

12-2019

Understanding Employee Engagement: A Mixed-Methods Study

Joren M. Scharn

University of the Incarnate Word, scharn@uiwtx.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://athenaeum.uiw.edu/uiw_etds



Part of the Behavioral Economics Commons, Business Administration, Management, and Operations Commons, Finance and Financial Management Commons, Leadership Studies Commons, Management Sciences and Quantitative Methods Commons, Organizational Behavior and Theory Commons, and the Performance Management Commons

Recommended Citation

Scharn, Joren M., "Understanding Employee Engagement: A Mixed-Methods Study" (2019). *Theses & Dissertations*. 363.

https://athenaeum.uiw.edu/uiw_etds/363

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by The Athenaeum. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of The Athenaeum. For more information, please contact athenaeum@uiwtx.edu.

UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

by

JOREN SCHARN

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the University of the Incarnate Word
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD

December 2019

© 2019 Joren Scharn

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my committee chair Professor Kruti Lehenbauer, whose wonderfully optimistic personality and professionalism were key ingredients for excellence outside of my comfort zone. She pushed me there, kept me there, believed in me and never ceased to inspire. It has been absolutely delightful working with her and I look forward to continue on this academic quest with her in the near future. I thank my other committee members Adam Guerrero for turning my weakness regarding quantitative methods into a strength, and Diana Garza for helping me take the critical first steps into the fascinating world of human subject research.

I would like to thank Sean Grindall and Steve McKenna for exposing me to years and years of best practices in business leadership, and for supporting me in writing with my application for the doctoral program. Their faith in me drove me to perform to the best of my ability at all times and I was definitely not going to let them or their endorsements down. Special thanks also to my close friend and former colleague Amy Browning, whose *activator* mindset consistently put my natural *sit-back-and-ponder* approach to shame, getting the work done while I was still at the drawing board. It never ceased to amaze me and the memory of it helped me get things started over and over again throughout this quest. With a smile on my face.

Many thanks to Miroslav Canak (Echelon Purple), Peter Lavers (Customer Attuned) and John O'Connor (Deep Insight) for their generosity in sharing data and expertise in the field of engagement studies.

Acknowledgments—Continued

Thanks to my study mates in Team Chester and Team Midnight Oil, who were never willing to sacrifice quality for speed, no matter the hour. Good fun and sweet memories.

Words of great gratitude are owed to my parents Lis and Dick Scharn, who gave me a brain capable of critical thinking and who raised me with the mentality to never stop learning, developing, growing and seeking out challenges to broaden horizons and get to the next level.

Thanks to my dear brothers Dick and Tim Scharn and their families, just for being the wonderful people they are and always just a phone call away.

I would like to thank Rachel and Kirsten Scharn, my two little miracles and amazing daughters, for knowing exactly when daddy needed a break from it all, meaning that his work computer would be confiscated for Peppa Pig episodes. Many thanks and appreciation for Veronica de la Harpe, my dear mother in law, for preventing them from doing that... most of the time. Or for helping me get my computer back.

And last, but most certainly not least, words of love and admiration to my wonderful wife Carmen Scharn, who selflessly encouraged me to go down this path despite knowing exactly what was coming her way and how tough it was going to be. With every passing semester I would offer to take things down a gear but that was always out of the question: “Just get it over with”. I did, and she was right there with me along the way, from start to end. Her courage and perseverance throughout this journey will not be forgotten.

Joren Scharn

DEDICATION

Carmen, love of my life, thank you for your endless support, patience, inspiration, encouragement and sacrifice. This would be my present to you, if it weren't your gift to me.

UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

JOREN SCHARN

UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD

For over four decades businesses around the world have been conducting employee satisfaction surveys at regular intervals and this surfaced a strong positive relationship between employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, and overall company performance. In recent years however, academics and researchers have reopened the debate on whether employee or job satisfaction metrics are in fact reliable indicators of productivity, suggesting that *employee engagement* has a far stronger correlation to productivity. This study addresses two interrelated problems that are associated with a practice that is common in working environments all over the world. According to literature, it is generally accepted that (1) quantitative measurement of employee engagement yields reliable results and that (2) reliable conclusions about employee productivity can be drawn from it. The objective of this study is to examine whether this notion is accurate and to assess whether qualitative research adds meaningful insights to an employee engagement study. These research questions are answered by means of a study based on an explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design. Qualitative and quantitative primary research is conducted among employees at a large financial services company based in the United States and the target sample is characterized by homogeneity across age, tenure, rank, ethnicity and gender, with a normally distributed spread across these variables. The results are compared to a generalized secondary data set containing raw survey data from employee engagement studies conducted across countries and

industries. The study reveals that conducting interviews in addition to the structured surveys produces significant deep insights, varying from subtle nuances to distinctly different and even conflicting outcomes, which the quantitative research did not capture on its own. The preliminary results indicate that the current quantitative instrument as well as its delivery method are no longer adequate to measure employee engagement in modern day working environments.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT	1
Background of the Problem	1
Problem Statement and Purpose	2
Research Question and Hypotheses	3
Summary of Methodology and Data.....	3
Theoretical Framework.....	4
Significance of the Study	5
Definition of Terms.....	5
Limitations and Delimitations.....	6
Dissertation Outline	8
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
Theoretical Foundation	9
Engagement in Numbers.....	10
Trends 10	
Variations in Definitions.....	11
Proposed Determinants of Engagement.....	11
Measurement Concerns.....	13
Measurement Complications	14

Table of Contents—Continued

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Job Fit	15
Benefits of an Engaged Workforce.....	16
Requirements for Engagement.....	16
Engagement and Productivity	17
Conclusions from Literature Review	17

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY AND DATA20

Purpose and Rationale.....	20
Methodology	20
Protection of human subjects: ethical considerations	23
Role of researcher	24
Research objectives.....	24
Research Design and Data	26
Secondary data foundation.....	26
Primary data collection	26
Quantitative data collection	26
Population selection and site.....	27
Survey design and protocol.....	27
Survey design.....	28
Quantitative Analysis.....	28
Mathematical modeling	28
Duration	29

Table of Contents—Continued

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY AND DATA

Subject compensation	29
Risk analysis	29
Descriptive statistics	30
Variable types	34
Qualitative Analysis.....	35
Qualitative data collection	35
Population selection and site.....	36
Interview protocol and procedures.....	36
Duration	37
Subject compensation	37
Risk analysis	37
Confidentiality	38
Conclusions from data and methodology	39
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS OF ANALYSIS.....	40
Data Collection and Cleaning.....	40
Secondary data	40
Primary data (quantitative).....	41
Primary data (qualitative).....	42
Secondary Data Analysis	42
Primary Data Analysis	45
Quantitative data analysis	45

Table of Contents—Continued

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS OF ANALYSIS	
Qualitative data analysis and integration	59
Summary	96
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
97	
Discussion	97
Interpretation of results	97
Research question	98
Justification of approach	100
Limitations	101
Findings in context of literature	102
Conclusions	103
Conclusions from qualitative research	103
Conclusions from quantitative research	108
Recommendations for Future Research and Practitioners	109
Summary	114
REFERENCES	116
APPENDICES	119
Appendix A: Copy of Paper Survey	120
Appendix B: Summary of Segment Characteristics	121

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Descriptions of the Independent Variables	31
2. Summary Statistics for the Independent Variables	32
3. Summary Statistics for the Secondary Data set of Company A	43
4. Summary Statistics for the Secondary Data set of Company B.....	45
5. Summary Statistics for the Primary Quantitative Data.....	47
6. Top Two Box Results	48
7. Top Two Box Results Sorted by Priority Score.....	49
8. Spearman's Test Output.....	55
9. Spearman's Test Results on EEI, ACI and ATI	56
10. Means of EEI, ACI and ATI Indices	57
11. Benchmark EEI Scores Across Industries in South Africa.....	58
12. Association Between Independent and Dependent Variables	112

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Theoretical framework of employee engagement and productivity	5
2. Elements from literature being confirmed or challenged	18
3. Number of participants by gender and age group	45
4. Distribution of participants by tenure and rank	46
5. EEI, ACI and ATI by age group	51
6. EEI, ACI and ATI by Gender	52
7. EEI, ACI and ATI by Rank.....	52
8. EEI, ACI and ATI by Tenure.....	53
9. Frequency of EE typologies in Primary Data	59
10. Relative employee segment size	59
11. Structural Equation Model path diagram.....	113

Chapter I: Introduction to Employee Engagement

This study is about the measurement of employee engagement and the reliability of the results. Employee engagement is a trending topic in today's human resource organizations and most companies conduct engagement surveys in some form or fashion in order to gain insights in personnel morale, job satisfaction and overall well-being. Corporate leadership is increasingly willing to make significant investments to lift employee engagement scores based on the belief that engaged employees are more productive and more likely to stay with the company.

This study is conducted to determine whether the techniques used to measure employee engagement are valid and whether alternative approaches -such as the one presented in this study- may improve the accuracy of the results, which would have serious change implications. After all, organizational landscapes and ways of working are changing rapidly as technological advancements are being adopted in the workplace and yet the highly standardized measurement tools have hardly changed for over a decade.

Background of the Problem

For over four decades businesses around the world have been conducting employee satisfaction surveys at regular intervals (Duncan, 2014) and a strong positive relationship between employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, and overall company performance has surfaced (Matzler, Fuchs & Schubert, 2004). Dedicated survey companies like Gallup, Qualtrics, and the Society for Human Resource Management have over time specialized in conducting cost-effective, quantitative employee surveys for large companies and their publications (Lee, 2017) have contributed significantly to literature regarding the determinants of job satisfaction (Eskildsen & Nussler, 2000).

In recent years however, academics and researchers have reopened the debate on whether employee or job satisfaction metrics are in fact reliable indicators of productivity (Duncan, 2014), arguing that *employee engagement* has a far stronger correlation to productivity. It is argued that the structured survey methods that are currently being used to measure employee engagement are unable to capture the subtle nuances that accurately describe an individual's sense of engagement to a company and they are losing effectiveness because they do not keep up with the pace of change seen in many industries (Pareek, 2013).

Problem Statement and Purpose

Because quantitative research is weak at revealing deep insights and qualitative research does not lend itself to generalization and statistical analysis (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007), neither one approach by itself is a particularly suitable research method to understanding the drivers of employee engagement. To address that problem, this study follows a mixed-method research approach to offset the weaknesses of the two methods by allowing both analysis and exploration together, which provides additional evidence and support for the findings. According to literature in this field, employee engagement is arguably the most accurate predictor of employee productivity and deep understanding of the drivers of employee engagement is therefore of great value to business leaders, people managers and human resource professionals. Currently, no literature on this specific topic has taken the mixed-methods approach and this dissertation would contribute to the literature by documenting a previously unexplored approach to understanding the relationship between employee engagement and productivity.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The core research question of this study is: “What are the significant drivers of employee engagement in a firm and how do they impact employee productivity?” The following primary hypothesis supports the data collection to answer the core research question:

An employee is more productive when both job-related factors (such as work environment and remuneration) and employee specific factors (such as ambition and tenure) are rated highly by the employee.

Alternative hypotheses that are tested or resolved through researching available literature, data, and methods:

1. The drivers of employee engagement differ depending on the employee’s cultural background, career level, ambition level, family situation, and financial situation (financial management/behavior relative to lifestyle).
2. The drivers of employee engagement change as industries, organizational structures and workplace practices evolve with time.
3. The levels of employee engagement directly impact the employee’s productivity.

Summary of Methodology and Data

This study was conducted using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach that was comprised of both quantitative and qualitative primary data collection. First, a structured survey was conducted in order to collect primary data from the target population. A high-level analysis of the results was then conducted in order to define the approach for the qualitative research, which took place in the form of semi-structured interviews. The intent of the qualitative stage of the research was to gain additional insights and to reveal information that could not be surfaced in the quantitative part of the study. In addition, it aimed to explain unexpected or

remarkable results produced by the survey. All primary data were then analyzed and compared to a secondary data foundation which consisted of raw data from employee engagement surveys performed by two professional service firms specializing in employee engagement studies at several companies in different countries and industries.

Theoretical Framework

Figure 1 shows the theoretical framework that was used in this study. Employee engagement is affected by a number of determinants that can be classified in three separate factors: satisfiers, dissatisfiers and performance & accomplishment (Coleman, 2015). Both the satisfiers and dissatisfiers can be either intrinsic or environmental in nature and the balance of these factors largely determine the level of engagement of an employee. The performance & accomplishment factor was added to create flexibility in the framework, because every employee is different and the extent to which the (dis)satisfiers actually affect their engagement levels varies depending on the employee (Matzler et al., 2004). Both literature and this particular study have shown that high performance and noteworthy accomplishment can be significant drivers of employee engagement, even among employees that are generally dissatisfied about their job.

A key hypothesis proposed in this study was that engaged employees are more productive than disengaged employees, or, in other words, that employee engagement is a significant predictor of productivity, which is illustrated on the right side of the figure below.

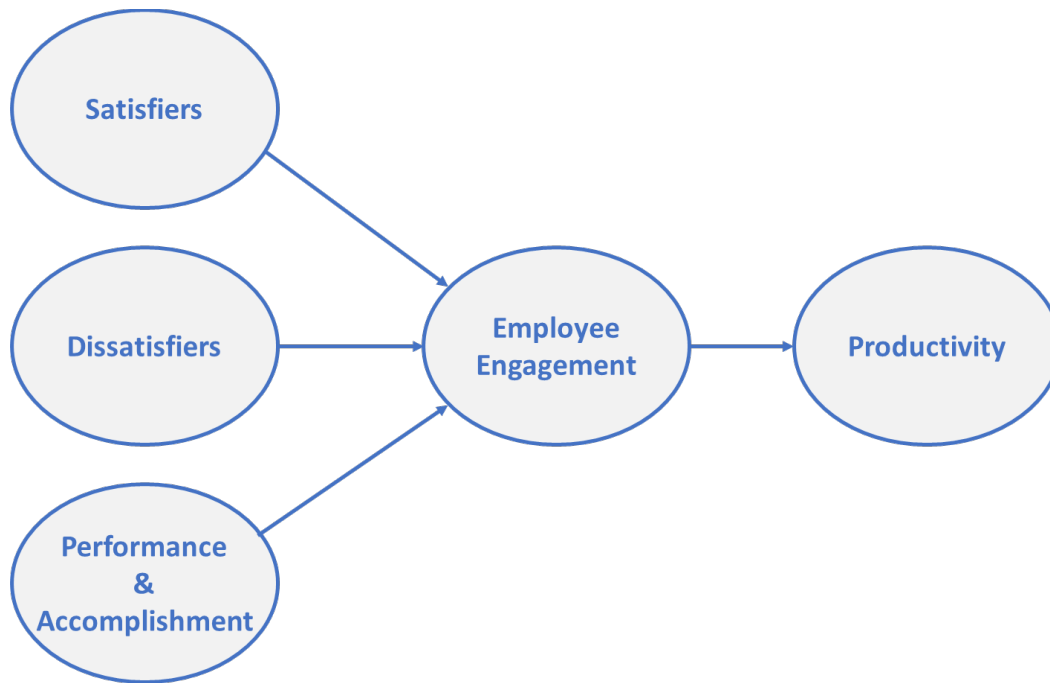


Figure 1. Theoretical framework of employee engagement and productivity.

Significance of the Study

This study matters because it addresses two interrelated problems that are associated with a practice that is common and applied in working environments all over the world. According to literature, it is accepted that (1) quantitative measurement of employee engagement yields reliable results and that (2) reliable conclusions about employee productivity can be drawn from it (Van De Voorde, Paauwe & Van Veldhoven, 2012). This study examines whether this notion is accurate and depending on the findings, it is confirmed or rejected. Regardless of the outcome, this study will contribute to academic literature by adding results, findings and conclusions of a research methodology that is uncommon in the field of employee engagement.

Definition of Terms

Since the terms given below are used frequently throughout the study and the document, their definitions in the context of the study are given here.

Employee Engagement – Employee engagement is the emotional commitment the employee has to the organization and its goals (Kruse, 2012). This study measures the emotional commitment of an employee to the organization using both quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

Employee Satisfaction - The extent to which an employee's needs are being met at work and how satisfied they are with their overall work experience (Wride, 2017). Specific questions have been included in this study to identify whether differences or commonalities in the interpretation of the terms *employee satisfaction* and *employee engagement* exist.

Employee productivity - An assessment of the efficiency of a worker, evaluated in terms of the worker's output in a specific period of time (Rouse, 2014). This study does not measure productivity in quantifiable terms, but instead it draws conclusions on the productivity of participants based on their answers to carefully formulated questions related to job efficacy, job efficiency and personal motivation.

Promoter – A customer/employee giving a nine or ten rating to the main NPS survey question (Kristensen, 2014).

Detractor – A customer/employee giving a zero to six rating to the main NPS survey question (Kristensen, 2014).

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations are conditions that are beyond the control of the researcher. They may influence the results or findings of the study and restrict the methodology or conclusions drawn from the research. Delimitations are boundaries deliberately put in place by the researcher to

manage the validity, reliability and/or overall scope of the study. The following limitations and delimitations apply to this study:

Both the qualitative and the quantitative research stages were conducted at a limited number of companies based in the same city. While these were all financial services companies, the number of participating companies was too few to allow for generalization and conclusions about the financial services sector in its entirety. In addition, geographic differences have not been examined in this study because of the local nature of the research.

Only employees working in the financial services industry (insurance, banking, mortgage, investments) were included in this study, so conclusions about employee engagement and productivity produced by this study do not apply to corporations in general. The secondary data sets included in this study do contain survey results from employees in different sectors, but this is purely for comparative purposes.

Participants of the qualitative research were recruited from my professional network and I know all of the participants as a result of professional collaborations. Nonetheless, participants were approached at random based on willingness and availability to participate, without preconceived notions of their opinions on employee engagement and productivity.

To survey a homogeneous sample in the quantitative stage, the number of participants per age and rank group were purposely capped at a fixed percentage of the total sample size per company. By design, the sample was not evenly distributed across the participating companies because the study does not seek to compare results between financial services institutions.

Both the quantitative and qualitative research was completed in a period of about 20 weeks, including the analysis. The surveys and interviews took place in a period of 6 weeks in order to prevent discrepancies in results due to seasonal effects.

Dissertation Outline

The rest of the dissertation is organized using a common five-chapter dissertation structure. Chapter two is the literature review, which describes the main elements of relevant literature being referenced in this study. It mainly focuses on employee engagement related research performed by other researchers and highlights key theories developed from their studies, regardless whether they support or contest the hypotheses and findings in this study. It pays special attention to methodologies used in those studies and describes in what way they informed the methodology being used in this particular study.

Chapter three focuses on the research itself. Starting with an introduction in which the purpose and rationale are being covered as well as the role of the researcher and the ethical considerations of this human subjects' study, it quickly moves on to the research objectives and the design of the study. This part of the chapter is substantial as it describes the primary and secondary data sources as well as the quantitative and qualitative research and analysis design. The chapter ends with conclusions from the data and the methodology.

Chapter four contains the results of the analysis. It describes how the data from the various sources have been handled and prepared for analysis, followed by an in-depth elaboration about the analysis results. Demographic data analysis (descriptive, inferential and qualitative) precedes the summary of results and the closure of the chapter.

The fifth and final chapter contains the discussion of the study leading into the conclusions. Included in this section are recommendations for future research, implications for HR and business leaders and limitations of the study. References and appendices are included after chapter five, concluding the document.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Neither quantitative nor qualitative techniques by themselves are particularly suitable research methods to understanding the drivers of employee engagement. To address that problem, this study follows a mixed-method research approach to offset the weaknesses of the two methods, which provides additional evidence and support for the findings. According to literature in this field, employee engagement is arguably the most accurate predictor of employee productivity and deep understanding of the drivers of employee engagement is therefore of great value to business leaders, people managers and human resource professionals. This section discusses and reviews core elements from the works of literature that inspired this study.

Theoretical Foundation

Kano's model of customer satisfaction also applies to employee satisfaction. According to Matzler et al. (2004), measuring employee engagement can be approached with the use of basic factors (dissatisfiers), excitement factors (satisfiers) and performance factors (hybrid). Customers can be perfectly happy with the services provided by a company as long as there are no dissatisfiers, even if there are no excitement factors. In that case, the company just does what it is supposed to do according to the consumer of the service, its performance is being perceived as adequate and the relationship continues.

According to Reichheld (2003) satisfaction turns into engagement or loyalty if the company's performance is such that it exceeds the customer's expectation significantly and gets rewarded with a 9 or a 10 on a NPS survey. In the event of a dissatisfier however, the nature and gravity of the dissatisfier determines how many satisfiers are required to offset the perceived notion of inadequate service performance. Applying Kano's model to employees, Matzler et al.

(2004) argue that the level of satisfaction of an employee about the job or the employer is determined in a similar fashion.

Engagement in Numbers

Gallup has been researching employee engagement and productivity since the early '90s and over time the company created the Employee Engagement Index called 'Q12', a quantitative survey methodology using 12 critical questions to measure engagement. Its first large-scale results indicated that 17% of employees in large corporations are actively disengaged, 54% are not engaged and 29% are truly engaged. Based on a calculation taking salary and work output into account, Gallup estimated that actively disengaged workers cost U.S. businesses approximately \$300 billion a year. Similar research was performed by the Corporate Leadership Council, which revealed similar results using a different approach to classifying results. 24% of employees were considered 'true believers,' 15.8% showed 'discretionary efforts', 5% was disengaged and 42.9% indicated they were not thinking about leaving the company (Cattew, Flynn & Vonderhorst, 2007). This calculation is based on extrapolation with 25 million U.S. workers being actively disengaged resulting in 86 million 'sick' days, reduced productivity, more stress and poor health (Duncan, 2014).

Trends

Kumar, Dass and Topaloglu (2014) states that there is much variation in satisfaction levels among employees that have just quit their jobs, arguing that most of them were satisfied but disengaged. Eskildsen and Nussler (2000) argue that corporations have evolved from exploiting financial resources to nourishing intellectual resources due to increasingly difficult operating circumstances. Fostering creativity and engagement has become a key focus point for HRM and recruitment strategies in order to win in a highly competitive marketplace. Data from

the US Bureau of Labor Statistics show that since 2010, the number of employees voluntarily quitting their jobs has been higher than those being laid off by their employer (Moreland, 2013). Goldschmidt and Chung (2001) proposed that employees in large organizations tend to be more satisfied with the facets of pay and promotion, while highly educated employees tend to care less about the 'basic' job circumstances and are more engaged by intellectual stimulus and acknowledgement of solving complex challenges (Escardibul & Afcha, 2017). According to Catteuw et al. (2007), job satisfaction, valuing people and collaboration & trust are the most impactful drivers of employee engagement.

Variations in Definitions

It is the purpose of HRM to enable the organization to recruit and retain driven employees with the abilities necessary to achieve superior business performance. This connection between employee loyalty and productivity has been confirmed in multiple studies (Duboff & Heaton, 1999). Companies capable of satisfying their employees can expect to maintain a loyal workforce (McCusker & Wolfman, 1998), thus establishing a relationship between HRM, employee satisfaction and loyalty and company performance. Employee satisfaction is the gratification or prosperity that the employees get from their job (Hellriegel, Jacksons & Phukan, 1999).

Proposed Determinants of Engagement

A study among employees working in financial institutions established that satisfaction is largely explained by three key factors: organizational support, rewards, and job enrichment. Motivators and career growth have also been examined but they do not significantly contribute to job satisfaction. However, they become significant dissatisfiers when they are not sufficiently

accommodated by the employer, suggesting that using a linear scale to measure satisfaction levels may not always be appropriate (Pareek, 2013).

Engagement is largely explained by how well the company lives up to its core values (Catteuw, Flynn & Vonderhorst, 2007). Fairness and openness are becoming increasingly important factors and employee engagement is typically higher in companies that have an authentic leadership style that emphasizes transparency and displays commitment to core values (Azanza, Moriano & Molero, 2013).

According to research performed by Eskildsen and Nussler (2000), key drivers of loyalty are structured career programs, bonus programs, a pay better than similar organizations, a structured approach to leadership, a Hoshin process incorporating appropriate feedback and a culture of personal growth and development in order to enhance the learning capability of the organization.

