

Full Length Research Paper

An evaluation of the impact of the management practices and how they impact on employee-engagement: Employees' perceptions

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The employer-employee relationship has always been governed by the understanding that the employee is simply a hired hand to complement the business owner in the process of achieving a firm's set objectives. The rest of the other activities and phenomena are taken for granted – 'I employ you, you do your work I pay you', so the circle continues. The employer drives the employee to perform to enable the firm reach its objectives and give a good return on the investments. The rest of the other activities are merely a means to an end, understood to be merely a symbiotic relation, one hand washing the other. The concept of employee-engagement as a management tool does not seem to hold much strength and appreciation amongst managers whose sole purpose is to produce results. This paper brings into light empirical research indicating that industry captains do not focus on human capital as critical for effective productivity. The managers resort to hiring and firing as a means of boosting productivity, slave driving to increase labour performance. The industry captains are quick to point a finger to the labour as inhibiting free will hiring and firing as a solution to poor productivity. Consequently, the industry may be breeding a generation of non-devoted, convenience employees resulting in mediocre performance. The question asked always is; why does South Africa have low productivity? The paper points the problem to the failure of management to capitalize on the benefits of employee-engagement as an accessory to effective management by impression.

Key words: Commitment to the firm, conducive work-environment, employee-engagement, manager-employee-relationship, peer-relationship and productivity.

INTRODUCTION

Meihami and Meihami (2014: 80-91) assert that organizations constantly seek for means to enhance profitability by developing competitive advantage with the focus on the people that do the work. Defining the

mission and the vision is not enough in this dynamic business terrain, a new culture of trust and employee buy-in may be the way to go. It should be an imperative for business to strengthen employer-employee relations

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to retain the experience and the indispensable knowledge within the experienced employees. Effective leadership should therefore focus on employee engagement as an accessory to existing managerial competencies which should clarify the vision / mission prompt employee performance. The ideal employee engagement should be measured through the relationship between the firm and its employees. The higher the level of employee engagement, the higher the probability of a workforce highly absorbed and enthusiastic about their occupation (Albrecht et al., 2015: 7-35). An "engaged employee" is positive about her/his work and her/his performance leading to the development of a difficult-to-copy competitive advantage for the firm. It can be stated here that employee engagement does not come by luck; it is a result of deliberate effort to create conducive environment. The low productivity can be averted by providing an enabling environment that would motivate the employees to commit themselves more to their duties. Employee engagement, from the research, brings a new sense of devotion and ownership from the employee towards their tasks, thereby increasing productivity. It is this opportunity that management continues to miss, which could enhance productivity at the same level of employment. This research therefore seeks to identify the impact of a deliberate employee-engagement oriented management practice towards the attainment and maximization of employee productivity.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Carasco-Saul et al. (2015: 38-63) are of the view that an engaged employee has a heightened emotional and intellectual connection to the organisation and to co-workers especially if the leaders are close to the employees. This results in higher levels of loyalty and higher probability of high performance and full employee engagement. Organizations focusing on employee engagement outperform their own performance-expectations, making it easier to compete in the global village. Inevitably employee-engagement has become more complex and cumbersome because of the increase on the diversities at the workplace. The availability of information and subsequent knowledge of the employees only serve to complicate the process which is supported by Saks and Gruman (2014: 155-182) who posit that change is inevitable compounded by the ever-changing market needs.

According to Korschun et al. (2014: 20-37), there is a direct relationship between the level of employee-engagement and performance level of an individual employee's awareness of the business context. Engaged employees show enthusiasm and are emotionally attached to the organization and cognitively alert to any happenings in the organization. A triangle can be drawn between employee-engagement, individuals-involvement and job-satisfaction. This inevitably builds pressure for

the individual to do more for the organization including promoting it, protecting it, and being innovative for the sake of the loved organization.

