1 INTRODUCTION 58
5.2 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY 58
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS 59
5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH 59
5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS 61

REFERENCES **62**

APPENDIX A **68**

INTERVIEW OUTLINE 68

APPENDIX B **70**

RESPONDENT BEHAVIOUR 70

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: A model to measure employee engagement (Imandin et al., 2014) ……. 9
Table 2: Profile of respondents ……. 27
Table 3: Interview schedule …… 33
Table 4: Demographic profile of the respondents interviewed ……..… 34
Table 5: Factors positively affecting employee engagement as identified in the analysis of the personal interviews …….. 40
Table 6: Factors negatively affecting employee engagement as identified in the analysis of the personal interviews …….. 44
Table 7: Ranking of factors positively affecting employee engagement ……. 55
Table 8: Ranking of factors negatively affecting employee engagement ……. 56
Table 9: Factors positively affecting employee engagement in response to the research proposition … 57
Table 10: Factors negatively affecting employee engagement in response to the research proposition … 57
Table 11: Respondents' behaviour ……... 71

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: A theoretical model to measure employee engagement (Imandin et al., 2014) ……..... 12

Figure 2: The top 5 drivers of sustainable employee engagement (Chakraborty, 2014) …….. 15

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the factors that both promote and inhibit employee engagement among creative individuals in an advertising agency in South Africa. The result will provide advertising agencies with a deeper understanding of the factors that need attention and focus in order to ensure that creative individuals remain fully engaged and thus contribute to the core requirement of the job function.

1.2 Context of the study

It can be generalised that a creative environment such as an advertising agency represents an unusual corporate culture and therefore unusual measures are to be taken to not only attract and retain creative people but more importantly to stimulate ongoing engagement with the organisation and its clients.

Reid, Whitehall King and DeLorme (Reid, Whitehall King, & DeLorme, 1998) in their journal article argue that the most important aspect in advertising indisputably remains creativity. Similarly, Weilbacher (1993, p82) states that the physical environment could have an effect on creativity in an advertising agency, and therefore a negative environment could have a detrimental effect on creativity.

Often, and more so with public companies than private advertising agencies, financial performance is placed above creative performance for the obvious reason of shareholder interests, and this impacts both creative input and output to varying degrees (Von Nordenflycht, 2007).

The concept of employee engagement is not all together new, and numerous studies have been conducted (Lodahl & Kejnar, 1965; Thomas, 2009). The concept of engagement sets itself apart from the parallel concept of commitment - and even the traditional understanding of job involvement which is the degree to which employees are identified psychologically to their work (Lodahl & Kejnar, 1965) - in that it is a two-way relationship where the organisation is responsible for actively engaging employees (Robinson, Perryman, & Hayday, 2004).

A broader definition will be presented and discussed as this research is developed, however a working definition is offered as follows: engaged employees are fully involved in and enthusiastic about their work – they are inspired, committed to both job and organisation, and remain fascinated with their job (Seijts & Crim, 2006). Similarly Robinson et al (Robinson et al., 2004) continue that it is a positive attitude towards the organisation, an appreciation of the business context, while at the same time the organisation nurtures, maintains and grows engagement as a two-way relationship.

A significant body of research on employee engagement was summarised by the Canadian Conference Board in 2006 and collectively, 12 studies by various institutions identified 25 key drivers of employee engagement, of which these include both cognitive and emotional issues (Hammond, 2012).

1.3 Problem statement

This research seeks to identify the factors that creatives believe are affecting their levels of engagement with the agency, both positively and negatively. The result therefore, will identify those areas that the agency should develop and pay attention to so that engagement is optimised among creatives.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study aims to explore the specific reciprocal engagement relationship between creatives and the advertising agency, and what the organisation can do to ensure high levels of engagement which ultimately leads to delivery of award-winning creativity.

If this study uncovers the factors that enhance engagement among creatives, advertising agencies can take note of them and ensure that they are addressed in an effort to better nurture employee engagement and ensuring that the best creative outputs are achieved.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

The research will be delimited in the following respects:

- The research topic focuses on creatives in an advertising agency and therefore only creatives will be interviewed. The study will not include account management and administrative functions.
- The research will be conducted at a single advertising agency based in Johannesburg, selected on the basis of industry recognition of excellence in creativity, and willingness to participate in the study.

1.6 Definition of terms

- Employee engagement: According to Heger (2007) employee engagement is the emotional and intellectual attachment that employees have to both their work and the organisation. He continues that it involves the heart and the mind, and thus consists of rational and emotional factors.

- Creatives: a term used in the advertising industry referring to creative professionals in an advertising agency.
- Agency: the term refers to a professional services firm providing creative advertising services to its clients.

1.7 Assumptions

The following assumptions are made:

- All respondents will be assumed to have an understanding of the meaning of employee engagement and thus also an appreciation of the factors affecting their own engagement, both positive and negative.
- Potential respondents will be assumed to be willing to participate in the interviews and answer all questions honestly and truthfully.
- The number of respondents will be assumed to be sufficient to complete a meaningful research paper.
- The researcher will remain consistent throughout the interview process in order to ensure accurate data capturing.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review aimed to create an understanding of the relatively new concept of employee engagement, how it fits into the contemporary organisation, its causes and effects, and specifically looking at its role in an advertising agency.

We started with investigating employee engagement from seeking a definition, its origin, theory and measurement in the bigger scheme of human resource management and performance evaluation, and how it is interrelated to organisational performance and stakeholder satisfaction specifically in the knowledge environment in general, and an advertising agency in particular.

Following that we reviewed the related concepts of involvement, commitment, motivation, satisfaction and burnout, as the opposite state of engagement, and how they are related to engagement according to the literature, only in an effort to better distinguish engagement and not meant to form part of the research.

Then we looked at the nature of the advertising agency environment and creative employees, their drivers and factors influencing engagement and performance.

2.2 Employee engagement

2.2.1 *A definition*

It is generally accepted that very little research has been done on employee engagement. The literature proposes different views on the origin of the

concept of employee engagement, however Saks (2006) notes that its source in all probability is in the practice rather than in the theory, because most of the original literature around the concept is found in practitioner journals as opposed to academic literature.

So, what is engagement? Admasechew and Dawson (2011) argues that the most basic foundation of employee engagement is based on the organisation's wish to improve engagement, because improved engagement, in turn, improves employee well-being, reduces staff turnover and increases both individual and organisational performance.

Macey & Schneider (2008) reason that engagement can be described by the conditions under which people work, and claim that, over the years, employee engagement has been measured by using three different approaches, namely engagement as a description of the conditions under which people work; engagement as a behavioural outcome; and engagement as a psychological presence. The existing literature also uses engagement to refer to a psychological state of commitment and involvement, as a performance construct for both the individual and the organisation, as well as a disposition with either a positive of negative effect, or a combination thereof.

Kahn's concept of engagement as psychological presence (1990) argues that attention and absorption are the two critical components underscoring role engagement, where attention refers to the intensity of employees' involvement in their jobs, and absorption refers to the intrinsic motivation of employees in their respective roles. To this day, Kahn's 1990 definition of employee engagement remains one of only two significantly respected definitions, as "the harnessing of organisation members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances," (Kahn, 1990, p694).

The other significant definition of employee engagement is that of Schaufeli et al (Wilmar B Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzales-Roma, & Bakker, 2002), stating that engagement is a positive and fulfilling state of mind at work that is generally

characterised by the concepts of vigour, dedication, and absorption. Saks & Gruman (2014) believe that the Schaufeli definition is the less distinctive because of its similarity to burnout, while Kahn's include a rational choice by the employee to the extent of which he is bringing his true self into the performance of the job.

In his 2005 book, Getting Engaged: The New Workplace Loyalty, Tim Rutledge (as cited by Seijts & Crim, 2006) defines an engaged employee as one that is inspired by their work ('I want to do this'), committed to their work ('I am dedicated the success of what I am doing'), and fascinated by their work ('I love what I am doing'). Seijts & Crim continue that an engaged employee is one that is involved in and enthusiastic about his work.

In the Institute of Employment Studies' (IES) report (Robinson et al., 2004) the authors believe that engagement encompasses a positive attitude and includes an employee's attitude towards the organisation's values, the employee understands the business contexts and is willing to work with co-workers in an effort to improve overall performance to benefit the organisation. In return, the organisation should strive to grow engagement and thus engagement is seen as a two-way relationship between the organisation and the employee.

It is argued that most authors define employee engagement using the three-dimensional model of vigour, dedication and absorption. Ametoglu et al (Ahmetoglu, Harding, Akhtar, & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2015) as well as Schaufeli et al (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p74) also define employee engagement as a ''positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that can be viewed as a combination of vigour, dedication, and absorption'. Thus, engaged workers display higher levels of energy, dedication and absorption to their job and its related tasks. Vigour is described as high energy levels and mental resilience and persistence, therefore vigour is the direct positive opposite of exhaustion. Dedication is described as a sense of pride, enthusiasm and inspiration, therefore dedication is the direct positive opposite of cynicism. Absorption is described as fully present with a difficulty of detachment from work.

Engagement is characterised by vigour and dedication, while burnout is characterised by exhaustion and cynicism.

In more recent literature, Albrecht et al (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015) reason that even though there may be a certain level of disagreement about the definition and measurement of employee engagement between scholars and practitioners, academia most often define it as a positive work state characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption as per Schaufeli's definition.

Practitioners reason that employee engagement in practice would be described as a positive attitude towards the organisation rather than work-related experiences (Fletcher et al., 2012). In relation to this claim, Fletcher et al defines engagement as the degree to which employees are motivated to contribute to organisational performance, and display effort to assist the organisation in achieving its goals.

Heger (2007) defines employee engagement as the intellectual and emotional attachment that an employee has with his organisation, and involves both rational (what the employee thinks) and emotional (what the employee feels) factors. Engaged employees are therefore intellectually stimulated and emotionally inspired – they understand how they contribute to the success of the organisation while they are inspired to do their best and passionate about their work.