Engagement levels are in part explained by environmental factors. They tend to be higher in times when the labor market is slow, as employees put more emphasis on job security and stability even when they are not particularly satisfied with their current jobs. However, when the job market offers a lot of opportunity, engagement levels drop, and employees are more likely to seek opportunities elsewhere (Lee, 2017).

A study by Embry (2009) resulted in the finding that leadership and communication are strongly correlated to employee performance. In addition, it attributed higher engagement levels of employees located at the company headquarters to the finding that they have higher perceptions of leaders than employees working in the field or in remote locations.

Measurement Concerns

According to Duncan (2014) and Pareek (2013), commonly used approaches to measuring employee engagement are outdated and cannot keep up with the pace of change seen in many industries, companies and workplaces. Their research identifies a growing need for accurate, adaptive metrics and updated methodologies to measure employee engagement. Spurk, Abele and Volmer (2011) propose that intrinsic and extrinsic determinants of employee engagement are insufficiently included in common practices regarding the measurement of job satisfaction and employee engagement. In a similar study, Lee (2017) revealed that person-related and work-related drivers of employee engagement require more attention in research in order to obtain reliable insights for decision-making purposes.

Byrne, Peters and Weston (2016) suggested that current engagement measurement techniques, interpretation and common management response are immature and need to evolve to modern day corporate standards in order to deliver value. Current engagement/satisfaction related studies are predominantly quantitative in nature and adding qualitative research to augment the results of data analysis looks promising in terms of generating deep insights about employee engagement (Lee, 2017).

Research by Fry, Chantavanich and Chantavanich (1981) found that qualitative analysis can enrich quantitative studies. Advantages of merging qualitative and quantitative techniques include improved conceptualization, better understanding of residual unexplained variance, more valid empirical indicators, more meaningful interpretation of quantitative data, and finally new theoretical insights. This notion is substantiated by Denzin (1970), who states that single-method, single-observer, single-theory studies inevitably come with bias, which can be overcome by the use of multiple observers, theories, methods and data sources. Creswell (2018) argues that

mixed methods approaches are especially valuable in studies that aim to understand variables and relationships between variables that are tough (if not impossible) to capture using quantitative methods alone, such as perceptions, feelings and emotions. Provided that the research method is rigorous and rooted in sound philosophical assumptions, the extra effort to explain the results from quantitative research using qualitative methods is well worth the investment, as it adds both meaning and depth to the results and the study as a whole.

Measurement Complications

Significant differences are not only observed in drivers of employee engagement across countries and cultures, but also within sectors in the same country (Ambreen, 2013, Pareek, 2013, Shan, Li, Yao, Shi & Ren, 2014). Measurement approaches need to mature to establish scalability and generalizability across borders. Studies conducted by Nelson (2016) and Lee (2017) confirm that the effect of career level, ambition, financial situation and family situation on employee engagement are substantial and need to be appropriately factored in when analyzing survey data. Satisfaction and engagement have different drivers. Satisfied people are not necessarily engaged and engaged employees may still be unsatisfied about their job (Ambreen, 2014).

The range of engagement scores vary from employee to employee, meaning that the maximum and minimum scores that employees self-report vary greatly. This is in part explained by the employee's appreciation of his/her current job in light of their career and career ambitions. Employees who feel that their current job is not significantly contributing to their career progression and ambitions tend to report lower maximum engagement scores than employees who feel that their current job helps advance their career substantially (Spurk et al., 2011). The

word *engagement* itself has different interpretations and is not naturally embraced by leaders and managers, classifying it as a HR exercise (Duncan, 2014)

Job Fit

The effects of poor job fit are significant as disengaged employees may negatively affect their colleagues, family and friends, the company's bottom line and the larger economy. It turns out that many unhappy employees don't just seek other employment but instead work longer hours in an attempt to turn things around and be successful. This often has an adverse effect and it is important that companies identify such behavior early before it leads to burnouts, less quality time spent with family and friends and eventually eliminating the benefits of spending extra time and effort on work altogether (Moreland, 2013).

Research performed by Byrne, Peters and Weston (2016) substantiates the notion of adverse effects, indicating that employee engagement can be approached from a positive side (performance and accomplishment) or a negative side (burnout and decreased productivity). According to Moreland (2013), poor job fit is the primary reason why people quit their jobs. When the tasks and duties associated with a job are a poor match with an employee's interests or skills, engagement levels drop rapidly and without adequate training and guidance, the employee will seek employment elsewhere. Recruiting for job fit therefore becomes increasingly important (Moreland, 2013).

Research by Moreland (2013) shows that employee disengagement occurs when employees are unsatisfied with their jobs, exacerbated by the effects on their personal lives, emotional and physical health. Moreland (2013) argues that this is a two-way phenomenon that can be attributed to people pursuing job opportunities that are a poor match with their competencies and interests and to companies inaccurately matching candidates to roles.

Benefits of an Engaged Workforce

Research conducted by Hennessy (2017) indicated that the productivity of highly engaged employees is up to 20% higher than that of unengaged employees. The research revealed four key catalysts of employee engagement: clear communication, meeting relevance, achievement recognition and growth opportunities. According to Axelrod (2000), organizations with high levels of employee engagement are characterized by employees who see the big picture, fully understand threats and opportunities, share a common purpose, feel a sense of ownership and responsibility, inspire creativity and deal with performance gaps quickly and effectively (Duncan, 2014). Catteuw et al. (2007) concur, proposing that employee engagement is an important tool to ensure long-term growth and success.

Employee engagement levels have a significant effect on a firm's competitiveness. Research from Towers Watson (2012) shows that organizations with high levels of employee engagement managed to boost their operating income by 19.2 percent, while companies with low levels of employee engagement saw a 32.7 percent decline in their operating income (Moreland, 2013). Engaged employees are less change resistant and embrace change more effectively (Catteuw, Flynn & Vonderhorst, 2007). This is seconded by Bridges (2009), arguing that engaged employees move through the change adoption phases (Endure, Emerge, Embrace, Excel) faster than disengaged employees. Engaged workers adopt change more effectively because they understand the mutual purpose of change and partake in it willingly (Duncan, 2014)

Requirements for Engagement

Building a culture of innovation is not achievable without an engaged workforce (Catteuw, Flynn & Vonderhorst, 2007). If the leadership of a firm fails to inspire its workforce with a sound future vision, innovation efforts diverge resulting in lack of cohesion and

frustration in transformative journeys. Aside from a clear *North Star* and faith in the course set by senior management, perceived benefits play a big role in driving engagement as well (Balkin & Griffeth, 1993). This is not limited to benefits in terms of remuneration alone. Especially in firms where innovation is a vehicle to increase competitiveness, personal acknowledgement and celebration of accomplishments is key to establishing a culture of eagerness to win and to outperform the competition.

Engagement and Productivity

Many companies are conducting satisfaction surveys, but often ask the wrong questions. Questions about job satisfaction produce a lot of information but research shows that it says little about productivity (Duncan, 2014). The paradigm for productivity used to be about compliance and following orders but in the past decades it shifted to commitment, purpose, respect and ownership, summarized by Duncan (2014) with the term engagement. Catteuw et al. (2007) argue that productivity is the critical link between engagement and business results, but Judge, Thoresen, Bono, Patton and Eisenberg (2001) examine 7 different models to explain the relationship between employee satisfaction and performance and concludes that none of the models conclusively proves a generalizable relationship.

Conclusions from Literature Review

This study confirms some of the concepts, relationships and theories found in relevant literature, but it also challenges some of these findings. The main findings are illustrated in Figure 2:

	Concepts	Relationships	Models	Theories
Confirm	1	2		3
Change				
Challenge		4		5
Fundamentally alter				

Figure 2. Elements from literature being confirmed or challenged.

Literature does not distinguish unequivocally between loyalty and engagement, complicating dialogue and discussion on these topics. In general, there is consensus about the relationship between employee engagement and productivity and between employee engagement and loyalty to the company. Both of these notions are being challenged in this study based on the findings from the qualitative research. It turns out that employees who are highly engaged to the company (as opposed to their job, role or position) will leave the company without hesitation if a better opportunity comes along. Employees who are highly engaged to their jobs are much less likely to leave the firm and they also tend to be much more productive.

Literature does not conclusively agree on the drivers of employee engagement (item 2 in figure 2) and research into the performance-satisfaction relationship is declining. The academic community appears to agree that meta-analysis has confirmed that the synthesized results of relevant studies are inconclusive and not worth pursuing any further (4). The drivers of employee engagement are no longer a static set of variables but a highly dynamic and complex structure of

factors. Measurement techniques need to evolve in order to surface these factors, deliver more actionable insights and keep up with the accelerating pace of change (5).

The standardized and commonly used employee engagement surveys (based on Gallup's Q12) do not sufficiently take intrinsic and environmental factors into account (4) and there is merit in adding qualitative research to the commonly conducted quantitative approach to measuring employee engagement in order to get more meaningful and more reliable insights (3).

Chapter III: Methodology and Data

Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this study is to examine (a) whether a deep understanding of employee engagement and its relationship with employee productivity can be obtained with the application of quantitative research alone, and (b) whether a mixed-methods approach to researching employee engagement and productivity is a superior alternative.

Methodology. This study followed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach and the design consisted of six steps, described below:

1. Secondary Data Foundation - Two professional employee engagement research companies assisted in establishing a generalized data set to serve as the quantitative backdrop of the study. It consisted of approximately 1,100 observations of raw survey data across 44 relevant employee engagement variables from surveys taken around the world and across industries. The data set was fully de-personalized when it was delivered and a signed NDA was put in place to protect the companies, the participants, and the researcher.
2. Quantitative Research (Surveys) - Power analysis revealed that the sample size required to arrive at statistically significant results in the quantitative stage of the research equaled 250 participants. Based on the total estimated population size of approximately 3,000 non-frontline employees across the offices of financial services providers based in San Antonio, Texas, that number would ensure a statistical reliability of results of approximately +/- 5% ($\alpha = .05$) at the 95% confidence level, a widely accepted standard for quantitative research. This meant that the final results would not deviate by more than 5% from the actual population parameters, that is if the entire population had

been surveyed. This approach to sample size determination is proposed by Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010) and assumes multivariate normality. An appropriate percentage of surplus surveys were factored in depending on the completeness level of the submitted surveys. It took about 10 minutes to complete a survey and subjects participated no more than once. I performed all activities related to data collection and analysis. The methodology for collecting data is described later in this chapter.

3. Comparative Quantitative Analysis - In this stage the results of the primary research were compared to the secondary data in the generalized data set. The following multivariate analysis techniques were used:

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) – since all independent variables used in the primary quantitative research are ordinal, performing multiple regression analysis quickly becomes cumbersome as the Likert-scale approach used in the structured survey requires several categorical variables per independent variable observed. SEM is the preferred approach when working with ordinal variables as it directly ties in with the theoretical framework (Figure 1) while eliminating multicollinearity issues typical in regression analysis.

Discriminant Analysis – to examine whether respondents can be classified in homogeneous groups based on their responses.

Factor Analysis – to identify the fewest number of independent variables that explain the most variance of the dependent variable (principal component analysis). If needed, factor variables obtained in this analysis can be used to perform regression analysis.

Cluster Analysis – to determine whether the results can be segmented into meaningful subgroups based on the similarity of individual or groups of characteristics. These analyses surfaced discrepancies between the primary and secondary data. These were categorized into themes and used to determine the questions of the interviews conducted as part of the qualitative stage.

4. Qualitative Research - Considering the number of discrepancies the comparative analysis yielded, saturation was reached after 11 interviews. This method of sample size determination is a common practice and it is based on the notion that adding participants at that stage would no longer significantly change the results. The objective of these interviews was to obtain deep understanding of the determinants of employee engagement and to help explain the discrepancies found in the preceding comparative analysis stage. Interviews took approximately 45 minutes each and I performed all activities related to data collection and analysis. The interview protocol was developed after the comparative quantitative analysis (step 3) was completed. This analysis surfaced the differences observed between the generalized data set and the primary quantitative research. The purpose of the interviews was to explore these differences in-depth and find explanations as to the findings of the comparative research. If, for example, a factor analysis revealed that ‘personal training and development’ had a significantly higher correlation to employee engagement in the primary data than in the secondary data, then an interview question would be formulated to help explain that difference. Following the timeline provided in the ‘Duration’ section, the interview protocol was expected to be completed in the first week of October. When done, an IRB Amendment would be submitted so that the interview protocol was approved before it was administered.

5. Qualitative Research Analysis - The interviews were transcribed, coded and categorized into themes for use in the integration stage.
6. Integration - In this stage of the study the results of the qualitative research were merged with the results of the quantitative research. The objective was to identify explanations for the discrepancies found between the primary and secondary quantitative data and to test the hypotheses.

Protection of human subjects: Ethical considerations. This study examines the determinants of employee engagement and it aims to illustrate that there is merit in conducting the research using a mixed-methods approach. As such, it is important that the data collection, analysis and discussion of results are conducted as objectively as possible. Because I have no preconceived notion of a *desired* or preferred outcome, the circumstances created by the combination of this research topic with the research design are favorable and lend themselves well to be reported on in a highly neutral and unbiased fashion. In addition, I aim to apply the highest standards of ethical and academic fidelity in this study. Despite these circumstances, the following ethical considerations were observed throughout the study:

Protection of human subjects – Participants getting in trouble for willingly contributing to this study is not acceptable. Strict measures were put in place in order to protect their identities and to depersonalize the research data so that the participant is not identifiable in the published work. All data collected from the participants during both stages of the research were destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.

Respect for intellectual property – Two external research companies have contributed significantly to establishing the generalized data set to support this study and, in the process, intellectual property was shared with me in good confidence. Violating that

confidence is unacceptable and would be testament to poor judgment, character and integrity.

Objectivity – As mentioned before, I have no bias regarding the results, findings and outcomes of this study and he is adamant to conduct this study as neutrally as possible to maximize objectivity. The nature of this study is such that my views and opinions are inferior to the purpose and objectives formulated in this study and the research was conducted accordingly.

Role of researcher. I conducted all primary data collection mentioned in this study, both qualitative and quantitative. I analyzed the results and wrote this dissertation. All activities in this study were performed in accordance with IRB guidelines under supervision of Dr. K. Lehenbauer. The secondary data foundation was supplied by people in my professional network and remains their respective property.

Research objectives. The goal of the primary research conducted in this study was to obtain:

1. Traditional employee engagement survey results from the target population
2. Deep insights from the target population explaining the survey results

The majority of questions included in the traditional (quantitative) study were commonly asked questions in structured employee engagement surveys. This enabled comparison between the target population and the benchmark employee engagement data obtained from third party sources, which helped surface the similarities and differences with surveyed populations in other countries and industries. Listed below (in no particular order) are some of the questions included in the survey:

- I feel a strong personal attachment to this organization.

- I really like the duties and activities that make up my job.
- Information about the organization is communicated well to employees.
- Executive leaders at the head office are excellent leaders.

The response options to these questions ranged from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree” on a 5-point Likert scale, which is industry standard for employee engagement surveys such as these.

The qualitative part of the primary research consisted of a series of face-to-face interviews and aimed to find meaning for the survey results and generate deep insights that could not be discovered by means of the structured survey. The interviews were semi-structured, meaning that I had prepared a number of questions to get the conversation going, while taking the liberty to ask spontaneous questions based on the participants’ answers. Examples of prepared questions include:

- In your own words, please explain what employee engagement means.
- Is there a difference between employee engagement and job satisfaction? Please explain.
- In your opinion, is there a relationship between employee engagement and employee productivity?
- If you had the power to choose how to improve productivity, how much effort would you invest in increasing employee engagement, if any? Please elaborate.

Examples of spontaneous questions inspired by the conversation:

- You mentioned that measuring employee engagement once or twice per year is not frequent enough. Why is that?
- In your opinion, what is the right frequency? Please explain.

- You mentioned that you go on autopilot because the surveys are largely the same year over year. How would increasing the frequency of surveys affect that?

Research Design and Data

Secondary data foundation. Two professional employee engagement research companies assisted in establishing a generalized data set to serve as the quantitative backdrop of the study. It consisted of approximately 1,100 observations of raw survey data across 44 relevant employee engagement variables from surveys taken around the world and across industries. The data set was fully de-personalized when it was delivered and a signed NDA was put in place to protect the companies, the participants, and the researcher.

Primary data collection. The primary research in this study was conducted with employees of financial services providers based in San Antonio, Texas. This population was chosen for several reasons. It was my primary work location, which made conducting the research convenient and there were virtually no barriers to accessing the target population at scale. This was relevant because it helped recruit sufficient participants for the quantitative study and it also facilitated access to senior executives who might be difficult to get a hold of from outside the building. Another reason for targeting this particular population was that the distribution of age and gender was fairly even across the non-customer-facing roles that operated at this location, which was helpful in terms of obtaining a representative sample. Accomplishing this (more on inferential statistics in the statistical methods section) was important because some of the hypotheses included in this study rely on a representative sample in order to be adequately tested.

Quantitative data collection. This stage of the research was conducted in various locations in San Antonio, Texas. Subjects were surveyed by means of a paper copy of the survey

or electronically using Survey Monkey. The facility used to complete the survey was at the discretion of the subject, but a level of privacy was maintained in line with the IRB standards. Equipment used to carry out the data collection included printed copies of the survey and the consent form, pens/pencils and whichever electronic device (laptop, smartphone, tablet) the subject wished to use to complete the electronic survey, if applicable. I used my personal PC laptop to access the Survey Monkey results and an Apple smartphone to share the link to the electronic survey with prospect subjects. I conducted the analysis on this PC laptop, which was equipped with Microsoft Office 2016 and Stata 15 (statistical analysis software).

Population selection and site. The target subject population consisted of adults that were full time employees of financial services providers based in San Antonio. The target sample for both stages was ideally characterized by homogeneity across age, tenure, rank, race/ethnicity and gender, meaning that I attempted to sample a normally distributed spread across these variables.

Survey design and protocol. A number of qualifying subjects were selected from my personal network of contacts and requested to participate in one or more of the following ways: in person, via phone, via personal email or via text message / IM. Subjects were given the option to use either a printed survey or an electronic survey. If the subject chose to complete a paper survey, I made arrangements to personally hand the subject in question a paper copy of the survey. Two printed copies of the informed consent form (including a brief description of the study) were provided and both needed to be signed prior to handing out a paper copy of the survey. Once signed, the participant kept one copy of the signed consent form. Surveys were to be completed anonymously and participants were not required to provide their name or other personally identifiable information. Subjects who chose to participate using Survey Monkey were sent a link to the electronic survey via personal email, text message or IM. Informed

consent was obtained prior to accessing the survey using Survey Monkey's proprietary workflow.

Because the survey contained questions to verify whether the subject met the qualifying criteria, this survey lent itself very well to referral sampling, which contributed to arriving at the required sample size. Subjects were requested to refer other subjects and given the opportunity to share the link to the survey with up to 5 qualifying individuals in their network.

Survey design. The primary quantitative data were collected by means of a questionnaire consisting of 24 questions. 92 respondents completed the survey using the SurveyMonkey questionnaire and 18 respondents used the paper survey. The SurveyMonkey data were exported to Excel and the results of the paper surveys were added to the same Excel file, consolidating the survey results in a single document. The secondary quantitative data consist of two datasets obtained from professional research firms. They contain approximately 1,100 observations of raw survey data across 44 relevant employee engagement variables from surveys taken around the world and across industries. The primary qualitative research was collected by interviewing 11 subjects that also completed the questionnaire. I conducted all interviews face-to-face and recorded them (with consent) for analysis purposes.

Quantitative Analysis

Mathematical modeling. Mathematical models were created for both dependent variables included in this study, employee engagement and employee productivity. These models are critical to understand the independent variables that affect the dependent variables, as well as the relationship between them.

Employee Engagement:

$$Y_1 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{attachment} + \beta_2 \text{proud} + \beta_3 \text{passion} + \beta_4 \text{purpose} + \beta_5 \text{enjoy} + \beta_6 \text{otherjob} + \beta_7 \text{fair} \\ + \beta_8 \text{care} + \beta_9 \text{trust} + \beta_{10} \text{resources} + \beta_{11} \text{understand} + \beta_{13} \text{appreciated} + \beta_{14} \text{achievement} + \\ \beta_{15} \text{comms} + \beta_{16} \text{likeduties} + \beta_{17} \text{manager} + \beta_{18} \text{training} + \beta_{19} \text{leaders} + \beta_{20} \text{highquality} + \epsilon_1$$

Employee Productivity:

$$Y_2 = \beta_0 + Y_1 + \beta_1 \text{lesswilling} + \epsilon_2$$

Duration. Subject recruitment and data collection took place in four weeks. Both the paper surveys and the electronic Survey Monkey survey were available during that time. The survey itself took about 10 minutes to complete. The methodology for analyzing the quantitative data (primary and secondary) had been prepared and was completed within two weeks after the survey closed.

Subject compensation. I accommodated and facilitated participation by subjects to the best of my ability: no compensation of any form was offered to subjects participating in this study.

Risk analysis. Electronic surveys (via SurveyMonkey) were conducted anonymously and I did not have visibility into the identity of participating subjects at any time. Data were collected and stored in the designated SurveyMonkey account, which was only accessible by me. There was no risk to the participant, even in the unlikely event that the data were accessed by someone other than the researcher because no personally identifiable information was obtained in the surveys. Paper surveys were also conducted anonymously, that is no identifiable data would appear on a completed survey. I did interact with a number of subjects in person when completed surveys were being collected, which could technically be perceived as a minimal risk by the subject. To minimize this risk (and to put the subject at ease), I collected completed surveys in a large envelope that contained other completed surveys as well a small stack of empty sheets of paper. Subjects were requested to place their completed survey anywhere in the stack. This way I

would not be able to tie a survey to a subject, effectively eliminating the risk altogether. Subjects were not at risk in the event the envelope gets lost. Note: in this particular study there was no benefit in knowing who answered what. As such, I did not attempt to make any completed survey identifiable. Subjects were not exposed to elevated medical risks by participating in this study. It was expected that no more than 100 paper surveys would be collected and the frequency of this risk (the likelihood that it occurs) was minimal. In the event that the risk would occur, the severity of the risk to subjects was minimal due to the risk mitigation described above.

Descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics of the primary quantitative research that was conducted are shown in Tables 1 and 2, and are accompanied by a brief discussion on the significance of each of the variables. A total of 110 observations were included in the dataset and information on 24 variables collected for each observation.

1. Age – It is plausible that employee engagement is explained by different factors depending on the age group of the participant. Five age ranges had been included in the survey: 18 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54 and over 55 years of age.
2. Gender – Recording the gender of participants helps identify whether employee engagement or the factors that explain it differ between men and women.
3. Rank – Four options for rank were included in the survey: Non-management, Junior Management, Mid-Management and Senior Management. Including rank alongside age helps determine whether certain findings are attributable to one or the other, or a combination of both.
4. Tenure – Data collected from participants in the same age and rank groups may still show a significant degree of variability based on how long they have been with the company.

Five answer options were available: 0 to 2, 3 to 5, 6 to 10, 11 to 15 and over 15 years of tenure.