Jowah (2013: 708-719) posits that the effectiveness of a leader reaches its maximum when there is a congruency between the follower and leader expectation. At this stage the average employee performs at their best, they become fully engaged as they will feel respected, accepted and valued. All things being constant, it is possible to predict the creation of an employee-employer engagement ideal to boost and maintain productivity. Popli and Rizvi (2015: 59-70) assert that employee engagement is the driver of organisational success since high employee engagement levels assist in retention of experienced personnel. The retention of skills means the presence of intellectual property (knowledge), which when properly managed (knowledge management) will boost employee-engagement. Pauleen and Gorman (2016: 23-38) define knowledge as a "fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information." The explicit, implicit and tacit knowledge in the organization, combined with high employee engagement, would form a solid impenetrable force of high morale, high productivity, high synergy, and not an easy to bit competitive advantage.

Bin (2015: 1-8) noted that the three elements responsible for driving employee engagement are; contributions, connections, and growth and advancement. Great leadership generates increased employee engagement that results in organizational efficiency. Cognizance should be taken of the three dimensional concept of work, namely; physical, emotional and cognitive element of the human employee. Saks and Gruman (2014: 155-182) mention both emotional and intellectual (cognitive) dedication to the organization (an indication of employee-engagement) which takes in a lot of strength and zeal for the organization. It is the degree of satisfaction of the employees with the organization that makes them think of their workplace as their second home.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

It has been alluded to in the foregoing literature that leadership, organizational structure and culture, and the ability of management to measure the extent to which the employees may be loyal to the firm would enable the management to predict employee engagement. It can be stated here that employee engagement does not come by luck, it is a result of deliberate effort to create the conducive environment. This study seeks to evaluate the degree of employee engagement in selected companies in the Cape Metropolis of Cape Town. It is assumed that the average leader / manager may have little academic knowledge about the value of employee engagement.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is the “how” part of this empirical research; it is a mixed quantitative and qualitative research using pre-constructed instruments (questionnaires) that had been pre-tested and re-constructed for the purpose. The questionnaires were administered to different respondents in different workplaces by final year Research Methodology students who had been trained on research methods.

Target population

The people who feel the effects of leadership behavior are those employees who are managed. It can be argued that employee feels a degree of subordination as long as they have someone that they report to, including managers who report to senior managers. The target population was decided on the basis of any employee who was not the owner of the organization, and preferably not classified as a senior manager.

Sample, sampling and sampling technique

The sample was all subordinates in 10 selected firms/organizations that were available / able to fill in the questionnaires. The interviewers were part time Research Methodology students who carried out the research at their workplaces. They were requested to choose randomly, of course dependent on willingness and availability of the prospective respondents. The 10 students participating were requested to get a minimum of 10 questionnaires each (100) properly completed, solely to do with the costs and time involved.

Data collection and analysis

The data were collected using well-structured questionnaires that had been pre-tested and reconstructed to be relevant. The questionnaire was sent to a statistician for further corrections before it was administered. One hundred people responded and the data were edited, and coded. The coded data were captured into the Excel Spread sheet and bar charts, pie charts, histograms and other pictorial data-representing forms were developed. The data were therefore interpreted and analyzed.

FINDINGS

The perceptions of a hundred respondents are recorded under the findings. The format is simply stating the question or statement as it appeared in the questionnaire with the response following thereafter. The response includes the brief explanation and interpretation of the graphic representation of the findings. The questionnaire was divided into three parts named, Section A (Demographics), Section B (structured statements – Likert scale) and Section C (open ended questions).

Section A: Demographics

The biography assisted in identifying the respondents and in determining which of them were relevant to the

study. General questions were asked with pre-determined answers to eliminate those that did not qualify for the survey.

Question 1: What is your gender? The research had nothing specifically to do with gender in the questions that followed, except the researcher wanted to know for the record how many males and females participated in the survey.

Out of the 100 responding, from left to right 2% of the total is females employed as general workers with 9% male. The administrators show females at 12% contrasted to males at 3% ($\frac{1}{4}$ of the total for females); there were more female supervisors at 8% which is twice the males at 4%. Ironically the number of female managers (13%) stands at 4 times that of males at 3%, but “other” has female respondents at 20% with males at 26%. In all, 55% females responded with males at 45%.

Question 2: What is your age group? It was considered important that the age groups of the respondents be ascertained. The age group would help establish the level of maturity and this may indicate the average years of experience in the workplace. Results are analyzed based on cross tabulating age groups and their levels of occupation.

