

**Employee engagement at Eskom  
Distribution Free State Operating Unit  
Head Office**

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## **DECLARATION**

“I declare that the Field Study hereby submitted for the qualification of Magister in Business Administration at the UFS Business School at the University of the Free State, is my own independent work and that I have not previously submitted this work, either as a whole or in part, for a qualification at another university or at another faculty at this university.

I also hereby cede copyright of this work to the University of the Free State”

Name: Llewellyn Alistair Bok

Date: 13 November 2015

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## **ABSTRACT**

Employee engagement has the potential to influence employee performance and management, yet it is not well understood by a number of organisations. The current challenge facing most organisations, however, is that employee engagement levels are very low which impacts the performance of the organisation negatively.

The study centres on the Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office in order to evaluate the current level of employee engagement amongst employees. The study also aims at determining the relationship between employee engagement and certain biographical factors of employees.

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) questionnaire that measures three aspects of engagement namely vigour, dedication and absorption was used in the study. The overall results indicated that the majority of the respondents are engaged. The study highlighted two profiles: a white male older than 50 years of age working in the Maintenance and Operations department, who is highly engaged versus a black female younger than 31 years of age with less than 5 years experience working in the Customer Services department, being the least engaged.

Although the overall results indicated that respondents were engaged there were areas of concern. The results for vigour indicated a work environment that is not very supportive, meaning there is not a good work–life balance and employees are unwilling to go the extra mile for the organisation and easily get tired when doing their job. Respondents did not feel like going to work in the morning and did not have high levels of energy and mental resilience. The results for dedication paint a picture of employees who do not find their jobs inspirational or challenging and this may be because they cannot see the link between what they do and the organisation's overall goals. The absorption results indicate non-commitment and a lack of involvement by employees in their jobs. They are not immersed in their jobs at all – it is only a means to an end.

Continuous interventions are required from leadership to maintain and improve employee engagement. This includes roadshows to share the business priorities and focus areas as well as to reinforce the part each employee plays in achieving said priorities. It is also recommended that special engagement sessions be held with Customer Services employees since they are the least engaged. Management should ensure that employees have adequate job resources, that it is a correct job fit and that there is leadership support to enable employees to do their jobs well.

Conduct quarterly employee engagement surveys in the Free State Operating Unit to see if the interventions are having the desired effect.

Lastly, further investigation is recommended on the use of the internationally based and developed Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) in a South African context since the findings highlighted engagement differences among ethnic groups.

**KEYWORDS:**

Employee engagement, biographical factors, Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES).

# **CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 BACKGROUND**

Employee engagement has the potential to influence employee performance and management, yet it is not well understood. According to Armstrong (2009) engagement is often used as a mantra for an organisation's management without employers, and employees' being clear what exactly is meant by engagement or how to improve the engagement of workers. However, employers are increasingly starting to realise that engaged employees remain one of an organisation's best tools to remain competitive and reach its performance targets (Dromey, 2014).

The current challenge facing most organisations, however, is that employee engagement levels are very low (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010). If an organisation can understand the influence of employee engagement on its performance, it can secure the organisation's sustainability. In this study, employee engagement at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office was evaluated.

Eskom is a state owned utility company that generates 95% of the total electricity consumed in South Africa and also supplies 45% of Africa's electricity. The company is critical in fulfilling government's goal of supplying secure electricity to the country in order to ensure economic growth and prosperity (Eskom, 2014). In the Budget Speech of 2015, it was reiterated by Minister Nene that one of the biggest challenges for growth in manufacturing and mining, as well as foreign investment in South Africa remains the electricity constraints experienced by Eskom (Budget Speech, 2015). According to a study by Quantec Research, the direct impact of Eskom on South Africa's GDP is approximately 3% and when considering the economy-wide effect, the impact is estimated to be more than 7% (Eskom factor, 2011).

The biggest reason for the electricity constraints currently experienced at Eskom is the primary energy supplies (coal-fired power stations) that are severely compromised due to an aging power station fleet marred by deteriorating water and coal supplies, frequent breakdowns and high system losses. The other major

contributing factor is the delays in the construction of the Medupi and Kusile coal fired stations that has seen project costs rise to nearly R105 billion (Creamer, 2013). This led to frequent senior management replacements and the country experiencing its first load shedding event in 2008. Since then load shedding has become a part of every South African's life.

All these events have not left the employees unscathed; employee morale is low and people are demotivated. This is also evident at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office where the following observations were made by the researcher:

- Employees only do what is required and are not willing to go the extra mile. They are only putting in the time.
- Employees do not feel free to voice their opinion or criticise leaders' decisions due to fear of retaliation.
- There is a feeling of distrust of senior management.
- Employees are cynical and apathetic.
- Employees are uncertain about their job security and the future of the company.

Since it is crucial for the country that Eskom is successful, it is worthwhile to determine the level of employee engagement and also to understand the relationship between employee engagement and the biographical factors of employees.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The problem is that employees at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office have shown signs of disengagement in recent years. If the problem is not addressed, it has the potential of seriously debilitating Eskom from successfully implementing its strategic objectives and reaching its performance targets.

Research questions:

What does the literature say about employee engagement?

What is the current level of employee engagement at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office?

What is the relationship between employee engagement and biographical factors at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office?

### **1.3 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY OBJECTIVES**

#### **1.3.1 Primary objective**

To evaluate employee engagement at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office.

#### **1.3.2 Secondary objectives**

- To provide an overview of the literature on employee engagement.
- To determine the level of employee engagement at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office.
- To determine the relationship between employee engagement and biographical factors at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office.

### **1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research philosophy, approach, sample strategy and data collection methods are discussed in these sub-sections. The research design was structured to obtain answers and the study used a quantitative method to evaluate the level of employee engagement.

#### **1.4.1 Research philosophy**

Realism was adopted as a research philosophy, specifically the approach of a critical realist. The critical realist's view is analytical in terms of understanding the world and states that the researcher might get close to the truth when conducting research, but will never fully uncover it. Critical realists believe that researchers are inherently flawed and that when phenomena such as emotions and attitudes are measured, the process is highly subjective and will thus lead to imperfect data collection (Sekaran &

Bougie, 2013). This suits the type of study that the researcher pursued because it involved humans and their emotions and attitudes.

#### **1.4.2 Research design**

A quantitative research method was used since it requires the use of numerical results to express the findings. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) define cross-sectional research as research that focus on one case at a single point of time to enable a researcher to answer a research question. This study followed a cross-sectional quantitative research design since the researcher collected data over a period of one month (July 2015) from Eskom employees and no other data was collected afterwards for the purpose of this research. The quantitative research approach focused on the situation at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office and endeavoured to assess the current level of engagement of employees.

#### **1.4.3 Sampling strategy**

The researcher used all the employees that work at the Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office in Bloemfontein as his target population ( $N = 329$ ). The sample size was 185 in order to make it representative of the population ( $S = 185$ ) (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

The researcher pursued a non-probability sampling strategy. This allowed the researcher to collect information quickly and inexpensively (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Non-probability sampling has the disadvantage that the findings of the study cannot be generalised to the entire population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). A convenience sampling approach, which is a type of non-probability sampling, was then followed since it made the collection of information from respondents who are placed at the head office of Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office in Bloemfontein convenient and sped up the data gathering process (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

#### **1.4.4 Data collection methods**

In support of the research design, a quantitative data collection strategy was used in this research study. Quantitative techniques require that data be obtained in a quantitative manner. Quantitative methods require using questionnaires (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

A standardised survey questionnaire, called the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), was used to study employee engagement. The study was conducted at the Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office in Bloemfontein to make it easier for the researcher to answer respondents' questions should they require clarification, and since he is also employed there. The researcher needed to guard against bias caused by how the sample was selected and responses from the respondents. Factors that could influence the responses included the time the responses were provided and the location where the questionnaires were completed.

The questionnaires were distributed to all departments situated at the Eskom head office in Bloemfontein between 01 July 2015 and 25 July 2015. The questionnaire was very basic with clear instructions on how to complete it to make it easier for the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two sections to make it user friendly. These were:

Section A: Biographical information

Section B: UWES scale

#### **1.4.5 Data analysis**

Data obtained through quantitative techniques can be tested and verified. On completion of the data collection phase, the statistician at the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of the Free State assisted the researcher in analysing the data by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Once the data was gathered, the researcher used descriptive analysis methods to display the data. Descriptive analysis uses tables or graphs to represent the data. The use of visual aids like bar charts, histograms, or pie charts provides information about the data and makes it visually easier to interpret (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

#### **1.4.6 Ethical considerations**

The following ethical aspects specifically considered for this study from the onset are as follows, as stated by McMillan and Schumacher (2006):

- The researcher must ensure that the study adheres to all the ethical standards. Eskom management and employees must thus be informed of all aspects that will influence participation in the study.
- The researcher will make sure that the collected data is not used to the detriment of those involved in the research project. The data will be used only to inform this study in an anonymous manner. No personal information will be made available to any parties, but will only be available to the researcher.
- The researcher will ensure that the consent of the respondents is voluntary and informed. All respondents will receive a letter from the researcher that indicates the purpose of the study and they will also be informed about the anonymity, confidentiality and termination of participation.
- The respondents are to remain anonymous and the information supplied by them, treated confidentially; only the researcher and the statistician are to handle the data. This will be used as a supporting strategy to encourage respondents to be open and honest when answering the questionnaire.
- The researcher will apply for ethics clearance from Eskom's Ethics Committee prior to engaging with the study participants.
- The researcher will share the findings of the study with Eskom's management via a written report and also an oral presentation. The results of the study will also be made available to the participants upon request. If the results are shared, it can cause potential misinterpretation, which must then be cleared by the researcher.



Ethics and ethical behaviour is highly valued at Eskom and hence the researcher protected the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents.

### **1.5 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY**

The study was conducted at the Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office in Bloemfontein which has 329 employees that make up the target population. The sample size was 185 in total, as prescribed by Sekaran and Bougie (2013) in order to make it representative of the population. This research study fell within the discipline of Human Resources Management.

### **1.6 CHAPTER LAYOUT**

This study is presented in the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduced all the concepts that relate to the topic and also provided an overview. The problem statement, research questions and research objectives was also presented.

Chapter 2: Employee Engagement Literature review

This chapter presents a review of research relating to employee engagement and the impact of a high degree of employee engagement on the performance of the business.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

Here the focus is on a quantitative assessment of the level of employee engagement and a discussion of the administration of the questionnaires and data gathering.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretations

The statistical analysis of the questionnaires is discussed, and the results are compared with relevant literature results.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter summarised the results and provides proposals and recommendations on how employee engagement can be improved and maintained at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office. It also highlights the limitations and identifies possible future research.