Table 1

Descriptions of the Independent Variables

Variable Name	Survey Question
attachment	I feel a strong personal attachment to this organization
proud	Working for this organization makes me feel proud
passion	I am passionate about my role within this organization
purpose	Working at this organization gives me purpose
enjoy	Irrespective of the reasons, I look forward to coming to work here at this organization
otherjob	I am already looking for another job opportunity or will start to do so soon
fair	Overall, I feel that this organization treats its employees fairly
care	Overall, this organization shows genuine care and concern for its employees
trust	Overall, this organization truly trusts its employees
resources	Employees are supported with adequate resources to help them do their work well
understand	Overall, I have a good understanding of what I am supposed to be doing in my job
lesswilling	At times I do not feel engaged, I am less willing put in extra effort for my work
appreciated	Overall, ideas and suggestions from employees are appreciated by this organization
achievement	Overall, I get a real sense of achievement working for this organization
comms	Overall, information about the organization is communicated well to employees
likeduties	Overall, I really like the duties and activities that make up my job
manager	Overall, my manager is an excellent manager
training	Overall, this organization provides good training and development opportunities
leaders	Overall, executive leaders at head office are excellent leaders
highquality	Overall, this organization provides me with a high-quality work environment

Table 2

Summary Statistics for the Independent Variables

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
ID	110	55.50000	31.89828	1	110
Age	110	3.02727	1.13703	1	5
Gender	110	1.53636	0.50096	1	2
Rank	110	2.20909	1.02354	1	4
Tenure	110	2.84546	1.25754	1	5
attachment	110	3.79091	0.89949	2	5
proud	110	3.99091	0.87257	2	5
passion	110	3.78182	0.90241	2	5
purpose	110	3.60909	0.88924	2	5
enjoy	110	3.79091	0.76740	2	5
otherjob	110	2.61818	1.02252	1	5
fair	110	3.63636	0.82091	2	5
care	110	3.40909	0.78162	2	5
trust	110	3.40909	0.80475	2	5
resources	110	3.06364	0.98872	1	5
understand	110	3.88182	0.91603	1	5
lesswilling	110	3.55455	0.97290	1	5
appreciated	110	3.59091	0.84913	1	5
achievement	110	3.71818	0.85812	1	5
comms	110	3.37273	0.99410	1	5
likeduties	110	3.50000	0.92617	1	5
manager	110	3.31818	1.14885	1	5
training	110	3.66364	0.96998	1	5
leaders	110	3.34546	0.90297	1	5
highquality	110	3.45455	0.86349	2	5

The 20 survey questions below had five answer options to choose from: Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Neither Agree or Disagree (3), Disagree (4) and Strongly Disagree (5).

5. I feel a strong personal attachment to this organization – To determine the nature of the relationship between attachment and engagement or productivity.
6. Working for this organization makes me feel proud – To identify whether a sense of pride makes employees more or less engaged.

7. I am passionate about my role within this organization – To determine the importance of the actual role of the employee.
8. Working at this organization gives me purpose – To identify what drives an employee to perform.
9. Irrespective of the reasons, overall, I look forward to coming to work here at this organization – To measure an employee's level of excitement about the job.
10. I am already looking for another job opportunity (outside of this organization) or will start to do so soon – This question was added to identify the main reasons why employees do not like working for their organization.
11. Overall, I feel that this organization treats its employees fairly – To assess the relationship between fairness and engagement.
12. Overall, this organization shows genuine care and concern for its employees – To determine whether employees are more engaged when they feel appreciated.
13. Overall, this organization truly trusts its employees – To identify whether the element of trust is a significant contributor to engagement.
14. Overall, in this organization, employees are supported with adequate resources to help them do their work well – To assess whether appropriately equipping employees with the tools to be successful affects their engagement level or productivity.
15. Overall, I have a good understanding of what I am supposed to be doing in my job – To identify whether commitment occurs at the job level or at the organization level.
16. At times when I don't feel engaged, I am less willing to put in extra effort for my work – To determine whether employee engagement is correlated with productivity.

17. Overall, ideas and suggestions from employees are appreciated by this organization – To determine whether employees feel valued about their (innovative) contributions to improve the way the organization performs and does business.
18. Overall, I get a real sense of achievement working for this organization – To ascertain whether employees feel that their accomplishments matter to the organization.
19. Overall, information about the organization is communicated well to employees – To determine whether an employee’s sense of engagement is in part explained by the degree of (insider) information they receive.
20. Overall, I really like the duties and activities that make up my job – To identify the relationship between engagement or productivity and the job content.
21. Overall, my manager is an excellent manager – To measure the degree to which the manager affects an employee’s engagement level and productivity.
22. Overall, this organization provides good training and development opportunities – To assess the correlation between development opportunities and employee engagement.
23. Overall, executive leaders at head office are excellent leaders – To measure whether the perceived quality of executive management affects employee engagement.
24. Overall, this organization provides me with a high-quality work environment – To determine whether the perceived quality of the work environment affects the engagement level of an employee.

Variable types. The majority of variables discussed above are independent variables that explain variability in the two dependent variables, employee engagement and employee productivity. For example, the question “Overall, ideas and suggestions from employees are appreciated by this organization” reveals to what extent an employee’s engagement level is

affected by appreciation for new ideas and solutions brought forward by this particular employee. If the value for this independent variable is high, it is likely that this increases the employee's engagement level and productivity (dependent variables). Similarly, if this value is low then the dependent variables are likely to be negatively affected, but if the employee doesn't propose new ideas or doesn't particularly care about the appreciation received for new ideas, then the correlation between this independent variable and the dependent variables is weak and other variables have to be considered in order to draw reliable conclusions about relationships between variables.

A degree of multicollinearity is expected in the primary data. For example, it is possible that an employee has a high engagement score and still agrees with the statement "I am already looking for another job opportunity (outside of this organization) or will start to do so soon" (variable $\beta_{6_{\text{otherjob}}}$). Further investigation may show that the employee has a strong personal attachment to the company (variable $\beta_{1_{\text{attachment}}}$) but really dislikes the supervising manager (variable $\beta_{17_{\text{manager}}}$) and therefore seeks new employment. However, should variable $\beta_{16_{\text{likeduties}}}$ "Overall, I really like the duties and activities that make up my job" have received a poor score, then it is plausible that the manager's score is affected by the employee's frustration about the job content. In other words, while the manager element may be a perfectly good independent variable to explain engagement, productivity and job seeking behavior, it may also be a dependent variable explained by other factors.

While this study observes employee engagement and employee productivity to be the main dependent variables, it is possible that others are introduced if the analysis reveals a significant degree of multicollinearity. Especially the job seeking question mentioned above is an

interesting variable to observe, because it is likely to behave similarly to employee engagement, but it may also have a causal relationship with it.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data collection. Eleven subjects were interviewed face-to-face in various locations in San Antonio, Texas. The exact location was at the discretion of the subject and the researcher, if it was safe and comfortably accommodated a private conversation of up to 60 minutes with no interruptions. Equipment I used, included a printed interview guide, printed consent forms, paper and pens to take notes and my personal PC laptop to record the conversation using Windows 10's built-in voice recording software. Subjects also had a pen/pencil and blank paper at their disposal to take notes or make drawings to support their answers. I performed all data analysis and reporting activities from my personal home in San Antonio, Texas, using my personal PC laptop.

Population selection and site. The target subject population consisted of adults that were full time employees of financial services providers based in San Antonio. The target sample for both stages was ideally characterized by homogeneity across age, tenure, rank, race/ethnicity and gender, meaning that I attempted to sample a normally distributed spread across these variables.

Interview protocol and procedures. Qualifying subjects were selected from my personal network of contacts. The sample size for the qualitative research depended on the results of the primary quantitative research and the integration with the secondary quantitative research, which produced the discrepancies between the data sets that the qualitative stage of the research focused on. The greater the number of discrepancies found, the more participants the qualitative stage of the research required in order to reach saturation, that is when adding participants would no longer change the results. This is a common method of sample size

determination. It was expected that saturation would be achieved by interviewing approximately 15 participants, however this could change depending on the quantitative results. Subjects were approached in person, given a high-level brief of the study's intended purpose and requested to participate in a face-to-face interview. In the event of a favorable response, a date, time and location were set for the interview to take place.

Two copies of the informed consent form were presented for signing prior to the start of the interview. Signed consent forms were safely stored at my house and the electronic consent signatures were stored in the SurveyMonkey account, which was only accessible by me. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were the same for both the quantitative and the qualitative research and equal to those defined at the global level. The surveys were only available in English and the interviews were conducted in English.

Duration. Subject recruitment and the interviews took place during a period of 4 weeks, after the quantitative results had been obtained. Each interview took about 45 to 60 minutes. This phase of the study started after the quantitative analysis had been completed, because the results of the quantitative analysis determined the design and questions of the interviews. I anticipated that it would take time to schedule the interviews due to the availability of subjects and resources. Also, scheduled interviews might be postponed, and extra time was being factored in to accommodate that. The qualitative analysis required 2 weeks. The duration of the final (combined) analysis depended on the results, but a time frame of 8 weeks was budgeted to complete it, taking the total duration of the study to 20 weeks.

Subject compensation. I accommodated and facilitated participation by subjects to the best of my ability: no compensation of any form was offered to subjects participating in this study.

Risk analysis. Interviews were conducted with 11 subjects. All interviews took place in a location of the subject's choosing, provided it was safe and comfortably facilitated a private conversation of up to 45 minutes with no interruptions. Participation in this study did not expose subjects to risks that they were not normally exposed to in their work environment. Considering 11 participants, the frequency of health-related risks was very low. Due to the nature of the risk (medical emergency) the severity of the risk might be high, however the interview itself was not expected to increase the risk of any such event occurring because none of the questions were likely to trigger occurrences of a medical nature.

The interviews were recorded using my personal laptop, which was password protected and not used by anyone but me. In the unlikely event that the laptop was lost, Iron Mountain data encryption software ensured that the data on the laptop were not recoverable. After the interview, I typed and stored any hand-written notes taken during the interviews on the same encrypted laptop and destroyed the handwritten notes, when done. The risk of identifiable data being accessed by anyone other than the researcher was therefore eliminated. The frequency of this risk was minimal and the severity of the risk was classified as low to medium, depending on how forthcoming the participant would be. Employee engagement and job satisfaction are topics that are openly discussed in modern day business environments.

Confidentiality. My personal laptop was the main instrument being used in this study. It was only being used by me and it was password protected. The hard drive was encrypted by Iron Mountain data encryption software which ensured that data on the hard drive could not be accessed in the event the laptop was lost or stolen. The use of paper was minimized in this study, both at home and on the road. I converted any data recorded on paper into an appropriate electronic format, stored it on the encrypted laptop and destroyed the papers. I always aimed to

achieve the highest level of confidentiality; a phrase that was also included on the consent form available to all subjects. I did not disclose any confidential information with participants at any time. Confidential information shared with me by participants was not disclosed to anyone else. No identifiable data of any kind were included in the final report of this study.

Conclusions from data and methodology. In conclusion, both the data collection approach and the research methodology have been successfully executed in accordance with the IRB guidelines for Human Subjects Research and proven to be adequate to support the objectives of this study. All of the 110 conducted surveys were completed with no missing fields and are therefore usable to perform the quantitative analysis. Similarly, all 11 interviews that were conducted are complete and usable for the qualitative analysis without putting any of the participants at risk and the precautions taken to minimize the role of the researcher have adequately minimized the introduction of researcher bias. The sampling method that was used for both primary research stages have led to homogeneity across age, tenure, rank, ethnicity and gender, with a normally distributed spread across these variables. Two employee engagement surveys have been sourced from two (external) professional research companies and the approximately 1,100 observations across 44 relevant variables constitute a solid secondary data foundation to serve as a comparative benchmark for the primary research. Consequently, all of the input requirements of an explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design have been met and the results and conclusions stages as described in the following chapters were entered with confidence.

Chapter IV: Results of Analysis

Data Collection and Cleaning

Three distinct analyses were conducted in this study and the data studied in each analysis came from a different source. The sections below describe for each type of analysis how the data were collected and how it was handled in preparation of the analysis.

Secondary data. Comparing the results of the primary research to an external data set is a common practice in explanatory sequential mixed-methods research (Shannon-Baker, 2016). Two professional services companies specializing in employee engagement research were found willing to share data from actual employee engagement surveys conducted between January 2018 and April 2019. Prior to sharing, both companies had curated their data sets to ensure that respondents and their company names could not be identified and what remained in both cases was anonymized, raw survey data and basic demographic information of respondents.

Company A supplied a data set containing the raw data of 712 completed engagement surveys from employees working at financial services companies based in Ireland, Sweden, Norway and Finland. Data had been collected on a 7-point Likert scale across 44 variables and there were no missing fields. The statistical analysis tool used in this study was Stata 15 and it imported the data file with no issues and no cleaning operations were required. In order to be able to compare this survey data results side-by-side to the other secondary data set and the primary quantitative data (which were both collected on a 5-point scale) a multiplication by $5/7$ was performed in order to get the data on a comparable scale. Because this is only statistically sound in a limited number of circumstances, this was only done at the aggregate level when working with averages.

Company B delivered a data set containing the raw data of 410 completed engagement surveys. Participants in this survey were all employed in the financial services industry in South Africa and the survey they completed gathered data on 86 variables using a 5-point Likert scale. The file arrived in SPSS format and due to data handling incompatibility between SPSS and Stata, an export to Microsoft Excel was required in order to get the data in Stata. This transfer was completed free of issues and since there were no missing fields or irregularities of any kind, no cleaning operations were required or performed.

Primary data (quantitative). Primary quantitative data were collected using a survey of 25 questions, gathering basic demographics and data on 20 variables. Twelve of these variables are those from the Gallup Q12 survey, which are also included in the surveys from the professional services firms. Seven of the remaining eight questions are a relevant selection of the highest weighted variables that both external surveys had in common and I added one variable (“at times I do not feel engaged, I am less willing put in extra effort for my work”).

Participants had two options for completing the survey: fill out a printed version of the survey or complete an identical survey via SurveyMonkey. 102 respondents chose to do the latter for convenience purposes and 8 paper surveys were collected. The data from SurveyMonkey were then exported in Microsoft Excel format and arranged to match the structure of the external data files, that is variables by columns and observations by rows. The answers to the paper surveys were manually entered onto the last 8 rows of that Excel file and double-checked for accuracy by a relative: no errors were found. All surveys were complete with no missing data and no cleaning operations were required or performed. Once completed and backed up, the paper surveys were destroyed and the SurveyMonkey project was closed.

Primary data (qualitative). I collected all qualitative data in this study by means of face-to-face interviews. All 11 interviews were recorded using the voice recording software on my laptop and I took during the interviews. When completed, I transcribed the recordings in full and added the notes to the corresponding sections. The recordings were then examined once more (along with the transcriptions) in order to identify themes and highlight noteworthy contributions. The highlighted phrases were isolated into a separate working document and categorized by topic. Approximately 30 themes emerged during that process and finally verbatim was tied back to the themes in order to complete the structure found in the qualitative data analysis section in this chapter: question, rationale, top answer, analysis. All verbatim was copied without editing any of the wording, despite the occasional use of colloquial language, potentially offensive remarks, and language errors. All interviews conducted were included in the study.

Secondary Data Analysis

Table 3 and Table 4 depict the key statistics found in the secondary data set provided by company A. Please note that the $5/7$ multiplier mentioned in the Data Collection and Cleaning section has been applied in this copy of the dataset, which explains the values lower than 1. Examining this table does not reveal anything noteworthy. There are no missing fields, mean values are realistic and standard deviations healthy.

Table 3

Summary Statistics for the Secondary Data Set of Company A

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
toolseq	712	3.55136	1.00211	0	5
service	712	3.51525	1.02202	0	5
teamwork	712	3.69282	1.03140	0.7143	5
partofteam	712	3.82925	1.05676	0.7143	5
contribute	712	3.53832	1.18941	0	5
comfort	712	3.72392	0.95597	0.7143	5
hivalue	712	4.24458	0.73880	0	5
training	712	3.56140	1.11672	0	5
takeresp	712	3.98375	0.96054	0	5
objective	712	3.87941	0.99607	0.7143	5
perfmeas	712	3.51224	1.17443	0.7143	5
strengths	712	3.75401	1.04489	0	5
needs	712	3.55538	1.11408	0	5
feedback	712	3.50321	1.13066	0	5
coaching	712	3.54535	1.16120	0	5
listens	712	3.82524	1.11068	0.7143	5
devdisc	712	3.46108	1.11580	0	5
teambnf	712	3.68078	1.14102	0.7143	5
ideas	712	3.11597	1.16781	0	5
mgtcomm	712	3.28953	1.21939	0	5
respond	712	3.85935	0.91051	0	5
promise	712	3.76706	0.94466	0	5
custfocus	712	3.92556	0.88683	0	5
vision	712	3.76706	1.05925	0	5
sharevalue	712	3.76104	0.98746	0	5
consistent	712	3.33267	1.14671	0	5
change	712	3.46509	1.09215	0	5
newideas	712	3.38483	1.12235	0	5
infoshare	712	3.15108	1.20528	0	5
unique	712	3.17717	1.22408	0	5
emprer	712	3.00662	1.16698	0	5
doright	712	2.96348	1.24159	0	5
speakup	712	3.29956	1.20749	0	5
honest	712	3.04976	1.21057	0	5
respect	712	3.51023	1.21280	0	5
merit	712	3.06782	1.28248	0	5
faireval	712	3.38784	1.17071	0	5
nostress	712	2.76084	1.29279	0	5
pay	712	2.80799	1.19067	0	5
benefits	712	2.90730	1.23005	0	5

proud	712	3.67576	1.00403	0.7143	5
opportun	712	3.31059	1.22437	0	5
outlook	712	3.75602	0.99745	0.7143	5
loyalty	712	3.62259	1.13188	0	5
recomm	712	4.88563	1.72522	0	7.1429
AV	712	3.51115	0.76988	0.7143	5

Table 4 summarizes a subset of the data obtained from company B. The original dataset contained 86 variables, but only 20 of them are relevant for this particular study. Because 12 of these questions were based on the Gallup Q12 and so many other variables were available in this dataset, all of these questions line up with the variables used in the quantitative survey of this study, (with the exception of the question “At times when I am not engaged, I am less willing to put in extra effort for my work”) which facilitates side-by-side comparison. A quick comparison reveals that the mean values of *Trust*, *Care* and *Fair* variables are significantly higher in the dataset collected in this study, while the *Purpose*, *Understanding* and *Resources* elements have significantly higher means in the secondary dataset included below. Standard deviations are consistently higher in this one as well, by a margin (~0.4 on average).

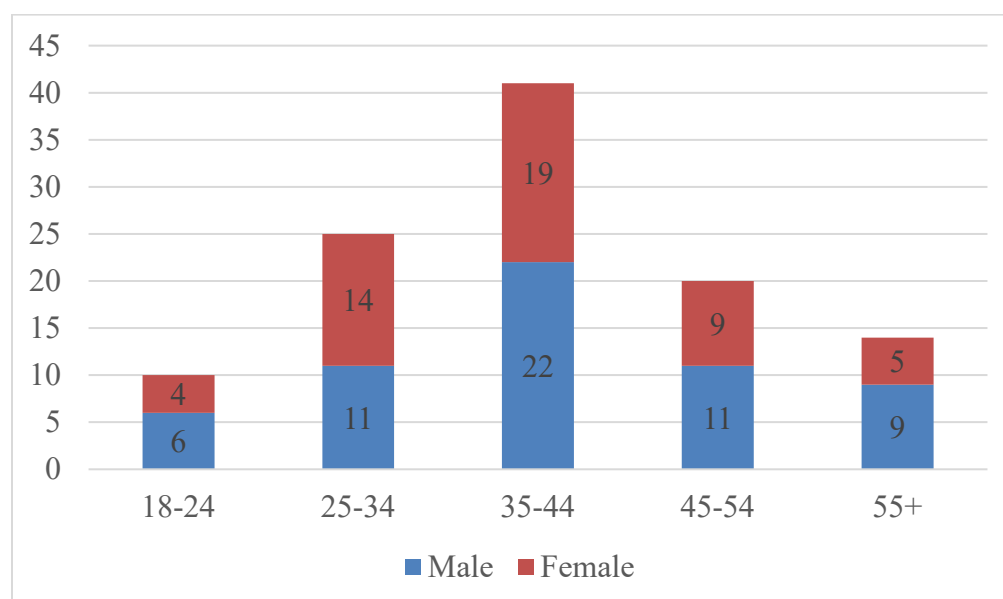
Primary Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis. The primary quantitative research was conducted with a sample size of 110 participants, 51 women and 59 men. The distribution of participants by gender and age group is indicated in Figure 3. The number of men and women per age group is well-balanced and the sample reflects the actual distribution of age groups across the companies. Figure 4 illustrates the distribution of participants by tenure and rank.

Table 4

Summary Statistics for the Secondary Data Set of Company B

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
attachment	410	3.87317	1.13771	1	5
proud	410	3.99268	1.14369	1	5
passion	410	3.86342	1.16211	1	5
purpose	410	3.79024	1.16799	1	5
enjoy	410	3.76342	1.19907	1	5
otherjob	410	2.60244	1.50484	1	5
fair	410	2.78781	1.38851	1	5
care	410	2.90976	1.36822	1	5
trust	410	3.00244	1.31104	1	5
resources	410	3.52195	1.23152	1	5
understand	410	4.19512	1.02343	1	5
appreciated	410	2.95610	1.30188	1	5
achievement	410	3.23415	1.31153	1	5
comms	410	3.28293	1.35703	1	5
likeduties	410	3.68293	1.26141	1	5
manager	410	3.17073	1.42287	1	5
training	410	3.41951	1.31183	1	5
leaders	410	3.51220	1.23957	1	5
highquality	410	3.50488	1.24944	1	5
EI	410	70.24500	22.52943	0	100

*Figure 3. Number of participants by gender and age group.*

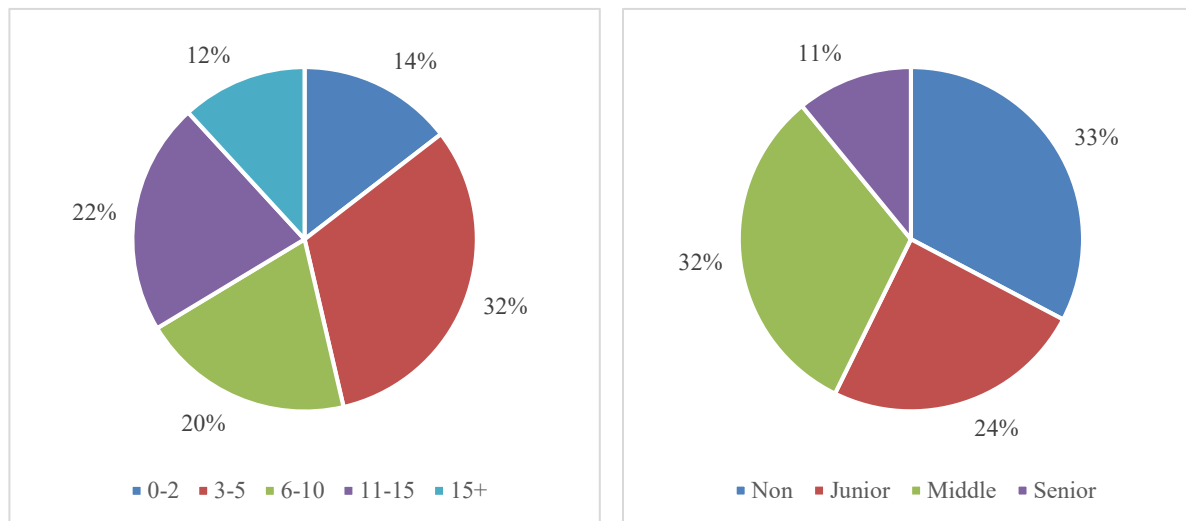


Figure 4. Distribution of participants by tenure (in years) and rank.

Descriptive statistics. The table below depicts the descriptive statistics of the primary quantitative data that were collected by means of a survey. It is worth noting that despite a fair number of respondents ($n = 110$), 9 out of 20 measured variables did not get a single “Strongly disagree” answer (Min = 2).

Top and bottom box analysis. Top and bottom box scoring is a commonly used technique to provide quick insights into the results of a survey conducted using a Likert-scale. In the table below, this technique was utilized to calculate the relative priority scores of the variables and to determine the impact of each of the variables on the overall engagement score.

Impact analysis is based on Linear Regression where Engagement is used as dependent variable and the 13 “engagement” questions as independent variables (predictors). Due to the expected multicollinearity between this type of predictors the Ridge Regression was applied (Ridge coefficient $K = 0.30$), which corrected the Beta coefficients while still keeping the overall r-squared (coefficient of determination) at 0.69. The original value for r-squared was 0.70 so the Beta coefficients were corrected with no significant impact to the quality of the model. An r-squared value of 0.69 represents a very strong, meaningful model.