According to Chakraborty (2014), The Towers Watson 2012 Global Workforce Study came up with a new robust definition of employee engagement which focuses on the concept of sustainable employee engagement in the contemporary workplace. This description defines the level of intensity of the employee's connection to the organisation as a function of the effort by the employee, an enabling environment and a work experience that promotes well-being.

A working definition for the purposes of this research report has been identified in chapter 1 and slightly adapted here as follows:

engaged employees are fully involved in and enthusiastic about their work – they are inspired, committed to both job and organisation, and remain fascinated with their job (Seijts & Crim, 2006). Similarly, Robinson et al (Robinson et al., 2004) continue that it is a positive attitude towards the organisation, an appreciation of the business context, while at the same time the organisation nurtures, maintains and grows engagement as a two-way relationship. An engaged employee exhibits the following behaviours: belief in the organisation; desire to improve their work; understanding of the business strategy; ability to collaborate with colleagues; willingness to demonstrate extra effort; drive to continually enhance their skill set and knowledge base (Imandin, Bisschoff, & Botha, 2014).

2.2.2 *A model to measure employment engagement*

This section will consider a single model (Imandin et al., 2014) for the measurement of employee engagement which proposes no less than 11 constructs to measure engagement, and summarised in the table below:

1. Cognitive drivers	- if the employee feels that his work is meaningful, that he is safe and that he is well resourced to complete tasks. The opposite is negative work circumstances which lead to disengagement and burnout, and ultimately poor performance.
2. Emotional engagement	- an employee invests personal resources such as pride, trust and knowledge. The positive cognitive drivers mentioned above leads to emotional engagement. Positive emotion enhances critical and creative thinking processes.

3. Behavioural engagement	- is the manifestation of cognitive and emotional engagement. An engaged employee believes in the organisation; has the desire to improve his work; shows an understanding of the organisation's strategy; can collaborate internally; is willing to offer discretionary effort; wants to continually improve their skill set and knowledge base.
4. Feeling valued and involved	- being able to make decisions and being recognised for performance.
5. Having an engaged leadership team	- effective leadership is engagement. Leaders must be connected with employees; must be performance focused; must be future and development oriented.
6. Trust and integrity	- leaders must inspire trust, based on character and competence. Trust is considered a primary driver of engagement; both the employees' trusts of the leadership as well as the leaders' trust in the employees.
7. Nature of my job	- this is defined as the extent of employee participation, autonomy and accountability. In order to drive employee engagement to the highest levels, they need to be empowered and held accountable for results.

8. Connection between individual and company performance	- this engagement driver refers to the employees' understanding of the company's objectives and performance, and how the employees can best contribute to these.
9. Career growth opportunities	- this includes career path planning and promotion, and the level of satisfaction experienced by employees with opportunities for progression and promotion, directly linked to challenging and meaningful work.
10. Stress-free environment	- this relates to an environment where the employee can be creative and innovative to ensure optimum output. It has also been found that a fun and relaxing environment ad to success.
11. Change management	- if an employee is already engaged during a change management initiative he is more likely to support the initiative which leads to better performance and ultimately supporting business success.

Table 1: A model to measure employee engagement (Imandin et al., 2014)

The content of this measurement table is visually represented in figure 1.



Figure 1: A theoretical model to measure employee engagement (Imandin et al., 2014).

In a local study of engagement factors (Rothmann & Rothmann Jr, 2010), the authors suggest that the organisation should address a variety of aspects or factors that drive employee engagement. These factors, among others, include learning and growth opportunities, autonomy in the job, organisational support, good relationships with co-workers and managers, and participation in decision making. In the 2015 Trends in Global Employee Engagement Report (Aon Hewitt, 2015) the concepts of strong leadership and an organisation-wide

performance orientation are added to these factors that will affect employee engagement.

2.2.3 *The drivers of employee engagement*

In the Global Human Capital Trends Report (Deloitte, 2015) it is suggested that the employee's motivation has shifted with a focus on purpose and work-life integration. The report suggests that factors such as job design, management and leadership, work environment and development opportunities contribute to the level of engagement. It claims that passion motivates more than twice as many employees than what ambition does. This is a clear indication to the leadership of an organisation to create a compelling and enjoyable environment for everyone.

High levels of employee engagement are found when employees are involved in, committed to, enthusiastic and passionate about their work (Attridge, 2009). Attridge proposes that the following tactics are implemented by the organisation to promote employee engagement:

- better job design - matching the employee's abilities and talents to the job role;
- support and job resources - ensuring that the employees are enabled through resources and provided with organisational support structures;
- working conditions - these include not only physical conditions such as equipment but also factors such as decision-making ability, job demands, and social relationships at work;
- corporate culture - the following 5 factors contribute to a healthy workplace culture, according to the American Psychological Association: supporting work-life balance; growth and development opportunities; promoting employee health and safety; reward and recognition; and employee engagement;

- leadership style - is has been shown that transformational and authentic leadership styles are most conducive to engagement as it supports employee well-being and productivity.

Seijts & Crim (2006) claim that engaged employees care about the future of the company and are therefore prepared to go beyond the call of duty in an attempt to contribute to the organisation's overall success. The literature offers numerous ways in which the organisation can better engage employees which are summarised as the Ten C's of employee engagement according to Seijts & Crim:

1. Connect - leaders must show that they value employees through steps such as profit share and work-life balance initiatives.
2. Career - work should be challenging and meaningful, with opportunities to advance.
3. Clarity - a clear vision at all times. Not only at organisational level, but also departmental, unit and team levels. Employees need to understand the goals of the organisation, why they are important and how they will be met.
4. Convey - leaders must make sure that employees understand the expectations of them and provide positive and constructive feedback on employees functioning within the organisation.
5. Congratulate - leaders should acknowledge and recognise strong performance just as quick as poor performance is addressed.
6. Contribute - employees need to know that their contribution matters to the organisation's overall success.
7. Control - employees value control over the pace and flow of their jobs.
8. Collaborate - It has been shown that cohesive teams outperform individuals and teams that lack good relationships.
9. Credibility - leaders should show high ethical standards and maintain the company's good reputation, because employees want to be proud of their jobs and the organisation.

10. Confidence - leaders create confidence in the organisation by showing high ethical and performance standards.

It is maintained (Chakraborty, 2014) that employee engagement remain the most consistent predictor of business performance, and that companies should have a solid understanding of the factors that drive employee engagement. Chakraborty refers to The Towers Watson paper which focuses on sustainable engagement, which includes the components of engaged, enabled, and energised.

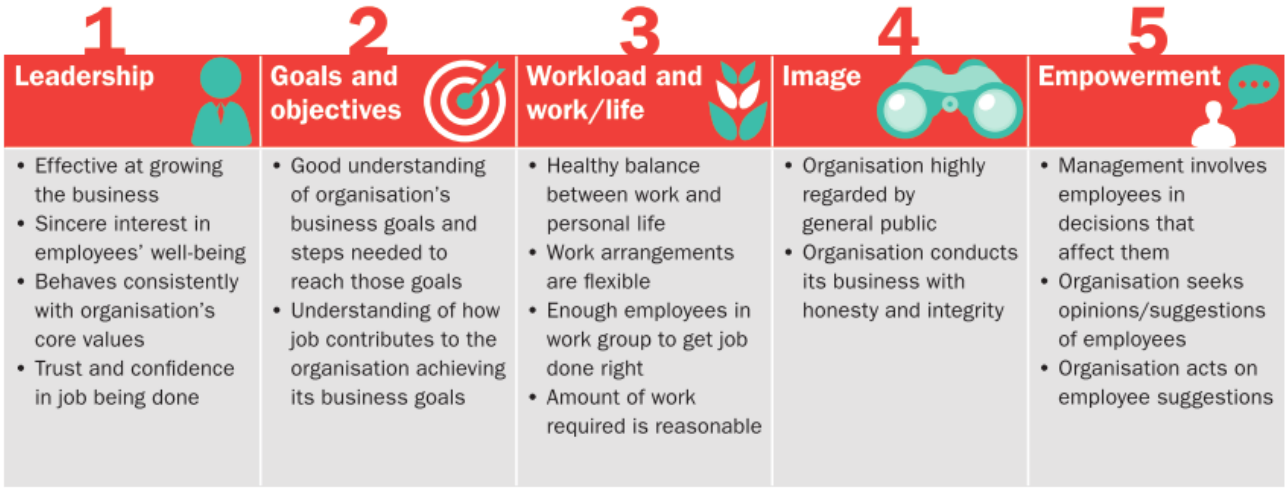


Figure 2: The top 5 drivers of sustainable employee engagement (Chakraborty, 2014).

In his article The Four Intrinsic Rewards That Drive Employee Engagement, Kenneth W Thomas (2009) states that rewards as a driver of employee engagement should also be considered as a factor that will affect engagement, and proposes these four intrinsic rewards that drive employee engagement:

- Sense of meaningfulness - the opportunity to accomplish something of real value with a strong sense of purpose and direction.
- Sense of choice - free to choose how to accomplish with a strong sense of ownership and responsibility.
- Sense of competence - performance that meets personal standards with a strong sense of satisfaction and pride.
- Sense of progress - efforts that are on track and progressing based on the choices that were made, with a strong sense of confidence in the future.

2.3 Involvement, commitment, motivation, satisfaction and burnout

In the practitioner literature, the definition of engagement often overlaps with the other, related constructs of commitment, involvement and satisfaction. Saks (2006) and Saks & Gruman (2014) are of the opinion that the academic literature defines engagement as a unique construct that relates to cognitive, emotional and behavioural components of the employee's role performance.

Various authors claim that the level of engagement predicts personal outcomes which include satisfaction, motivation and commitment, as well as organisational outcomes such as productivity, customer and shareholder value (Rothmann & Rothmann Jr, 2010).