### **1.7 CONCLUSION**

This research study endeavoured to assess the level of employee engagement at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office. The target population was the 329 employees that work at the Head Office in Bloemfontein.

The next chapter focuses on what the literature states about employee engagement and its constructs.

## **CHAPTER 2 : EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter 1 an overview of the study was provided, namely employee engagement at Eskom as well as the background on the research problem and the research questions.

A literature review provides insight on the theory governing the research question. This chapter reviews the literature on employee engagement and all the relevant aspects. The concepts, theory, models, determinants, enablers, and barriers of employee engagement were studied.

### **2.2 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

#### **2.2.1 Defining employee engagement**

Engagement at work was first hypothesised by Kahn (1990:3) who defines it as “the harnessing of organisation members’ selves to their work roles” and he also further states that an engaged person will “express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances.” Armstrong (2009:336) defines engagement as “everything the organisation is seeking with regard to the contribution and behaviour of its employees in terms of levels of job performance, willingness to do that much more and identification with the organisation.” McShane and Von Glinow (2010:132) define it as “the employee’s emotional and cognitive motivation, self-efficacy to perform the job, perceived clarity of the organisation’s vision and his or her specific role in that vision, and belief that he or she has the resources to get the job done”. Wiley (2010:48) defines it as the “extent to which employees are motivated to contribute to organisational success, and are willing to demonstrate commitment, loyalty, and a willingness to go beyond basic requirements to accomplish tasks and organisational goals.”

Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma and Bakker (2002) state that employee engagement is characterised by vigour (high levels of energy), dedication (strong

involvement in your work, enthusiasm and pride) and absorption (fully engrossed in your work).

According to The Harvard Business Analytical Services Review Report (2013) the main key to engagement is to determine what constitutes a “successful” employee and communicating it clearly. They further found that individual goals that are tied to the organisation’s goals are the most commonly cited success characteristic (The Harvard Business Analytical Services Review Report, 2013).

Engaged employees are physically involved in tasks, are cognitively vigilant, and empathically connected to colleagues in a manner that shows what they feel and think. In addition, Kahn (1990) indicates that, for an employee to be engaged, three psychological engagement conditions need to be present: psychological meaningfulness (work elements), psychological safety (social elements and norms) and psychological availability (individual distractions). Psychological meaningfulness means that the employee receives a return on investment for the performance. Psychological safety refers to the employees being able to show and employ themselves without fear of negative consequences. Psychological availability means the employee possesses the physical, emotional and psychological resources needed to do the job (Kahn, 1990).

It is evident from the definitions and literature quoted above that they are similar in terms of the key components. These components include enthusiasm for the work, vigour, pride and commitment to the organisation, alignment to the organisational goals and a willingness to go the extra mile for the organisation. In the section below the elements of employee engagement are explored.

### **2.2.2 Elements/determinants of employee engagement**

Anitha (2014) identified and empirically tested the various factors that facilitated the three psychological conditions (meaningfulness, safety and availability) as identified by Kahn and found it to be determinants of employee engagement. These determinants were identified as:

- Work environment,
- Leadership,
- Team and co-worker,
- Training and career development,
- Compensation,
- Organisational policies, and
- Work place well-being (Anitha, 2014).

According to Armstrong (2009) an enabling and supportive work environment has an influence on engagement, since it influences how people carry out their duties and will thus encourage high performance. The author further adds that the characteristics of a supportive work environment are a good work-life balance, healthy and safe working conditions, consideration for job security, and one where personal growth is encouraged.

Wiley (2010) argues that organisations need visionary leaders that can create a culture of engagement where the employees' trust are maintained, better productivity levels are pursued and increased job satisfaction and retention are maintained. This is especially true when times are tough, since employees look to the leaders for guidance and reassurance that everything will be fine. Wiley (2010) then elaborates further on effective leadership and suggests that it can be identified by five characteristics:

- Leadership that is able to give employees a clear picture of which direction the organisation is heading,
- Leadership that can handle the organisation's challenges,
- Leadership that is committed to give high quality products and services,
- Leadership that can communicate to employees how important their work is to the organisations' success, and
- Leadership that can inspire confidence in all employees.

A harmonious team and co-worker relationship was found to promote employee engagement as employees feel safe and engaged with their responsibility (Anitha, 2014).

Training and career development help employee concentration in a work environment since it improves service accuracy and boosts confidence (Anitha, 2014).

Both financial and non-financial compensation motivates employees to focus on work and personal development. When employees are rewarded or get recognition, they rise to the occasion and deliver even higher levels of engagement (Anitha, 2014).

Amiable organisational policies and procedures are very important for engagement and eventually achieving the business goals (Anitha, 2014).

Work place well-being has been found to enhance employee engagement (Anitha, 2014).

Kreitner and Kinicki (2002) state a positive relationship between organisational citizenship behaviour and job satisfaction. Furthermore, leadership and work environment characteristics were conditions needed more in order for employees to display citizenship behaviour than personality. This supports Wiley's (2010) view that a manager plays a very important role in creating the right climate for an employee to display organisational citizenship behaviour.

Coffman and Gonzales-Molina (2002) distinguish between three levels of engagement:

- Highly engaged with the following profile:
  - use their talents daily,
  - consistently a high performer,
  - has natural innovation capability,
  - builds supportive relationships,
  - know the desired outcome of their jobs,

- energetic and enthusiastic, and
- committed.
- Moderately engaged with the following profile:
  - meets basics,
  - no confidence and confused,
  - doesn't have sense of achievement,
  - is possibly committed to the organisation but not always to job, and
  - speaks frankly about negative views.
- Disengaged with the following profile:
  - always resistant,
  - doesn't trust anyone,
  - unable to solve problems,
  - low commitment to organisation and job,
  - isolated, and
  - acts out frustration either openly or secretly.

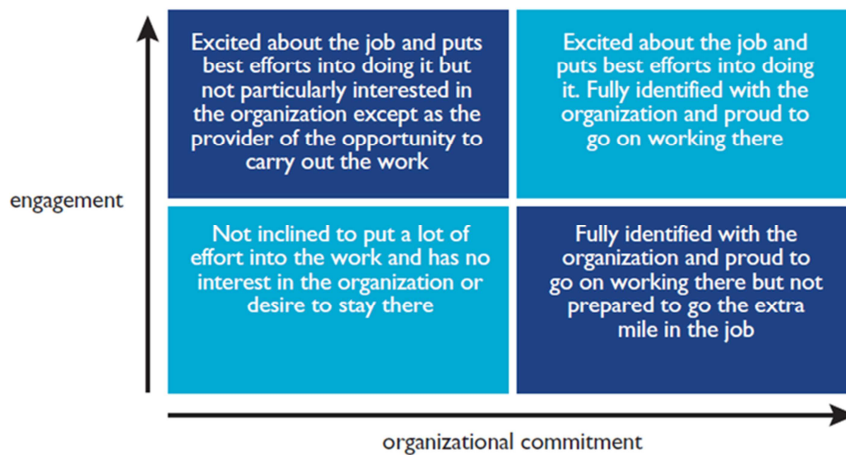
In the next section the underlying constructs normally used to explain engagement, such as commitment and job satisfaction, are discussed.

### **2.2.3 Employee engagement and commitment**

Khan (1990) states that involvement and commitment is a general state where an employee, over time, maintains an average level of presence, whereas engagement is a specific fluctuation of psychological presence due to a particular moment or situation.

Armstrong (2009:336) argues that although there are overlaps between the “ideas of engagement, commitment and motivation” and that it may be claimed by some that the confusion does not cause harm, it can, in fact, hamper progress in putting them to good use. A committed employee is not necessarily motivated and employees might stay committed to the company just because there are no better job prospects even though they are disenchanted with their current jobs (Armstrong, 2009).

Employee engagement and organisational commitment are both big drivers that affect work performance, the attraction and retention of employees; however, the one is job-oriented and the latter organisation-oriented (Armstrong, 2009). Figure 2.1 illustrates the combinations of the impact of engagement and organisational commitment. It is noticeable that even though the two are not the same, there is a positive correlation between employee engagement and organisational commitment. Employees can, however, be engaged, but not committed, by just using the organisation as a platform to use or develop skills. This will then mean that different strategies may be needed to improve job engagement than organisational commitment (Armstrong, 2009).



**Figure 2.1 Relationship between engagement and organisational commitment.**

(Armstrong 2009)

Macleod and Clarke (2009) again argue that organisational commitment, discretionary effort and a sense of involvement in one's job are the three measures used as indicators of engagement. Now that the relationship between engagement and organisational commitment has been discussed, the relationship between engagement and job satisfaction are discussed below.

#### **2.2.4 Employee engagement and job satisfaction**

Macleod and Clarke (2009) believe that, although employee engagement has overlaps with the forerunners, such as job satisfaction, it is distinctively different.



Measuring satisfaction will not show how employees are behaving, but measuring engagement can provide an indication. Bakker (2011) theorises that employee engagement is different from job satisfaction because it combines work pleasure (or dedication) with high activation (or vigour, absorption), whereas job satisfaction is a more passive form of well-being.

Galagan (2015) also suggests that research has shown little or no correlation between job satisfaction and performance. A satisfied employee is more likely to stay with the organisation but will not necessarily be the most productive.

### **2.3 DRIVERS/ENABLERS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

In order to create more engaged and motivated employees, we first need to understand what drives or motivates employees. People drive direct behaviour since it creates emotions and emotions play a large role in motivation. However, not all people have the same emotional response, even though people have the same drives (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010).

Macleod and Clarke (2009) did extensive research reviewing literature, communicating with experts and conducting case studies and identified four enablers of engagement. These are:

- Strategic narrative – Macleod and Clarke (2009:31) define it as “a strong, transparent and explicit organisational culture which gives employees a line of sight between their job and the vision and aims of the organisation”. It is important for leaders to be visible, to set out this strong narrative and to ensure that it is understood by all the employees in order for them to see how they are contributing towards achieving it (Macleod & Clarke, 2009).
- Engaging managers – Macleod and Clarke (2009:31) define it as “engaging managers who offer clarity, appreciation of employees’ effort and contribution, who treat their people as individuals and who ensure that work is organised efficiently and effectively so that employees feel they are valued, and equipped and supported to do their job”. The relationship between the

employee and his/her line manager is the most crucial at the work place and needs to be nurtured (Macleod & Clarke, 2009).