Unskilled labour: Of particular interest is the absence of unskilled labour (0%) in age group below 20 years, and none (0%) above 50 years. Most would complete high school at about the age of 19 and 20. This means that there were no recent *matriculants* that were interviewed. There is only 9% of unskilled workers for age group of 41-50, which is as expected; at that age the bulk have been promoted or moved to other occupations. As would be expected, 55% (entry level) come from 21-30 years, with a drop to 36% for the ages 31-40 years.

Administrators: As in the case of general workers, there are no administrators below 20 years of age, but a sudden jump to 47% for the age range 21-30. This is followed by 31-40 age range at 40% and a low 13% for the 41-50 age group. No administrators were found in the age group of 50 years plus.

Supervisors: The results show that 33% of the supervisors responding were between the ages of 21-30 years of age, 25% were between 31-40 years, another 25% was between 41-50 years with 17% above 50 years of age. It was rather surprising that there were more supervisors between the ages of 21-30 compared to the subsequent years when it is expected that the longer people serve the higher the chances of them getting to supervision level.

Managers: Usually the most experienced, knowledgeable or educated, which ever fits the description of how the

individual gets to management level. The highest percentage of managers (39%) is in the age group of 41-50 years. This may be an indication of years of experience mostly, and may not relate to academic achievements. Age groups of 31-40 years and 50 years plus are both at 28% each, with those 20 years and below at 0%, whilst 21-30 age group is at 5%. The managers statistics were very much along expectations.

Other: No provision was made to identify what other levels would represent, the anticipation was these would be, and not limited to professions such as technicians, engineers, advisors etc. In this category, 39% were in the age group 21-30 years, 28% between the age group 31-40, with the 41-50 years age group recording 18 with 11% at 50 years and above.

Question 3: - State the employment status - industries in South Africa have moved swiftly to outsourcing and *casualisation* of labour. It is believed to be cost saving. The researcher wanted to establish the employment status of the respondents, the workplace now commonly people employed as permanent, casual, contract, consultant, and other status that may be a hybrid of two or more of the status.

Unskilled employees accounted for 73% with 9% as casual labour, 18% on contract, and none of the unskilled labour consulted was classified as "other." Administrators accounted for 73% as permanent, no casual (0%), 27% were on contract, with consultants and *other* at 0% each. Supervisors and managers were both at 100% each. The other had 74% permanently employed, 2% as casual, 11% on contract and 13% as consultants.

Question 4: How many years (total) work experience do you have? The longer an individual has worked, the more they are likely to provide objective perceptions to employee perceptions because of their exposure. Have been managed or having managed different personalities may translate to a degree of emotional intelligence. Just above one third (35%) of the respondents have between 0-5 years working experience; this could be a young company or a company that has experienced recent expansion (55% of unskilled labour was age 21-30). The 6-10 years' experience range sits at 30% with 11-15 years at 11% and those with 16 years plus accounting for 24%.

Section B

Likert scale was used to measure the perceptions of the respondents. A 5-level Likert (1 – 5) scale with 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree was used; the statements are classified into sub-topics.

Type of job: In times of high unemployment people take just "anything." The situation is compounded by the influx of economic refugees who will accept any job as long as they get paid. The statements on which the respondent's perceptions were measured are presented in Table 1.

Statement - this is my dream job and here I will stay till retirement: It is surprising that only 33% of the respondents felt that this was what they had dreamt of having. On the other hand 45% (nearly half) of the respondents disagreed that this is what they had set out to have in their lives. Ambivalence is high at above one fifth (22%); the picture can be considered gloomy as the majority of the employees either have no opinion or are not devoted to the company they work for.

Statement - I am here by default I had no job I could do: When jobs are scarce, people look for anything to earn themselves some money to live on. A total of 16% people allege that they got to this job by default, even though 45% (above) had indicated that the job they occupied was not their dream job. It could be that after failing to find their dream jobs they may have worked to get to plan B. The neutral are at 17%, with 67% rejecting the assertion that they got the current jobs by default. It may be important to consider that 73% of the employees are not skilled, therefore any job is a job.

Statement - As a professional this job is relevant to my aspirations: Though no specific reference was made to a specific skill, people develop skills at the workplace, which becomes their profession. In response to this statement, unskilled labour stood at 73%; now just over three fifths of the respondents (61%) assert that the jobs they are in are relevant to their aspirations. Neutral (21%) continue to worry; it can be generalized that the respondents seem to be comfortable with their current occupations. Only 18% are definitely not comfortable.