According to Rothmann & Rothmann Jr, the distinctiveness of engagement in its relation to burnout is questionable, while another school of thought argues that much of the engagement research is grounded in the burnout research (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Other researchers attempt to distinguish engagement from the related constructs of satisfaction, commitment and involvement by describing it as a higher order motivational construct that any of the others.

Albrecht, Bakker & Gruman (Albrecht et al., 2015) remind us that it had been demonstrated that engagement, involvement, and commitment are three distinct constructs. In addition, research done by Rich et al (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010) found significant evidence for the distinctiveness of the engagement construct from burnout.

2.3.1 *MOTIVATION*

As Thomas (2009) argues, the intrinsic rewards are a relatively healthy and sustainable source of motivation for employees. Understanding intrinsic rewards as a form of motivation mitigates the chances of burnout. Workers with high reward levels experience more positive feelings and fewer negative ones on the job. Their job satisfaction is higher, they report fewer stress symptoms and are more likely to feel that they are developing professionally. Overall, intrinsic rewards create a strong form of motivation in which both an organisation and its employees benefit.

2.3.2 *SATISFACTION*

Job satisfaction is considered an antecedent to engagement (Rich et al., 2010) and is reviewed in the literature as a separate construct to that of employee engagement, even though the constructs are related as far as organisational outcomes are concerned (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Employee engagement differs from job satisfaction because it combines dedication with vigour and absorption whereas satisfaction is considered a passive form of employee well-being.

The same argument is made by Bakker (2011) to describe the difference between engagement and motivation, in that engagement also refers to vigour and absorption, in addition to dedication. Therefore, Bakker considers engagement to be a better predictor of job performance than many other and earlier constructs.

2.3.3 *INVOLVEMENT*

“Job involvement is the degree to which a person is identified psychologically with his work, or the importance of work in his total self-image,” (Lodahl & Kejnar, 1965).

Saks (2006) argues that engagement differs from job involvement and cites May et al. (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004) in describing job involvement as the result of a rational decision about the ability of work to satisfy self-image needs, while engagement has to do with how employees apply themselves in the execution of their work. Engagement also involves the application of emotion and behaviour in addition to intellectual ability. For this reason, it is suggested that engagement could be considered as an antecedent to job involvement in that employees “who experience deep engagement in their work, should come to identify with their jobs,” (May et al., 2004, p12).

2.3.4 *COMMITMENT*

Saks (2006) reasons that commitment differs from engagement in that it indicates an employee’s attitude towards and attachment with the organisation, where engagement is not an attitude but rather the level to which the employee is absorbed in his role at work. Engagement is positively related to commitment, performance and behaviour (W.B. Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006).

2.3.5 *BURNOUT*

According to Rothmann & Rothmann Jr. (2010), the term ‘burnout’ was introduced by author Herbert Freudenberger in 1974 when he used it to describe feelings of emotional depletion and a loss of commitment and motivation. The Rothmanns continue that interest in engagement as a concept arose in the 1997 burnout literature by Maslach & Leiter, as directly opposed to burnout. Accordingly, burnout is defined as disengagement with the job. They frame engagement as energy, involvement and high efficacy, as opposed to burnout being exhaustion, cynicism and low efficacy. Once again setting aside

the suggestion that engagement is dependent on the construct of burnout, it is argued that it is an independent concept characterised by three dimensions as mentioned earlier, namely vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Saks & Gruman (2014) also refer to the research published by Maslach et al (2001) in which it is claimed that engagement is grounded in the research on burnout, which questions the distinctiveness of engagement. This has led to an influential definition of engagement as the opposite of burnout. Various authors including Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker (2002) believe that burnout and engagement are independent states even though engagement has been proven to be the opposite of burnout. Burnout and engagement are caused by six factors, namely sustainability of the workload, control over work-related choices, appropriate reward and recognition, a supportive work community and social structure at work, perceived fairness and justice, and meaningful and valued work (Maslach et al., 2001).

2.4 Creatives

2.4.1 *Introduction*

'Imagination is everything; it is the preview of life's coming attractions.'
Albert Einstein.

In 1985, the editor of the Journal of Advertising echoes the adage that the assets of an advertising agency leave the building every day, reiterating that the employees are the most valuable asset to the organisation, which is generally labelled as labour intensive (McGann, 1985). He continues that the discrepancy between stable billings and volatile profits can be found in the way that the agency's human resources are managed.

This view that creativity is the most important aspect of advertising, even though it remains the least scientific, is widely supported in the literature over the years (Reid et al., 1998). Even creative genius Leo Burnett, in his famous 1960 speech 'Finally somebody has to get out an ad,' believed that being creative and making advertisements was the life, core, and heart of the advertising business.

2.4.2 *Definition*

Creativity is the cornerstone and a key dimension of professional skill in the advertising industry. Von Nordenflyght (2007, p433) defines creativity within the context of advertising as 'the originality of an ad campaign as expressed both in its artistic conception and its approach to positioning the clients' product.' He believes that creativity is perhaps the primary dimension on which advertising professionals judge each other.

Reid, King, & DeLorme (1998, p3) define advertising creativity as 'original and imaginative thought designed to produce goal-directed and problem-solving advertisements and commercials.' They go further to quote Leo Burnett, who defined advertising creativity as 'the art of establishing new and meaningful relationships between previously unrelated things in a manner that is relevant, believable, and in good taste, but which somehow presents the product in a fresh new light.'

2.4.3 *Creating an environment for creatives*

It has been shown that organisational context has the potential to influence the cultivation of creativity, as much as the employee's individual disposition can contribute to individual creativity (Jin Nam Choi, Anderson, & Veillette, 2009a).

Nam Choi et al (2009) maintain that employee creativity can be fostered by the organisation through levers such as supportive leadership, helpful co-workers, the complexity level of tasks as well as the level of innovation permeating through the organisational climate and culture.

In order to describe or define creativity, El-Murad & West (2004) cite a variety of authors with terms such as creative thinking, imagination, innovation and problem solving. They propose that the aspect of problem solving requiring insight and therefore originality, even though required, is an insufficient condition for creativity. To be successful, creative advertising must first be noticed and then cause the audience to take action in order to be regarded successful. If it has not been noticed, the creativity is considered a failure. Creatives generally are not interested much in changes in awareness levels and increase in sales as a result of their advertising creativity, while those remain the specific effectiveness outcomes that are most sought by managers in the agency (Hackley & Kover, 2007).

From the literature, it is generally accepted that employees who are more engaged at work are more energetic, more dedicated to their job, and more absorbed with the tasks of the job (Ahmetoglu et al., 2015). Engagement has been related to a number of work-related outcomes, including commitment and financial performance (Harter et al., 2002). Although little direct evidence of the impact of engagement on creativity exists, Ahmetoglu et al (2015) believe it is reasonable to assume a positive association between these variables.

Hackley & Kover (2007, p63) state that creatives in advertising agencies are often thought of by outsiders as ‘quirky and insecure, brash and brilliant, and even (deceitful)’. Thus, it is often unclear how creatives achieve an identity within the agency that is satisfactory to both the self and others in the workplace. It is suggested that the process with which creatives establish their creative identity remains a mystery.

‘Creativity is at once the least scientific aspect of advertising and the most important’, (El-Murad & West, 2004). A winning creative idea in the context of advertising stands out from the crowd and is memorable. It also impacts positively on sales for the client, and ensures a long-lasting relationship between agency and client.

2.4.4 *Engagement drivers of creatives*

It is suggested that intrinsic motivation is the psychological key to creativity (Jin Nam Choi et al., 2009a). This is based on the fact that intrinsic motivation causes employees to be more enthusiastic about work while at the same time allows them to discover endless possibilities as a result of a heightened sense of autonomy. When employees are faced with controlling workplace dynamics such as strict rules, they could feel lesser levels of intrinsic motivation and autonomy, and consequently exhibit lower levels of creativity. The Nam Choi study results show that aversive leadership negatively affects employee creativity, regardless of the employee's creative ability. It shows that even highly creative employees are negatively affected by unfavourable leader behaviour. Unsupportive climate has very little effect on highly creative employees, while it adversely affects low creative employees, potentially due to lack of confidence, feelings of low self-efficacy, and a higher perception of risk of failure in creative endeavours, have been shown in the study. It was furthermore found that high creative ability employees show a negative reaction to task standardisation. They feel frustrated by the presence of rules and regulations that direct the process and become passive as they overreact to the constraining environment.

2.5 Conclusion

It has been stated that advertising agencies represent unusual corporate cultures. In addition, highly creative people – who form the core of the agency and its creative and commercial success – bring with them a specific and un-corporate disposition unique to the advertising world. In an attempt to harness the full and unhindered potential of the creatives, the agency leadership and management should be aware of the specific factors that affect employee engagement among creatives, unlike the unique set of factors that are important for engagement of other job functions in the agency.

Following the literature review is has become evident that creatives' levels of engagement are driven by a specific set of factors. These factors have the

potential to affect the levels of engagement both positively and negatively, more so than other factors as identified in the research that has been covered by the literature review. Based in the themes addressed in the literature review, the following research proposition has been formulated for the purposes of this study.

2.5.1 *Research proposition*

The following factors significantly affect, both positively and negatively, employee engagement among creatives in an advertising agency:

- Leadership style and management style;
- Training and development opportunities and opportunities for growth;
- Reward and recognition;
- Supportive environment, including an enabling corporate environment and a meaningful social structure at work;
- Autonomy and the absence of rules and regulations;
- Decision-making ability.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective of the research was to determine the factors that affect employee engagement in an advertising agency. The study was explorative and thus qualitative research was applied as it presents an holistic approach that involves discovery (Williams, 2007). Qualitative research is described as an unfolding model that allows the researcher to develop his detail from high involvement with the subjects.

Data about the factors that affect employee engagement were gathered through in-depth interviews with creatives in an adverting agency.

3.1 Research methodology /paradigm

Qualitative research is considered best suited to research that is exploratory in nature (Williams, 2007). Williams continues that it enables the researcher to gain a deep level of detail based on the high involvement is the actual experiences of the subjects begin interviewed on the topic.