- Employee's voice – this relates to an environment being created in the work place where the employers encourage employees to challenge views and make suggestions and also act on them where possible. In this way employees are central to finding the solution (Macleod & Clarke, 2009).
- Integrity – this means that the organisation has integrity and all the values displayed on the walls and in documents are reflected daily by everyone in the organisation through behaviour that is consistent with the values. Integrity forms an integral part of the organisation (Macleod & Clarke, 2009).

After Kaye and Jordan-Evan (2003) researched what the 25 best global talent leaders did to build a culture that engaged employees and to foster loyalty and commitment, they summarised their findings as follows:

- Reciprocity.
- Managers must think 'retention'.
- Seek great job fit.
- Be an employer of choice.
- Each generation have different reasons for staying.
- Train as an investment.
- Recognise managers who keep employees.
- Mentor widely in both directions.
- View employees as investors.
- Remotivate after mergers and transfers.
- Identify your stars.
- Manage high-potentials carefully.
- Career development.
- Create a development culture.
- Hold managers responsible for their people management skills.

The Harvard Business Analytical Services Review Report (2013) again did a survey on employee engagement, involving more than 550 executives, and found the following to be the employee engagement drivers with the most impact. Figure 2.2 below depicts the drivers and their survey scores.



**Figure 2.2 Most impactful Employee Engagement Drivers**

(The Harvard Business Analytical Services Review Report 2013)

According to Wiley (2014) the four drivers of employee engagement are:

- leaders that inspire confidence in the future,
- employee recognition and emphasising quality and improvement by managers,
- growth opportunities and an exciting job, and
- organisational responsibility towards employees and their communities.

It is noticeable that the drivers identified by Macleod and Clarke (2009), Kaye and Jordan-Evan (2003), the ones by the Harvard Business Analytical Services Review Report (2013) and Wiley (2014), are almost identical in nature. Now that the drivers have been identified the barriers of employee engagement are discussed next.

## **2.4 BARRIERS TO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT**

Macleod and Clarke (2009) indicated one of the barriers to be the leadership of the organisation. Some leaders are not aware of employee engagement, its benefits or do not believe it is worth considering. Others do not know how to address the issues, whilst one also finds that the senior leaders might be supportive, but the managers that are meant to implement engagement strategies do not share the belief of the senior leadership or are ill-equipped to implement the engagement strategies. Commitment by leaders was also found to be an issue. One also finds that in those cases an engagement strategy is just an annual employee survey and the results may or may not be acted on (Macleod & Clarke, 2009).

Gable, Chyung, Marker and Winiecki (2010) also highlight that not acting on survey results by the organisation's leaders is a pitfall to improve employee engagement. They warn that the levels of engagement might even deteriorate further if employees felt that their inputs are not considered. They explain the reason for it by using change management theory. The various change management models, in general, all indicate the change management phases to be awareness of the need, followed by a desire to change. Leaders might be aware of the findings from the employee engagement survey, but might not desire or be motivated to work towards changing the status quo.

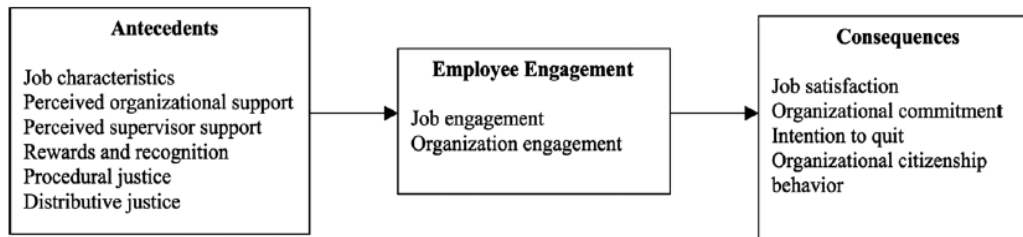
The survey by the Harvard Business Analytical Services found that there is a clear division on the perception of employee engagement between executive management and middle-management. Senior management were far more optimistic of their organisation's engagement level than middle management. This can be attributed to the fact that middle management were more involved in the day to day management of the organisation. If senior management and middle-management are not on the same page it will be difficult to implement employee engagement improvement strategies (The Harvard Business Analytical Services Review Report 2013).

Now that the barriers of engagement have been discussed the next focus will be on employee engagement models.

## 2.5 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT MODELS

### 2.5.1 Khan's model of engagement

Khan's model of engagement antecedents and consequences are shown in Figure 2.3 below.



**Figure 2.3 Khan's model of engagement**

(Saks 2006:604)

Khan (1990) is of the opinion that people are engaged when they are psychologically present while doing work. His model is based on the theory that the three psychological conditions, namely meaningfulness (work element), safety (social elements and norms), and availability (individual distractions) can be linked to work engagement. According to his model the condition for engagement is the job itself, perceived organisational and supervisor support, rewards and recognition, as well as justice (Khan, 1990).

### 2.5.2 Job-demands-resource (JD-R) model

The Job Demands-Resource (JD-R) model tries to integrate stress research and motivational tradition (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). According to Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli (2001) the JD-R model explains how job demands and job resources influences health and commitment through two processes, namely health impairment (e.g. burnout) and motivation (e.g. engagement). The JD-R model assumes that job demands (physical, social and organisational aspects that require sustained physical and/or mental effort) predicts feelings of exhaustion and a lack of job resources (physical, social or organisational aspects that are functional in

achieving work goals, stimulate personal growth and learning) can predict disengagement from work. It can thus predict the experience of burnout and work engagement.

The JD-R model also proposes that development of burnout and engagement is caused by the interaction between job demands and job resources. More specifically, it proposes that if an employee has enough job resources, it will lessen the impact of job demands on burnout (Bakker, Demerouti, Taris, Schaufeli & Schreurs, 2003).

## **2.6 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT MEASURES**

### **2.6.1 Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)**

Drake (2012) advocates having measures with good construct validity evidence in order to advance the field theoretically and practically. There are numerous measures used for the purpose of measuring employee engagement.

Rothmann and Rothmann (2010) recommend the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma and Bakker to measure employee engagement in a valid and reliable manner. This questionnaire includes the three constituting aspects of engagement, namely vigour, dedication and absorption. The UWES was developed to measure the three elements of work engagement. Schaufeli and Bakker (2001) consider vigour and dedication as the core dimensions of work engagement.

The UWES is a self-report questionnaire that consists of 17 statements which measure the three work engagement dimensions, namely vigour (six statements), dedication (five statements) and absorption (six items). It is scored on a seven point scale from 0 (never) to 6 (always). It takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete and can be done individually or in a group. The respondents are expected to indicate in the space provided if they ever, or how often the 17 statements concerning their job, are relevant to them (Schaufeli et al., 2003).

In the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) these three elements are evaluated in the following way:

- Vigour is evaluated by the following six items “that refer to high levels of energy and resilience, the willingness to invest effort, not being easily fatigued, and persistence in the face of difficulties”.
  1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.
  2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.
  3. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.
  4. I can continue working for very long periods at a time.
  5. At my job, I am very resilient, mentally.
  6. At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well.

If the score is high on the vigour element then the person has lots of energy when working and vice versa (Schaufeli et al., 2003:5).

- Dedication is evaluated by the following five items that “refer to deriving a sense of significance from one’s work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about one’s job, and feeling inspired and challenged by it”.
  1. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.
  2. I am enthusiastic about my job.
  3. My job inspires me.
  4. I am proud on the work that I do.
  5. To me, my job is challenging.

If the score is high on the dedication element then the person identifies strongly with the work and it is meaningful and inspiring. They show enthusiasm and are proud of their work (Schaufeli et al., 2003:5).

- Absorption is evaluated by the following six items that “refer to being totally and happily immersed in one’s work and having difficulties detaching oneself from it so that time passes quickly and one forgets everything else that is around”.

1. Time flies when I'm working.
2. When I am working, I forget everything else around me.
3. I feel happy when I am working intensely.
4. I am immersed in my work.
5. I get carried away when I'm working.
6. It is difficult to detach myself from my job.

If the score is high on the absorption element then the person is engrossed in the work and time seems to fly when working (Schaufeli et al., 2003:6).

### **2.6.2 Job Engagement Scale (JES)**

The other dominant measure used for employee engagement assessment is Rich, Lepine, and Crawford's (2010) Job Engagement Scale (JES) that is based on Khan's research that measure three factors, namely emotional, cognitive and physical engagement. Each factor is measured by six questions (Rich, Lepine & Crawford, 2010:634).

1. I work with intensity on my job (physical).
2. I exert my full effort to my job (physical).
3. I devote a lot of energy to my job (physical).
4. I try my hardest to perform well on my job (physical).
5. I strive as hard as I can to complete my job (physical).
6. I exert a lot of energy on my job (physical).
7. I am enthusiastic about my job (emotional).
8. I feel energetic about my job (emotional).
9. I am interested in my job (emotional).
10. I am proud of my job (emotional).
11. I feel positive about my job (emotional).
12. I am excited about my job (emotional).
13. At work, my mind is focused on my job (cognitive).
14. At work, I pay a lot of attention to my job (cognitive).
15. At work, I concentrate on my job (cognitive).



16. At work, I focus a great deal of attention on my job (cognitive).

17. At work, I am absorbed in my job (cognitive).

18. At work, I devote a lot of attention to my job (cognitive).

Drake (2012) compared the Job Engagement Scale (JES) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) and found the following:

- Both are derived from different theoretical backgrounds that may suggest differences in “their construct, content and criterion-related validity evidence” (Drake, 2012:2).
- The UWES is grounded in the burn-out literature whereas the JES is based on Kahn’s work.
- That the UWES had less psychometric strength than the JES, but that it was more strongly related to stress-related criteria.

It was found that engagement measured with the UWES correlates positively with age, which indicates that older employees are more engaged than younger employees. However, the strength of the relationship is weak. Men also score higher on engagement than women, with also a weak relationship. The research also found that professional groups, such as managers, executives and entrepreneurs, score higher than blue-collar workers, police officers and homecare employees. It may be attributed to the fact that their jobs are more challenging and resourceful (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2003).

Now that we have examined how employee engagement can be measured, the next section discusses the impact of employee engagement.

## **2.7 IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

Employee engagement is heavily promoted by consultants, books and magazine articles, but does it really add value or provide a tangible return on investment? In the section below the researcher aimed to highlight what the literature states about the effect of employee engagement on an organisation.