Table 5

Summary Statistics for the Primary Quantitative Data

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
ID	110	55.50000	31.89828	1	110
Age	110	3.02727	1.13703	1	5
Gender	110	1.53636	0.50096	1	2
Rank	110	2.20909	1.02354	1	4
Tenure	110	2.84546	1.25754	1	5
attachment	110	3.79091	0.89949	2	5
proud	110	3.99091	0.87257	2	5
passion	110	3.78182	0.90241	2	5
purpose	110	3.60909	0.88924	2	5
enjoy	110	3.79091	0.76740	2	5
otherjob	110	2.61818	1.02252	1	5
fair	110	3.63636	0.82091	2	5
care	110	3.40909	0.78162	2	5
trust	110	3.40909	0.80475	2	5
resources	110	3.06364	0.98872	1	5
understand	110	3.88182	0.91603	1	5
lesswilling	110	3.55455	0.97290	1	5
appreciated	110	3.59091	0.84913	1	5
achievement	110	3.71818	0.85812	1	5
comms	110	3.37273	0.99410	1	5
likeduties	110	3.50000	0.92617	1	5
manager	110	3.31818	1.14885	1	5
training	110	3.66364	0.96998	1	5
leaders	110	3.34546	0.90297	1	5
highquality	110	3.45455	0.86349	2	5

Table 6

Top Two Box Results

Variable	Impact on engagement and priorities	Impact	Top Two Box	Bottom Two Box	Priority Score
fair	Overall, I feel that this organization treats its employees fairly	0.13	58.18%	8.18%	0.01828
care	Overall, this organization shows genuine care and concern for its employees	0.10	48.18%	12.73%	0.02642
trust	Overall, this organization truly trusts its employees	0.07	51.82%	15.45%	0.02087
resources	Employees are supported with adequate resources to help them do their work well	0.01	37.27%	27.27%	0.00732
understand	Overall, I have a good understanding of what I am supposed to be doing in my job	0.20	70.91%	8.18%	0.02307
appreciated	Overall, ideas and suggestions from employees are appreciated by this organization	0.03	56.36%	9.09%	0.00484
achievement	Overall, I get a real sense of achievement working for this organization	0.22	64.55%	8.18%	0.02788
comms	Overall, information about the organization is communicated well to employees	0.06	50.91%	20.00%	0.02357
likeduties	Overall, I really like the duties and activities that make up my job	0.21	60.00%	14.55%	0.05093
manager	Overall, my manager is an excellent manager	0.19	50.00%	25.45%	0.09671
training	Overall, this organization provides good training and development opportunities	0.01	64.55%	15.45%	0.00239
leaders	Overall, executive leaders at head office are excellent leaders	0.04	47.27%	15.45%	0.01307
highquality	Overall, this organization provides me with a high-quality work environment	0.02	55.45%	17.27%	0.00623

Table 7

Top Two Box Results Sorted by Priority Score

Variable	Order of priorities	Impact	Top Two Box	Bottom Two Box	Priority Score
manager	Overall, my manager is an excellent manager	0.19	50.00%	25.45%	0.09671
likeduties	Overall, I really like the duties and activities that make up my job	0.21	60.00%	14.55%	0.05093
achievement	Overall, I get a real sense of achievement working for this organization	0.22	64.55%	8.18%	0.02788
care	Overall, this organization shows genuine care and concern for its employees	0.10	48.18%	12.73%	0.02642
comms	Overall, information about the organization is communicated well to employees	0.06	50.91%	20.00%	0.02357
understanding	Overall, I have a good understanding of what I am supposed to be doing in my job	0.20	70.91%	8.18%	0.02307
trust	Overall, this organization truly trusts its employees	0.07	51.82%	15.45%	0.02087
fair	Overall, I feel that this organization treats its employees fairly	0.13	58.18%	8.18%	0.01828
leaders	Overall, executive leaders at head office are excellent leaders	0.04	47.27%	15.45%	0.01307
resources	Employees are supported with adequate resources to help them do their work well	0.01	37.27%	27.27%	0.00732
highquality	Overall, this organization provides me with a high-quality work environment	0.02	55.45%	17.27%	0.00623
appreciated	Overall, ideas and suggestions from employees are appreciated by this organization	0.03	56.36%	9.09%	0.00484
training	Overall, this organization provides good training and development opportunities	0.01	64.55%	15.45%	0.00239

Engagement, activation and attraction. Analyzing the results of the quantitative and qualitative research led to the notion that the number of exogenous variables affecting productivity is too large to capture in a single standardized survey of 20 questions. 26 of them have been identified in this study and it is likely that there are many more, which are beyond the scope of this study. A closer look at these 26 exogenous variables resulted in a classification based on 4 key endogenous variables: employee engagement, job satisfaction, intrinsic motivation and productivity. In other words, each of the identified exogenous variables were tied to a single endogenous variable with relative ease. Twelve of these ended up being connected to employee engagement and 10 of these to job satisfaction, both of which are determinants of productivity. In order to facilitate further analysis on these connections and their meaning relative to productivity, three indices are adopted from company A, one of the suppliers of external data:

Activation Index (ACI): This signifies the level of pro-activeness and enthusiasm that employees exhibit in their jobs or roles within the organization, expressed by a score on a 0 to 100 scale.

Attraction Index (ATI): This is the level of affective bond (valence) between employees and the organization, expressed by a score on a 0 to 100 scale.

Employee Engagement Index (EEI): Level of heightened emotional connection that employees feel for their organization, which influences them to exert greater discretionary effort to their work, expressed by a score on a 0 to 100 scale. EEI is a composite score of the other two (ACI and ATI), weighted according to their contribution to engagement.

This is supported by the comparative analysis performed on the primary quantitative research and the secondary data foundation, which yields an Activation Index (level of pro-

activeness and enthusiasm that employees exhibit in their jobs) that is 7% higher than the Attraction Index (level of affective bond (valence) between employees and the organization) for highly engaged employees.

Figure 5 depicts the three indices described above by age group and it is clear that the 45-54 age group exhibits the highest levels of engagement, which is predominantly explained by their affective bond with the company (ATI).

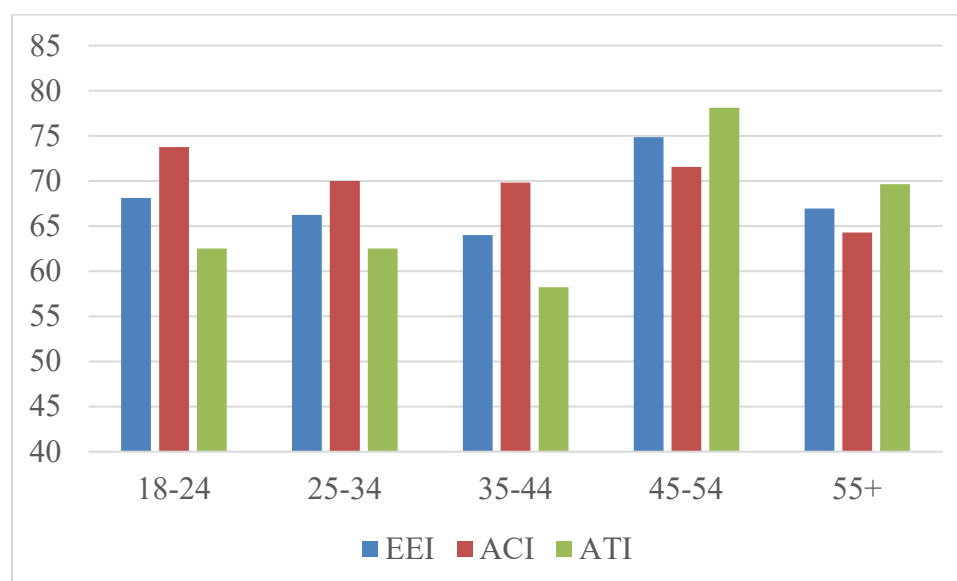


Figure 5. EEI, ACI and ATI by age group.

Figure 6 depicts the composite engagement scores by gender and shows that male employees on average score about 8 points higher than female employees on a 100-point scale. In both cases engagement is predominantly explained by the Activation Index.

Figure 7 shows engagement by rank and it is clear that employees who are in junior management roles or not in a management role at all score significantly higher on all three indices than seasoned leaders and executives in the surveyed companies. According to this view, the engagement level of senior leaders is mostly explained by the Attraction Index, whereas the engagement level of lower ranked employees is mostly explained by the Activation Index.

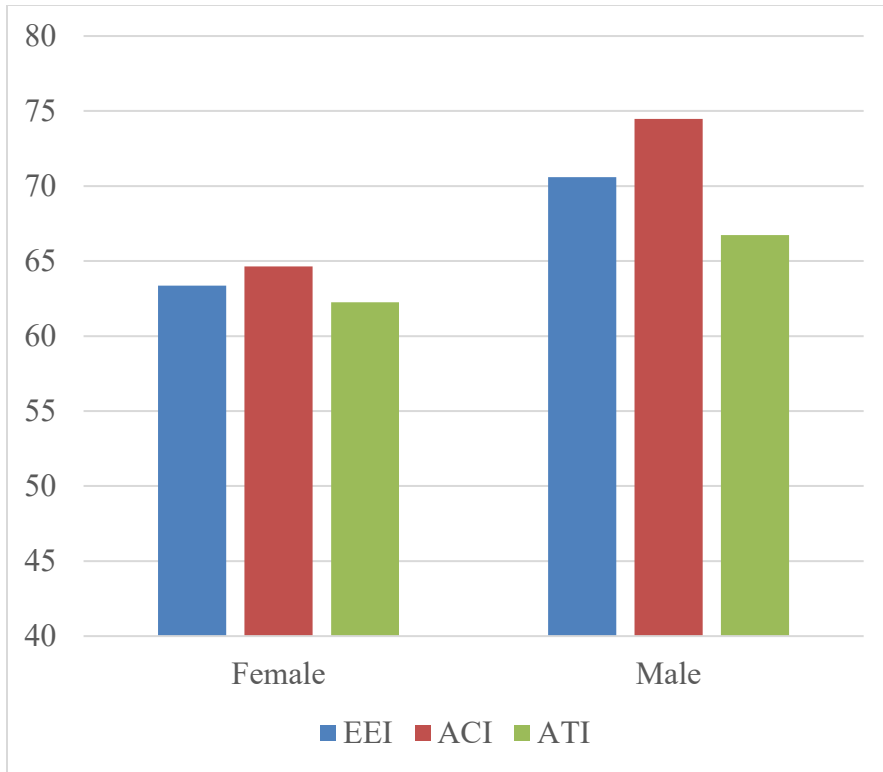


Figure 6. EEI, ACI and ATI by gender.

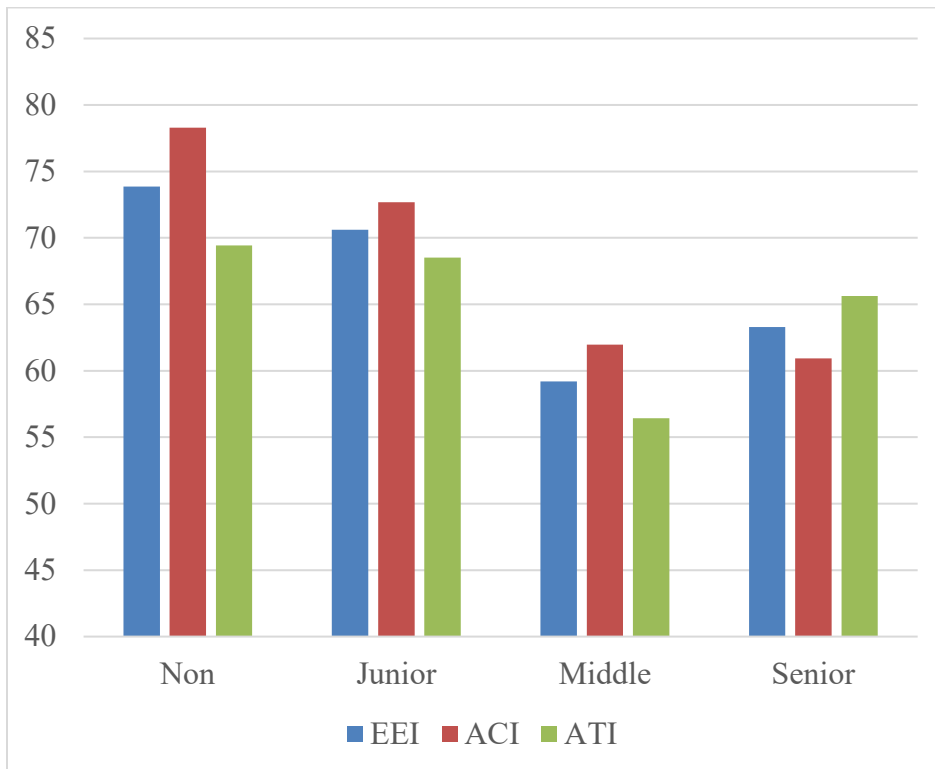


Figure 7. EEI, ACI and ATI by rank.

Plotting the same analysis, as shown in Figure 8, on a graph grouped by tenure results in an emerging narrative. New hires are highly engaged (mainly due to the Activation Index) but that engagement wears off over the years. After a decade of service, the Attraction Index makes a significant jump, leading to significantly higher engagement scores as well. Unfortunately, this does not seem to last, as the most tenured employees show slightly lower composite engagement scores yet again. They are still high though, and mainly explained by the Attraction Index.

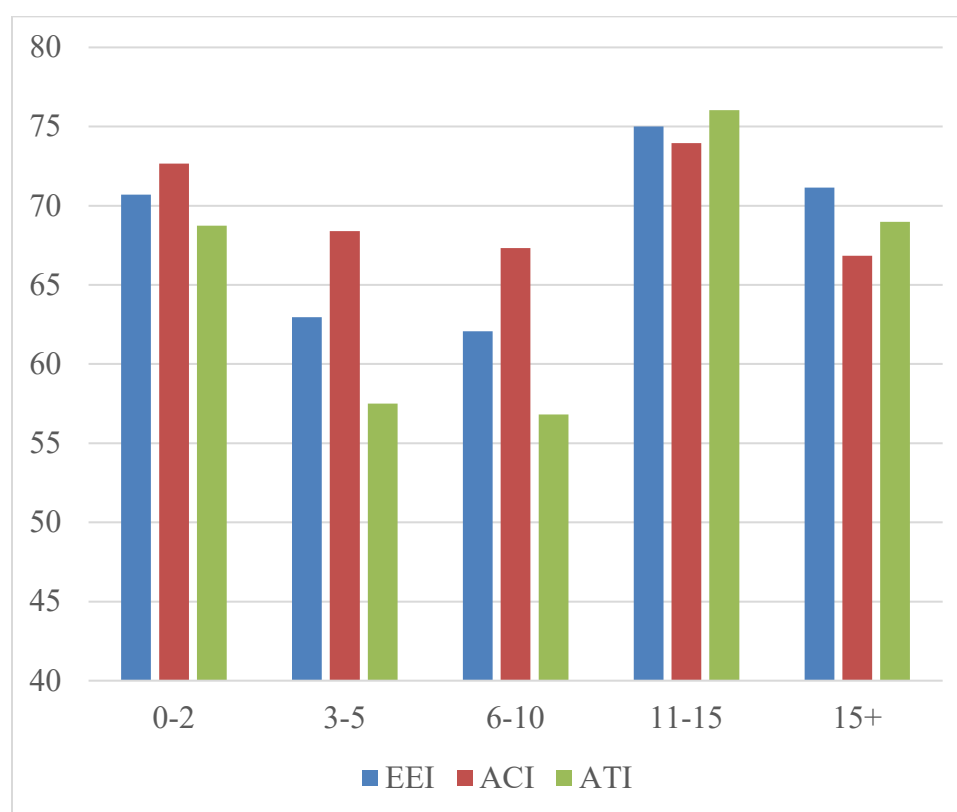


Figure 8. EEI, ACI and ATI by tenure.

Spearman's test. The Spearman rank-order analysis is a test to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between two ordinal variables. This test was used in order to ascertain from the primary quantitative data which set of variables best predicts the dependent variable employee engagement. The strength and direction of the correlation are indicated by Spearman's correlation coefficient which is typically denoted as r_s or the Greek letter ρ (rho) and

can take on values between -1 and 1. In the context of this study and its research question, positive ρ -values close to 1 are those of interest, as they point to a strong positive correlation between the dependent and independent variables. Values close to -1 would also be of interest, but they are not expected from this test. Aside from the Engagement Index, the indices Attraction and Activation will also be included, as they may yield noteworthy insights. Bolded numbers in the Spearman's test output table included below indicate values greater than 0.5 or smaller than -0.5. Please note that the test runs separate, one-to-one correlation tests between all variables in the model, so removing a variable from the model does not affect the rest of the model as would be the case in for example a regression analysis.

Table 9 offers a tabulated view of the results in the third Spearman diagram with all variables included and written out in full, in descending order of correlation strength (regardless of sign) with the Employee Engagement Index. Note that these are p -values, not index scores.

The variables *Attachment*, *Proud* and *Enjoy* have the highest Spearman ρ -values in this analysis, which means that these variables are the strongest predictors of employee engagement based on the survey data collected in this study. Having the Activation and Attraction Indices in the same view helps better understand the underlying reasons for a given engagement score. For example, the variable "I am passionate about my role in the organization" has a far stronger correlation with the Activation Index than it does with the Attraction Index, which makes sense because this is a question about the role (the job itself) rather than the organization. Similarly, the variable "Irrespective of the reasons, I look forward to coming to work here at this organization" shows a higher correlation coefficient with Attraction than with Activation, which suggests that employees in general like to come to work every day because of the company itself and not necessarily the job.

Table 8

Spearman's Test Output

	Age	Tenure	attachment	proud	passion	purpose	enjoy
Age	X						
Tenure	0.7785	X					
attachment	0.1014	0.1976	X				
proud	-0.0598	-0.0604	0.6812	X			
passion	-0.1307	-0.0942	0.6343	0.5787	X		
purpose	-0.1446	-0.0421	0.6154	0.5991	0.5849	X	
enjoy	0.0652	0.0423	0.5430	0.5617	0.4180	0.4029	X
otherjob	-0.2861	-0.2543	-0.3572	-0.2202	-0.2583	-0.2578	-0.3361
fair	-0.0634	0.0330	0.4968	0.5415	0.4297	0.3858	0.4946
care	0.1323	0.2318	0.4496	0.2865	0.2336	0.2611	0.3120
trust	0.1022	0.0996	0.4620	0.2564	0.2765	0.1949	0.2716
lesswilling	-0.5033	-0.5079	-0.3558	-0.0822	-0.0081	-0.0069	-0.1863
achievement	-0.1413	0.0051	0.5945	0.4206	0.5217	0.5657	0.4132
comms	0.0089	0.0602	0.3658	0.1205	0.1624	0.1548	0.2092
likeduties	0.0472	0.0613	0.5663	0.4194	0.5532	0.4043	0.3226
manager	-0.0488	0.1125	0.6263	0.4328	0.5336	0.4280	0.3929
training	0.0537	0.1358	0.1779	-0.0489	0.0921	0.1316	0.0543
highquality	-0.0625	0.0909	0.4218	0.2298	0.2435	0.2326	0.2696
ACI	-0.0559	0.0214	0.8692	0.8469	0.8191	0.8289	0.5730
ATI	0.2493	0.2161	0.5208	0.4274	0.3740	0.3887	0.7256
E EI	0.1048	0.1302	0.8165	0.7449	0.7136	0.7119	0.7346
	otherjob	fair	care	trust	lesswilling	achievement	comms
otherjob	X						
fair	-0.1705	X					
care	-0.4303	0.3099	X				
trust	-0.4902	0.3358	0.6184	X			
lesswilling	0.3516	-0.0620	-0.1598	-0.2062	X		
achievement	-0.3805	0.4436	0.3003	0.3643	-0.1637	X	
comms	-0.1233	0.0549	0.3020	0.4424	-0.1042	0.1936	X
likeduties	-0.4322	0.3928	0.4025	0.3162	-0.2198	0.5082	0.1000
manager	-0.3878	0.3889	0.5061	0.5468	-0.1946	0.4836	0.4805
training	-0.3599	0.1620	0.3413	0.4138	-0.0712	0.3224	0.1800
highquality	-0.3992	0.2700	0.5668	0.5100	-0.1333	0.4869	0.2815
ACI	-0.3351	0.5473	0.3825	0.3506	-0.1497	0.6268	0.2382
ATI	-0.8713	0.3611	0.4502	0.4747	-0.3586	0.4749	0.1830
E EI	-0.6564	0.5256	0.4677	0.4604	-0.2717	0.6296	0.2204
	likeduties	manager	training	highquality	ACI	ATI	E EI
likeduties	X						
manager	0.5204	X					
training	0.3546	0.3204	X				
highquality	0.4297	0.5187	0.4814	X			
ACI	0.5805	0.6086	0.1039	0.3473	X		
ATI	0.4531	0.4592	0.2986	0.4230	0.5167	X	
E EI	0.5955	0.5953	0.2036	0.4170	0.8899	0.8383	X

Table 9

Spearman's Test Results on EEI, ACI and ATI

Variable	Survey Question	ACI	ATI	EEI
attachment	I feel a strong personal attachment to this organization	0.8692	0.5208	0.8165
proud	Working for this organization makes me feel proud	0.8469	0.4274	0.7449
enjoy	Irrespective of the reasons, I look forward to coming to work here at this organization	0.5730	0.7256	0.7346
passion	I am passionate about my role within this organization	0.8191	0.3740	0.7136
purpose	Working at this organization gives me purpose	0.8289	0.3887	0.7119
otherjob	I am already looking for another job opportunity or will start to do so soon	-0.3351	-0.8713	-0.6564
achievement	Overall, I get a real sense of achievement working for this organization	0.6268	0.4749	0.6296
likeduties	Overall, I really like the duties and activities that make up my job	0.5805	0.4531	0.5955
manager	Overall, my manager is an excellent manager	0.6086	0.4592	0.5953
fair	Overall, I feel that this organization treats its employees fairly	0.5473	0.3611	0.5256
care	Overall, this organization shows genuine care and concern for its employees	0.3825	0.4502	0.4677
understandin g	Overall, I have a good understanding of what I am supposed to be doing in my job	0.3444	0.4857	0.4632
trust	Overall, this organization truly trusts its employees	0.3506	0.4747	0.4604
highquality	Overall, this organization provides me with a high-quality work environment	0.3473	0.4230	0.4170
rank	Rank	-0.3822	-0.2401	-0.3835
appreciated	Overall, ideas and suggestions from employees are appreciated by this organization	0.3320	0.1745	0.2941
leaders	Overall, executive leaders at head office are excellent leaders	0.2433	0.2605	0.2773
lesswilling	At times when I don't feel engaged, I am less willing to put in extra effort for my work	-0.1497	-0.3586	-0.2717
comms	Overall, information about the organization is communicated well to employees	0.2382	0.1830	0.2204
gender	Gender	0.2610	0.1248	0.2178
training	Overall, this organization provides good training and development opportunities	0.1039	0.2986	0.2036
resources	Employees are supported with adequate resources to help them do their work well	0.1046	0.1801	0.1476
tenure	Tenure	0.0214	0.2161	0.1302
age	Age	-0.0559	0.2493	0.1048

It is worth pointing out that the variables *Age* and *Tenure* have the lowest correlation strength with employee engagement, but that the correlation coefficient of *Rank* is fairly high in

comparison. This relationship is negative, which shows that employee engagement drops as employees move higher in rank and this is consistent with earlier findings. Another finding worth noting is the fact that the variable “I am already looking for another job opportunity or will start to do so soon” has a much stronger coefficient (closer to -1) to the Attraction Index than to the Activation Index. This gives us valuable insight in the sense that most of the employees considering a job change do so because they dislike the company more than their job. Lastly, the correlation strength of the variable “At times when I don’t feel engaged, I am less willing to put extra effort in my work” with the Engagement Index is low, which suggests that this question was answered with a fair degree of consistency across the board, regardless of the engagement level of an employee.

Comparative analysis. Using the three indices of company A in this study comes with the great benefit that the results of the primary quantitative study can be compared against an employee engagement survey database containing 14,589 observations from 25 different companies. Table 10 shows the EEI, ACI and ATI scores for the data gathered in the quantitative research of this study.

Table 10

Means of EEI, ACI and ATI Indices

	<i>N</i>	Mean
ACI Activation Index	110	69.83
ATI Attraction Index	110	64.66
EEI Engagement Index	110	67.24
Sample size	110	

Comparing this to the aforementioned benchmark data reveals that the companies included in this study score just below average in terms of employee engagement, both across industries and within the financial services industry. What stands out in Table 11 is that the range

in Finance & Insurance is the second largest of all industries in the benchmark and that the worst performing financial institution is in the bottom three when compared to the lowest scoring companies in each industry.