Interviews are among the most familiar and used strategies for collecting qualitative data, and provide the researcher with rich and in-depth information about the experiences of the interviewees (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

The purpose of a phenomenological study as a qualitative research method is to gain a deep understand of the specific experiences from the interviewee's point of view. This method of data collection is achieved through lengthy semi-structured interviews.

Qualitative research is best suited for purposes to find the characteristics of people, relationships and situations, which allows the researcher to gain insight into the phenomenon being studied and to test the validity of generalisations.

According to Social Research Methods (Bryman, 2012), qualitative research methods have been criticised, seemingly mainly by quantitative researchers, specifically noting that it is too subjective, it is difficult to replicate, problems with generalisation and representativeness, and a lack of transparency.

3.2 Research Design

The methodological approach of data gathering was based on semi-structured individual interviews. This process enabled the researcher to gain the opinions from the interviewees on their respective opinions on the topic: the factors affecting employee engagement in an advertising agency.

The interview process consisted of 12 in-depth semi-structured interviews with creatives, permanently employed by an advertising agency in Johannesburg. Each interview session was recorded for back-up purposes with the consent of the interviewee, and thematically transcribed in detail during each interview. After each interview, the researcher reflected on the interview and took time to make additional notes which included nonverbal communication cues.

The researcher prepared a standardised protocol for all the interviews which included an introduction, definition of specific terms in relation to the interview and of importance to the research topic, and the interview questions.

The researcher ran a pilot interview to test the approach, the questionnaire and the mode of data collection. Once the pilot had been completed, the researcher made no adjustments to the process design.

The semi-structured in-depth interview allows the researcher to delve deep into personal and social matters. It also allows the interviewee the opportunity to answer the questions from their own perspective and not constricted within the confines of a formal structured interview (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The semi-structured interview provides flexibility to the process in that answers often

leads the researcher to the next question which would not have been uncovered in a structured format.

The disadvantages of a semi-structured in-depth interviews are that they are prone to bias and lead to selective perception of the interviewer, and may affect the behaviour of participants (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Additionally, they can be time-consuming and often the interviewer requires specialised skills in interviewing techniques. Finally, the results are not generalisable.

3.3 Population and sample

3.3.1 *Population*

The population of this research study included all creatives working in an advertising agency in Johannesburg, South Africa.

There was no additional demographic filtering such as age, race, education, gender, or work experience. The only condition was minimum tenure of at least one year at as 1 August 2016 with the current employer due to the nature of the study.

3.3.2 *Sample and sampling method*

Selecting the sample for in-depth interviews from the identified population is based on purposeful sampling, where the researcher attempts to maximise the depth and richness of the data in order to address the research question (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

A purposeful sample of 12 respondents from the population was drawn. Part of the sampling process aimed to ensure diversity from a race, gender, age and experience perspective. This is done so that the respondents provide a variety

of different perspectives in terms of characteristics relevant to the research question (Bryman, 2012, p418).

The respondents were all based in one agency in Johannesburg to facilitate ease of access for conducting the interviews considering time constraints. It was not expected that this would have affect the research results.

Table 2: Profile of respondents

Description of respondents	Number sampled
Creatives in an advertising agency	12

3.4 The research instrument

The research instrument was semi-structured in-depth interviews based on a questionnaire. The questionnaire for the semi-structured interview was designed around a set of predetermined open-ended questions that related to the research question. This allowed the researcher to use the respondents' answers to probe deeper into issues rather than sticking to a structured questionnaire.

Each interview followed a predetermined protocol ensuring consistency among all respondents. This included a formal introduction, followed by some background on the research topic and the objectives. In order to further ensure consistency among the respondents, each was provided with the working definition of employee engagement as per chapter 1.

The questionnaire as the basis for the interview consists of questions that concerned the level of engagement of respondents with the agency – see Appendix A hereto.

3.5 Procedure for data collection

With the support of the agency's HR manager and the office of the head of the creative department, the researcher made contact with the selected respondents informing them of the research, its objectives, the potential value of the outcomes, the duration of the interviews and inviting their participation. Upon agreement, participants were guaranteed in writing of the confidentiality of the content of their interviews.

The interviews took place at a time and venue that was most convenient to the respondents.

DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree (2006) advise that it is necessary for the interviewer to rapidly develop a rapport with the participants. This includes trust and respect for the interviewee and the information that is shared. It contributes to the establishment of a safe and comfortable environment for sharing personal experiences and attitudes.

The researcher took hand written notes of each interview on a template designed for the process. After each interview the notes were enhanced to also include any non-verbal communication that took place. With recorded consent from each respondent, the interviews were voice recorded which were only used as back-up in cases where the hand-written notes were deemed ambiguous or unclear. The recordings do not form part of the research report submission but remain available in safe digital storage should the need arise. These would typically be destroyed after successful completion of the research report.

3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

The research data was analysed through themed content analysis or thematic analysis. Bryman (2012) describes thematic analysis as the extraction of core themes from the data that could be distinguished both between interview transcripts as well as within transcripts.

Thematic analysis is an easy way of organising and analysing qualitative data by themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). She states that seeks to uncover the relevant themes in a text at different levels, and thematic linkages facilitate the structuring of these themes.

All information was analysed after each interview and coded per theme. This provided the researcher the basis from which the thematic analysis was conducted.

Thematic analysis was the only technique applied to the data of this research study.

3.7 Limitations of the study

- Only a limited number of participants were interviewed from a single agency in Johannesburg.
- The study did not take into account possible external influences on engagement or creativity, for instance an agency in Cape Town might experience different creativity stimuli from its external environment or the slower pace of corporate Cape Town in comparison to Johannesburg.
- Accidental and subconscious researcher bias could potentially have influenced the results of the study.
- The respondents' buy-in to the process and honesty with regards the information provided, for the fear of being labelled as negative towards the organisation.

- Potential time constraints in the context of the course timelines and the respondents' availability.

3.8 Validity and reliability

Validity refers to the ability of an indicator or instrument to measure or gauge what is intended to be measured or gauged, while reliability is the degree to which an indicator or instrument is stable, in other words, the consistency of a measure of a concept (Bryman, 2012).

Reliability and validity are related because validity presumes reliability. Therefore, if the instrument or indicator is not reliable, it cannot be valid.

3.8.1 *External validity*

External validity could be defined as whether the results of a study could be generalised beyond the specific context of which the research was conducted (Bryman, 2012).

Based on the fact that the study has been conducted on a small number of respondents that were not randomly selected, it is not possible to generalise the results.

3.8.2 *Internal validity*

Bryman (2012) states that internal validity allows the researcher to make accurate assumptions regarding relationships within the findings. This is based on the comprehensive results achieved from the research design. The onus is on the researcher to maintain neutrality throughout the information gathering process. For this reason, the researcher offered to conduct the interviews at a venue most convenient to each subject.

3.8.3 *Reliability*

Reliability is the extent to which the research findings can be duplicated (Riege, 2003) and the findings being consistent no matter when the research is repeated (Bryman, 2012). In qualitative research this is not possible due to the human component of the process – people are not static like other measurement tools.

In an attempt to increase the reliability of the research, all the interviews were conducted by the researcher in person and over a short period of time. The same questionnaire and interview structure was applied consistently to ensure the best reliability possible considering the methodology.

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the presentation of the study results has been combined with the discussion of the study results into a single chapter so as to avoid unnecessary repetition.

Following the literature review, a research proposition was formulated which in turn formed the basis of the research questionnaire. This chapter discusses the themes resulting from the interview process and the thematic analysi, and compare such with the research proposition which was formulated after the literature review in chapter 2.

To recap, the research proposition as per 2.5.1 (see page 23):

> *"The following factors significantly affect, both positively and negatively, employee engagement among creatives in an advertising agency:*
>
> - *Leadership style and management style;*
> - *Training and development opportunities and opportunities for growth;*
> - *Reward and recognition;*
> - *Supportive environment, including an enabling corporate environment and a meaningful social structure at work;*
> - *Autonomy and absence of rules and regulations;*
> - *Decision-making ability".*

4.2 Demographic profile of interview respondents

As per the methodology discussion in chapter 3, a total of twelve semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted. The only condition that the researcher had regarding the respondents, was that all respondents had at least a 1-year tenure with the agency as their current employer. This condition was put in place to ensure that respondents have had a reasonable time with the current employer to have meaningful opinions and discussions during the interview around the topic of employee engagement.

The interviews were conducted as per the scheduling in table below.

Table 3: Interview schedule

Respondent	Date	Time	Venue
R1	20 September 2016	10:00	Agency
R2	20 September 2016	11:00	Agency
R3	20 September 2016	12:00	Agency
R4	21 September 2016	14:00	Agency
R5	21 September 2016	15:00	Agency
R6	23 September 2016	10:00	Agency
R7	23 September 2016	11:00	Agency
R8	23 September 2016	12:00	Agency
R9	26 September 2016	10:00	Agency
R10	26 September 2016	11:00	Agency
R11	30 September 2016	11:00	Agency
R12	30 September 2016	12:00	Agency

The demographics of the participating respondents are completely random as these did not form part of the process in identifying or selecting participants.

The demographic breakdown of the respondents follow hereto in the table below.

Table 4: Demographic profile of the respondents interviewed

Respondent	Title	Years with agency	Age	Gender	Ethnic group
1	Creative group head	8	36	M	Black
2	Creative group head	3	43	F	White
3	Art director	6	37	F	White
4	Design illustrator	8	29	M	Black
5	Junior art director	2,5	24	M	White
6	Copy writer	1,5	25	M	Black
7	Art director	5	27	M	Black
8	Junior copy writer	1,5	25	F	Black
9	Art director	1	31	M	Indian
10	Art director	8,5	44	M	Black
11	Creative director	6	49	M	Indian
12	Creative director	14,5	49	F	White

All the interviews were conducted with creatives from one advertising agency in Johannesburg. Even though the option was offered to conduct the interviews at any time of the day and at a location which suited the participants best, all of the interviewees opted for the interviews to take place at the agency during normal working hours.