According to a Harvard Business Analytical Services Review Report (2013) most leaders of organisations understand the importance of engagement, but find it challenging to measure engagement or link its impact to the financial results. However, one group of companies also involved in the study are using metrics and also did the following in order to tie engagement to business performance:

- Avoiding routine surveys and using resources dedicated to compile specific employee engagement surveys that do not just measure job satisfaction and also analysing the data to get to the root causes of the issues. Their recommendations are then used by senior management to influence future strategy and policy.
- Ensuring that every department of the organisation is aligned to the goal and that the goal is communicated and known by everyone.
- Using available data to use engagement initiatives in order to improve performance. When winning results are achieved it is then also recognised in order to reinforce alignment and the activities linked to the better performance.

Wiley (2010), however, states that according to the 2010 Work Trends survey done by the Kenexa Research Institute (KRI) there is a link between employee engagement to both earnings per share and total shareholder return. Anitha (2014) agrees and states that employee performance has a direct link with organisational performance and its success and a vital way of improving performance is to encourage employee engagement.

The CBI Harvey Nash employment trends survey (2012) also highlights evidence between effective employee engagement and improved performance, productivity and profitability. It is also worth mentioning that Macey, Schneider, Barbera and Young (2009) requested 65 firms from different industries to complete an engagement index and found that the top 25% companies of the index had better performance figures and shareholder value than the bottom 25% companies.

However, Rich, Lepine and Crawford (2010) argue that although correlations of engagement have been made, little evidence exist that proves that employee engagement gives a competitive advantage.

Macleod and Harvey (2009) remark that higher levels of engagement lead to higher levels of innovation. Khan (2013) remarks that higher levels of employee engagement leads to improved passion, increased employer branding, less accidents, greater commitment to achieve the organisational goals and increased productivity.

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter a literature foundation was provided as well as explanations of the elements and drivers of employee engagement.

It is evident that there are different schools of thought on what exactly employee engagement is if all the definitions are considered. There are, however, similarities in terms of the key components. These components include enthusiasm for the work, vigour, pride and commitment to the organisation, alignment to the organisational goals, and a willingness to go the extra mile for the organisation.

The UWES has been used widely to measure employee engagement and most of the past research and reviews were based on this measure.

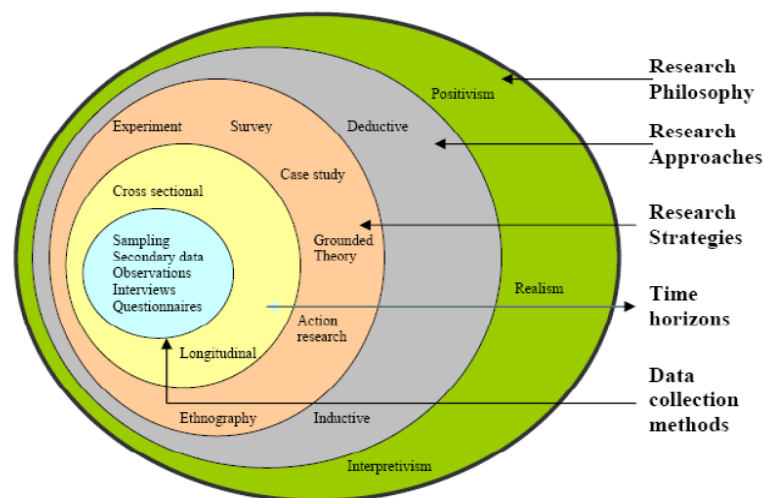
## CHAPTER 3 : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 follows the literature review in Chapter 2 and the purpose of this chapter is to provide an outline of what was used for this study. The research philosophy, approach, strategies and data collection methods are discussed in these sub-sections.

This research was done to measure the levels of employee engagement at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office as identified in Chapter 1.

Figure 3.1 illustrates a generic research process 'onion' and shows the relationship between the various aspects of the research process. The research philosophy is firstly identified, followed by the research approach, research strategy selected, time lines and data collection methods (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). The researcher followed this process to ensure a structured approach.



**Figure 3.1 The research onion**

(Saunders et al. 2009)

The first layer of the research process, namely research philosophy, is discussed first.

### **3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY**

The researcher endeavours to explain in the next section the most relevant philosophical stance that he pursued as his choice of research philosophy.

The researcher adopted realism as a research philosophy, and took the approach of a critical realist. The critical realist's view is analytical of how we understand the world and states that we might get close to the truth when we conduct research, but that we will never fully uncover it. Critical realists believe that researchers are inherently flawed and that when phenomena such as emotions and attitudes are measured, the process is highly subjective and will thus lead to imperfect data collection (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). This suited the type of study that the researcher pursued because it involved humans and their emotions and attitudes.

Critical realism is part of the positivist paradigm that is based on the belief that the social world can be studied in the same manner as the natural world (Saunders et al., 2009). Positivists believe that there is only one objective truth and that if it is understood, we can predict and control it (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:28). Surveys and experimental designs have been the primary methods used in positivist approaches, using statistical techniques to achieve generalisation across populations (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

Constructionism is the opposite of positivism. In constructionism, "knowledge is socially constructed by people active in the research process and the researcher should be guided by the participant's point of view" (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:29). The methodology in a constructionist paradigm is often qualitative in nature and data is often collected through "interviews, observations and document reviews". Interaction between the investigator and respondents is important to construct reality. In a constructivist paradigm, the investigator and participant influence each other because of this interaction (Saunders et al., 2009).

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A quantitative research method was used since it requires using numerical results to express the findings. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) define cross-sectional research as research that focuses on one case at a single point of time to be able to answer a research question. This study followed a cross-sectional quantitative research design since the researcher collected data over a period of one month (July 2015) from Eskom employees and no other data was collected afterwards for the purpose of this research.

The cross-sectional quantitative research approach focused on the situation at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office and endeavoured to assess the current level of engagement of employees

### **3.4 SAMPLING STRATEGY**

The researcher used all the employees working at the Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office in Bloemfontein as his target population ( $N = 329$ ). The sample size was 185 and is representative of the population ( $S = 185$ ) as recommended by Sekaran and Bougie (2013:268). The personnel compliment was verified with the Eskom Human Resources department to ensure the population used was adequate.

The researcher pursued a non-probability sampling strategy. This allowed the researcher to collect information quickly and inexpensively (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Non-probability sampling has the disadvantage that the findings of the study cannot be generalised to the entire population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). A convenience sampling approach, which is a type of non-probability sampling, was thus followed since it made the collection of information from respondents employed at the head office of Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office in Bloemfontein convenient and sped up the data gathering process (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

In support of the research design, a quantitative data collection strategy was used in this research study. Quantitative techniques require that data be obtained in a quantitative manner. Quantitative methods require using questionnaires (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

A standardised survey questionnaire, called the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was used to study employee engagement. The study was conducted at the Eskom Distribution Free State Head Office Head Office in Bloemfontein to make it easier for the researcher to answer respondents' questions, should they need clarification, and since he is also employed there. The researcher needed to guard against bias caused by how the sample was selected and responses from the respondents. Factors that could influence the responses included the time the responses were provided and the location where the surveys were completed.

The questionnaires were distributed to all departments situated at the Eskom head office in Bloemfontein between 01 July 2015 and 25 July 2015. The questionnaire was very basic with clear instructions on how to complete it, to make it easier for the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two sections to make it user friendly. These were:

Section A: Biographical information

Section B: UWES scale

#### **3.5.1 Questionnaire applied**

A standardised survey questionnaire was used to study the impact of employee engagement as prescribed by the literature. The researcher opted to use the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli et al. (2003) to measure employee engagement in a valid and reliable manner.

The UWES is a self-report questionnaire that consists of 17 statements which measure the three work engagement dimensions, namely vigour (six statements),

dedication (five statements), and absorption (six items). It is scored on a seven point scale from 0 (never) to 6 (always). It takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete and can be done individually or in a group (Schaufeli et al., 2003).

Vigour is evaluated by the following six items “that refer to high levels of energy and resilience, the willingness to invest effort, not being easily fatigued, and persistence in the face of difficulties” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003:5).

1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.
2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.
3. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.
4. I can continue working for very long periods at a time.
5. At my job, I am very resilient, mentally.
6. At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well.

Dedication is evaluated by the following five items that “refer to deriving a sense of significance from one’s work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about one’s job, and feeling inspired and challenged by it” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003:5).

1. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.
2. I am enthusiastic about my job.
3. My job inspires me.
4. I am proud on the work that I do.
5. To me, my job is challenging.

Absorption is evaluated by the following six items that “refer to being totally and happily immersed in one’s work and having difficulties detaching oneself from it so that time passes quickly and one forgets everything else that is around” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003:6).

1. Time flies when I’m working.
2. When I am working, I forget everything else around me.
3. I feel happy when I am working intensely.
4. I am immersed in my work.



5. I get carried away when I'm working.
6. It is difficult to detach myself from my job.

The interval type scale, the six-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire to gather the statistics as it allowed the researcher to determine how strongly respondents disagree or agree with statements. Respondents were asked to read each statement carefully and decide if they ever felt this way about their job. If they never had this feeling, they had to insert zero after the statement. If they had experienced the feeling, they needed to insert the following number (1) almost never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) often, (5) very often, (6) always after each of the statements that best describes how frequently they felt that way (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003:6).

The study was conducted at the Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office in Bloemfontein to make it easier for the researcher to interact with respondents should clarity be required, and since he is also employed there. The researcher needed to guard against bias caused by how the sample was selected and responses from the respondents. Factors that could influence the responses included the time the responses were provided and the location where the questionnaires were completed.

### **3.6 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

All the data obtained from the respondents was collated and captured using Microsoft Excel in order to provide a descriptive statistical analysis. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) state that this type of statistical analysis displays frequencies, measures of central tendency and dispersion. Frequencies can be displayed with bar charts, pie charts and histograms. Measures of central tendency have three measures, namely the mean, the median and the mode. The measures of dispersion are the range, the variance and the standard deviation (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

The Statistical Programme for Social Scientists (SPSS) was also used to perform the highly complex data manipulation and analysis of the data received from the questionnaires.

### **3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The following ethical aspects that were specifically considered for this study from the onset, were as follows, as stated by McMillan and Schumacher (2006):

The researcher must ensure that the study adheres to all the ethical standards. Eskom management and employees had thus to be informed of all aspects that would influence participation in the study.

The researcher ensured that the collected data was not used to the detriment of those involved in the research project; the data was used only to inform this study in an anonymous manner. No personal information will be made available to any parties, but will only be available to the researcher.

The researcher ensured that the consent of the respondents was voluntary and informed. All respondents received a letter from the researcher, indicating the purpose of the study. Respondents were informed about the anonymity, confidentiality and termination of participation.

The respondents remain anonymous and the information supplied by them treated confidentially; only the researcher and the statistician handled the data. This was used as a supporting strategy to encourage respondents to be open and honest when completing the questionnaires.