Table 11

Benchmark EEI scores across industries in South Africa

Industry / Sector	EEI	Min	Max
Pharmaceuticals	77.10	77.10	77.10
Services	76.48	75.34	77.62
Retail	76.11	76.11	76.11
Media	71.54	61.99	82.11
Finance & Insurance	67.76	59.85	75.11
Manufacturing	66.59	59.37	73.80
Mining	65.03	60.81	69.24
Telecommunication	63.45	63.45	63.45
Transport	61.31	55.61	67.01
Average	69.22	65.51	73.51

Segment analysis. Activation, Attraction and Engagement Indices are available per employee, which enables the design of employee engagement typologies. This is done by means of an algorithm that takes into account various levels and combinations of the three indices. Applying this algorithm onto the benchmark data reveals seven distinct employee types whose behavior and relationship with the organization differ substantially. They are described in detail in Appendix B. Using this approach on the primary research data revealed the results as illustrated in Figure 9 and Figure 10.

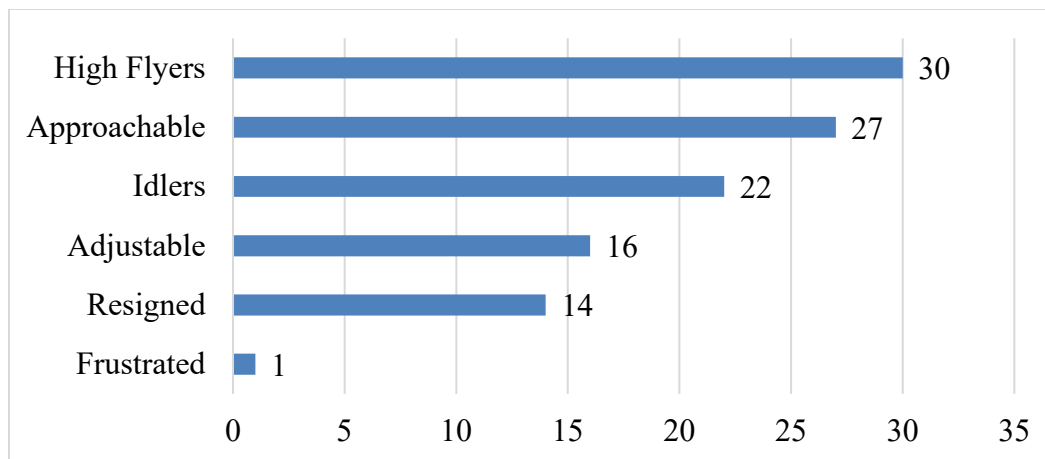


Figure 9. Frequency of EE typologies in primary data.

Plotting the results in a pie chart gives an impression of the relative segment sizes.

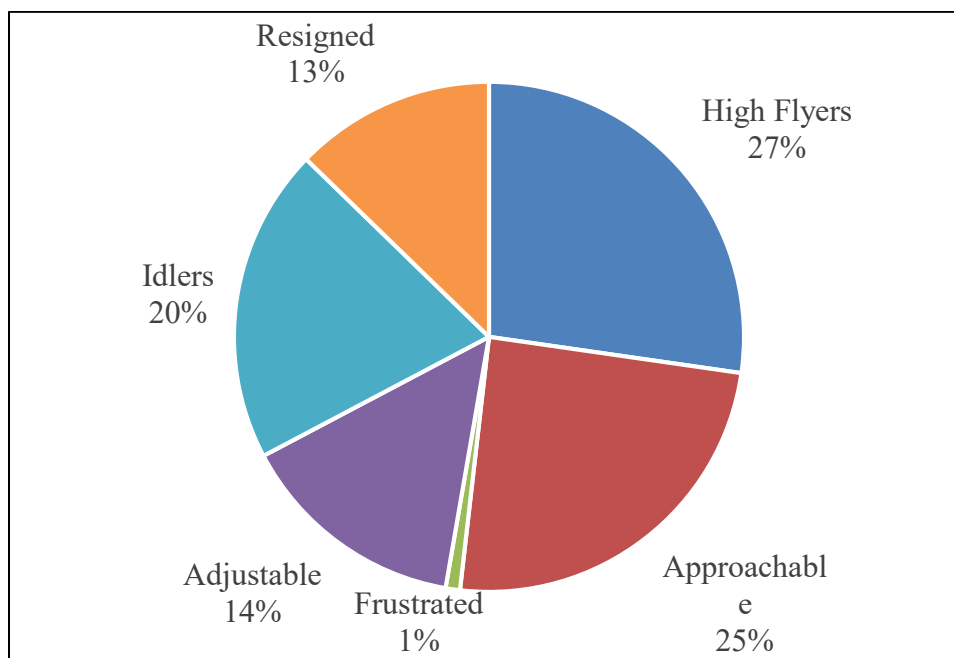


Figure 100. Relative employee segment size.

Qualitative data analysis and integration. This section contains the analysis of the interviews using the structure mentioned in the Data Collection and Cleaning section. In some of the questions, the input gathered from respondents during the interview serves as an explanation to findings from the quantitative analysis. If so, these findings are being included in order to arrive at an integrated analysis. The structure of the answers to each of the questions is the same

from start to end. The question as it was asked during the interview is phrased followed by a brief elaboration on the underlying rationale. The answers that best summarize the majority of answers have been included verbatim, as well as the answers that produced noteworthy findings. Each question section is concluded by a brief analysis of the responses and the main takeaways. Terms like “respondent A” and “respondent B” are used to indicate that responses were given by different respondents, but there is no relationship between respondents across questions, meaning that respondent A in one question may be a different person than respondent A in another.

Question 1: In your own words, please describe what employee engagement means.

This question was included to determine whether the respondents employ different definitions of employee engagement and to identify categories or themes based on the keywords used to describe employee engagement.

Participant A said that “employee engagement equates to a feeling of ownership with your work, so rather than just being an employee, you feel like having a vested interest in your work and the enterprise.” Participant B produced a different angle, saying: “Engaged employees feel eager to come to work, are passionate about what they do and put their employer’s best interests at heart.” Participant C and D both tied their answers to the mission, saying that “employee engagement means being aware of the mission and objectives of the company and understanding how a job or role contributes to it” and “finding ways to meaningfully contribute to fulfilling the mission, adding value beyond the job description and doing so with a sense of purpose and enthusiasm.”

Other answers included references to employer-to-employee communication, freedom of initiative, empowerment in terms of decision-making, customer experience and commitment to quality.

The definitions and interpretations of employee engagement provided by the respondents vary significantly and make connections to a wide range of employment aspects, such as passion, energy, remuneration, communication, problem-solving, volunteer activities, collaboration and teambuilding. Nine out of 11 respondents mentioned the words mission, objectives and purpose in their answers which suggests that the majority of respondents tie employee engagement to the company or the enterprise and not to the job or role they have in it. When presented with generally accepted industry definitions of employee engagement, all respondents responded favorably and about half of them specifically pointed out the element of “heightened emotional connection to the organization” as being a key aspect of it.

Question 2: Is there a difference between job satisfaction and employee engagement? Please elaborate. This question was included to determine whether respondents distinguish between employee engagement and employee satisfaction and whether they do so comfortably and eloquently. Participant A said: “I’m having a hard time decoupling those two” and participant B produced a similar answer saying that “they go hand in hand.” Participant C said: “Yes, of course, they’re connected. I’m not sure which causes which, though.” Participant D had a similar opinion, saying “I don’t see much of a difference between the two.”

Most of the interviewees agree that there is a correlation between the two terms. Half of them have strong opinions about the differences and relationship between the two and are able to articulate them well. Interestingly, the number of people convinced that engagement causes satisfaction and those convinced it is the other way around is equal. The other half seems to struggle with the two terms and gets to a somewhat satisfying answer after talking about it for a while.

Question 3: In your opinion, is it possible that an employee is happy about the job despite not being engaged? In your opinion, is it possible that an employee is highly engaged but unhappy about the job? Please elaborate. This question was included to ascertain the relationship between employee engagement and employee satisfaction, as perceived by the respondents.

One of the respondents said:

If I'm not doing what I'm supposed to be doing then I'm not going to be happy and I won't be very engaged. But I think you can be engaged and hate your job. You can also love the job and not care about the company or mission.

Another said: "My satisfaction level with the job is very high, I love it. My engagement is still low because I can't contribute the way I'd like to and I often disagree with where we're headed as a company."

In contrast, yet another respondent said "I can be engaged and still struggle in my job. I can be engaged to the mission and not get satisfaction out of my job." While a fourth respondent argued that being "unhappy and engaged seems very difficult to me," a fifth said that "people can be very engaged but not happy with their job. I don't see it working the other way."

In general, respondents agree that there is a correlation between the two and that you can be engaged without being fully satisfied with the job. A strong argument to support this notion was provided a few times in the situation of a highly tenured employee who has switched jobs or job types a few times within the company. In that example the sense of purpose regarding the overall wellbeing of the company outweighs the level of satisfaction experienced in a particular role.

Respondents generally think that the other way around, that is being very satisfied and not engaged, is less likely but still possible. An example provided to support this is that of an

older employee in his/her pre-retirement years. Such an individual would be more likely to pursue a role that comes with good day-to-day circumstances (for example manager, peers, comfortably paced) without being overly concerned about the contribution of that role to a higher purpose. Another example is a new hire who is very excited about the job but has not spent enough time with the company in order to be truly engaged, which inspires thought about the importance of onboarding new employees in order to prevent skewed results in years when the number of new hires is high. In addition, there is consensus that people with high levels of engagement and satisfaction are probably the most loyal employees willing to go the extra mile when needed, while those with low levels of both pose a flight-risk.

Question 4: Do you think that average employee engagement scores are higher or lower at your company compared to industry peer companies/competitors in the U.S.? Why?

This question was included to get a feel for the perceived engagement level of employees at any company. Identifying the basis of that perception may shed light on the extent to which results of the employee engagement survey are being shared at any company and through what mechanism.

“Higher”, said respondent A. “My company has a mission that makes people feel that even remedial tasks serve a higher purpose. I think meaningful work is a big factor in driving employee engagement.” Respondent B agreed with similar words, saying,

higher, because we focus on the mission in all our meetings and most companies, I’ve worked for in the past don’t have that. That drives engagement at this company. We take care of our members regardless of product line. If my department wasn’t here, we’d have to change the mission.

Participant C was not so sure, but still agreed with the previous answers, saying: “Probably higher, I’m pretty sure we exceed the standard in financial services.”

All respondents were of the opinion that employee engagement at their company exceeds the industry average, which is indeed the case based on comparisons to benchmark scores and the data foundation used in this study. The fact that most interviewees mention the company's mission and/or its strategic objectives in their answer affirms the notion that engagement is tied to the company and the greater good, as opposed to job satisfaction.

Question 5: Employee engagement scores at your company used to be higher than industry peers, but overall engagement scores at your company indicate a downward trend over the past three years. Why do you think that is? Note: This is true for two out of five companies included in the study, accounting for 70 out of 110 responses. This question was skipped for the other three companies.

This question was included to get respondents to think hard about what causes engagement at their company to be higher than the benchmark and/or the industry average. It will likely produce deep insights in the event that the benchmark comparison is different than expected.

Participant A: "Too much change. Change for the sake of change. Change fatigue. The rate of change causes a lot of dissatisfaction because people are consistently breaking down what they have been building. This is not managed well." Participant B said:

I am surprised to hear that. I suspect that this has to do with the tools and equipment defects we've suffered from in the past years. Considering that the majority of our client-facing staff as well as pretty much all of IT rely heavily on tools and equipment, this probably affects a big group, pushing the results in that direction. I imagine that their engagement levels drop because little is being done about it, they feel they're not being heard.

Participant C argued that "the pace of change is too high. Employees may feel it's their fault if things need to be changed all the time, which leads to insecurity and disengagement", while participant D said:

We seem overly focused in the risk area. Too compliant almost. We lost a lot of talent because of it. When 14 highly tenured and talented people leave an area within a year that also affects the engagement level of those who stay behind. I have a supporting, servant leadership style which is fostered by this company and yet people perceive that as if I'm not performing up to par.

The most insightful answer was produced by participant E:

I think the actual engagement level is not reflected in the survey scores. Even though they ask to answer honestly there is still a persuasion to answer positively. This company is big on engagement and it sets an expectation to answer favorably so the company can keep up the bragging rights. The company is not actively manipulating that but they're so vocal and expressive about how engaged the workforce is, it creates a desire with employees to perpetuate those. So, the score ends up being higher than the actual engagement level. Customers do the same thing, because of the company's reputation customers go in with a different mindset, expecting to get top notch service and they'll end up rating a touchpoint highly even if it wasn't all that great. I like the company and their heart is in the right place but my rating is not reflective of my experience.

This question produced a lot of deep insight as to the various factors that affect the outcome of an employee engagement survey. While the expectation may be that employees see this survey as an opportunity to make their voices heard for the greater good, the reality is that they experience pressures to answer questions in a certain way. These include peer pressure, pressure from management and leadership, team pressure and pressure from internal communications. This is exacerbated by the uncertainty regarding anonymity of the survey and a desire to maintain the status quo because of the ever-changing nature of the company, a concern shared by the majority of respondents. This explains an important finding in the quantitative analysis: despite a fair number of respondents ($n = 110$), 9 out of 20 measured variables did not get a single "Strongly disagree" answer, which suggests that employees are avoiding this answer option.

Another interesting insight was provided by respondents who mentioned tools and equipment defects that haven't been adequately addressed in the past few years, leading to frustration and a sense of not being heard. Specific groups of employees (end users) were

highlighted and they constitute about 35% of the company's personnel. The average score of this question was 2.94 (on a 1-5 scale) with a relatively high standard deviation of 0.99, which confirms the suspicion that this score is heavily influenced by the minority of respondents, leading to skewed results and potentially, a distorted picture. This score would still be considered "neutral," which would not immediately raise flags and a call to action or create a sense of urgency, while this is very much needed. This is a good example of how qualitative research helps explain the results of a quantitative survey and how the wrong actions may be taken when relying on the quantitative survey results alone.

Question 6: Employees at your company are generally are less willing to put in extra effort at times they do not feel engaged. Why do you think that is? Some of the companies included in this research have very strong themes and standards associated with *going the extra mile* and this question was included to determine whether these are effective. In addition, it aims to surface insights about drivers of disengagement and effect on productivity.

Respondent A:

People in general like to be recognized. Engagement is based on how much recognitions and true personal rewards are you getting from peers or managers or stakeholders. It is not based on title or money, only on personal recognition and rewards. If you're not receiving that people become less interested in performing above and beyond.

Respondent B:

If the work does not contribute to the mission, so busy work, then people are less engaged, that's really demoralizing. We know there is work out there that we want to do to fulfill the mission and it's not motivating if the work does not contribute to our purpose, what we are here to do.

Respondent C had a strong opinion about this question:

There is no motivation to put in extra effort if you're not bought into to the mission and the company's objectives. If there is no intrinsic reward or no extra reward, why do it? Personal work ethic is a stronger driver to productivity than engagement.

Respondent C also produced a quick answer, saying: “Why would you put in extra time if you don’t understand the purpose of your work or role?”

The respondents’ answers to this question indicate that two key factors that determine whether an employee is willing to put in extra effort, (a) a thorough understanding of the purpose of the work in relation to the company’s objectives and (b) consistent acknowledgement and genuine appreciation for the extra effort made. The quantitative analysis supports this, with a high degree of correlation between variables $\beta_{1\text{attachment}}$, $\beta_{4\text{purpose}}$, $\beta_{2\text{lesswilling}}$ and $\beta_{3\text{appreciation}}$. Comparing the top and bottom 20% in terms of employee engagement score yields average scores of 2.91 and 1.88 (respectively) on the question whether employees are willing to put in extra effort at times they do not feel engaged. This difference of more than 1 point on a 5-point scale is substantial and it shows that highly engaged employees are significantly more willing to go the extra mile (even at times they do not feel engaged) than disengaged employees. Running the same analysis for employee satisfaction yields similar results, but the differences are much smaller with 2.60 for the most satisfied employees versus 2.19 for the least satisfied employees. This suggests that engagement is a stronger determinant of the willingness to go beyond than job satisfaction.

Question 7: At your company, do you think that employee engagement varies by gender? Please elaborate. This question was included to determine whether respondents feel engagement levels are different between men and women in their company. If so, it aims to shed light on whether men and women have different drivers of engagement.

Person A: “A lot of women here have a chip on their shoulder about opportunities lost to men that they were qualified for. Distracted by inequality or unfair treatment that leads to disengagement”. Person B tied the answer to social interactions, saying: “Assumption. Women

are more engaged because they are more engaged in social events here. Men more in professional events. On par probably.” Persons C, D, and E are not convinced and answered “I don’t think that engagement is gender related, more focus on purpose”, “No,” and “I have not seen that. In my experience the percentages of more/less engaged is more or less equal.” Other answers include the following: “No. I think experience varies by gender, how careers develop. I think that affects engagement in a way. Combination of gender and tenure,” “Women seem to be more content with where they are and less expressive regarding concerns. More engaged,” and “Women feel a greater obligation towards work because they are giving up more. More at stake. Limiting factors that they have to balance. Men are more cavalier about it in general. Women tend to be more engaged.” One respondent describes a trend in the answer, saying: “Yes. I think in this company men are more engaged because leadership is generally male. I think female engagement went up across the board because we have been getting a higher percentage of female leaders in the past years.”

While the majority of respondents feel that gender is not a factor regarding employee engagement, some of them gave some compelling arguments to the contrary and the answers go both ways. This question resulted in unexpected answers and they are quite mixed. One respondent explains the difference in engagement based on the composition of leadership and another sees a relationship with the level of participation in social events organized by the company. A few others indicate that women are generally more engaged because they are giving up more in order to make a full-time job possible, while one respondent argued that women are less engaged because they are (too) distracted by gender inequality issues. The quantitative research shows that men have an average employee engagement score of 70.60 (out of 100) with a standard deviation of 15.49 and women have an average engagement score of 63.36 with a

standard deviation of 15.77. These differences are small and a larger sample size is required to get significant results in order to draw reliable conclusions about whether employee engagement varies by gender. No external benchmark data were available to compare these results to.

Question 8: At your company, do you think that employee engagement varies by age group? Please elaborate. This question was included to determine whether respondents feel engagement levels are different between young, middle-aged and older employees in their company. If so, it aims to shed light on whether these age groups have different drivers of engagement.

Participant A said: “Yes. Lot of long tenured people here. Things get easier as people stay longer and that keeps people here. We lose people that are more ambitious.” Participant B had a slightly different opinion:

Does engagement grow with tenure? Not as a rule. Engagement would decrease with tenure. A high level of engagement does not lead to high tenure. Engagement is high when people just start. Ambition, promotions etc. Over time engagement would decrease. I don’t see that going up, ever. Inversely related: engagement and tenure.

Person C did see a clear tie between engagement and tenure: “Yes. Younger people less affected by dark side of corporates. Life stage may be a factor too. Family: less sleep, other priorities, less engaged.” Another answer shed light on the nature of the organization:

Yes. The older gen of workers may be on their last couple of years before they retire. It depends whether you see this company as just an insurance company or whether you have family members and friends that have actually been out there dealing with the type of hardships this company is specialized to address.

Participant E said

Yes. Career takes different focus as life events occur. Family members passing away, taking care of parents, children, education. Who are you when you come to work and what role does your job play in it? Different ideals, regardless of age. Determines level of engagement,

while participant F had a clear opinion about the matter, saying: “Stereotypical. Older people do not always “coast” as they say. People define success differently. Aspirations to advance come and go at any age.” Person G produced contrast to the other answers by saying: “I think older people may be more engaged, which goes against the stereotype. They’ve lived the mission for so long it’s in their DNA. Engagement is tied to mission.” Participant H contended that “younger people may be more engaged because they’re more open to internal propaganda”, while person I saw it the other way: “Yes. Employees older than millennials are visibly more engaged at this company. To younger employees the job is little more than the means to an end.” Insightful answers of a different nature were produced by participant J:

Yes. Very young people just trying to find their way in the job, less engaged. On the other end, older people may be less engaged as they reach retirement. In between there is probably a curve. Engagement would tend to go up as you mature and get more stake in the company.

Finally, participant K said:

That depends on individual situations. My 25-year-old nephew appears to be a lot more engaged to his job than most people in his age group and I would say that it’s because he’s keener to advance in his career than most people his age.

The answers to this question are highly mixed and yield very interesting insights. About half of the respondents are convinced that a relationship between age and engagement level exists, but their answers are conflicting in the sense that some of them argue that younger people are more engaged because of susceptibility to internal communications and less exposure to corporate politics, while others contend that older people are more engaged because they are likely to have been with the company longer and value the purpose of the company more as they mature. Respondents also make a distinction between tenure with their company and age, but again the arguments are two-sided. The other half of respondents does not support the notion that age and engagement are related, saying that life events and the ambition to make a career sprint

can happen at any time and are not necessarily tied to a certain age group. Cultural background, personal values and ambitions are also mentioned as engagement factors that are not age-related.

One respondent mentioned seeing a difference in attitude towards work between employees born before 1980 and after. Considering that significant differences in working style and preferences exist between generations X, Y and Z, it would be interesting to examine in more depth whether the determinants of engagement differ as well. If so, a single structured survey across age groups may not capture these generation specific insights when aggregated and skew the overall results.

The role that a job plays in someone's life is considered a strong driver of engagement in this group. If the job is a necessity to support aspects of life that are deemed more important then lower levels of engagement are expected, while highly ambitious employees who are intently focused on career growth are expected to show high levels of engagement. This implies that being visibly engaged is a prerequisite for climbing the career ladder, a notion that is generally supported by the respondents.

Question 9: At your company, do you think that employee engagement varies by rank?

Please elaborate. While rank and age group are generally linearly correlated, there are always exceptions on both ends of the spectrum. This question aims to decouple rank and age to get a more accurate understanding on the drivers of engagement across these two variables.

“Not at all”, said participant A. “I’ve seen VP’s being highly engaged and also highly disengaged VP’s. But I’ve also seen new hires that are highly engaged and some that are just trying to slip through the cracks.” Participant B agreed, with similar reasoning: “I don’t think so. It depends on the person. You’ll find tremendously committed people at any level, as well as demotivated, disengaged ones.” Person C shared a personal experience:

As an entry level employee, I was super engaged because I was helping out members every day. Now that I'm a senior in a staff agency I'm experiencing a different type of engagement. Not more, not less, just different. Back then it was one to one, now it is one to many and I feel equally engaged.

Interviewee D provided a noteworthy answer, saying:

It depends on how they got to that rank. If people climb consistently on the career ladder, they're likely to be more engaged than those who join the company at a certain level and get stuck there for a long time.

Participant E tied the answer to the company mission: "Once you move up, the work becomes less grounded in the mission and people tend to be less engaged because of it."

The answers to this question were relatively consistent across the board, with respondents seeing both high and low levels of engagement at any rank. Nonetheless, this question yielded some interesting insights. One respondent who had been with the company for a great number of years said the nature of her engagement had changed as she worked her way up through the ranks. At the start of her career at this company she was particularly engaged to a particular aspect of the company's mission: being empowered to do whatever it took to deliver the best possible service to customers. When she got to management level her engagement shifted to the aspect of "create conditions for people to succeed," a key element of the company's standard of successful practices. This corresponds to the comment made about "the work becoming less grounded in the mission as you move up," but in this case it did not bring down her engagement level. Being successful meant something else for her in this role as her engagement was tied to a different aspect of the company's ideology and purpose. In summary, the nature of engagement may be very different depending on the person and the rank. Another interesting comment was that it depended on how the employee got to that rank in the first place. Did he or she get it coming in from outside the firm or was it earned by climbing through the ranks? Whether

engagement levels at any rank differ based on how the rank was earned is an interesting question and worthy of examining in follow-on research.

Question 10: In your opinion, does the level of engagement of an employee vary from day to day? Or does it take a longer period of time to see significant differences in the engagement level of an employee? Please elaborate. This question was included to get an impression of the overall fluctuation level and frequency of an employee's engagement level at any company. In addition, it sought insights from the respondents as to whether the frequency of the employee engagement survey aligns to the cadence of the employee engagement survey.