At the commencement of each interview, each respondent gave the researcher permission for the interview to be voice recorded as part of the research tool. In addition, all respondents were guaranteed of their anonymity. Even though all the interviews were digitally recorded, none of the interviews were fully transcribed. In preparation of the thematic analysis, each interview was played back in conjunction with the researcher reviewing the hand-written notes which

were taken during the interview, to ensure that the notes were complete. These recordings do not form part of this research document.

4.3 Results pertaining to the factors affecting employee engagement

The literature review and in particular the Nam Choi study (Jin Nam Choi, Anderson, & Veillette, 2009b) lead the researcher to suggest six factors that would significantly affect employee engagement among creatives in an advertising agency.

The following is a brief overview of the respondents' views on factors that positively affect employee engagement, as per questions 2 and 6 of the research instrument.

Respondent 1: This respondent was rather brief in his opinion of factors that positively affect his engagement. From an organisational perspective, he rates the supportive social environment at work as positively affecting engagement, the general disposition of co-workers and a positive organisational culture as lead factors that would positively affect his engagement. In addition, he felt that his levels of engagement would be enhanced by the type of clients in his portfolio, thus clients that he gets along with on a personal level as well as brands that he personally has an affinity for. Furthermore, he finds motivation within himself and does not believe that line management can do anything specific to enhance his levels of engagement.

Respondent 2: First and foremost, and outweighing all other factors, this respondent believes that a supportive social environment at work is of utmost importance as a factor that positively affects engagement. She believes that a work environment that is loving, caring, nurturing and accommodating positively contributes to employee engagement.

Furthermore, adequate remuneration was identified as a secondary factor. In addition to salary she also added rewards and recognition, monetary as well as non-monetary, as important factors. Supportive and visionary leadership, not only of the division but also of the organisation, was mentioned as of equal importance as remuneration. Finally, a feeling of acknowledgement of her contribution to the organisation ranked high as well.

Respondent 3: This respondent was of the opinion that employee training and skills development across the board would lead to feelings of appreciation and therefor increased levels of employee engagement. Included in the concept of training and development was the concept of masterclasses presented by best of breed, best practice standards as part of standard operating procedures, and knowledge sharing throughout the agency in the best interest of the both the agency and its clients. In addition, she believed that a structurally enabling environment, including access to up-to-date tools and technology, would be considered as factors positively affecting employee engagement. Also, mention was made of better cross cultural appreciation that would also enhance her levels of engagement with the organisation. Finally, she finds creative inspiration within herself through the practice of physical exercise.

Respondent 4: Inspirational and visionary leadership and management together with acknowledgement of your talents, your contribution and your point of view, formed the basis for the most important factors that positively affect employee engagement for this respondent. He also believes that the structural, emotional and social environment stimulates engagement among co-workers, as well as between employees and the organisation. Reward and recognition, more in terms of acknowledgement that in monetary form, further supports employee engagement according to this respondent. He also finds incredible creative inspiration in new client briefs because of the sense of accomplishment that new business provides him.

Respondent 5: Respondent 5 believes that leadership and management style and, very importantly, mentorship from superiors, are the most important factors that positively affect employee engagement. This is followed by monetary reward and recognition. He also rates the social environment highly, and believe that personal relationships in the work place support levels of employee engagement.

Additional factors that drive feelings of creativity are mentorship and guidance from superiors, an opportunity to operate autonomously, and when he believes that he is being trusted by management to deliver creatively.

Respondent 6: A positive and supportive leadership style and leadership by example are the factors most likely affecting employee engagement for this respondent. He also believes that the mentioned preferred leadership style will facilitate a fun and engaging culture. Furthermore, employee autonomy and decision making ability also rank highly for him as factors positively affecting employee engagement. Also of importance is a practical reward system that acknowledges the employee's individual contribution to the creative process. Finally, he believes that a new brief that nobody in the agency has worked on will drive him to achieve high levels of creativity.

Respondent 7: For respondent 7, inspirational leadership and management who also take charge of mentorship in the organisation is of utmost importance. This is supported by a belief that autonomy and decision making ability will contribute to higher levels of employee engagement. Furthermore, acknowledgement of individual contribution to the creative process is more important than monetary reward. Of importance as well is a supportive organisational environment that values professional development.

He furthermore states that he produces some of his most creative work under pressure and in the presence of tight deadlines where there is no time for self-doubt.

Respondent 8: This respondent believes that leadership is the most important factor. This is followed by an acknowledgement of the employee's talents and contribution to the creative process. This is not necessarily in any form other than verbal. Reward and recognition, first non-monetary and then followed by salary and cash rewards, are also important factors that will positively affect employee engagement.

She cares immensely about mankind and thus pro bono work causes her to excel creatively as she knows that her work will have a positive impact on people's lives.

Respondent 9: For respondent 9, reward and recognition is the most important factor that will positively affect his levels of engagement. In this instance, specifically cash followed by verbal acknowledgement. He also values a supportive social structure and high levels of autonomy and decision making ability. Leadership style and leadership through example are considered inspirational for him, which leads to higher levels of engagement.

He seeks challenges in his work that will be innovative and disruptive, and when he finds such his levels of creatively are enhanced.

Respondent 10: Supportive line management and co-workers form the basis for his opinion on the factors that positively affect employee engagement. This is underscored by superiors showing acknowledgement for his contribution, and trusting that he will play a successful role in the creative value chain.

He finds that guidance and constructive criticism from his superiors drive high levels of creativity and motivation.

Respondent 11: Visionary leadership, and visionary and transparent management are considered key factors affecting employee engagement by this respondent. Furthermore, he believes that acknowledgement for his professional contribution would also enhance his levels of engagement with the organisation. Acknowledgement not only internally but also from clients for effort and contribution, drives this respondent's creativity.

Respondent 12: This respondent rates the structural environment as most important to positively affect levels of engagement. This is closely followed by leadership and management style. In addition, she believes that reward and recognition as well as acknowledgement for her creative contribution would significantly increase her levels of creativity.

This discussion is reflected in the following table which also shows the rate out of 12 that each factor has been identified by the respondents.

Table 5: Factors positively affecting employee engagement as identified in the analysis of the personal interviews

Factors positive	Rate	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12
1. Leadership style and management style	10		•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
2. Training and development opportunities and opportunities for growth	4			•		•		•	•				
3. Reward and recognition	7		•		•	•	•		•	•			•
4. Supportive environment	10	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•
5. Autonomy and absence of rules and regulations	5				•	•		•		•	•		
6. Decision-making ability	4				•	•				•	•		
NOT MENTIONED: Acknowledgement	7		•		•		•	•	•	•		•	•

The following is a brief overview of the respondents' views on factors that would negatively affect employee engagement, as per questions 3 and 7 of the research instrument.

Respondent 1: He believes that poor leadership and management, specifically when managers are influenced by personal views, negatively affects employee engagement. This respondent adds that poor salary also negatively affects engagement, and that creatives are generally underpaid and under-valued.

Respondent 2: This respondent states that a lack of autonomy and decision making ability as well as a lack of freedom to express herself creatively negatively affects her levels of engagement. She also mentions that the absence of acknowledgement and recognition as well as an unsupportive work environment have a similar effect.

Respondent 3: Staid leadership styles that are not in keeping with the contemporary creative organisation and weak management by superiors are triggers that negatively affect this respondent's motivation, confidence and creativity. She continues that an external client's disregard for her insights and solutions cause increased disengagement.

Respondent 4: He believes that a lack of acknowledgement of his contribution and insight because of his unique frame of reference and background causes him to be less engaged. In addition, if he is not allowed to have an opinion while at the same time operating in an unsupportive working environment, negatively affect his creativity as well as his levels of engagement with the organisation.

Respondent 5: The absence of leadership, mentorship and guidance from superiors is seen as the manifestation of general disrespect for employees by this respondent, and he feels that these are the main factors that negatively

affect his levels of engagement. Other triggers include difficult external clients and a lack of autonomy.

Respondent 6: For this respondent, poor management, uncertain leadership and the lack of acceptable reward and recognition, including salary, are the main factors that negatively affect his engagement. He also agrees with the previous respondent that difficult external clients also negatively affect engagement.

Respondent 7: This respondent is of the opinion that poor pay and the absence of an emotionally supportive environment at work have the biggest negative affect on engagement. He moreover believes that no recognition and acknowledgement for his contribution also negatively affect engagement.

Respondent 8: She argues that an environment that does not provide emotional and social support as well as a lack of strong creative leadership in the agency are most likely to negatively affect her engagement. This is followed by the absence of acknowledgement for her contribution to the creative process.

Respondent 9: This respondent claims that a lack of visionary leadership as well as management that does not lead by example are the main factors that negatively affects his engagement. An inappropriate physical environment that is too corporate not only inhibits creativity but also affects engagement. Unreasonable deadlines and work overload also have a negative impact on his level of engagement.

Respondent 10: For this respondent, the lack of acknowledgement of his contribution is the most important factor that will lead to lower levels of engagement. Other factors that negatively affect engagement are the absence of autonomy, poor leadership and management styles that are uninspiring, a lack of vision, as well as external clients that interfere with the creative process.

Respondent 11: He believes leadership that lacks vision and transparency is most likely to negatively affect his levels of engagement. This is followed by

meaningless and random input from both superiors and external clients into the creative process.

Respondent 12: Finally, this respondent argues that poor leadership and management styles have the biggest negative effect on her levels of engagement. Additionally, the lack of acknowledgement from management for her contribution to the creative process as well as too tight deadlines and limited budget generally lead to low levels of engagement.

This discussion is reflected in the following table which also shows the rate out of 12 with which each factor has been identified by the respondents.