The researcher obtained ethics clearance from Eskom's Ethics Committee prior to engaging with the study participants.

The researcher will share the findings of the study with Eskom management via a written report and also an oral presentation. The results of the study will also be made available to the respondents upon request. If the results are shared, it can

cause potential misinterpretations. Any misconceptions must then be cleared by the researcher.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview of the methodology and research design followed in this research. It is important to choose the correct approach in order to obtain valid and reliable data. The next chapter focuses on the research findings that were obtained from the questionnaires completed by the respondents.

## **CHAPTER 4 : DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 4 implements the research design as encompassed in Chapter 3 of the research study. This chapter gives a detailed description of the results obtained from the questionnaires answered by the employees at Eskom Free State Operating Unit Head Office in Bloemfontein.

The chapter includes a discussion on the response rate, data analysis and findings. The chapter concludes with the interpretation of the results.

### **4.2 RESPONSE RATE**

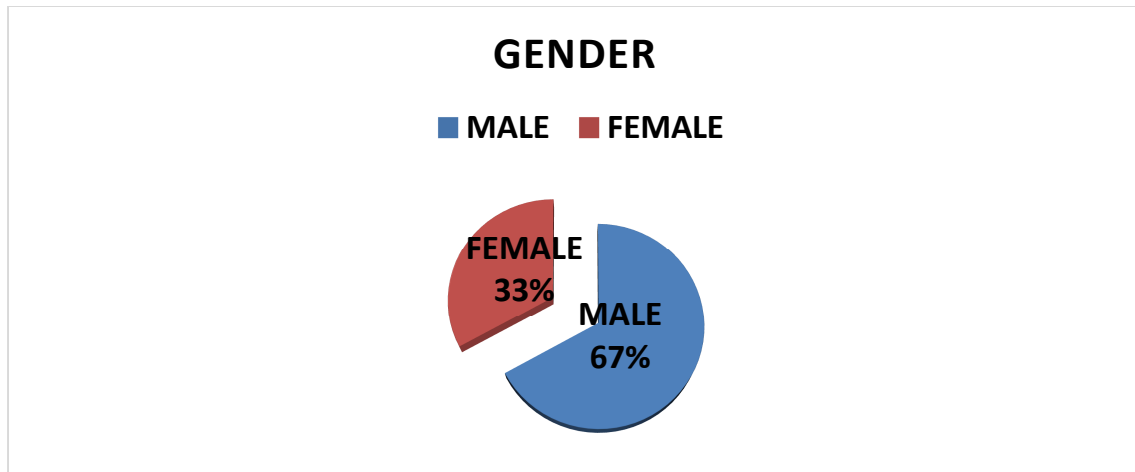
The total number of employees employed at Eskom Free State Operating Unit Head Office in Bloemfontein is 329. There was a response rate of 116 from a sampling size of 185. This is a response rate of 62.7%. Babbie, Mouton, Vorster and Prozesky (2001) reported that a response rate of 50% is considered as adequate for analysis and reporting whereas a rate of 60% is good and 70% is regarded as very good.

According to Morton, Bandara, Robinson and Carr (2012), a response rate alone is not sufficient evidence to judge the quality and/or validity of a study and shouldn't be seen as the single measure for all measures of validity. Response rates have dropped steadily in the past decades from more than 90% in the 1950s to today where one struggles to reach 70%. There have been attempts in the past two decades to challenge the presumption that low response rates give lower study validity, but that it merely indicates a potentially greater risk of this (Morton et al., 2012). Visser, Krosnick, Marquette and Curtin (1996) have shown that some studies with a response rate as low as a 20%, are able to yield more accurate results than studies with response rates of 60-70%.

## 4.3 FINDINGS

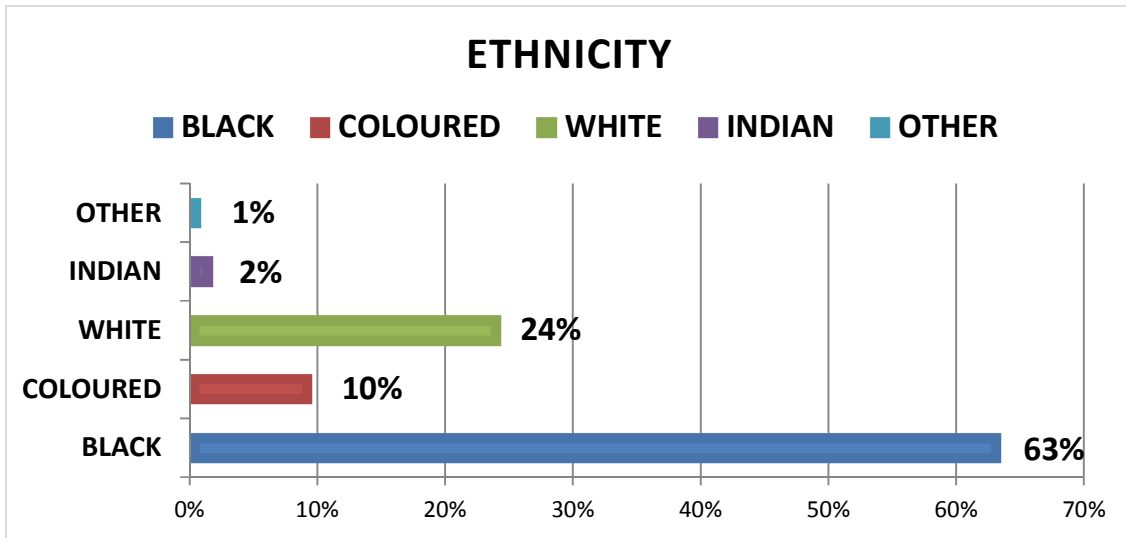
### 4.3.1 Section A – biographical information

The biographical information of all the respondents is discussed in this section. This information includes details about the age, gender, ethnicity, years' work experience, department, job grading and qualifications of the respondents.



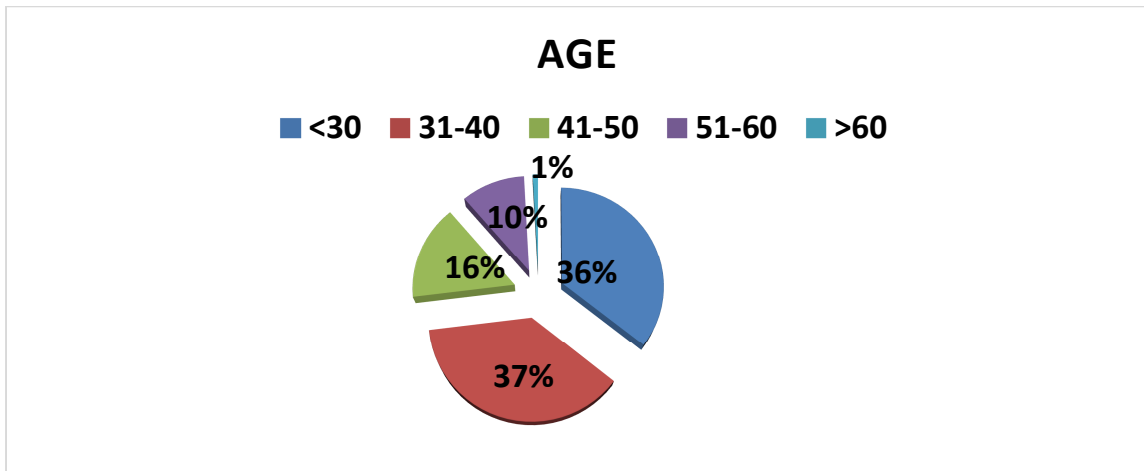
**Figure 4.1 Gender distribution**

From Figure 4.1 it can be concluded that 67% of the respondents are male, while 33% are female. Hence the population was male dominant. This is representative of the entire population since it is still a very male dominant work place.



**Figure 4.2 Ethnicity distribution**

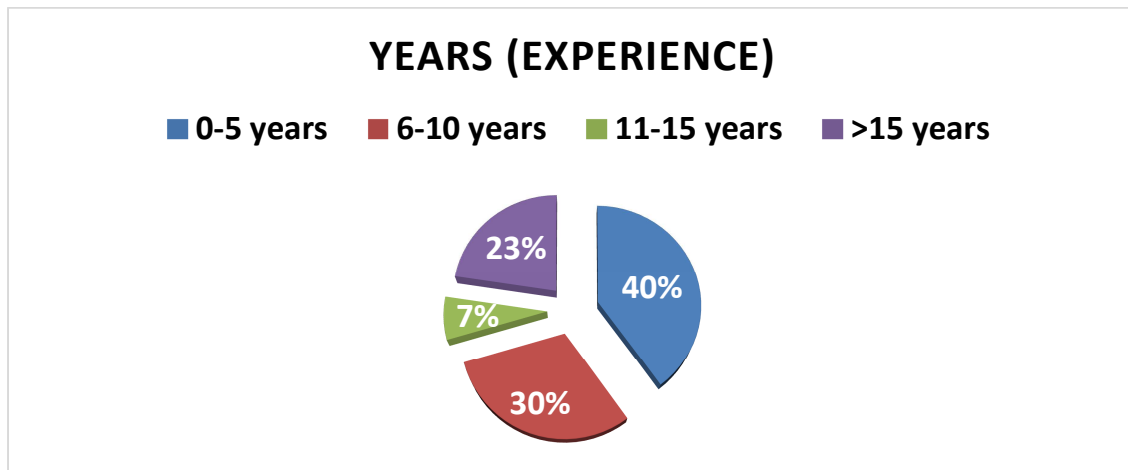
From Figure 4.2 it is clear that the majority of the respondents employed at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office are black (63%). The second largest ethnic group is white (24%) and the third largest is coloured (10%), with a percentage six times less than the black ethnic group.