Five responses to this question have been highlighted because they best summarize the answers of the respondents. Participant A said:

Interesting. I think longer. I think engagement is affected by changes in seasons, managers and peers so I would expect to see engagement levels change at a similar pace. Like over a 3-month period, little fluctuations. In 6 months, you would start to see serious changes in people's attitudes.

Participant B said:

Fluctuations in engagement levels are probably more apparent on a month-to-month basis. If you measure in shorter intervals then the results become more of a mood board. Longer periods of time between measurements probably leads to reduced accuracy. Timing of the survey matters a lot too. I'd be interested to see results before and after the annual bonus has been announced or paid out.

Participant C thought engagement fluctuates in shorter time intervals, arguing: "There are so many variables that change all the time around here, so I think engagement can change very quickly. Manager, job, workload, peers, developments... I think it changes every day. Day to day fluctuations." Participant D based the answer on energy:

Engagement requires energy. Enthusiasm and commitment imply energy and that is not always at its highest. Within a week you should be able to see a natural ebb and flow of energy and enthusiasm. The engagement survey twice a year sounds about right, provided it is supported by other tools that measure engagement continuously or more in the moment.

Person E contended that engagement changes based on events that happen in the company:

While I think that a full year between surveys is too long to produce meaningful results, I don't think there is a right frequency. Engagement here shifts with major changes, like a new CEO, a major reorg or the complete sell-off of a business unit. I think the engagement survey should be tied to major events in a company instead of conducting it at a fixed frequency. The examples I mentioned all happened in the past eighteen months and they affected engagement so bad you could just feel it walking through the building. This impacted pretty much all employees but considering the questions in the survey, I doubt this was reflected in the results.

Responses to this are very mixed and the proposed time between measurable changes in engagement varies from 1 day to 6 months, according to the respondents. Three respondents mentioned that the survey should be conducted in relation to impactful corporate events like a leadership change, a public award or a successful acquisition in order to measure their effect on employee engagement and get a better understanding of it. Several respondents said that an annual survey produces a company-wide snapshot of the state of employee engagement at and that there is value in comparing it to the results of previous years to identify trends, but that the questions are too generic to produce meaningful, actionable results.

Most interviewees see little value in conducting a survey annually, because the results get rolled up too much and therefore become too diluted. The amount of change that takes place in a year's time is substantial and respondents are skeptical about the ability to tie the results of an annual survey to specific changes or even specific investments being made in human resources. In that context, one respondent used the analogy of the resolution being so low that it would never produce a sharp image. In other words, if the survey cannot reveal the root cause of trends, then actions to reverse or amplify those trends cannot be justified.

Question 11: In your experience, is there a relationship between job satisfaction and employee productivity? Please elaborate. This question was included to ascertain whether respondents see a connection between job satisfaction and productivity and what the nature of that relationship is. It is connected to the next question and the differences in the answers should yield some valuable insights.

Respondent A: “I think so. If people enjoy their job they would naturally be more interested in performing well and doing their job to the best of their ability.”

Respondent B said:

100%. You have to love what you do. You have to be excited to come to work and perform at a certain level. Performance goals need to be met. We can only exceed expectations if the job satisfaction is high.

Respondent C provided another insight, saying: “You don’t have to be happy about the job when you’re driven by engagement. When you’re engaged you can get through periods of reduced job satisfaction and still be productive.” Person D had a different take on the relationship between the variables: “I’ve been unsatisfied with jobs and yet very productive. Being productive may be satisfying in itself, but that’s different from loving the actual job.” A very insightful answer was produced by Person E, who said:

Yes, satisfaction more so than engagement. The more satisfaction you have in your job, the more likely you are to go the extra mile. We should be focusing more on satisfaction if we want to create a performance culture here. A lot of people here are very engaged with the mission and the company but they’re not productive.

An interesting observation here is that respondents appear to distinguish between employee engagement and employee satisfaction with a higher level of confidence than in the beginning of the interview. Some respondents proactively included *engagement* in their answer, as if they had developed a better understanding of the two terms and the relationship between them during this interview.

The majority of respondents indicate that a positive correlation exists between job satisfaction and productivity. Among the respondents who brought up engagement there is a general consensus that job satisfaction is a stronger determinant of productivity than employee engagement, but not without exceptions. An example given by one of the respondents: employees with a strong intrinsic drive to perform and be productive beyond expectations can last for a very long time in a job they do not like, but they would have to understand the purpose of their work in relation to a higher objective in order to stay motivated and productive. This example is interesting because it adds a variable that affects the relationship between the other three variables, which suggests that unsatisfied employees can only be highly productive if they are engaged and intrinsically motivated to perform. The quantitative research in this study supports this notion: 37 out of 110 respondents indicate that they are unsatisfied with their job. The majority of those (20) are both driven to perform and highly engaged (> 62%).

Question 12: In your experience, is there a relationship between employee engagement and productivity? Please elaborate.

This question is similar to the previous one, but it aims to identify whether a relationship exists between engagement and productivity. The sequence of these two questions matters and was deliberately chosen to get respondents to think hard about these relationships and potentially reveal interesting, deeply personal insights.

The response given by person A was profound:

Internally motivated people can be productive and engaged regardless of their environment. Something is driving them from within. Externally motivated people are more likely to be demotivated in terms of being productive when they don't get the appreciation for their work or when they don't like aspects of their job environment.

Person B distinguished well between the variables by saying, "to a degree. I believe there is a stronger correlation between satisfaction and productivity than between engagement and

productivity”, and so did person C using fewer words: “Definitely. But Not as much as satisfaction.”

In line with the answers to the previous question, the majority of respondents sees a stronger relationship between job satisfaction and productivity than between engagement and productivity. This is supported by the comparative analysis performed on the primary quantitative research and the secondary data foundation, which yields an Activation Index (level of pro-activeness and enthusiasm that employees exhibit in their jobs) that is 7% higher than the Attraction Index (level of affective bond (valence) between employees and the organization) for highly productive employees.

One respondent proposed the idea that being adequately rewarded for consistently exceeding the performance expectations leads to a form of engagement associated with personal success and achievement, rather than with the firm’s ideologies. This suggests that the right leadership style may result in superior performance and productivity regardless of an employee’s engagement level, which is supported by the quantitative research. 61% of respondents get a high sense of achievement from their work *and* feel that the organization is acknowledging their extra effort. 16% of those employees are disengaged (<50) *and* highly positive about the leadership style of their direct supervisor.

Question 13: In your experience, is there a relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement? Please elaborate. This question is a logical follow-up of the previous two questions. Respondents are not likely to reveal new insights after having answered the previous two questions and this question was included for confirmation purposes only.

One person answered: “If someone is happy in their job, they are more likely to be engaged.” Another shared a slightly different point of view: “They’re not dependent on each other, but I do think satisfaction contributes more to engagement than vice versa.”

As expected, few respondents produced a meaningful answer to this question, but it resulted in an insightful takeaway nonetheless. Respondents were consistent in terms of the hierarchy or causality between job satisfaction and employee engagement, which is in line with the answers given to question 3 of the interview (“In your opinion, is it possible that an employee is happy about the job despite not being engaged? In your opinion, is it possible that an employee is highly engaged but unhappy about the job? Please elaborate.”) and supported by the quantitative analysis that revealed a higher number of employees being satisfied with their job (94) than employees being engaged (77). This suggests that satisfied employees are more likely to be engaged, but that satisfaction in the job does not unequivocally imply engagement.

Question 14: What is the work from home policy of your company? In your opinion, does the level of employee engagement affect the amount of time employees choose to work remotely? This question was included to identify whether respondents are aware of work from home policies, whether different policies exist within and across companies and whether respondents feel there is a relationship between engagement level and the amount of time spent working remotely. Most standardized employee engagement surveys do not include questions about working from home, even though it has become a key element of “the new way of working” across industries. Insights gathered here may help explain some of the results of the quantitative analysis.

Person A answered this question with a personal experience, saying:

It does. We have a work *at* home policy and a work *from* home policy. If an employee is engaged, they can be successful no matter where they work. Others I’m worried about. If

an employee is not engaged, they'd rather be disengaged where no one is watching than being at their desk. It has an impact. I'm more productive at the office.

Participant B shared a good practice in the answer, saying: "My manager asked to announce working from home a week in advance. That's a good practice to prevent abuse." Person C offered an interesting insight: "Bad work from home behavior is mostly caused by unhealthy work environments than engagement. Engaged people in healthy work environments tend to be more productive when working from home." This sentiment was shared by participant D, who said:

We have a very liberal policy about working from home and in some roles, it is even encouraged. I could see how someone feeling disengaged would want to work from home to mask their engagement or be less productive. People can be much more productive at home. If I'm not enjoying interactions with colleagues or projects, I'd be more likely to work from home.

The answers to this question were pretty consistent and respondents agreed that their company has a generous work from home policy. A distinction was made between work from home and work at home, the former involving full-time on-site employees having the opportunity to incidentally work from if required and the latter relating to roles tailored to be fulfilled working at home full-time and incidentally on site. There is consensus about two key aspects regarding the behavior associated with remote working, namely engaged employees with healthy onsite work circumstances are generally more productive when they work from home and disengaged employees are likely to work from home more often to mask the impression that they are disengaged. These employees are usually less productive when working from home and because they lose touch with their colleagues and the organization, their disengagement is likely to get worse.

Respondents agreed that no questions regarding remote working were ever included in the employee engagement survey. Some said that the ability to work from home is rolled up in

the question “At this organization employees are supported with adequate resources to help them do their work well”, which would make this an ambiguous question. They expressed these concerns because the equipment they use at home is superior to the standard issue equipment at the office and they also have higher internet speeds. Two respondents have a background in IT and they choose to work from home when working on virtual collaboration development projects, simply because the tools they use at home are more reliable than those available at work. While they are excited about being given the opportunity to work in this fashion, it also proves that this question can be interpreted in two very different ways, potentially skewing the results in favor of reality. In other words, based on the results of the survey, the company may not feel a sense of urgency in addressing the equipment matter.

Question 15: Does the amount of time employees choose to work remotely affect the level of employee engagement? This question only applies when the company indeed has a work from home or working remotely policy. It reverses the assumed relationship between working from home and employee engagement in order to examine whether working remotely affects an employee’s engagement level.

Person A shared the following answer:

Disengaged people may actually be more productive working from home. When I am disengaged and I work from home I finish the work and I feel energized. You can’t increase engagement while working at home. There is an element of belong associated with engagement and being away from everyone by definition means you are less connected. Interactions with people are key to being engaged.

Person B brought several variables into the answer by stating:

I’m not sure if it has an effect on engagement, but it definitely has an effect on satisfaction. Back in the day the manager needed to see a butt in a seat to monitor your productivity. Now people are more satisfied because not dealing with traffic, eat when they want, more focused, less distracted. That helps with their satisfaction. It doesn’t change their engagement level though. If people work from home too much then it will probably affect engagement too. Being away all the time leads to a sense of being

disconnected, and you cannot be engaged to something you're disconnected from. There is an element of belong there too, which is probably a vital aspect to engagement. There is a sweet spot for everyone. Flexibility is the big satisfying part of it.

Respondent C provided a slightly different angle:

Probably. The time spent is probably just as engaging but the actual time spent is probably less due to distractions. People are less productive in general when working from home. It does affect your engagement. If I'm not engaged, I'd probably work from home more often because no one is looking over your shoulder.

Most respondents mentioned the words “belong” or “connectedness” in their answer, arguing that in order to be engaged, one needs to have a sense of being in touch with the object of engagement, that is the company and its employees. While there is consensus about the positive effect of the work from home policy on job satisfaction, respondents generally feel that engagement cannot “grow” when working away from the company for long stretches of time. Some respondents drew comparisons to previous employers, mentioning that it depends greatly on the company culture. Companies with soft, highly social, people-oriented cultures and a “family-feel” require a higher degree of physical presence in order to develop and maintain engagement than companies that are more result-oriented and less reliant on workforce connectedness.

Question 16: Does your company measure employee engagement? If so, how? How often? This question was included to determine whether employee engagement is being measured at the respondent's company, how that is being done and at what frequency.

Five answers are highlighted here, because this question revealed valuable insights.

Participant A:

Yes. It is a Gallup survey with questions added by HR, conducted once a year for all employees. I think a lot of vital information is lost by doing this annually. Considering how quickly the company changes you could answer those questions very differently within two or three months after the survey and then you're still a long way out from the

next survey. I imagine that capturing those changes is part of the purpose of the survey in the first place.

Participant B said:

Yes. Annually. The results are reported back at team level. Annual is not the right frequency. They're encouraging leaders to behave differently in the weeks prior to the survey in order to get the highest possible scores. This does not help in terms of showing trends or identifying critical issues.

Respondent C questioned whether the annual survey actually measures engagement:

I am not sure. I know we track volunteer hours to determine our level of commitment to social responsibility. The questions in the Gallup survey are not the right ones to measure engagement, we have other ways to track that. That survey measures satisfaction with your current job, with your immediate supervisor and the overall health of the team. You get the feedback from your manager at the team level. It's not how are "you" doing as an individual but more how are "we" doing as a team relative to the rest of the company.

Person D said:

Yes, annually. It's a poor survey, really. Whether the technology is provided to do your job effectively has nothing to do with engagement. Depending on the type of role, some questions may be more or less relevant and I imagine that a lot of folks answer neutrally to the questions that do not pertain to their role. It's very generic and it requires more depth to be able to draw conclusions about engagement.

Respondent E also had doubts about what is really being measured:

They try to. They have various tools and surveys but I doubt they're really capturing engagement with any of them. The combination of those maybe. The Gallup survey is intended to measure employee engagement, but the problem with that is that it's a single point in time, you can't really capture people's feelings with a handful of questions that can be interpreted differently by a lot of people and are heavily influenced by their mood that day, work related or not.

Respondents were very skeptical and outspoken about the annual survey, sharing information well beyond the scope of the question. While this annual survey is internally branded as an engagement survey, respondents indicated that the nature of the questions is such that it would not allow drawing conclusions about engagement, but rather about the overall health of teams, departments, business units and their respective managers. Since results are

reported back at the team level, teams that score low on certain aspects will become “a blip on the radar” according to some respondents, indicating that something is wrong with a team. Because scores on the various aspects of the survey are averages, those with a high standard deviation (that is where some team members scored low and others high) will not show up as a potential area of concern and will therefore remain unaddressed. Because of these dynamics, the survey as a whole will have a tendency to reflect the status quo rather than identify areas that require attention. It also explains concerns mentioned by respondents that their voice is not being heard, because areas of weakness do not get the required attention. This is exacerbated by managers changing their behavior in the weeks prior to the survey in order to obtain favorable results. This is understandable, because the survey does contain the question: “Overall, my manager is an excellent manager,” which is the only question that ties back directly to an individual. It is in the interest of the manager to not become an outlier and the above-mentioned behavior helps accomplish that.

It was mentioned by some respondents that channels exist to provide feedback other than the annual engagement survey. One of those channels is the job satisfaction board on the company’s internal website, which allows employees to indicate on a 5-point scale how they are feeling about the job at any time and anonymously leave comments about why they feel that way. Another is the employee feedback channel, which allows employees to share their written concerns or success stories anonymously at any point in time.

Both of these result in a continuous stream of employee feedback which is being analyzed and filtered by a team in HR. The most remarkable contributions are then collected and sent to the department heads on a monthly basis for discussion. Because these do consistently lead to mitigating actions, it is the impression of respondents that this is a much more effective channel

to let their voice be heard, which explains in part why numerous respondents indicated going on “auto-pilot” when it comes to the annual engagement survey. While these channels are effective and appreciated, they do not contribute to the measurement of employee engagement.

Question 17: Do you feel that your company’s measurement of employee engagement is an adequate approach to measure employee engagement? Why/why not? This question was included to assess the respondent’s opinion about the methodology or tool being used to measure employee engagement and to identify whether different attitudes regarding the approach may have an effect on the results.

Respondent A: “This is a team performance survey, not an employee engagement survey.” Respondent B was also skeptical:

This is not an adequate way to measure employee engagement, it’s just a point in time measurement. Results are rolled up to the team, then to the department, then to the business unit and they lose focus and meaning along the way. Considering most people don’t trust the anonymity of the survey and they’re concerned about repercussions this is not a good instrument for employees to say something about their boss. Being acknowledged and heard is an important driver of engagement to me.

Respondent C shared many years’ worth of experience with engagement surveys by saying:

Some areas get very high scores because the engagement is so low, employees will score high so there are no consequences. Make it go away. Engaged people will likely take the survey more seriously and express their concerns, making a great leader look worse than a bad one. Surveying at a higher frequency will help solve that. If a leader is managing a team of low performers and does great things to try to address it, they may be still be thrown under the bus on the survey. Similarly, someone managing a mediocre team may be better off changing nothing to avoid low scores.

Person D:

No. Questions are formulated poorly and it is a very basic questionnaire. If you are engaged, you’re thinking of it as “how can I be better at my job?” while unengaged employees will approach it from a “What’s wrong with my job or team?” perspective and there is a big grey area where those intersect. It needs to be more personal overall.

Respondent E shared a sentiment worth noting by saying: “People who have been disappointed with how their honest feedback is not being addressed are no longer interested in filling out the survey accurately. No complaints, no consequences, back to work.” Person F had an opinion about the questions on the survey:

The tool is fine but the questions can sometimes leave you scratching your head thinking what they are really asking here. Most of the questions are vague and too broad. I imagine that answers are different because people interpret questions differently.

Respondent G argued that

the data are not driving the decisions. Often you don’t hear about the results, not even when they asked about top 5 pain points. It just rolls up and disappears. I sometimes wonder if bad news is being shoved under the rug.

Lastly, participant H questions the purpose of the annual survey:

There is too much room for misinterpretation and mistranslation of the questions in order to get a usable, meaningful response. The survey is inadequate to accurately depict engagement. Conducting a standardized test in order to benchmark is fine, but that means that the survey has a purpose other than measuring engagement and improve things.

As mentioned in the analysis of Question 1, nine out of 11 respondents mentioned the words mission, objectives, and purpose in their answers which suggests that the majority of respondents ties employee engagement to the company or the enterprise and not to the job or role they have in it. The only question in the survey related to any of the aforementioned terms is “Working at this organization gives me purpose,” a question that respondents in this study interpreted in two different ways: “The organization gives me a job that has purpose” and “This organization makes me feel that I do meaningful work.” Neither of these interpretations tie directly to a higher purpose such as a mission or a set of corporate objectives. This explains why respondents feel that the questions typically included in the engagement survey are too job-related, as opposed to company related.

Respondents were significantly more outspoken with their answer to this question than to the previous one and it yielded some profound insights. The body language displayed by some respondents is also worth mentioning, as well as the heightened emotional charge in the responses. Across the board there are few respondents who believe that the annual engagement survey actually measures employee engagement or constitutes a vehicle to get their voice heard, resulting in a fair degree of uninterested participation in the survey. Participation is not mandatory but the campaign to get to 100% is so intense that it gets even the least interested employees to complete the survey. While some respondents feel that this approach to drive participation is too aggressive, it prevents the survey from becoming optional and that is a good practice to avoid bias in research.

Question 18: If you could change the way employee engagement is measured at your company, what would be the one thing you would change? Why? This question was included to surface specific examples of where the methodology used to measure employee engagement falls short according to the respondent. It also aims to identify expectations of respondents regarding the questions being asked and potentially, opportunities to improve or actualize the survey.

Person A:

It is supposed to be anonymous, but there is a lot of uncertainty about that. A manager sees the rollup of the team member and a director sees the rollup of all the managers. I think no one gets to see an individual's score. I would probably increase the frequency and also change some of the questions to make the survey as a whole more actionable. The follow up actions dry up after a couple of months. It's like coming to San Antonio in September and then leave, making you think that it always rains in San Antonio. Meaning, can you really say anything for certain about the weather throughout the year if you've been there only for a little while?

Person B made a number of impactful statements in his answer by saying:

There was no question on executive leadership this time around. Why? Maybe they didn't want to know. Afraid of the answer? Downward trend? You can't just change questions if you're after a historical perspective and trend analysis. You're supposed to keep that

consistent. I don't get much value from it and I don't think the company does either. Ambiguous questions, different interpretations, rollups, aggregation... how can you possibly make any decisions based on the outcome? There are also a lot of yes/no questions that offer answers on a 5-point scale. How do you deal with the 2s and the 4s in that case, how are they interpreted? I feel that people go on autopilot. I usually answer close to the middle, rarely on the extremes. Less tenured people will probably express their feelings more strongly, tenured people probably rock the boat a bit less. This skews the results too.

Respondent C is clearly tenured and wonders about the relevance of the survey:

It's been consistent for 20 years now and it has lost its relevance to modern workplaces of this day and age. It needs to be more frequent and the results need to be processed much faster. By the time we get to put together an action plan we've forgotten where the focus should be. Then the action plan lives for a few weeks and then we just move on. Assumptions that it makes are very general and with the delay in response it's just a faulty mechanism. The frequency would depend on the kind of questions. Technology questions have a shorter lifespan than questions regarding morale or remuneration.

Person D had similar reservations:

I actually go through that survey really fast. I don't feel like I take it that seriously anymore because I've seen those same questions over and over again. Is that a problem? Probably. I'm not as introspective as I should be about the responses.

Respondent E questioned the accuracy of the survey:

Questions on this survey stay the same year over year, and how we respond to the results stays the same year over year. Hey look, these responses were low, let's see how we can fix that as a team. Now we're being punished for results being low so you're conditioning people to give a change aversion response to the survey, give all 5's to avoid homework. That is the environment that is being created and managed by managers.

Participant F: "Engagement varies from day to day, so measuring annually doesn't really produce reliable results. More and better formulated questions along with a higher frequency would improve the results." Respondent G shared ideas to improve the survey:

Adjust the survey so that it surfaces true results and shows what is really bothering people, that will help get rid of the current "check the box" attitude. Take it seriously, review results and drive action based on feedback. And monitor the results of those actions so that they don't just go away after a while.

Respondent H worries about the level of anonymity of the survey:

This survey is not anonymous. People are afraid to be candid. Anonymity is important to get true feedback or results. In fact, when I took your survey, I felt more comfortable being honest and outspoken than I did when I was completing the real thing.

Person I made similar suggestions for improvement:

I would change the way it is measured. I wouldn't make it an annual event. Smaller. Pulse check. More frequently. Low engagement can be very expensive. Identify red flags and help those teams out specifically instead of this generic, companywide approach. Sometimes I wonder what the ultimate purpose is of these surveys. Is it to measure productivity? Morale? Support HR decisions?

Interviewee J was concerned about the actions that follow from the survey, stating:

Yes. When people are happy, they'll be better at their job and more productive. Not the way it is done here though. It passes managers, it passes employees and broad-brush solutions are being implemented that hardly address the real problems. Solving engagement issues from the top down doesn't work. It gets diluted.

Respondent K suggested a different frequency to improve accuracy:

Results are assessed at the team level. If there were a way for managers and leaders to figure out the drivers of engagement, then they can raise a flag and ask for help to improve engagement levels. Once a week, every other month would be a better frequency.

The changes proposed here are in line with the issues laid bare by the respondents in the previous question and it paints a grim picture. In general and regardless whether this is an engagement survey or not, respondents feel that the questions on the survey are too generic, that the results are aggregated too much and that the frequency of the survey is such that it provides a snapshot rather than shed light on what is really going on in the company. There appears to be little excitement and faith associated with the annual survey and the lack of interest expressed by the respondents is obvious. Managers behave differently in the weeks prior to the survey and employees are conditioned to provide favorable results to make the results look good, thus avoiding homework in terms of mitigating actions. Any corrective actions typically go away

after a few weeks because managers are not held accountable for change and respondents are not bought in to the survey results in the first place.

Most respondents are uncertain about the anonymity of the survey and admitted that they were deliberately conservative in their answers, sparingly checking the “Strongly Agree” option and avoiding the “strongly disagree” answer altogether. One respondent said she felt more comfortable being fully honest when completing the survey provided in this study than the actual annual survey. If this were true for other participants of the quantitative survey as well, it may explain in part why the survey outcome in this study ranks just above average when compared to the external industry benchmark, while the actual annual survey results for this particular company have consistently ended up high in the upper quartile of the financial services industry.