Table 6: Factors negatively affecting employee engagement as identified in the analysis of the personal interviews:

Factor negative	Rate	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12
1. Leadership style and management style	10	•	•	•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•
2. Training and development opportunities and opportunities for growth	2			•						•			
3. Reward and recognition	6	•	•		•	•	•	•					
4. Supportive environment	11	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
5. Autonomy and absence of rules and regulations	6		•			•	•			•	•		•
6. Decision-making ability	3		•							•	•		
NOT MENTIONED: Acknowledgement	6		•		•			•	•		•		•

Appendix B shows the respondents' negative and positive behaviour when they are triggered to feel both more engaged and less engaged.

4.4 Analysis of the results pertaining to the factors affecting employee engagement in an advertising agency

4.4.1 *Factor 1: Leadership Style and Management Style*

From the interviews conducted, it has been established that 10 out of the 12 respondents believe that this factor affects employee engagement, both positively when it is present and exists in a positive manner, and negatively when it is ether absent or exists in a poor manner. As a factor positively affecting employee engagement, it is also tied in the highest ranking together with a supportive environment as a factor, while it ranks second highest as a factor negatively affecting employee engagement, after supportive environment as a factor.

Respondent 5 remarked: 'Leadership - and mentorship from leaders – is a big thing for me. I'm a junior and I need to look up to them but they also need to develop me to become the best that I can be. The lack of mentorship is a big warning bell for me. Relationships with management and mentorship is more important to me than a pay cheque', (personal communication, 2016).

Respondent 7 remarked that for him, a challenging organisational leadership structure in the agency that pushes all employees to grow and become better, and where both leadership and management 'need to be inspirational, to coach, teach and mentor us creatives so that we can give our best', is most important (personal communication, 2016).

Respondent 8 considered ‘leadership one of the most important factors that will influence me to do better’, (personal communication, 2016). He continues that visionary leadership and management is a critical factor that positively affects employee engagement.

Oppositely, respondent 9 said that ‘if management does not lead by example, the creatives do their own thing and the (creative) process falls apart’, (personal communication, 2016). He continues that the perceived lack of vision from the agency’s leadership as a result of poor communication would negatively affect his levels of engagement with the organisation.

Even though 10 out of 12 respondents believe that leadership and management styles positively affect employee engagement, only three out of the 12 respondents ranked this as the primary factor that positively affect employee engagement. Conversely, seven of the respondents rate this factor of prime importance in its absence - or presence in a poor or negative sense - as a factor negatively affecting employee engagement.

The large number of respondents (10 out of 12) agreeing that visionary leadership and a supportive management positively affect employee engagement, directly correlates with the Global Human Capital Trends Report (Deloitte, 2015) on factors that positively affect employee engagement. As discussed in chapter 2, the report proposes that, among other factors, Leadership and Management positively contribute to levels of employee engagement. Supporting this notion is the suggestion that transformational and authentic leadership styles have been proven to be the most conducive to employee engagement as it encourages well-being and productivity (Attridge, 2009). This follows that aversive leadership as a factor is also strongly supported (10 out of 12 respondents) and thus has a negative impact on employee engagement.

Nam Choi et al (Jin Nam Choi et al., 2009b) furthermore explain that supportive leadership aids employee creativity. In the context of this study, higher levels of employee engagement promote creativity among creatives in an advertising

agency, and it therefor can be inferred that supportive leadership positively affect levels of engagement among creatives.

It can thus be concluded that the theme Leadership Style and Management Style is considered important among creatives in an advertising agency in South Africa and categorically support the research proposition in this regard.

4.4.2 *Factor 2: Training and Development Opportunities and Opportunities for Growth*

Only four of the 12 respondents have identified the presence of this factor as a positive influence on employee engagement. This rate of four out of 12 is the lowest achieved among the six factors, together with Decision-making Ability. Of the four respondents, only one has identified this factor as the most important to positively affect employee engagement, while two of them ranked it second most important.

Respondent 3 believes that training and development of staff, specifically the creatives in the agency, include informal activities ‘such as masterclasses by respected people in the industry, knowledge share of best practice across the group agencies, making use of data to the best interest of the agency as well as for our clients’, (personal communication, 2016). She continued that training and development should also encompass the upgrading of the creatives’ tools of the trade such as cutting edge technology.

Oppositely, respondent 9 went so far as to say that ‘often creatives are pushed to copycat rather than to invent, because some organisations do not always support innovation because of a lack of training and development of the creatives’, (personal communication, 2016). For him, a lack of employee training and development is a significant factor that negatively affects his levels of employee engagement.

This factor achieved the lowest ranking among all six factors that negatively affect employee engagement. Thus, only two of the respondents believe that the absence of Training and Development Opportunities and Opportunities for Growth would negatively affect their levels of employee engagement. Both of these respondents also did not rank this factor of significant importance in their discussions with the researcher, while the same respondents ranked poor leadership as the most important factor that negatively affect employee engagement.

Training and Development Opportunities and Opportunities for Growth as a factor has been identified in the literature (Deloitte, 2015; Rothmann & Rothmann Jr, 2010) as an aspect that the organisation should address to drive employee engagement, as mentioned earlier in chapter 2. As an intrinsic reward that drives employee engagement according to Thomas (2009), a sense of competence ties in with training and development as a factor affecting employee engagement. However, it must be stated that the research results have shown that among creatives in an advertising agency, this factor has only been identified by a third of the respondents as important in driving employee engagement, and the absence of this factor only by 2 out of 12 as negatively affecting employee engagement.

It can this be concluded that Training and Development Opportunities and Opportunities for Growth only partially support the research proposition in that it seems to be of lesser importance to creatives in an advertising agency.

4.4.3 *Factor 3: Reward and Recognition*

From the interviews conducted by the researcher, seven of the respondents believe that Reward and Recognition as a factor positively affects employee engagement. Six of the respondents argue that a lack of reward and recognition or poor reward and recognition negatively affects employee engagement. It is

interesting to note that four of the respondents to this factor appear in both the positively affecting and negatively affecting tables.

Respondent 8 reported that ‘monthly salary will influence me to do better. Also, more than money, non-monetary rewards and recognition in the form of awards for your talent. It changes how people in the agency see you, especially when you are a junior’, (personal communication, 2016). Respondent 4 suggested that ‘incentives, not necessarily monetary, but more in the form of acknowledgement’ have a positive impact on his levels of engagement (personal communication, 2016).

Respondent 1 remarked that ‘creatives are highly underpaid considering the agency’s revenues as result of their creativity’, (personal communication, 2016). Respondent 7 agreed and continued that creatives are often undervalued. ‘The agency depends on their creativity, they are the heart of the business, but mostly they remain undervalued from a monetary perspective as well as the from a business perspective’, (personal communication, 2016).

Three out of the seven respondents who believe that this factor positively affect their levels of engagement have also ranked it as the most important. At the same time, only one respondent ranked it of highest importance as negatively affecting employee engagement.

The researcher found it interesting that Reward and Recognition as a factor ranked in third place for both positively and negatively affecting employee engagement. An interesting observation in relation to this theme was a factor that was not measured but appeared an equal number of times, and even though not strictly classified as Reward and Recognition, should be discussed in this section: the concept of acknowledgement. It has been defined in the sense of contribution to the entire work process. This includes hard work and going the extra mile in general terms, and also from a creative process perspective not only creatively but also from a strategic insights into consumer behaviour and market segment psychographics perspective. Acknowledgement

is reflected in the Ten C's of employee engagement, according to Seijts & Crim (2006).

The American Psychological Association (Attridge, 2009) argues that reward and recognition contribute to a healthy corporate culture which in turn drives employee engagement.

It can thus be concluded that Reward and Recognition partially support the research proposition.

4.4.4 *Factor 4: Supportive Environment.*

Out of the 12 respondents interviewed, 10 suggested that a supportive working environment positively affects their levels of employee engagement. The rating 10 out of 12 rating for this factor is the highest rate among all the factors, tied with Leadership and Management Style.

The environment that the respondents referred to was further defined as a structurally supportive environment that are free from any stifling and formal corporate structures, thus conducive to free thinking and creativity, as well as a strong socially supportive environment in the sense of a work family, not only among co-workers on the same job level but also from the agency's management and leadership. The main issue that was raised in the context of the supportive social environment related to an appreciation and understanding of the fact that 'life happens', meaning family responsibilities regarding children, family members, and general things that everyone needs to do from time to time and never gets the opportunity to do during normal weekday working hours.

Respondent 2 reasoned that a socially supportive environment that is 'caring, loving, nurturing and family oriented outweigh any money benefit that salary might offer', (personal communication, 2016). Respondent 10 claimed that his positive personal relationships at work with co-workers as well as line management definitely affects his levels of engagement in a positive manner. 'It

feels great when we share a vision and when I can meet and exceed their expectations of my creative ability and delivery', (personal communication, 2016). Respondent 5 said that personal relationships at work are important, because he preferred to address his direct line manager when he experienced any issues as he needed to learn from co-workers. 'Relationships at work are more important than things like money and pay', (personal communication, 2016).

Respondent 2 argued that an environment that instils fear creates nervous tension which leads to her losing trust in her own creative ability. 'You are limited in your creativity when you are scared that you will be judged harshly for your creativity or lack thereof', (personal communication, 2016). Respondent 5 said that he withdraws his participation in the creative process when co-workers do not show personal consideration for him, his likes and his happiness. Respondent 7 maintained that a negative environment at work negatively affects his levels of engagement and therefore also his creative contribution, while respondent 8 said 'when there is no vibe at work, people get bored and that leads to low energy and weak creativity', (personal communication, 2016).

Of the 10 respondents who identified Supportive Environment as a theme which they believe positively affects levels of employee engagement, only three have actually rated it as the most important factor.

An even higher rate of 11 out of 12 was recorded for the theme of Supportive Environment among the factors that negatively affect employee engagement. Of the 11, only two respondents regarded the lack of a supportive environment of prime importance among the factors that negatively affect their levels of engagement.