**Figure 4.3 Age distribution**

From Figure 4.3 it is evident that the work force is fairly young with the majority of the respondents younger than 40 years of age (73%). The age group of 41-50 years of

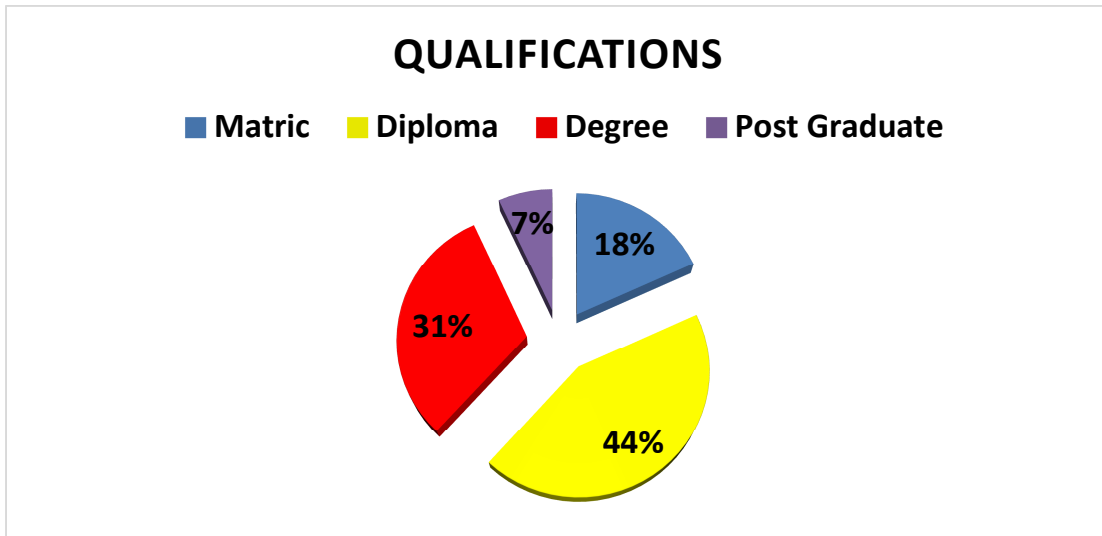
age had a value of 16%. The age group of 51-60 years of age had a value of 10% and above 60 years of age 1%.



**Figure 4.4 Work experience distribution**

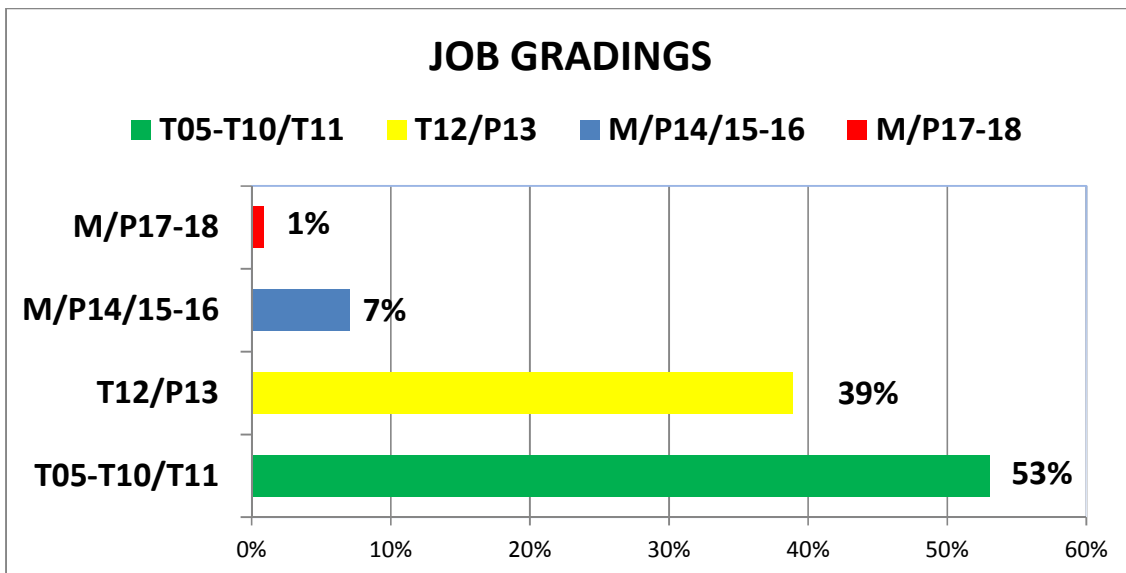
From Figure 4.4 it can be deduced that the majority of the respondents (70%) had less than ten years' work experience and of that 70%, 40% had less than five years' work experience. This large percentage is, however, offset with 30% of the respondents having more than 10 years' work experience.

The low years' work experience of 40% also correlates with the young workforce of 36% younger than 30 years of age, as presented in Figure 4.3.



**Figure 4.5 Qualifications distribution**

From Figure 4.5 it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents (72%) have post-matric qualifications. There are a high number of respondents with diplomas (44%), degrees (31%) and postgraduate qualifications (7%). This was expected as Eskom is a highly technical organisation with few positions that require only matric.



**Figure 4.6 Job grading distribution**



From Figure 4.6 it is evident that the majority of the respondents (53%) occupy T05-T10/11 job grading positions, which is essentially an entry level position at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head office. Only 8% of the respondents are in management positions.

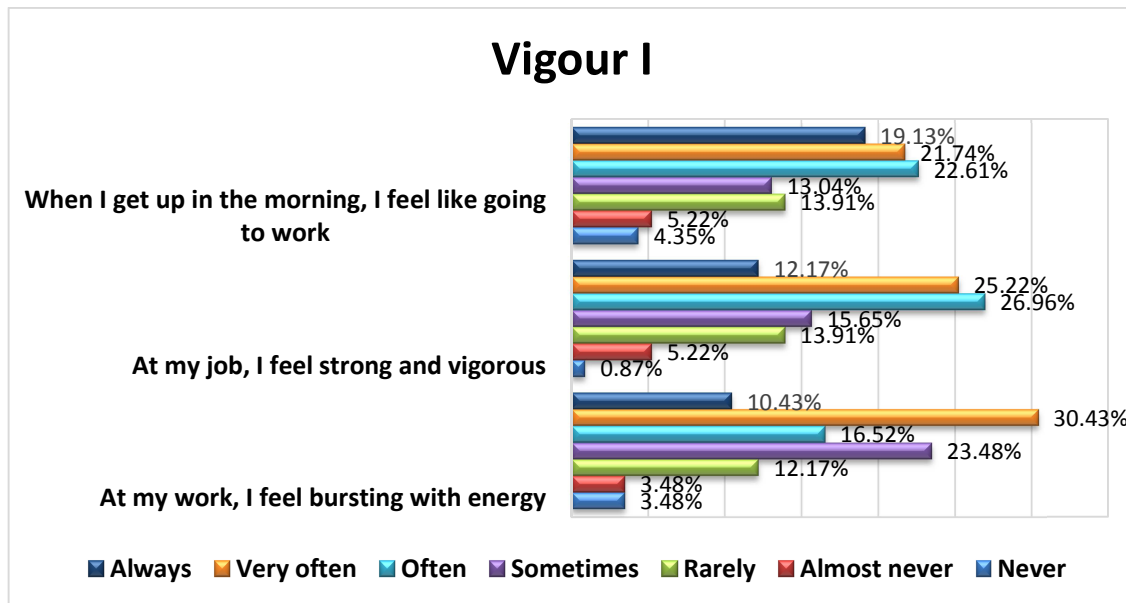
In summary, the majority of the respondents are male (67%). The dominant ethnic group is black (63%) followed by whites at 24%. The work force is fairly young with the majority of the respondents younger than 40 years of age (73%). The majority (70%) of the respondents had less than ten years' work experience. The majority of the respondents had post-matric qualifications (72%) with respondents with diplomas making up the largest group at 44%. It was also evident that the majority of the respondents (53%) occupy T05-T10/11 job grading positions, which is essentially an entry level position at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office.

#### **4.3.2 Section B – the UWES questionnaire feedback**

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) uses three sub-scales or themes, namely vigour, dedication and absorption. Vigour is characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience. Dedication is characterised by a sense of significance and inspiration. Absorption is characterised by being fully engrossed in your work (Schaufeli et al., 2003).

##### **4.3.2.1 Vigour**

The vigour measurements are displayed on two graphs – Figure 4.7: Vigour I and Figure 4.8: Vigour II. In figures 4.7 and 4.8 the six questions relate to the level of vigour present amongst the respondents. Those who scored high on vigour usually have lots of energy and stamina when working and vice versa.



**Figure 4.7 Vigour I**

Figure 4.7 provides a graphical presentation of the responses for Vigour I.

**Vigour 1: At my work, I feel bursting with energy**

The majority of the respondents (57.38%) indicated that they were bursting with energy at work, with 10.43% selecting always, 30.43% very often, and 16.52% often. Only 23.48% of the respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 19.67% of the respondents had a negative response with 12.17% selecting rarely, 3.48% almost never, and 3.48% never.

**Vigour 2: At my job, I feel strong and vigorous**

The majority of the respondents (66.42%) felt strong and vigorous at their jobs with 12.17% selecting always, 25.22% very often, and 26.96% often. Only 15.65% of the respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 20% of the respondents had a negative response with 13.91% selecting rarely, 5.22% almost never, and 0.87% never.

### Vigour 3: When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work

The majority of the respondents (63.48%) indicated that they feel like going to work when they get up in the morning with 19.13% selecting always, 21.74% very often, and 22.61% often. Only 13.04% of the respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 23.48% of the respondents had a negative response with 13.91% selecting rarely, 5.22% almost never, and 4.35% never.

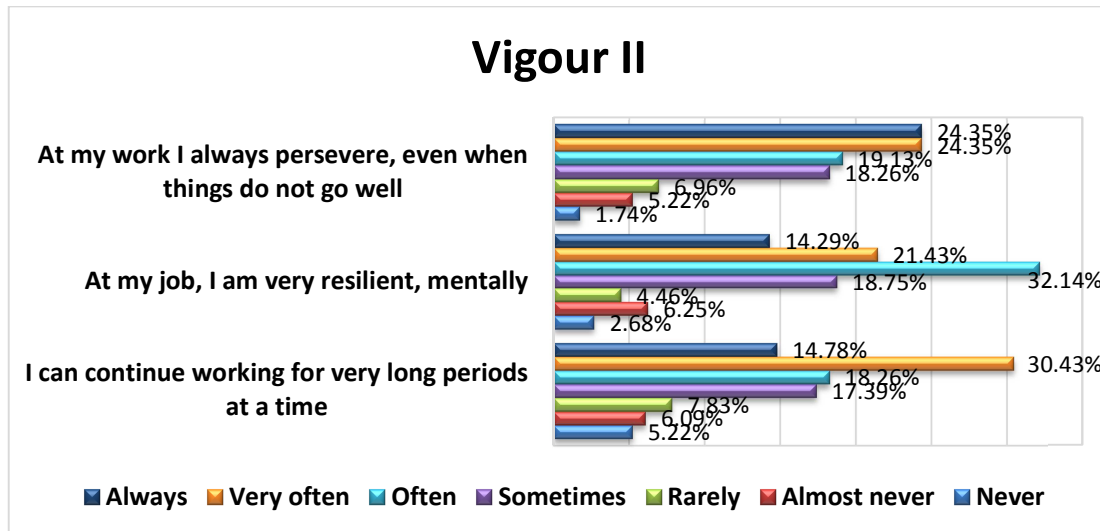


Figure 4.8 Vigour II

Figure 4.8 provides a graphical representation of the responses for Vigour II.