One of the respondents made an interesting comment about the lifespan of a question, saying that technology related questions have a shorter lifespan (that is increased fluctuation in responses) than questions related to morale or remuneration. Considering that the majority of respondents felt the frequency of the survey needed to be increased and that the questions need to change from time to time to force people to think before answering, conducting two surveys per year with different questions may be an interesting improvement opportunity to increase active participation, collect more data and improve the reliability of the results.

Question 19: If you had the power to choose how to improve productivity, how much effort would you invest in increasing employee engagement, if any? Please elaborate. This question was included to determine whether respondents think employee engagement is a strong driver of productivity relative to other factors that may drive productivity. In addition, it is expected to reveal how respondents define productivity, what drives productivity and to help identify whether an employee is intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to be productive.

Person A would not invest in engagement: “I think that investing in technology, tools, process improvements, training, knowledge, learning and development has a much bigger effect on productivity. People feel heard, valued and enabled that way and I’m sure that will boost both motivation and productivity.” Person B was of a similar opinion, saying: “I would only invest in improving engagement if there were serious red flags, otherwise I would put the money in technology and make people’s lives easier that way.” As was Person C: “If engagement were already high, I would not invest in improving engagement. If I invested in technology and tools to help people grow, I may actually see bigger leaps in engagement.” Person D on the other hand did see the advantage of investing in engagement to improve productivity, among other aspects of the job:

I would spend it on engagement. Reduce turnover, increase morale, increase output... Create a domino effect. Focus on keeping engagement levels high is probably more effective than, for example, an increase in pay. People not coming to work because they don’t see the point of their job is far more costly.

Person E shared that notion: “You should always invest in engagement. Always try to identify what drives engagement and find ways to take it to the next level.” Person F also shared that notion:

Yes. Definitely. It will help people make the extra effort. The difference will probably be visible in the quality of the work rather than output. The actual output may stay the same but if people go the extra mile, they’ll put more effort in making it really good instead of just good enough.

Person G contemplated the longevity of an investment in engagement, arguing:

Engagement is a driver of productivity. A pay increase probably has an effect on the short run but it wears off much faster. I’d probably invest in making people understand our mission and purpose and how their work matters to accomplish that and then engagement will follow.

As can be read in the examples above, this question yielded opposing answers. Half of the respondents believe that an engaged workforce is key to superior productivity, while the

other half prefers to invest in the development of that workforce and the tools used to perform the work. Some respondents in the last group argue that engagement will likely increase as a result of providing workers with adequate tools to do the work efficiently and opportunities to develop their skills and expertise. The quantitative research conducted in this study supports this notion: 30 out of 110 surveyed employees feel that the tools and equipment provided by the company are inadequate and the 10% of employees scoring lowest in terms of engagement are all included in this group. Out of the 30 employees that scored top marks on the adequacy of tools and equipment, not a single one scored below the average of 110 observations in terms of engagement. These results indicate a strong correlation between the adequacy of tools and engagement score.

Question 20: Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the topics discussed in this interview? This question was included for respondents to share any thoughts, ideas or opinions that have not yet been discussed in this interview. Anything is allowed as long as it is relevant for this study. Insights shared here are assessed to determine if they were present prior to the interview or if they were triggered by the questions in the interview.

Participant A said:

I am engaged but less engaged now than when I joined. Other aspirations have drawn me away from day to day work. My ideal state is entrepreneur and the next best option is a stable job that I'm good at with people that I like. I love where I am but I am looking more and more to that other track. This has a disengaging effect.

Person B proposed a correlation with a different variable:

I think that the correlation between productivity and corporate culture is much stronger than between engagement or satisfaction and productivity. In fact, engagement and satisfaction are greatly determined by culture, which is why recruiters are so keen to make sure a new hire is a good cultural fit. The annual survey does not include a single question related to culture. I've seen many cultures in many companies and culture is always the main driver. My previous employer is known for its performance-oriented

culture and productivity and overall pace is much higher there than it is here, without making sacrifices in job satisfaction or engagement levels.

Respondent C felt that the survey needs to change along with changes in the work environment:

Expectations of employees change, mentality too. Establishing an engaged workforce requires an approach that adapts to those trends. Back in the day you needed to stay busy but that's not enough anymore. Purpose and meaning are guiding principles now and one is expected to challenge tasks before executing them. The engagement survey that we've used in the past years is not being adjusted to accommodate these trends. Also, a single engagement study may not work in a highly diversified workforce. Labor norms and values are very different depending on the circumstances you grew up in. Customized surveys may reveal better insights, depending on the purpose of the survey.

Person D offered a noteworthy insight:

I find that at this company, disengaged employees drop their work altogether. At other companies disengaged employees still get a decent amount of work done. I think this has to do with the limited responsibilities here, making almost everyone expendable. If you don't deliver, someone else will.

Person E: "I appreciate the intent of the survey but we probably need to dig a lot deeper to get a good understanding of both satisfaction and engagement at this company." Respondent F

provided a number of profound insights by stating,

engagement is a very personal thing. You have to truly know the individual to know what engages them or disengages them. We say that we want people to speak up and share their opinions, but I think in reality we really don't. A lot of people feel misunderstood or unhappy because they're not being heard. Others are just happy that their opinion is being asked for from time to time, regardless whether anything happens with it. It's up to management and leadership to understand the individual and make sure they ask the right questions. Some people really don't care what happens with the answer and they just fill out the survey as quickly as they can so they can go on with their lives. Others may be very interested to know what happens to the answers. Consider this example: person A wants his opinion to be heard and acted upon. Person B doesn't care. They both get to answer the question "My ideas and opinions are appreciated by this organization" on a 5-point scale. How do you think person A and B answer that? Person A probably gives an unfavorable score because he wants things to improve. Person B probably scores this neutral or slightly favorable because he doesn't want things to change. How does the analyst interpret those results? And what is the conclusion that goes to the board? And what do they do with it? It's a broken system." Lastly, person G highlight another missing element in the survey: "Inclusion is a big deal here and I'm pretty sure it affects engagement in one way or another. The company has these little communities and you have to have things in common with its members in order to become part of those

communities. Some people just do not fit in anywhere through no fault of their own and they become disengaged because they don't get to be part of those communities like everybody else. They feel left out. There is no question in the annual survey about that.

While this question was primarily included as a courtesy, it revealed profound thoughts and feelings about the way the company deals with employee engagement that had not been mentioned before in this interview. Most respondents answered this question from a highly personal point of view, bringing in experiences they have had with previous employers or sharing thoughts and emotions that are difficult in terms of finding the right audience. The majority of responses are included in full above because they contain high quality insights that may help explain some of the results of the quantitative research.

One respondent said that her engagement level has gradually dropped over the years, but not due to external factors or lack of motivation from within. She had been looking for a career change for some time and felt that her engagement to the company suffered from it. The quantitative research shows that 56 out of 110 respondents are actively or passively for a different job and exactly half of them rank above average in terms of engagement. Twelve of them are in the upper quartile in terms of engagement score, meaning that despite a very high level of engagement, employees are still considering pursuing career opportunities elsewhere. This phenomenon needs to be taken into account when analyzing the results of an engagement survey, in the sense that high engagement scores do not imply a loyal workforce. Engagement does not equate loyalty and no conclusions about the "stickiness" of talent should be drawn based on structured engagement surveys. This is another example where qualitative research explains a noteworthy outcome of quantitative research performed, and companies should consider doing the same in order to obtain the deep insights required to make decisions in the field of human resources. In summary, an engagement survey alone is not enough to draw

reliable conclusions about the loyalty of employees and additional research is required to enable a company to do so.

In the conversation about engagement, satisfaction, loyalty and productivity, several respondents produced another variable they felt was part of the equation: corporate culture. They distinguished between soft, people-oriented cultures and result-driven performance cultures, indicating that the differences in productivity are substantial. Disengaged employees at a performance-oriented company will generally still put out a fair amount of work, while disengaged employees in soft-cultured companies will “drop the work altogether”. It leads to conclude that the range of productivity differs between companies and that benchmarking engagement against the industry does not lead to meaningful insights regarding the productivity ratio between industry peers. For example, a highly engaged employee at one company may be less productive than a slightly engaged employee at another company. Most structured engagement surveys do not include questions regarding the nature of the culture in a company and based on the insights found here, adding such a question is likely to help combat the effects of omitted variable bias in an employee engagement survey.

As companies become more diverse and change at an increasingly rapid pace due to accelerating technological advancements, engagement studies need to evolve with it. A few highly tenured respondents said that the changes they have seen in the engagement survey have been marginal during the ten years since it was first introduced and yet the company has changed fundamentally in terms of communication, leadership, collaboration, facilities, relationships, conduct, success measures, objectives, accounting, and so on. These changes are hardly reflected in the survey questions and many respondents feel that it has lost its relevance because of it.

One change that was noticed by a handful of respondents is that the question “Overall, I have faith in executive leadership and the direction it sets for the company” is no longer included in the survey. Respondents indicate that they are not happy about it and that they find it difficult to suppress negative thoughts or speculation about the reasons why. One respondent said that especially in times of turmoil and increased competition, employees need to be able to follow their leaders without hesitation and the removal of this question signals lack of connectedness and accountability, which in turn has a disengaging effect on employees. The quantitative research performed in this study did have a question about executive leadership (“Overall, executive leaders at the head office are excellent leaders”) and 53% of respondents did not answer favorably.

One of the respondents proposed the element of “inclusion” as a potential driver of engagement. His company has a great number of employee communities of all sorts and interests and they are quite active and involving. Being part of such a community helps people feel that they are part of something and that they fit in, which has a positive effect on engagement. Similarly, not being part of such a community may lead people to feel less connected to their colleagues and their work environment, resulting in a negative effect on engagement. Employees may not be able to find the right community that matches their interests or maybe they are simply not the type of person to join a community in the first place. It is imperative that engagement-focused companies run a proactive inclusion program to prevent such employees from becoming disengaged and take into account the effects of exclusion in their employee engagement surveys.

Summary

This concludes the analysis stage of this study with highly satisfactory results. The data that were collected by means of primary research, as well as the secondary data that were obtained from external sources were of high quality in terms of volume, completeness, and usefulness, and left little to be desired. Plenty of data points and analyses opportunities were available to get the most out of this study and at no point in time was there any regret about not having a particular data point available, or not being able to run a particular type of analysis which may have left questions unanswered or relevant topics uncovered. Opportunities to expand and deepen with the use of additional data points do exist and they will be covered in the “Recommendations for Future Research” section in the next and final chapter. I selected a handful of quantitative and qualitative analyses that were relevant for this study in order to be able to confidently test the hypotheses and to answer the central research question, but many more analyses opportunities remain that have been left out of the scope of this research. They too will be discussed in the next chapter.

The quantitative analysis by itself confirmed and challenged a number of preconceived notions and it revealed exciting, unanticipated results. The secondary data set subsequently put these findings in a different perspective and the qualitative analysis effectively deepened the level of understanding on those topics, shedding light on underlying factors at play and helping to explain the origin or nature of these findings. In fact, the results of both stages of research challenged the assumptions derived from literature that served as the foundation for the theoretical framework in this study and it is exciting when that happens. In addition, it inspired thoughts about an entirely new approach to measuring employee engagement, along with new data collection methods and analysis techniques. This too will be included in the next chapter.

Chapter V: Conclusion and Recommendations

Discussion

Interpretation of results. The research stages of research conducted in this study are complete and the analysis of the results created a rich set of insights. The secondary data set managed to put the primary quantitative research results into perspective and the primary qualitative research added depth and meaning to the combined results. As anticipated, some of the theories drawn from literature were confirmed while others were challenged and it is comforting that the results from the different stages of research are consistent with each other, meaning that results found in one stage were never conflicting with the results from another. The surveys yielded a number of unanticipated results and the qualitative research confirmed many of them, which adds both credibility and confidence to the conclusions.

It is remarkable that the engagement scores measured in this study are 10% to 20% higher than those measured in the participating companies in the same timeframe and it is important to consider how this outcome needs to be interpreted. One of the respondents in the qualitative research mentioned that she felt more comfortable completing the survey in this study and that she spent more time thinking about her answers, despite the fact that the survey was largely identical to the actual survey conducted at her company. Without resorting to speculation and generalization, it appears that respondents were more comfortable with this “unofficial” version of the engagement survey than the one issued by the company on an annual basis and less concerned about repercussions or mitigating actions as a result of their answers. The lower overall engagement score could then be interpreted as a more honest one, simply because respondents were less constrained by the possible implications of completing the survey.

Research question. The core research question of this study is: “What are the significant drivers of employee engagement in a firm and how do they impact employee productivity?”

According to this study, the principal determinants of employee engagement are:

- Having a heightened emotional connection to the organization and its purpose;
- Understanding how the job contributes to that purpose;
- Getting a genuine sense of achievement working for the organization;
- Feeling proud about working for the organization;
- The feeling of being cared for and treated fairly.

These drivers impact productivity indirectly. It is the conclusion of this study that the level of productivity of an employee is a more complicated variable than employee engagement in the sense that employee engagement is one of three determinants of productivity. The other two determinants of productivity are job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation and both of these have their own set of determinants, which makes productivity a highly complex variable to measure and influence. The key drivers of engagement do indeed influence productivity through employee engagement, but if due to other factors the engagement level of an employee is low, the relative contribution of employee engagement to productivity is marginal and therefore also the influence of the key drivers of engagement. This is explained in more detail in the section Recommendations for Future Research.

The following primary hypothesis supports the data collection to answer the core research question: An employee is more productive when both job-related factors (such as work environment and remuneration) and employee specific factors (such as ambition and tenure) are rated highly by the employee.

This hypothesis is confirmed. As mentioned above, employee engagement is also part of that equation but because the effect of job satisfaction on productivity is greater than the effect of engagement on productivity, productivity will still be higher if the employee is satisfied with the job, especially if the intrinsic motivation (employee specific factors) is rated highly as well. Alternative hypotheses that are tested or resolved through researching available literature, data, and methods:

1. The drivers of employee engagement differ depending on the employee's cultural background, career level, ambition level, family situation, and financial situation (financial management/behavior relative to lifestyle).

This hypothesis is rejected, but that is largely due to semantics. Separate hypotheses should ideally have been formulated for each of the aspects above in order to arrive at conclusive test results. It is likely that family situation, financial situation and cultural background lead employees to have a different set of engagement drivers, but this study did not collect sufficient data to support those hypotheses and therefore they need to be rejected. The hypothesis that the drivers of engagement are different by rank or career level is confirmed on the basis of the primary quantitative research results. The qualitative research in this study revealed that intrinsic motivation, which is closely related to ambition level, is a strong determinant of productivity, but that has not been researched quantitatively in this study and the hypothesis that ambition level leads to a different set of engagement drivers can therefore not be confirmed.

2. The drivers of employee engagement change as industries, organizational structures and workplace practices evolve with time.

This hypothesis is corroborated by both the quantitative and qualitative research conducted in this study and it was confirmed by both professional employee engagement

research firms, stating that the element of *purpose* (of the organization, the job itself and even at the task level) has become a principal determinant of engagement in the past years, while this was hardly a factor of note a decade ago. The uptrend of Social Responsibility among employees puts pressure on organizations to become more proactive and transparent as to their contributions to the common good.

3. The levels of employee engagement directly impact the employee's productivity.

This hypothesis is also confirmed. Both the quantitative and qualitative research performed in this study confirm that employee engagement is a driver of productivity. However, the research also showed that employee engagement is not the only driver of productivity, but that job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation have a strong positive correlation to productivity as well. A highly engaged employee can therefore still be very unproductive in the situation where he or she is very unsatisfied with the job and has no drive from within to perform.

Justification of approach. This study was set up according to the design principles of a sequential explanatory mixed-methods study, in which the results from the quantitative research are being analyzed side-by-side with the secondary data foundation in order to surface themes worth exploring; and subsequently explain those noteworthy finds using qualitative methods. The design of this method turned out to be a remarkably good fit with employee engagement research and the execution of it was therefore straightforward, without significant issues. The added value of the secondary data and the qualitative research is substantial.

When conducting research according to this method, it is important to pay special attention to the integrity and logistics of the findings when conducting research across multiple companies at once. Since the results of the quantitative stage determine the questions being asked in the qualitative stage, data must be managed carefully to make sure that interviewees

understand and recognize the results of the survey. In other words, because of contextual differences in each of the participating companies, interview questions need to be tailored by company on the basis of company-specific survey outcomes.

Limitations. While significant efforts have been made to overcome limitations as much as possible and complete this study with satisfying results, it was not conducted without limitations. In the event of future research, knowing the limitations of this particular study in advance will help shape the work and the direction in the early stages of the study.

This research had a strong focus on relationships between variables and a higher sample size is needed to establish critical correlations between variables for statistical significance. Since the mixed-methods approach used in this study requires interviews, additional capacity in terms of time or people is recommended. The research in this study was performed by a single researcher and both the quantitative and qualitative research would have benefited from another two or three co-researchers in order to increase reach and sample size and therefore improve significance.

Because the research involved only a limited number of companies based in the same city, geographic differences could not be examined. In addition, all participating companies were financial services institutions which is fine if this is the scope of the study, but in order to get to generalizable results it is imperative to perform the research at scale across industries and sectors.

A reliable secondary data foundation is hard to obtain, and it is recommended to start there if the sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach is chosen for future research. In this case the data foundations were relevant because in my first-hand experience, the corporate culture of financial institutions in Western Europe and in South Africa are not significantly

different from those based in the US, but it still complicates generalization or substantiating conclusions within the scope of the study.

Findings in context of literature. Some of the findings in this study were expected, as they confirm the conclusions found in established literature on the topic of employee engagement. Other findings were unexpected in the sense that they have not yet been documented or that they challenge existing literature outright. The idea that Kano's model of customer satisfaction also applies to employee satisfaction falls in this last category which is unfortunate, because it was used as the basis of the theoretical framework for this study. The two paragraphs below are included from the literature review:

Kano's model of customer satisfaction also applies to employee satisfaction. According to Matzler et al. (2004), measuring employee engagement can be approached with the use of basic factors (dissatisfiers), excitement factors (satisfiers) and performance factors (hybrid). Customers can be perfectly happy with the services provided by a company as long as there are no dissatisfiers, even if there are no excitement factors. In that case, the company just does what it is supposed to do according to the consumer of the service, its performance is being perceived as adequate and the relationship continues.

According to Reichheld (2003) satisfaction turns into engagement or loyalty if the company's performance is such that it exceeds the customer's expectation significantly and gets rewarded with a 9 or a 10 on a NPS survey. In the event of a dissatisfier however, the nature and gravity of the dissatisfier determines how many satisfiers are required to offset the perceived notion of inadequate service performance. Applying Kano's model to employees, Matzler et al. (2004) argue that the level of satisfaction of an employee about the job or the employer is determined in a similar fashion.

The theory of Matzler et al. (2004) mentioned above is being challenged in this study. The research in this study revealed that employee engagement, job satisfaction and productivity are highly complicated variables that are being predicted by a vast number of independent variables. To avoid misinterpretation of survey results it is imperative that the relationships between these variables are understood and that predictor variables are tied to the right independent variable. The finding that engagement happens both at the job level and at the company level immediately disqualifies the theory of Matzler et al. (2004) that Kano's model is applicable to employees in the same way it is applied to customers, because customers do not have a vested interest in dealing with a merchant as they do with their employer. For most employees their jobs are the key sustainer of their lives and loved ones, which introduces variables that are simply not part of the equation in a customer-merchant relationship. The dissatisfier, satisfier, and performance elements in Kano's model does apply to job satisfaction by itself, but falls short to serve as a framework to examine the complex system in which employee engagement, productivity and intrinsic motivation also play a part of significance. This is explained in more detail in the section Recommendations for Future Research and Practitioners later on in this chapter.

Conclusions

This section includes the key conclusions drawn from the research in this study and it is not exhaustive by any means. Other conclusions may be drawn from the research results included in this document.

Conclusions from qualitative research. Employees struggle to define employee engagement, but a key aspect of employee engagement is a heightened emotional connection to the organization, its purpose, its mission, and its objectives. Employee engagement is generally

not associated with the job or role itself. Employees struggle to articulate the difference and the relationship between employee engagement and job satisfaction. Being both highly engaged and dissatisfied with the job is not considered unusual but being disengaged and highly satisfied with the job is considered unlikely. To highly engaged people, the overall wellbeing of the company is more important than their satisfaction with the job.

Engagement survey results suffer from bias because employees do not trust the survey to be anonymous. As a result, they answer with caution and avoid the answer options at either end of the scale, as well as the free format question. In addition, they experience pressure from leadership, management, peers and internal communications to answer questions favorably.

Questions are formulated ambiguously and are interpreted in different ways. Managers behave differently in the weeks leading up to the engagement survey in order to get favorable scores from their teams. Red flags found in the survey result in mitigating actions at the team level and answering unfavorably is therefore not in the interest of team members.

Questions are not equally relevant to all employees and concerns expressed by a minority of the workforce get lost in aggregation. Pressure from peers, managers, leadership and internal communications leads even the least interested employees to participate. Other employee feedback channels are more effective, leading to employees going on autopilot when completing the engagement survey.

Survey results are likely to be misinterpreted because some questions are poorly formulated and are therefore susceptible to misinterpretation. Central tendency is caused by a lack of anonymity and the general desire to maintain the status quo. Teams do not raise concerns in order to avoid mitigating actions. Concerns of smaller/specialty groups are being masked by

the majority of respondents. While binary (yes/no) questions do not offer a five-point scale (Likert) answer options, they reflect the past months more accurately than the past year.

Three key factors determine whether an employee is willing to put in extra work, even at times they do not feel engaged: a thorough understanding of the purpose of the work in relation to the company's objectives, and consistent acknowledgement and genuine appreciation for the extra effort made. The correlation between age and engagement is weak. This is explained by the role of the job in an employee's life, rank and his or her ambition level.

The pace of change at modern day companies is such that surveys conducted annually no longer capture significant fluctuations in employee engagement levels. The frequency of these fluctuations is increasing along with technological advancements in the workplace. At the highest level of aggregation, engagement level fluctuations do not follow a seasonal pattern. Instead, they are triggered by key events and developments in the company that randomly occur throughout the year (such as reorganizations, acquisitions, or having a new CEO, among others). Recurring, business related events, such as tax season or elections for instance, affect engagement differently depending on the business unit and the level of impact the event has on that business unit.

Job satisfaction is a stronger determinant of productivity than employee engagement. Employees who are both engaged *and* intrinsically motivated to perform can stay for a very long time in a job they do not like. While these employees tend to be highly disciplined and productive, they also skew the results of traditional engagement and satisfaction surveys. Because 21% of the surveyed population fits this "outlier" profile, measures to identify it in surveys are recommended.

The most productive employees are those who get a high sense of achievement from their work (intrinsic reward) and feel that their extra effort is being acknowledged by their direct leader(s) (extrinsic reward). A leadership style that fosters and nurtures these rewards is a strong driver of superior performance, regardless of an employee's level of engagement or job satisfaction. Satisfied employees are more likely to be engaged, but satisfaction in the job does not unequivocally imply a high level of engagement.

Working remotely is an important element of “the new way of working” and it affects engagement levels in a complex fashion. More than half of the employees in this survey work from home several times each month. Of all engagement surveys examined in this study, none included specific questions about working remotely. Engaged employees with healthy onsite work circumstances are usually more productive when they work from home. Disengaged employees are generally less productive when they work from home, tend to work from home more often to mask the impression that they are disengaged, and become more disengaged as they work remotely more often, because they lose touch with their colleagues and the organization. In highly social, employee focused organizations, engagement cannot grow when working remotely, regardless of the engagement level of the employee. The main reason being that the elements of connectedness, belonging, and inclusion are not being nurtured. The freedom to work from home has a strong positive effect on job satisfaction.