Weilbacher (1993) argues that the physical environment possibly influence creativity and similarly that a negative environment possibly have a detrimental effect on creativity in an advertising agency, while Von Nordenflycht (2007) suggests that the shareholders' expectation of an agency's financial performance above creative performance impacts both creative input and

output. The literature also claims that engagement is driven by various factors among which a supportive work community and social structure at work, while the organisation could nurture creativity through levers such as helpful co-workers (Jin Nam Choi et al., 2009b; Maslach et al., 2001).

It can be concluded that the factor of Supportive Environment categorically support the research proposition.

4.4.5 *Factor 5: Autonomy and the Absence of Rules and Regulations*

Out of the respondents interviewed, five identified the presence of this factor as positively affecting employee engagement, while six respondents are of the opinion that the absence of autonomy and the presence of rules and regulations negatively affect engagement. Interestingly, four out of the 12 respondents identified this factor as relevant in both instances.

Respondent 9 argued the importance of 'autonomy with regard to your personal responsibilities' as a factor that would positively affect employee engagement, while respondent 2 reasoned that 'agencies where the creative superiors work in specific ways and are not accommodating towards individual work style and want to change the way in which people work, cause triggers for creatives to become disinterested and less creative,' (personal communication, 2016).

None of the respondents rated Autonomy and the Absence of Rules and Regulations as a theme, as the most important factor positively affecting engagement, while only one believed that the absence of this factor is of prime importance that negatively affects employee engagement. Only two of the respondents were of the opinion that the theme of Autonomy would affect engagement both positively and negatively.

A local study of factors that affect employee engagement, proposes autonomy as a driver of employee engagement (Rothmann & Rothmann Jr, 2010), in keeping with the Imandin et al (2014) model for the measurement of employee

engagement, which also includes autonomy under the Nature Of My Job construct as a measurement of employee engagement, as presented in 2.2.2. The Nam Choi study supports this notion and found that high creative ability employees are frustrated in the presence of rules and regulations (Jin Nam Choi et al., 2009).

It can thus be concluded that Autonomy and the Absence of Rules and Regulations as a factor affecting employee engagement categorically supports the research proposition.

4.4.6 *Factor 6: Decision-making Ability*

Of the respondents interviewed, four reported that Decision-making Ability has a positive impact on their levels of employee engagement. This is the lowest rated factor among the six factors as per the research proposition, together with Training and Development Opportunities and Opportunities for Growth. Only three respondents believed that the absence of decision-making ability would negatively affect employee engagement.

Respondent 7 said that decision making ability is ‘an important factor for me as I like to have a say in the execution of the creative process in the agency’, (personal communication, 2016). Respondent 10 argued that his co-workers and superiors don’t necessarily have to agree with him, but he should be allowed to make decisions ‘because that’s the only way that you will grow and learn from your mistakes’, (personal communication, 2016).

Two out of the 12 respondents rated this factor of relevance for both positively and negatively affecting engagement. None of them rated decision-making ability of prime importance that would either negatively or positively affect their levels of engagement.

A local study (Rothmann & Rothmann Jr, 2010) of factors that affect employee engagement maintains that the ability to participate in decision making drives

employee engagement. Once again, the ability to make decisions appear under the construct of Feeling Valued and Involved in the model for the measurement of employee engagement (Imandin et al., 2014), as presented in 2.2.2. However, the Nam Choi study (Jin Nam Choi et al., 2009b) regarding engagement drivers of creatives does not discuss decision making ability as a factor, and it is therefore concluded based ion the literature and the results of the study that Decision-making Ability as a factor affecting employee engagement only partially supports the research proposition.

4.4.7 *Other factors*

- The theme of Reward and Recognition as part of the research proposition and within the context of the advertising industry, is generally seen to encompass components that include salary and cash rewards, as well as organisation and industry acknowledgement for great creative work, such as the local industry's annual Loeries and Pendoring Awards among others, for outstanding creative work. One theme that recurred during the interviews and that cannot be ignored as part of the analysis, is the concept of Acknowledgement. This should be defined in isolation of monetary recognition and internal and external awards. Among the respondents, seven rated this theme of importance in relation to positively affecting employee engagement, while six of them rated its absence of importance in relation to negatively affecting employee engagement. Five of these believed that the presence and the absence of the factor would affect their levels of engagement. Only one rated the absence of this factor of prime importance negatively affecting his levels of employee engagement.
- It has to be mentioned that, on day 1 of the interviews as scheduled, the researcher was informed that the entire Johannesburg office of the agency has been retrenched following the loss of two major accounts within a matter of weeks. The impact of the loss of fees was considered

too catastrophic for the business to remain operational in Johannesburg while it attempts to win new business, and the agency was wound down. As a result, all the respondents have been informed that they would be retrenched only days before the interviews commenced. The researcher believes that the mood in the agency and the sentiment among all employees could potentially have influenced the responses and it would be interesting to measure the ranking of the factors that negatively affect employee engagement under different circumstances.

4.4.8 *Conclusion*

According to the 12 respondents interviewed, the factors affecting employee engagement both positively and negatively in an advertising agency in South Africa are ranked and presented in the following tables:

Table 7: Ranking of factors positively affecting employee engagement

Factor	Rank
Leadership style and management style	1
Supportive environment, including an enabling corporate environment and a meaningful social structure at work	1
Reward and recognition	2
Autonomy and absence of rules and regulations	3
Training and development opportunities and opportunities for growth	4
Decision-making ability	4

Table 8: Ranking of factors negatively affecting employee engagement

Factor	Rank
Supportive environment, including an enabling corporate environment and a meaningful social structure at work	1
Leadership style and management style	2
Reward and recognition	3
Autonomy and absence of rules and regulations	3
Decision-making ability	4
Training and development opportunities and opportunities for growth	5

4.5 Conclusion to the results and discussion.

The research proposition of the study was:

> *"The following factors significantly affect, both positively and negatively, employee engagement among creatives in an advertising agency:*
>
> - *Leadership style and management style;*
> - *Training and development opportunities and opportunities for growth;*
> - *Reward and recognition;*
> - *Supportive environment, including an enabling corporate environment and a meaningful social structure at work;*
> - *Autonomy and absence of rules and regulations;*
> - *Decision-making ability".*

The tables below reflect the findings in ranked order:

Table 9: Factors positively affecting employee engagement in response to the research proposition:

Rank	Factor	Support of the research proposition
1	Leadership style and management style	Categorically
1	Supportive environment, including an enabling corporate environment and a meaningful social structure at work	Categorically
2	Reward and recognition	Partially
3	Autonomy and absence of rules and regulations	Partially
4	Training and development opportunities and opportunities for growth	Weak
4	Decision-making ability	Weak

Table 10: Factors negatively affecting employee engagement in response to the research proposition:

Rank	Factor	Support of the research proposition
1	Supportive environment, including an enabling corporate environment and a meaningful social structure at work	Categorically
2	Leadership style and management style	Categorically
3	Reward and recognition	Partially
3	Autonomy and absence of rules and regulations	Partially
4	Decision-making ability	Weak
5	Training and development opportunities and opportunities for growth	Weak

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The research aimed to provide an understanding of the factors that both promote and inhibit employee engagement among creatives in an advertising agency in South Africa, based on a research proposition. This final chapter of the report summarises the main findings, provides recommendations of how a creative agency could use the report as well as suggestions for further research.

Twelve respondents, all of which are creatives in an advertising agency in Johannesburg, were interviewed and asked to identify the factors which they believe both promote and inhibit employee engagement among creatives.

5.2 Conclusion of the study

Twelve semi-structured in depth interviews were conducted and the results analysed through themed content analysis or thematic analysis. Findings from the research were compared against the research proposition and discussed at length in chapter 4.

Tables 9 and 10 on page 57 reflect the level of support of the results of the research proposition.

It can be concluded from the research that an advertising agency will be able to drive higher levels of employee engagement for the creatives by ensuring that it provides visionary leadership and strong management styles and ensure a

supportive environment from an organisational, social and co-worker perspective.

5.3 Recommendations

Tables 7 and 8 on page 55 - 56 provide advertising agencies with a view of the importance of a number of factors that both promote and inhibit employee engagement among creatives. The ranking of these factors, both positive and negative, can equip the management of advertising agencies in South Africa with suggestions as to specific changes that can be made and programmes implemented to ensure that the agency facilitates to the best of its ability, the highest levels of employee engagement among its creatives.

It furthermore provides guidance as to which factors either in their absence or in their poor execution would inhibit employee engagement among creatives. As has been shown in the research results discussion, when creatives are less engaged for whatever reason, they tend to withdraw from the creative process and also argue that they are less creative under such circumstances.

The researcher recommends that creative agencies nurture employee engagement through ensuring that the relevant important factors are in place in the work place, and mitigating the negative effects as a result of lower levels of engagement by addressing the factors that inhibit engagement.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

This research was conducted in order to gain a better understanding of the specific factors affecting employee engagement among creatives in an advertising agency in South Africa. The following areas are suggested for future research:

- Extending the population to include other agency stakeholders and explore the factors driving engagement levels in other division in the agency, such as account management and strategy development departments. In the research, it has been established that the creatives have varying opinions about the specific set of factors that apply to creatives and if it would apply equally to other divisions within the agency, and how the factors compare to those applicable to creatives.

  Suggested research question: How do the factors affecting employee engagement in an advertising agency in South African differ from creatives and other employees in the agency?

- Rather than a research proposition as is the case in this study, provide the creatives in an advertising agency with all the factors that affect employee engagement as per the literature, and allow the respondents to identify those that they find resonance with.

  Suggested research question: Which factors according to creatives in an advertising agency in South Africa are most likely to both promote and inhibit employee engagement?

- Provide a comparison between the factors affecting employee engagement among creatives in Johannesburg and those living in Cape Town, to gain an understanding if different sets of factors exist in different cities in the same industry in the same country, and if lifestyle affects the importance of factors.

  Suggested research question: How does the factors affecting employee engagement differ between creatives in an advertising agency in Cape Town and that of an advertising agency in Johannesburg? Can these differences be contributed to the physical environment?