Statement - There is more to learn in the job and I want to advance: A decisive 56% of the respondents positively want to advance in this area of employment, but neutrality shoots up to an uncomfortable 26%, leaving 18% to disagree. It can be generalised that most employees would want to advance in the current field of occupation, a positive for employee engagement.

Statement – I am glad that I am accountable for what takes place here: Most people simply put in hours and work just hard enough not to be fired. A strong 70% agree to be accountable for what takes place in the organisation. Only 14% of the respondents are not happy with those that are undecided at 16%. It can be generalised that most of the respondents want to be responsible. Organisations may need to groom their employees and give them responsibilities as part of

Table 1. The respondents' perceptions about their current jobs.

S/N	The type of my job	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5
		(%)				
1	This is my dream job and here I will stay till retirement	18	27	22	23	10
2	I am here by default there was no other job I could get	27	40	17	12	4
3	As a professional this job is relevant to my aspirations	8	10	21	49	12
4	There is more to learn on the job and I want to advance	5	13	26	56	0
5	I am glad I am accountable for what takes place here	5	9	16	52	18

Source: Response from survey.

Table 2. Job environment.

S/N	Job environment	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5
		(%)				
6	My supervisor consults me before making any decisions	5	18	30	40	7
7	I am not involved in the decision making process	15	33	28	17	7
8	I just wait to be told what to do and what not to do	26	35	16	22	1
9	I keep my distance from things that do not concern me	9	34	15	26	9
10	I am employed to produce and not innovate and I do just that	16	34	15	26	9

Source: Data from survey.

employee engagement strategy.

Job environment: This has to do with the surroundings of one's work place, namely; ergonomics, relationships, tasks and all other matters pertaining to the work, directly or indirectly. This part of the research meant to measure the effect, if any, of the environment to their commitment to the job and organisation.

Statement - My supervisor consults me before making decisions: Being consulted may mean much to a subordinate, it brings worthiness; it means valuable, important and useful. This improves positivity towards one's job, and towards the organisation in general. In the response 23% disagree that they are consulted, neutral is at an all-time high at 30%, with 47% agreeing with the assertion. This shows a system that acknowledges its workforce.

Statement - I am not involved in the decision making process: The total disagreeing is 48% (compare this to the 47% above), meaning they are acknowledged and they develop a sense of worthiness and get engaged with

their organisation. Ambivalence is again high at 28%, not clear why respondents would not know their position on this matter. 24% agree that they are never involved in decision making.

Statement - I just wait to be told what to do and what not to do: To this statement 61% disagreed, meaning they do not wait to be told what to do, they are involved. Ambivalence is unusually low at 16%, leaving 23% amongst those that believe they just wait to be told what to do. It can be generalized that most respondents are engaged in the operations in their firms.

Statement - I keep my distance from things that do not concern me: Indifference is at 15%, somewhat acceptable given the previous high scores of neutrality. Those disagreeing – saying they do not stand off – are at 43% with those that “stand aloof” at 35%. The picture in the organizations does not encourage at all, with more than one third of the respondents distancing themselves from ownership of operations.

Statement - I am employed to produce and not innovate

Table 3. Job prospects.

S/N	Job prospects	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5
		(%)				
11	I have reached the climax of my profession and I can't advance	26	28	16	19	11
12	There is a demand for me and I want to try new companies	9	16	23	34	18
13	My concern is not the type of job but the type of management	8	21	21	31	19
14	Opportunities to advance are difficult in this profession	17	33	18	17	15
15	I am worried about the absence of advancement in this firm	11	21	18	31	19

Source: data collected from survey.

and I do just that: It may have more to do with the style of management or the culture of the organization, neutrality sits at 15%, and those disagreeing account for 50% of the respondents, meaning that half the respondents “innovate.” It is not very well for the workplace though where 35% of the employs just do what they are told to do, and possibly work just hard enough not to be expelled from work.

Job prospects: This involves the chances or opportunities for one to develop in the job place, to get promoted. Rising to senior levels at a workplace is uplifting to the employee; it is acknowledgement by senior management. The sub-statements are listed in Table 3.