Thus, this study finds that the principal determinants of employee engagement are as listed below:

- Having a heightened emotional connection to the organization and its purpose
- Understanding how the job contributes to that purpose
- Getting a genuine sense of achievement working for the organization

- Feeling proud about working for the organization
- The feeling of being cared for and treated fairly

On the other hand, the principal determinants of productivity can be identified as follows:

- Employee engagement
 - A heightened emotional connection to the organization and its purpose
 - Understanding how the job contributes to that purpose
- Job satisfaction
 - Adequate tools and equipment to do the work
 - Recognition of extra effort or superior performance
- An intrinsic motivation to perform and succeed

Younger employees appear to be less engaged than older employees on average and the standard deviation of engagement scores is significantly higher with younger employees than with older ones. Tenured employees appear to be more engaged than non-tenured employees. Even the most engaged employees indicate they are not willing to go the extra mile when they do not feel engaged. It is important to emphasize that a high engagement level with the company does not imply a high level of job satisfaction and vice versa. Employees that are engaged to the company appear to be less productive than those who are highly satisfied with the job.

Employee engagement fluctuates faster than can be measured with annual or bi-annual surveys. The ideal frequency for employee engagement surveys is three or four times per year, depending on the overall pace of change in the company. Employees indicate they go on autopilot if surveys are largely the same year over year (muscle memory). In addition, subjects indicate they do not use free format options for fear of traceability

Conclusions from quantitative research. In this study, men score 11% higher on overall engagement than women. Employees aged between 45 and 54 score highest on overall engagement, with a score that is 12% above average. Within this group, junior and non-management employees consistently show the highest levels of engagement. Employees with a tenure between 11 to 15 years score significantly higher than any other group on overall engagement. 24 out of 110 respondents are in this tenure range and 58% of them score in the upper quartile.

47% of highly engaged employees indicate they are not willing to go the extra mile at times they do not feel engaged. Regardless of their level of satisfaction with the job, highly engaged employees are more willing to put in extra effort at times when they do not feel engaged it than disengaged employees with high job satisfaction. 61% of respondents get a high sense of achievement from their work and feel that the organization is acknowledging their extra effort. 16% of those employees are disengaged and highly positive about the leadership style of their direct supervisor. Employees who have a high level of engagement to the company tend to be less productive than those who are highly engaged to the job.

Thirty of 110 surveyed employees feel that the tools and equipment provided by the company are inadequate and the 10% of employees scoring lowest in terms of engagement are all included in this group. Out of the 30 employees that scored top marks on the adequacy of tools and equipment, not even one scored below the average of 110 observations in terms of engagement. These results indicate a relatively strong correlation between the adequacy of tools and engagement score.

Engagement is an emotional affair and quantitative tools fail to capture essential details. Conducting qualitative research to explain results from quantitative research adds meaning,

depth and understanding. Structured surveys alone do not provide a reliable foundation for investment decisions.

Employee engagement is not a reliable indicator of productivity or loyalty. In fact, job satisfaction is a better indicator of productivity than engagement. The strongest predictors of employees looking for jobs outside of the company, regardless of their engagement level, are dissatisfaction with development opportunities, their manager, and their daily duties. 20% of all respondents indicated they were actively looking for a new job and 27% of those are highly engaged. Low-tenured employees tend to score the perceived quality of executives based on the leadership strength of their previous employer(s). 100% of interview respondents said their engagement levels fluctuate faster than once or twice a year (survey frequency). 73% of interview respondents admitted to “autopilot” behavior on EE surveys for lack of variation

Recommendations for Future Research and Practitioners

Understanding the relationships and correlation strengths between variables is at the heart of this study. To draw conclusions with a high level of confidence, a large sample size is required for both the quantitative and the qualitative research. The ratio between the number of participants in the research stages was about 10:1 in favor of the quantitative research and in this study, that felt right because saturation started showing after about 10 interviews. Should this study be repeated at a larger scale, then extra capacity may be required to uphold that ratio. In terms of time and labor, the qualitative stage is more intensive than the quantitative one and it is recommended to allocate enough capacity to it in order to make this study scalable. When running a study in this format at a company, the costs of those resources need to be managed carefully and it is likely that the budget for it will be limited. In summary, in future research it is recommended to find a cost-effective way to create scale.

The “autopilot” effect in quantitative surveys was mentioned a few times in this study and there is no debate about the impact on the reliability of the results when this is occurring at a large scale. Several techniques have been proposed in the conclusion section to combat this phenomenon and another one to consider is longitudinal research at the individual level. Conducting different surveys throughout the year will make surveys more interesting for participants and certainly help reduce the autopilot effect, but longitudinal research per employee would enable the creation of personalized response profiles. As these profiles “learn” and become more accurate over time, individual behaviors in terms of central tendency, risk avoidance, seasonal effects and all sorts of bias that may be in effect can be factored in to normalize the results across the sample. This practice is common in the fields of Customer Relationship Management, behavioral economics and retail-oriented Artificial Intelligence and would certainly take employee research to the next level if applied there.

The main recommendation for future research from this study is to use a different theoretical framework to further examine the relationship between key variables associated with engagement and productivity. This study found that productivity is an extraordinarily complex dependent variable with a significant number of determinants. While job satisfaction is related to employee engagement, they are not the same and the former turns out to be a stronger indicator of productivity than the latter. A third factor affecting productivity is intrinsic motivation, which can be defined as an employee’s drive to perform and succeed irrespective of external factors such as the level of engagement to the company or the level of satisfaction about the job or role. This intrinsic motivation is in itself a dependent variable, explained by highly personal characteristics such as (cultural) values, work ethic and the role of the job in a person’s life. Employees who consistently spend what they earn are highly dependent on their job in order to

sustain themselves and their families and so they are less likely to jeopardize a steady job even if they do not have an emotional connection to the company or if they are dissatisfied with their job. Instead, they make sure that they perform as expected by keeping productivity in terms of quality and quantity at a consistently high level.

No literature has been found that recommends including this element in employee engagement surveys, because it is accepted that employee engagement and/or job satisfaction are stronger drivers of productivity. Intrinsic motivation as a key driver of productivity is truly relevant in pyramid-shaped companies with the majority of employees in the lowest-earning positions. Financial services institutions with a substantial customer-facing workforce fit that description and overlooking this variable will dramatically skew the results of employee engagement surveys conducted at such companies.

The framework illustrated on the next page is the result of work performed during the analysis stage of this study, when Structural Equation Modeling was examined as a technique to determine correlation strength between the variables included in the theoretical framework. Because this framework was abandoned (as described in the Conclusions in the context of Literature section), I resorted to Spearman's test to study the relationships between variables that had been identified as significant in the quantitative research. The results from the research involving the Attraction, Activation, and Engagement Indices led to the conclusion that half of the variables measured in a traditional employee engagement survey are in fact tied to job satisfaction. The results of that analysis are shown in Table 12.

Table 12

Association Between Independent and Dependent Variables

Variable Name	Survey Question	Dependent variable
attachment	I feel a strong personal attachment to this organization	Engagement
proud	Working for this organization makes me feel proud	Engagement
passion	I am passionate about my role within this organization	Satisfaction
purpose	Working at this organization gives me purpose	Engagement
enjoy	Irrespective of the reasons, I look forward to coming to work here at this organization	Satisfaction
otherjob	I am already looking for another job opportunity or will start to do so soon	Engagement
fair	Overall, I feel that this organization treats its employees fairly	Engagement
care	Overall, this organization shows genuine care and concern for its employees	Engagement
trust	Overall, this organization truly trusts its employees	Engagement
resources	Employees are supported with adequate resources to help them do their work well	Satisfaction
understand	Overall, I have a good understanding of what I am supposed to be doing in my job	Satisfaction
lesswilling	At times I do not feel engaged, I am less willing put in extra effort for my work	Productivity
appreciated	Overall, ideas and suggestions from employees are appreciated by this organization	Satisfaction
achievement	Overall, I get a real sense of achievement working for this organization	Engagement
comms	Overall, information about the organization is communicated well to employees	Engagement
likeduties	Overall, I really like the duties and activities that make up my job	Satisfaction
manager	Overall, my manager is an excellent manager	Satisfaction
training	Overall, this organization provides good training and development opportunities	Satisfaction
leaders	Overall, executive leaders at head office are excellent leaders	Engagement
highquality	Overall, this organization provides me with a high-quality work environment	Satisfaction

These findings inspired the development of the framework, referred to as a Structural Equation Model Path Diagram, shown in Figure 11. The dependent or exogenous variables (rectangular shape) have been tied to the dependent or endogenous variables (oval shape) they have the strongest association with. The research revealed six additional independent variables that have a strong correlation with the dependent variables in the model and it is recommended that they be added to avoid bias due to omitted variables. This model was drawn in accordance with SEM Path Diagram guidelines and can be replicated in any statistical software that includes a SEM model builder. Should this study be repeated, it is my recommendation to do so based on this model.

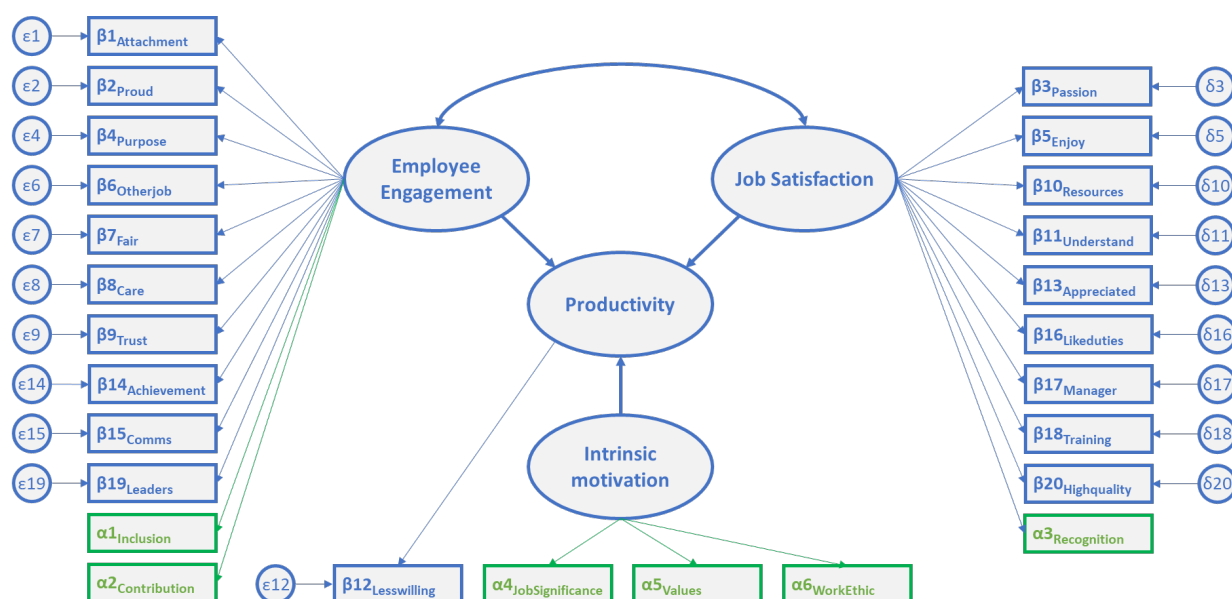


Figure 111. Structural equation model path diagram.

The research started out with a set of mathematical models (included in Chapter III) for the two dependent variables that this study set out to examine: employee engagement and productivity. As a result of the research, two additional dependent variables were introduced,

which requires the mathematical model to be updated accordingly. The new set of mathematical equations corresponding with the SEM model are as follows:

Employee Engagement:

$$Y_1 = \beta_0_1 + \beta_1_{\text{attachment}} + \beta_2_{\text{proud}} + \beta_4_{\text{purpose}} + \beta_6_{\text{otherjob}} + \beta_7_{\text{fair}} + \beta_8_{\text{care}} + \beta_9_{\text{trust}} + \beta_{14}_{\text{achievement}} + \beta_{15}_{\text{comms}} + \beta_{16}_{\text{likeduties}} + \beta_{19}_{\text{leaders}} + \alpha_1_{\text{inclusion}} + \alpha_2_{\text{contribution}} + \epsilon_1$$

Job Satisfaction:

$$Y_2 = \beta_0_2 + \beta_3_{\text{passion}} + \beta_5_{\text{enjoy}} + \beta_{10}_{\text{resources}} + \beta_{11}_{\text{understand}} + \beta_{13}_{\text{appreciated}} + \beta_{16}_{\text{likeduties}} + \beta_{17}_{\text{manager}} + \beta_{18}_{\text{training}} + \beta_{20}_{\text{highquality}} + \alpha_3 + \epsilon_2$$

Intrinsic Motivation:

$$Y_3 = \beta_0_3 + \alpha_4_{\text{jobsignificance}} + \alpha_5_{\text{values}} + \alpha_5_{\text{workethic}} + \epsilon_3$$

Employee Productivity:

$$Y_4 = \beta_0_4 + Y_1 + Y_2 + Y_3 + \beta_{12}_{\text{lesswilling}} + \epsilon_4$$

Summary

This section concludes the study and the document. In retrospect, it was a fascinating journey that started with a hunch, an extensive search through literature, the selection of the topic and the design of a research method that has hardly been employed in the context of employee engagement studies, but turned out to be a very good fit. The research itself has been both challenging and exciting and the rewards were reaped in the analysis stage with a great number of insightful conclusions and recommendations for future research and practitioners.

Employee engagement is a highly emotional affair which cannot be captured and fully understood on the basis of a structured survey and it is my opinion that the mixed-method research design is the way forward for employee engagement studies in order to lift them to the next level of maturity. Companies and HR professionals need to be able to rely on the results of such studies to ensure their investment decisions are sound and accurately address any issues the company wishes to resolve. Employees need to be able to trust employee engagement surveys in

terms of purpose and anonymity and regain confidence that their voice is being heard for the common good.

It is my hope that this study presents direction in terms of accomplishing the goals mentioned above, while giving the academic community something to think about in the process.

References

- Ambreen, U. (2013). Employee satisfaction in retail banking at Lahore: A case study of HBL. *International Journal of Information, Business and Management*, 5(1), 157-175.
- Axelrod, R. (2000). *Terms of engagement changing the way we change organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Azanza, G., Moriano, J.A. & Molero, F. (2013). Authentic leadership and organizational culture as drivers of employees' job satisfaction. *Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 29(2), 45-50.
- Balkin, D., & Griffeth, B. (1993). The determinants of employee benefits satisfaction. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 7(3), 323-339.
- Bridges, W. (2009). *Managing transitions: Making the most of change* (3rd ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Da Capo Press.
- Byrne, Z., Peters, J., & Weston, J. (2016). The struggle with employee engagement: Measures and construct clarification using five samples. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 101(9), 1201-1227.
- Catteeuw, F., Flynn, E., & Vonderhorst, J. (2007). Employee engagement: Boosting productivity in turbulent times. *Organization Development Journal*, 25(2), P151-P157.
- Coleman, L. (2015). *The customer-driven organization: Employing the Kano model*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. (1970). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (Methodological perspectives). Chicago, IL: Aldine.
- Duboff, R., & Heaton, C. (1999). Employee loyalty: A key link to value growth. *Strategy & Leadership*, 27(1), 8-13.
- Duncan, R. D. (2014, August 2). Why 'employee satisfaction' is the wrong metric. *Forbes.com*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rodgerdeanduncan/2014/08/02/why-employee-satisfaction-is-the-wrong-metric/#73666d096c05>
- Embry, S. G. (2009). A mixed method study: Understanding employee performance at U.S. department of homeland security (Order No. 3415962). Available from ABI/INFORM Collection; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (734727755). Retrieved from <http://uiwtx.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.uiwtx.idm.oclc.org/docview/734727755?accountid=7139>

- Escardibul, J. & Afcha, S. (2017). Determinants of the job satisfaction of PhD holders: An analysis by gender, employment sector, and type of satisfaction in Spain. *Higher Education: The International Journal of Higher Education Research*, 74(5), 855-875.
- Eskildsen, J., & Nussler, M. (2000). The managerial drivers of employee satisfaction and loyalty. *Total Quality Management*, 11(4-6), S581-S588.
- Fry, G., Chantavanich, S., & Chantavanich, A. (1981). Merging quantitative and qualitative research techniques: toward a new research paradigm 1. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 12(2), 145-158.
- Goldschmidt, N., & Chung, B. (2001). The effect of organizational size on customer satisfaction: A conceptual model. *American Marketing Association. Conference Proceedings*, 12, 45.
- Hair, J., Black, W., Babin, B., Anderson, R. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis* (7th ed). Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River (NJ); London
- Hellriegel, D., Jackson, S., & Phukan, R. (2003). Management: A competency-based approach. *Finance India*, 17(3), 1075-1078.
- Hennessy Sr, Mike. (2017). Employee engagement and productivity: Connecting for success. *Pharmacy Times*, 83(5), 1.
- Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed-Methods Research*, 1(2), 112-133.
- Judge, T., Thoresen, C., Bono, J., Patton, G., & Eisenberg, N. (2001). The job satisfaction–job performance relationship: A qualitative and quantitative Review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 127(3), 376-407.
- Kumar, P., Dass, M., & Topaloglu, O. (2014). Understanding the drivers of job satisfaction of frontline service employees: Learning from ‘Lost Employees’. *Journal of Service Research*, 17(4), 367-380.
- Lee, C. (2017). Employee job satisfaction and engagement: the doors of opportunity are open. SHRM.org. Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Documents/2017-Employee-Job-Satisfaction-and-Engagement-Executive-Summary.pdf>
- Matzler, K., Fuchs, M., & Schubert, A. (2004). Employee satisfaction: Does Kano’s model apply? *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 15(9,10), 1179-1198.
- McCusker, D., & Wolfman, I. (1998). Loyalty in the eyes of employers and employees. *Workforce*, 12-14.

- Moreland, J. (2013). Improving job fit can improve employee engagement and productivity. *Employment Relations Today*, 40(1), 57-62.
- Nelson, A. (2016). *Does employee engagement depend on position level?* Retrieved from <https://gethppy.com/employee-engagement/does-employee-engagement-depend-on-position-level>
- Pareek, V. (2013). Contributory factors in employee satisfaction: An empirical investigation of banking industry. *Journal of Strategic Human Resource Management*, 2(3), 38-47.
- Reichheld, F. (2003). The one number you need to grow. *Harvard Business Review*, 81(12), 46-54.
- Shan, S., Li, C., Yao, W., Shi, J., & Ren, J. (2014). An empirical study on critical factors affecting employee satisfaction. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 31(3), 447-460.
- Shannon-Baker, P. (2016). Making paradigms meaningful in mixed-methods research. *Journal of Mixed-Methods Research*, 10(4), 319-334.
- Spurk, D., Abele, A., & Volmer, J. (2011). The Career Satisfaction Scale: Longitudinal measurement invariance and latent growth analysis. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 84(2), 315-326.
- Van De Voorde, K., Paauwe, J., & Van Veldhoven, M. (2012). Employee well-being and the HRM–organizational performance relationship: A review of quantitative studies. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 14(4), 391-407.

Appendices

Appendix A: Copy of Paper Survey

My age is:	18-24 <input type="radio"/>	25-34 <input type="radio"/>	35-44 <input type="radio"/>	45-55 <input type="radio"/>	55+ <input type="radio"/>
My gender is:	Female <input type="radio"/>	Male <input type="radio"/>			
The company I work for is:	BoA <input type="radio"/>	Chase <input type="radio"/>	Wells F. <input type="radio"/>	USAA <input type="radio"/>	Citi <input type="radio"/>
My rank is (closest answer):	Non-Mgt <input type="radio"/>	Jr-Mgt <input type="radio"/>	Mid-Mgt <input type="radio"/>	Sr-Mgt <input type="radio"/>	
I have been with this company for:	0-2 y <input type="radio"/>	3-5 y <input type="radio"/>	6-10 y <input type="radio"/>	11-15 y <input type="radio"/>	15+ y <input type="radio"/>
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel a strong personal attachment to this organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working for this organization makes me feel proud	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am passionate about my role within this organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working at this organization gives me purpose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Irrespective of the reasons, overall, I look forward to coming to work here at this organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am already looking for another job opportunity (outside of this organization) or will start to do so soon	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, I feel that this organization treats its employees fairly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, this organization shows genuine care and concern for its employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, this organization truly trusts its employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, in this organization, employees are supported with adequate resources to help them do their work well	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, I have a good understanding of what I am supposed to be doing in my job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At times when I don't feel engaged, I am less willing to put in extra effort for my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, ideas and suggestions from employees are appreciated by this organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, I get a real sense of achievement working for this organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, information about the organization is communicated well to employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, I really like the duties and activities that make up my job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, my manager is an excellent manager	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, this organization provides good training and development opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, Executive leaders at head office are excellent leaders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, this organization provides me with a high quality work environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix B: Summary of Segment Characteristics

HIGH FLYERS:

- Engagement: Employees with highest level of engagement. Possess high energy and are happy to be at your organization.
- Characteristics: Connected performers. Enthusiastic workers who care about others and create sustainable relationships.
- Motivation: Motivated by synergy of organizational success and personal wellbeing.
- Behavior: Very considerate in problematic situations, looking for constructive compromise. Excellent team leaders and members who positively motivate others.
- Action: Should be maintained as your most valuable asset.

APPROACHABLE:

- Engagement: Highly activated performers that are starting to 'let go' of your organization (decreasing Attraction).
- Characteristics: In general, happier with 'what they do' than with 'whom are they doing it for'. It makes them unrelaxed, tensed.
- Motivation: Motivated by their own values and beliefs, with focus on personal professional success and development. Go-getters!
- Behavior: Tend to be aggressive in problematic situations and 'win the case' rather than seeking for a compromise. Not always ideal team members, but might motivate others through personal example and high working standards.
- Action: Should be approached by leaders to strengthen their connection to the organization. This could turn them into High Flyers.

FRUSTRATED:

- Engagement: High levels of energy. Passionate employees who are detached and frustrated by your organization.
- Characteristics: Angry! Feel exploited by the organization. In all likelihood, have an exit strategy in mind.
- Motivation: Motivated by competing with everyone and proving their own superiority.
- Behavior: Often operate with low respect for colleagues. Could be destructive as team members and demotivate others. Tend to spread negative word of mouth and are bad 'company ambassadors'. They exit problematic situations – other have created them and it is not their problem.
- Action: They should be given individual tasks which suit their ego, prove their superiority and remove feeling of exploitation. It will go some way keeping them engaged.

ADJUSTABLE:

- Engagement: Very useful workers with high attachment to your organization. Reliable, but not proactive. This is often due to misaligned purpose of their work and role in the organization.
- Characteristics: Agreeable characters who enjoy been accepted and working with others.
- Motivation: Motivated by confidence the others have in them.
- Behavior: Very cooperative in problematic situations. Excellent team members.
- Action: Could be easily activated by adjusting their daily duties and role in organization. Such an adjustment can bring them closer to High Flyers.

SLACKERS:

- Engagement: Typically love where they are, but are seen to do nothing by their peers (which is true).
- Characteristics: Care free, blend in and keep a low profile.
- Motivation: Motivated by personal well-being.
- Behavior: Disinterested individuals who take more than give to your organization. They conform in problematic situations - as 'somebody else' will take better care of it.
- Action: Should be frequently apprised with short-term corrective action. Otherwise, they will take a lot from your organization, give very little in return and will never leave.

IDLERS:

- Engagement: Undecided if your organization is really 'where they want to be'. Workwise, they stick to 'bare minimum' of what must be done.
- Characteristics: Constantly underperform and steadily damage your organization. Passive!
- Motivation: Lack of any.
- Behavior: Passive, demotivated and burdensome on other team members. They avoid or withdraw in problematic situations, believing that own effort won't make any difference, anyhow.
- Action: Poor performance management of this group can lead to great frustration among your activated assets. They could be mobilized through short-term, well defined goals with frequent appraisals. Otherwise, will remain passive and disinterested.

RESIGNED:

- Engagement: Employees with lowest levels of engagement. Have low to no energy and no affiliation to your organization.
- Characteristics: Checked out individuals who have given up purposeful fight. Emotionally tired. Their bad attitude is often beyond repair.
- Motivation: To prove that everything about your organization is wrong.
- Behavior: Behave in oppositional, critical and cynical manner, undermining your organization. Neglect problematic situations as it has nothing to do with them. Huge risk to your brand and integrity.
- Action: Twofold: if critical individuals, address them in earnest conversations to see what (if anything) can be done for them. Alternatively, encourage them to seek employment elsewhere – assist their exit.