### Vigour 4: I can continue working for very long periods at a time

The majority of the respondents (63.47%) indicated that they can work for very long periods at a time with 14.78% selecting always, 30.43% very often, and 18.26% often. Only 17.39% of the respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 19.12% of the respondents had a negative response with 7.83% selecting rarely, 6.09% almost never, and 5.22% never.

### Vigour 5: At my job, I am very resilient, mentally

The majority of the respondents (67.86%) indicated that they are mentally very resilient at their jobs with 14.29% selecting always, 21.43% very often, and 32.14% often. Only 18.75% of the respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 13.39% of the respondents had a negative response with 4.46% selecting rarely, 6.25% almost never, and 2.68% never.

### Vigour 6: At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well

The majority of the respondents (67.83%) always persevere, even when things do not go well at their jobs, with 24.35% selecting always, 24.35% very often, and 19.13% often. Only 18.26% of the respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 13.92% of the respondents had a negative response with 6.96% selecting rarely, 5.22% almost never, and 1.74% never.

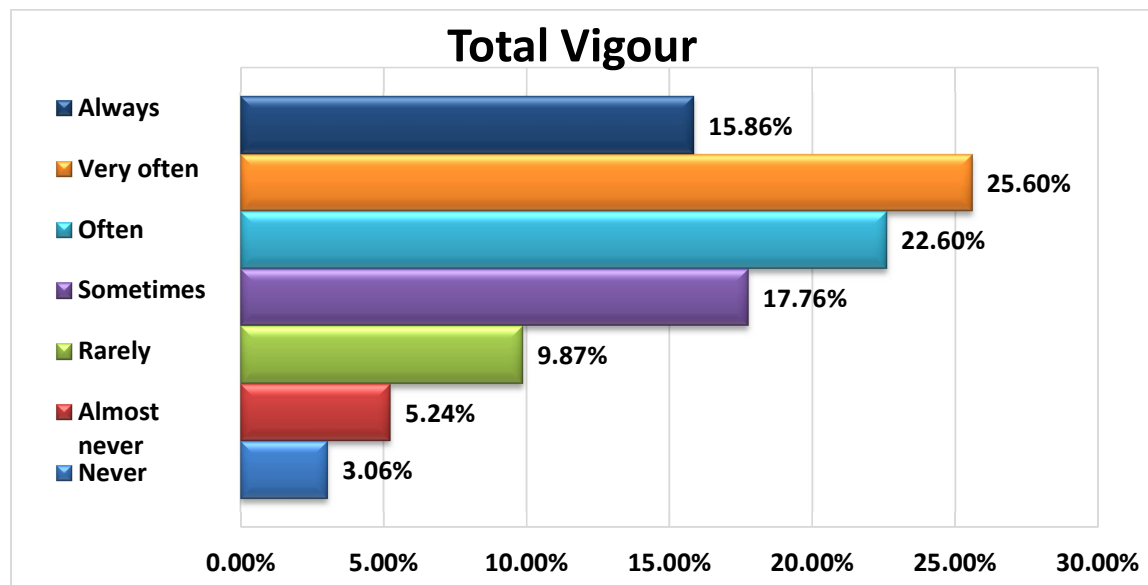


Figure 4.9 Vigour (Total)

Figure 4.9 provides a graphical representation of the total responses for Vigour.

From Figure 4.9, which is the total graphical representation, it is evident that the majority of the respondents had high levels of vigour with 64.06% of respondents displaying vigour often, very often, or always. A total of 17.76% of the respondents sometimes had vigour. A total of 18.17% of the respondents had a negative response with 9.87% selecting rarely, 8.70% almost never, and 3.48% never.

The four statements on vigour that received the largest percentage of negative responses were the following:

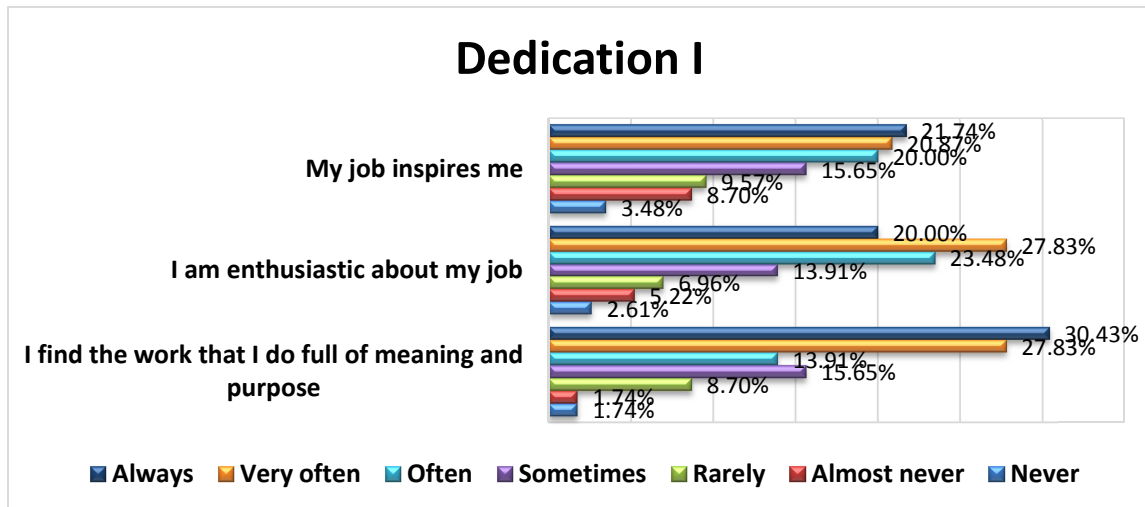
- When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work 23.48%.
- At my job, I feel strong and vigorous 20.00%.
- At my work, I feel bursting with energy 19.67%.
- I can continue working for very long periods at a time 19.12%.

By cross referencing the four statements above a total of nine respondents feel the same about these four statements. The majority of these nine respondents are younger than 31 years of age (6), female (5), black (5) with less than five years' experience (7) and work in Customer Services (5).

The results for vigour may also be indicative of a work environment that is not very supportive, meaning there isn't a good work-life balance and employees are not willing to go the extra mile for the organisation and easily get tired when performing their job. This is supported by Armstrong (2009), as indicated in Section 2.2.2, that an enabling and supportive work environment is characterised by a good work-life balance, healthy and safe working conditions, and consideration for job security and where personal growth is encouraged. The reason for the poor employee concentration could be caused by insufficient training and development since it would improve service accuracy and boost confidence, according to Anitha (2014) (see Section 2.2.2). It might also mean that the job tasks are very demanding and the employees cannot cope.

### 4.3.2.2 Dedication

The dedication measurements are displayed on two graphs – Figure 4.10: Dedication I and Figure 4.11: Dedication II. In figures 4.10 and 4.11 the five questions relate to the level of dedication that is present amongst the respondents. Those who scored high on dedication feel enthusiastic and proud about their jobs and it inspires and challenges them and vice versa.



**Figure 4.10 Dedication I**

Figure 4.10 provides a graphical representation of the responses for Dedication I.

#### **Dedication 1: I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose**

The majority of the respondents (71.17%) found their jobs full of meaning and purpose, with 30.43% selecting always, 27.83% very often, and 13.91% often. Only 15.65% of the respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 12.18% of the respondents had a negative response with 8.7% selecting rarely, 1.74% almost never, and 1.74% never.

#### **Dedication 2: I am enthusiastic about my job**

The majority of the respondents (71.31%) felt enthusiastic about their jobs with 20% selecting always, 27.83% very often, and 23.48% often. Only 13.91% of the

respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 14.79% of the respondents had a negative response with 6.96% selecting rarely, 5.22% almost never, and 2.61% never.

### Dedication 3: My job inspires me

The majority of the respondents (62.62%) felt that their jobs inspire them with 21.74% selecting always, 20.87% very often, and 20% often. Only 15.65% of the respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 21.75% of the respondents had a negative response with 9.57% selecting rarely, 8.70% almost never, and 3.48% never.

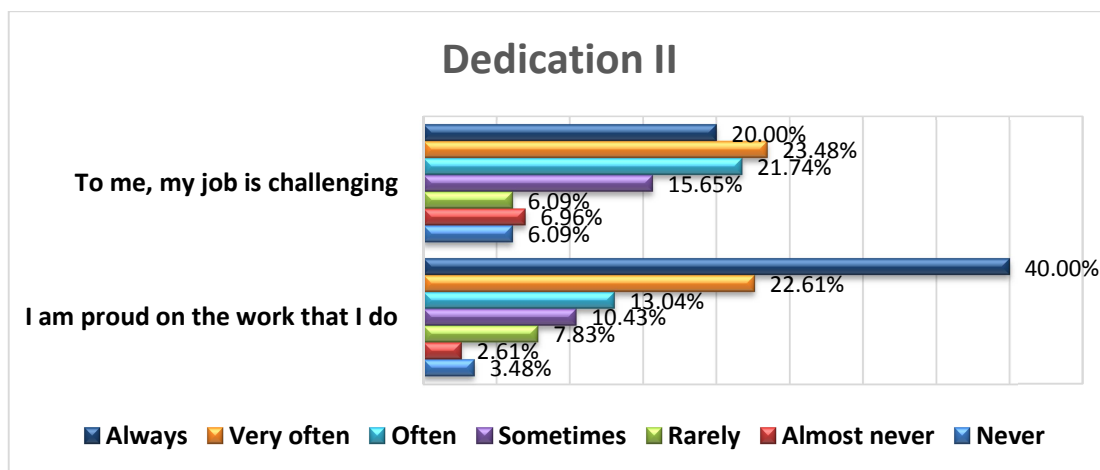


Figure 4.11 Dedication II

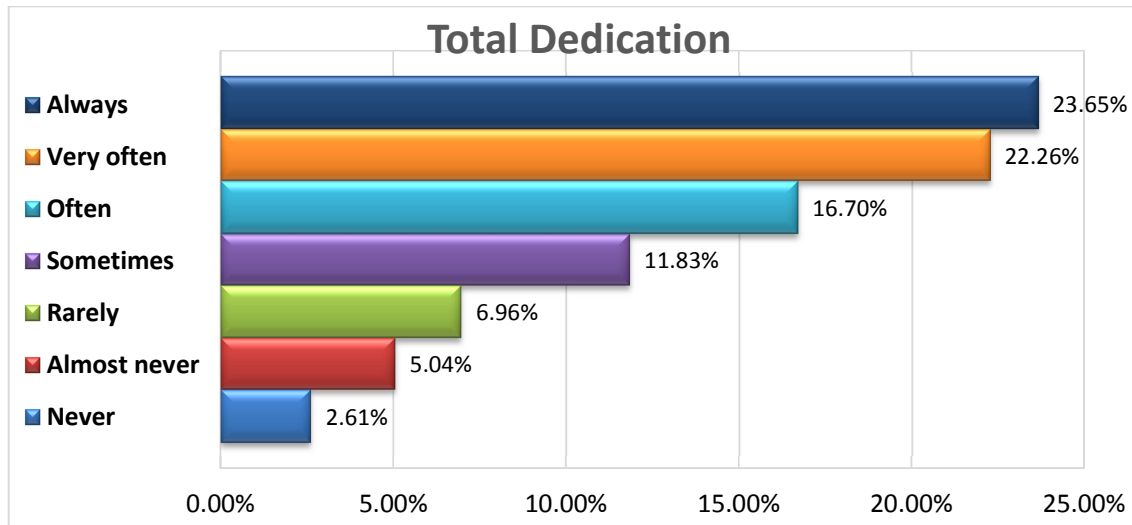
Figure 4.11 provides a graphical representation of the responses for Dedication II.