Statement - I have reached the climax of my profession and I cannot advance: The response appears to correspond to the age groups as recorded in the demographics; 54% of the respondents disagree that they have reached their climax (high percentage of interviewees below 40 years of age). Those that do not know are at 16%, with 30% agreeing that they have reached their climax.

Statement - There is a demand for me and I want to try new companies: This would be expected of those who are young and employable in other firms. Only 52% think they are in demand, could be the 25% disagreeing are unskilled or too old to think of changing to new jobs. Whatever the reason, this might give a reason for loyalty if they are not able to move. Ambivalence stands at 23%.

Statement - My concern is not the job but the type of management: Many employees leave their jobs because of the “type of management.” Of the respondents, 29% disagreed, but 50% agreed that they would be concerned with the type of management. Indeed most managers do

not know how to manage and motivate employees, but neutrals remain high at 21%.

Statement - Opportunities to advance are difficult in this profession: The participants (50%) disagree with the statement, with 32% agreeing that there are no advancement opportunities; such employees may want to move to firms with better prospects. The absence of opportunities may be because of the type of business, size of business, or even the way the business is operated, without forgetting the age of the employee. Neutral is at 18%.

Statement - I am worried about the absence of advancement in this firm: In this case 32% disagree (they are not worried} and 50% agree (they are worried) because there are no career opportunities. We do not know the reasons, but it is known that those who worry may seek for other opportunities. As usual neutral is high at 18%; this response is exactly like the one above.

Section C

Working relationships with peers

Statement - People in the firm do not want to cooperate to work together: Whilst employee engagement has more to do with the leadership and the firm, the peers are very much a critical part of the day to day experiences of the employee. Half (50%) of the respondents disagreed with the idea of a place with people that never cooperate. The usual neutral featured at 17% with agreeing 33% with the statement (Figure 4).

Statement - I want to move to an environment where I am respected: Too often some employees are in transit looking for work environments that suit them. This statement was met with mixed reactions with 22% neutral,

Table 4. Working relations in employee engagement.

S/N	Working relationships with peers	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5
		(%)				
16	People in the firm do not want to cooperate to work together	15	35	17	22	11
17	I want to move to an environment where I am respected	11	19	22	34	14
18	I am comfortable with my environment though it has problems	9	11	28	46	6
19	The poor team spirit in the firm discourages good performance	14	27	20	28	11
20	My performance is not affected by the attitude of my peers	4	17	22	37	20

Source: data from survey

Table 5. Dialogue and feedback relationships with managers.

S/N	Dialogue with superiors	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5
		(%)				
21	My manager makes regular contact with me on job issues	21	17	8	26	28
22	I wait for long before I get any feedback for any requests	9	26	22	34	9
23	The time taken before feedback is frustrating I want to quit	3	9	18	52	18
24	Good manager and firm but I think I need change	17	33	18	17	15
25	The rest of the company is heavy disorganized I hate it	7	16	30	40	7

Source: data from survey.

48% agreeing that they would want to move. Only 30% seem to show loyalty.

Statement - I am comfortable with my environment though it has problems: Some employees seem to have endurance where others fail. Consequently there is no scientific formula that can be used to predict this, 20% disagreed with the statement. Neutrality went up to 28%, but 52% of the respondents agreed to stay even though there are problems with at the workplace.

Statement - The poor team spirit in the firm discourages good performance: 41% of the respondents rejected either that there is a poor team spirit, or that the poor spirit discourages their performance. Neutral came down to 20%, whilst the remainder 39% agreed (very close to 41% disagreeing), meaning there is no consensus on the ground on this.

Statement - My performance is not affected by the attitude of my peers: Too often many people fail to focus because of the activities of other people around them. In

this case 57% of the respondents agree that the behavior of other people does not impact on their performance. The indifference is at 22% leaving those disagreeing (those whose performance is disturbed by the attitude of their peers) at 21% (below the neutral at 22%). It is somewhat encouraging to see high degree of focus, which is positive for employee engagement.