5.5 Concluding remarks

Employee engagement is a relatively new concept even though a significant body of research has been built up in recent years. Having said that, little is known about the specific factors that creatives in an advertising agency believe affect their levels of engagement, both positively and negatively. It is based on this gap of knowledge that the researcher embarked on this research in an effort the identity the factors that the advertising agency should leverage in order to enhance the levels of engagement among creatives, so that the agency can ensure maximum creative contribution to the organisation, because the creativity of the agency is generally accepted as the life blood of the agency.

REFERENCES

Admasachew, L., & Dawson, J. (2011). Employee engagement – a brief review of definitions, theoretical perspectives and measures.

Ahmetoglu, G., Harding, X., Akhtar, R., & Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2015). Predictors of creative achievement: assessing the impact of entrepreneurial potential, perfectionism, and employee engagement. *Creativity Research Journal*, *27*(2), 198–205.

Albrecht, S. L., Bakker, A. B., Gruman, J. a, Macey, W. H., & Saks, A. M. (2015). Employee engagement, human resource management practices and competitive advantage. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, *2*(1), 7–35.

Aon Hewitt. (2015). *2015 trends in global employee engagement. Making engagement happen.*

Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: an analytical tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, *1*(3), 385–405.

Attridge, M. (2009). Measuring and managing employee work engagement: a review of the research and business literature. *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health*, *24*(4), 383–398.

Bakker, A. B. (2011). An evidence-based model of work engagement. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *20*(4), 265–269.

Boyce, C., & Neale, P. (2006). *Conducting in-depth interviews: a guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews*. *Monitoring and evaluation* (Vol. 2). Watertown, MA.

Bryman, A. (2012). Social research methods (4th editio, pp. 379–609). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Chakraborty, R. (2014). Sustainable engagement. *HR Matters*, (7), 4–6.

Deloitte. (2015). Global human capital trends 2015. *Deloitte University Press*, 112.

DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). Making sense of qualitative research - the qualitative research interview. *Medical Education*, *40*(4), 314–321.

El-Murad, J., & West, D. C. (2004). The definition and measurement of creativity: What do we know? *Journal of Advertising Research*, *44*(2), 188–201.

Fletcher, L., Robinson, D., Truss, C., Holmes, J., Buzzeo, J., & Currie, G. (2012). Measuring employee engagement and interpreting survey results.

Hackley, C., & Kover, A. J. (2007). The trouble with creatives: Negotiating creative identity in advertising agencies. *International Journal of Advertising*, *26*(1), 63–78.

Hammond, M. E. (2012). *Factors affecting young women's levels of engagement in the workplace in South Africa*. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L., & Hayes, T. L. (2002). Business-unit-level relationship between employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and business outcomes: a meta-analysis. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, *87*(2), 268–279.

Heger, B. K. (2007). Linking the employment value proposition (EVP) to employee engagement and business outcomes: preliminary findings from a linkage research pilot study. *Organization Development Journal*, *25*, 121–132.

Imandin, L., Bisschoff, C., & Botha, C. (2014). A model to measure employee engagement. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, *12*(4), 520–532.

Jin Nam Choi, Anderson, T. a., & Veillette, A. (2009a). Contextual Inhibitors of Employee Creativity in Organizations: The Insulating Role of Creative Ability. *Group & Organization Management*, *34*(3), 330–357.

Jin Nam Choi, Anderson, T. a., & Veillette, a. (2009b). Contextual Inhibitors of Employee Creativity in Organizations: The Insulating Role of Creative Ability. *Group & Organization Management*, *34*(3), 330–357. http://doi.org/10.1177/1059601108329811

Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, *33*(4), 692–724.

Lodahl, T. M., & Kejnar, M. (1965). The definition and measurement of job involvement. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *49*(1), 24–33.

Macey, W. H., & Schneider, B. (2008). The Meaning of Employee Engagement. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, *1*(January), 3–30.

Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *52*, 397–422.

May, D. R., Gilson, R. L., & Harter, L. M. (2004). The psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability and the engagement of the human spirit at work. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *77*(1), 11–37.

McGann, A. F. (1985). Human Resource Planning in the Advertising Agency (Part Ii). *Journal of Advertising*, *14*(2), 3.

Reid, L. N., Whitehall King, K., & DeLorme, D. E. (1998). Top-Level Agency Creatives Look at Advertising Creativity Then and Now. *Journal of Advertising*, *27*(2), 1–17.

Rich, B. L., Lepine, J. a, & Crawford, E. R. (2010). Job Engagement: antecents and effects on job performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, *53*(3), 617–635.

Riege, M. A. (2003). Validity and reliability tests in case study research: a literature review with “hands-on” applications for each research phase. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, *6*(2), 75–86.

Robinson, D., Perryman, S., & Hayday, S. (2004). The Drivers of Employee Engagement. *Institute of Employee Studies (IES Report 408)*.

Rothmann, S., & Rothmann Jr, S. (n.d.). Factors associated with employee engagement in South Africa. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, *36*(2), 1–12.

Rothmann, S., & Rothmann Jr, S. (2010). Factors associated with employee engagement in South Africa. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, *36*(2), 1–12.

Saks, A. M. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *21*(7), 600–619.

Saks, A. M., & Gruman, J. A. (2014). What do we really know about employee engagement? *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *25*(2), 155–182.

Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire: a cross-national study. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *66*(4), 701–716.

Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., Gonzales-Roma, V., & Bakker, A. B. (2002). The measurement of engagement and burnout : a two sample confirmatory factor. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *3*, 71–92.

Seijts, B. G. H., & Crim, D. (2006). What is employee engagement? The 10 C's of Employee Engagement. *Ivey Business Journal*, *23*(4), 1–6.

Thomas, K. W. (2009). The four intrinsic rewards that drive employee engagement. *Ivey Business Journal*, *73*, 1.

Von Nordenflycht, A. (2007). Is public ownership bad for professional service firms? Ad agency ownership, performance, and creativity. *Academy of Management Journal*, *50*(2), 429–445.

Weilbacher, W. M. (1993). *Brand Marketing: Building Winning Brand Strategies That Deliver Value and Customer Satisfaction* (First Edit). Lincolnwood: Ntc Pub Group.

Williams, C. (2007). Research methods. *Journal of Business & Economic Research*, *5*(3), 65–72.

APPENDIX A

Interview outline

The questionnaire that was be applied for the interviews conducted by the researcher.

Factors affecting employee engagement in an advertising agency in South Africa - Interview guide

Respondent details

- Date:
- Time:
- Venue:
- Name:
- Title:
- Number of years in current position:
- Number of years with current agency:
- Basic demographics including gender, age, race:

Questions

1. Briefly describe what you do at the agency (a typical day in the life . . .)
2. Now that you understand the study's definition of employee engagement, please describe the factors that you believe influence your level of engagement in a positive way.
3. And those factors that you believe negatively influence your level of engagement?
4. What behaviour do you think you display when you feel engaged at work?
5. And when you feel less engaged or even disengaged?

6. What in your day makes you feel incredibly creative and wanting to deliver your best work?
7. Are there things at work that really deflates you to the point where you feel it is affecting your ability to be creative?
8. In the ideal world, what can your line manager do that will positively impact your level of engagement?
9. In your opinion, are there different sets of factors that will affect the creative team's level of engagement vs the client service team's level vs the admin and traffic team's level of engagement? Justify.

APPENDIX B

Respondent behaviour

This table refers to questions 4 and 5 from the research instrument.

It can be seen that the behaviour displayed when creatives are more engaged are in line with the three-dimensional model of vigour, dedication and absorption, where workers generally display higher levels of energy, dedication to and absorption in their jobs and the related tasks, while the opposite is also true relating to cynicism and detachment from work.

Table 11: Respondents' behaviour

Respondent	Behaviour when more engaged	Behaviour when less engaged
1	• Positive and professional attitude and enhanced interaction with the organisation, co-workers and clients; • Proactively contribute to the creative process;	• Absence, both physically and emotionally; • Withdraw creative contribution and creativity; • Become robotic in participation at work.
2	• Inspired to do more, be more creative, be proactive and deliver award-winning work; • Actively participate and mentoring juniors.	• Insecurity about creativity of my work and forget how to be creative; • Disengage from work and co-workers.
3	• Overall feeling of happiness and a creative high; • Proactively contribute to the creative process.	• Withdrawal of contribution; • Procrastination; • Feelings of constricted creativity
4	• Higher levels of participation in the creative process; • Enhanced creativity and insights into clients' business and the market.	• Withdrawal of creative contribution as well participation at all levels; • Displaying a defeatist attitude; • Feelings of discouragement.

5	• Working longer hours and much more committed to everything, including personal life; • Very high levels of co-worker engagement.	• Disengaged, forgetful; • Disregard for work, co-workers, clients; • Withdrawal from all things work related.
6	• Full participation in the creative process; • Very focussed and may seem reserved; • Experience anxiety to perform.	• Restless and sporadic behaviour; • Too chatty and disruptive; • Low commitment levels and tardy timekeeping.
7	• Committed to do more, go the extra mile; • High levels of drive in aspects of professional and personal life.	• Withdrawal from all things work related; • Lack of confidence in creative ability.
8	Excitement; Increased creativity and creative delivery; Deeper engagement with the creative process and co-workers.	Withdrawal from all work related things; Distant and absent; Demotivated, and impaired ability to deliver creativity.
9	More motivated, willingness to go the extra mile; High engagement with the organisation.	Distracted and demotivated; Tardy time keeping; Less confident and uncertainty about my own creative ability.

10	More creative expression; Look for deeper insights to benefit the brief.	Withdrawal from all things work related; Creative uncertainty and lack of confidence; Start to micromanage the team.
11	Much more committed to the organisation as well as the creative process.	Withdrawal from all thing work related; Attitude of indifference.
12	High levels of enthusiasm for professional and personal life; Stimulated creativity and creative contribution; Mentor and guide my team to achieve better outputs.	Distracted and demotivated; Much less creative and uncertain about creative ability.