FEEDBACK SECTION/DIALOGUE WITH SUPERIORS

This part of the work focused on the relationship between the subordinates and the managers directly. The management styles of managers are critical in the development of employee engagement; as such it was necessary to extend the survey to the relationships with the critical setters of the pace. The respondents' opinions about their working relationship with their managers are illustrated in Table 5.

Statement - My manager makes regular contact with me on job issues: Whatever the reasons, this creates the

much desired employee engagement all things being constant. Of those responding, 38% disagreed, meaning their managers do not liaise with them for anything to do with work issues. On the other hand 54% agree that the managers contact them regularly, a good show for loyalty. Only 8% are neutral.

Statement - I wait for long before I get any feedback for any requests: One of the greatest weaknesses of managers and leaders is lack of responsiveness. In this case 35% (disagree), meaning they do not wait for long, good indication of good management. Contrary to this position, 43% agree that they never get feedback in time for them to perform their duties. This leads to frustration and poor performance which works against employee-engagement. The remaining 22% are not sure.

Statement - The time taken before feedback is frustrating: I want to quit –80% of the manager's responsibility is communication, and part of that communication should be giving feedback. When there is no feedback, subordinates do not know what to do and how to do it; it is frustrating. Of the respondents, 12% say they are not frustrated by delayed feedback, 18% do not have an opinion and yet 70% get frustrated to the point of wanting to quit because there is a timely feedback.

Statement - Good manager and a good firm, but I think I need change: Sometimes people get tired of a place and aspire for something different. 50% of the respondents want to stay on (high engagement) with 18%, neutral and 30% think they need a change.

Statement - The rest of the company is heavily disorganized and I hate it: Of those participating, 23% have nothing against the place and do not see any disorganization at the workplace. Neutral are at 30%, but a disturbing 47% hate the place and think that it is disorganized.

ETHOS AND VALUES OF THE ORGANISATION

Too often, the loyalty of the employees may have to do with their pride over the organization they work for. Some companies are perceived as prestigious to work for, regardless of the level or position. This was measured also as a means of employee engagement.

Statement - I like the firm because it sells top range products: The outside prestige of the company too often becomes a bond between the employee and the employer. 11% of the respondents disagreed that they liked the firm because of its products, 18% were neutral, and a resounding 71% agreed that they liked the firm because of its products. That is high and works well for high employee engagement (Table 6).

Statement - The firm consults us for important changes to be made: Consulting is another way of engaging the employees, and 67% of the respondents disagree that they are contacted when changes have to be made. Of the remainder 15% are indifferent with 18% agreeing that they are approached. By this measure, the employee engagement is definitely not high due to resistance to change if not consulted in the process.

Statement - The firm develops employees to become professionals: Some organizations invest in their personnel's development with the hope of retaining such for better organisational performance. In this instance, 32% disagreed with the statement, 18% abstain, and 50% agree that the organization has developed them or does develop employees to be professionals. It would have been ideal to identify those that are developed and how.

Statement - I started here at low level and was financed by the firm: This may be part of those agreeing that the firm developed them to be professionals. The response was 35% disagree (compare with the 32% disagreeing in item 29 above), 16% are ambivalent (compare with 18% above) and 49% agree (compared to the 50% above) who agreed in the preceding statement. It would be ideal to identify those who have been earmarked for development.

Commitment and productivity of workers

Commitment to an organization is another form of high and effective employee engagement. An engaged employee is loyal and committed to the organization. This is what the next part of the work seeks to establish.

Statement - I am serious about my work because of the regulations of this firm: Particular reference is made here focusing on what makes the subordinates to work very hard. The response, as listed in Table 7, shows that; 41% disagree that they work hard because of the regulations, 20% do not know, and 39% agree that they are serious with their jobs because of the regulations.

Statement - I put in everything in order to get better payment: This is a typical effort-reward engagement stated here. The responses were: 72% disagreed that they put in more effort to get better money or that they may get more money if they put in more effort. Ambivalence is at 7% and 21% agree with the statement. It can be generalised that the respondents generally do not believe that working harder brings them monetary rewards.

Statement - the work environment encourages hard work: It is known that the type of environment impacts positively or negatively the practitioners. This can be confirmed

Table 6. Ethos and values of the organization.

S/N	Ethos and values of the organisation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5
		(%)				
26	I like the firm because it sells top range products	3	8	18	30	41
27	The firm consults us for important changes to be made	29	38	15	14	4
28	The firm develops employees to become professionals	11	21	18	31	19
29	I started here at low level and was financed by the firm	18	17	16	34	15

Source: data from survey.

Table 7. Evaluation of employee engagement through Commitment and productivity.

S/N	Commitment and productivity	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5
		(%)				
31	Statement; I am serious about my work because of the regulations of this firm	26	15	20	7	32
32	Statement : I put in everything in oprder to get better payment	20	52	7	3	18
33	Statement: the work environment encourages hard work	7	26	16	21	28
34	Statement: I work hard because I love the organisation I work for	13	19	14	28	26
35	Statement: If I am given an offer elsewhere I will not go because I love my company	19	33	19	21	8

Source: data from survey

through the study of ergonomics; however, 33% disagreed with the statement, 16% were indifferent with 49% agreeing that the the environment affects the way they work.

Statement - I work hard because I love the organisation I work for: There are numerous factors that cause people to consider themselves 'perfect fit' in an environment. To this statement, 32% disagree with the statement, 14% are indifferent and 54% agree with the assertion. That may be a good number of engaged employees, but one wishes the number to go higher.

Statement - If I am given an offer elsewhere I will not go because I love my company: The decision not to leave your firm is based on many factors. The results are; 52% outrightly would not leave the organisation, 19% remained neutral with 29% agreeing that they would leave for the next organisation to pursue the offer.

Conclusion

From the foregoing literature employee engagement may

be defined as the sum total of the factors at a workplace which impact employees' ability to perform well their day to day responsibilities. This creates the environment in which an employee can perform better and to his/her fullest. The environment creates or enhances their values, culture, beliefs and even perceptions about what constitutes good performance. Engaged employees wake up in the morning looking forward to go to work and clear as to what they will do, what changes they can help institute to advance their work, with a sense of belonging and ownership. Engaged employee feels that they belong to a team where they are involved and they contribute in developing the work as well as developing themselves.

The findings above tell a somewhat different story though there is good behavior overlapping from time to time. Managers do not always liaise with employees in work related issues even though some managers do contact their subordinates occasionally (54%).

In other instances lack of cooperation has recorded levels of up to 50% giving the impression that employee engagement is low. When half the staff are not cooperating and yet they are not willing to leave the firm, it disturbs. It becomes a cause for another study to

ascertain why unhappy employees will not leave; chief among the reasons could be, difficult to find an alternative job, convenience of job to home or school for the children, old age and nearing pension, and many other factors.

Working seems to be an accepted norm and 72% confirm that they still get paid the same way whether or not they work hard. Some of these (50%) allege that they have been developed by the firm with and 71% allege commitment to the firms they work for because of the products produced by the firms. This may augur well for employee engagement; it can be said that employee engagement may be viewed in the form of a continuum depending on the issues at hand and the comparison being made.

Even though they are not contacted by the management (67%) over issues to do with the organizations, 52% are prepared to stay even if things are difficult. The commitment of the subordinates is further noted with 57% suggesting that the attitudes of other employees do not affect their allegiance to the firms. Nevertheless, the absence of advancement opportunities does not affect 50% of the loyalists who may want to continue with their organizations. A sizeable majority (61%) of these employees do not wait to be given directions; they give themselves work to do, meaning they have a degree of empowerment and know what should be done. Given, 67% believe that they got the jobs by merit and not by default yet 73% of these employees indicated that they are not skilled. This may be because this is the best they could get given their circumstances; 56% of them still want to advance another degree of loyalty and employee engagement. Of particular interest is the 70% who are prepared to be accountable for whatever things they are given to do.

It can be stated in closing that there is a relationship between leader-followership-organisation culture link which is indispensable. There needs to be drawn a pre-determined structure to bring about congruency between the leadership, followership, tasks and the organisational fit. Such a strategic-fit can enable management predict the preferred levels of effective employee engagement. Thus the higher the level of employee engagement, the higher the probability of a workforce highly absorbed and enthusiastic about their occupation. Also, an "engaged employee" is positive about his/her work and if his/her performance will be high which leads to the development of a difficult-to-copy competitive advantage for the firm.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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