### Dedication 4: I am proud of the work that I do

The majority of the respondents (75.65%) felt proud of the work they do with 40% selecting always, 22.61% very often, and 13.04% often. Only 10.43% of the respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 13.92% of the respondents had a negative response with 7.83% selecting rarely, 2.61% almost never, and 3.48% never.

### Dedication 5: To me, my job is challenging

The majority of the respondents (65.22%) found their jobs challenging with 20% selecting always, 23.48% very often, and 21.74% often. Only 15.65% of the respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 19.13% of the respondents had a negative response with 6.09% selecting rarely, 6.96% almost never, and 6.09% never.



**Figure 4.12 Dedication (Total)**

Figure 4.12 provides a total graphical representation of the responses for dedication.

From Figure 4.12, which is a total graphical representation of dedication, it is evident that the majority of the respondents showed high levels of dedication with 62.61% of the respondents displaying dedication often, very often and always. A total of 11.83% of the respondents were sometimes dedicated. A total of 14.61% respondents had a negative response.

The two statements on dedication that received the largest number of negative responses were the following:

- My job inspires me 21.75%.
- To me, my job is challenging 19.13%.

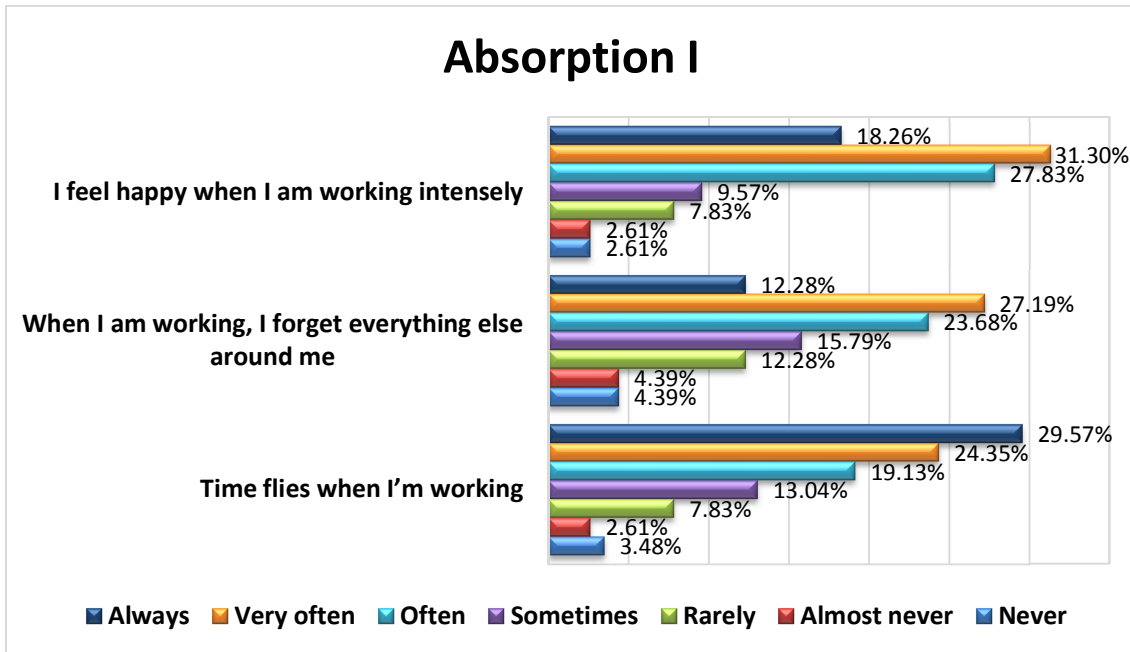


By cross referencing the two statements above a total of 14 respondents felt the same about these two dedication factors. The majority of these 14 respondents are younger than 31 years of age (9), black (9), with less than five years' experience (8), and work in Customer Services (8). The split between male and female was fifty per cent.

The results for dedication paints a picture of employees that cannot find inspiration or challenge in their jobs and this may be because they cannot see the link between what they do and the organisation's overall goals. It is a leader's job to provide clear direction of where the organisation is going and also to communicate to employees how important their work is to the organisation's success, according to Wiley (2010) (see Section 2.2.2). This is echoed by Macleod and Clarke (2009) (see Section 2.3) who state that it is the leader's job to be visible and provide employees a line of sight between their job and the vision and aims of the organisation and ensure that it is understood by all.

#### **4.3.2.3 Absorption**

The absorption measurements are displayed on two graphs – Figure 4.13: Absorption I and Figure 4.14: Absorption II. In figures 4.13 and 4.14 the six questions relate to the level of absorption that is present amongst the respondents. Those who scored high on absorption are immersed in their jobs and find it tough to detach themselves and vice versa.



**Figure 4.13 Absorption I**

Figure 4.13 provides a graphical representation of the responses for Absorption I.

**Absorption 1: Time flies when I'm working**

The majority of the respondents (73.05%) found that time flew when they were working, with 29.57% selecting always, 24.35% very often, and 19.13% often. Only 13.04% of the respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 13.92% of the respondents had a negative response with 7.83% selecting rarely, 2.61% almost never, and 3.48% never.

**Absorption 2: When I am working, I forget everything else around me**

The majority of the respondents (63.15%) forgot everything else around them when they were working, with 12.28% selecting always, 27.19% very often, and 23.68% often. Only 15.79% of the respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 21.06% of the respondents had a negative response with 12.28% selecting rarely, 4.39% almost never, and 4.39% never.

### Absorption 3: I feel happy when I am working intensely

The majority of the respondents (77.39%) felt happy when they were working intensely with 18.26% selecting always, 31.3% very often, and 27.83% often. Only 9.57% of the respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 13.05% of the respondents had a negative response with 7.83% selecting rarely, 2.61% almost never, and 2.61% never.

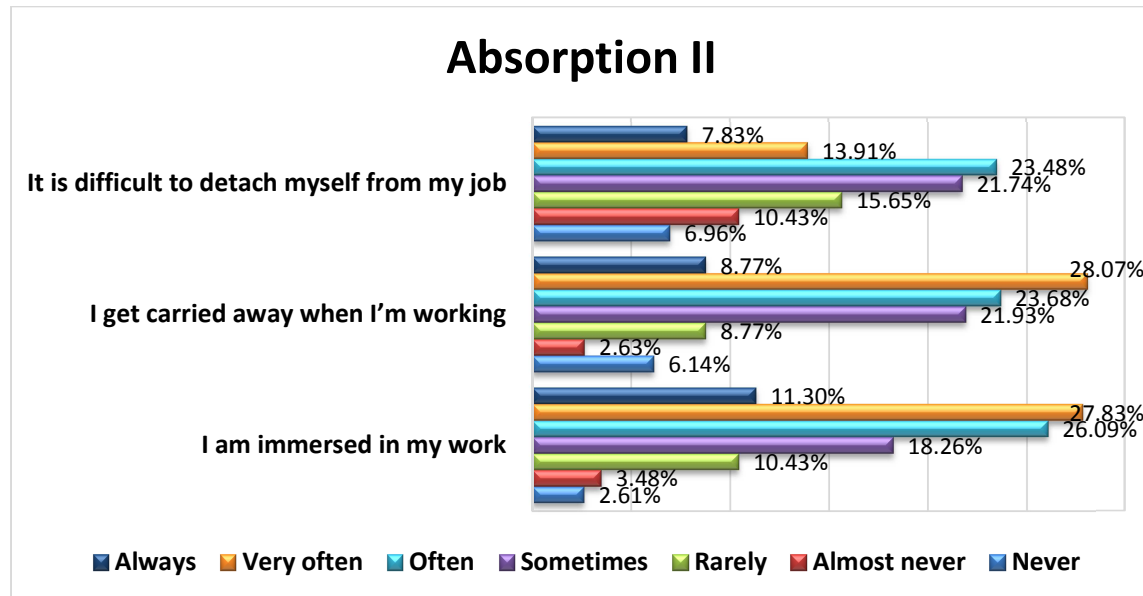


Figure 4.14 Absorption II

Figure 4.14 provides a graphical representation of the responses for Absorption II.

### Absorption 4: I am immersed in my work

The majority of the respondents (65.22%) were immersed in their work, with 11.3% selecting always, 27.83% very often, and 26.09% often. Only 18.26% of the respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 16.52% of the respondents were not immersed in their work, with 10.43% selecting rarely, 3.48% almost never, and 2.61% never.

### Absorption 5: I get carried away when I'm working

The majority of the respondents (60.52%) got carried away when they were working, with 8.77% selecting always, 28.07% very often, and 23.68% often. Only 21.93% of the respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 17.54% did not get carried away when they were working, with 8.77% of the respondents selecting rarely, 2.63% almost never, and 6.14% never.

### Absorption 6: It is difficult to detach myself from my job

The minority of the respondents (45.22%) found it difficult to detach themselves from their jobs, with 7.83% selecting always, 13.91% very often, and 23.48% often. Only 21.74% of the respondents sometimes felt that way. A total of 23.04% of the respondents had a negative response, with 5.65% selecting rarely, 10.43% almost never, and 6.96% never.

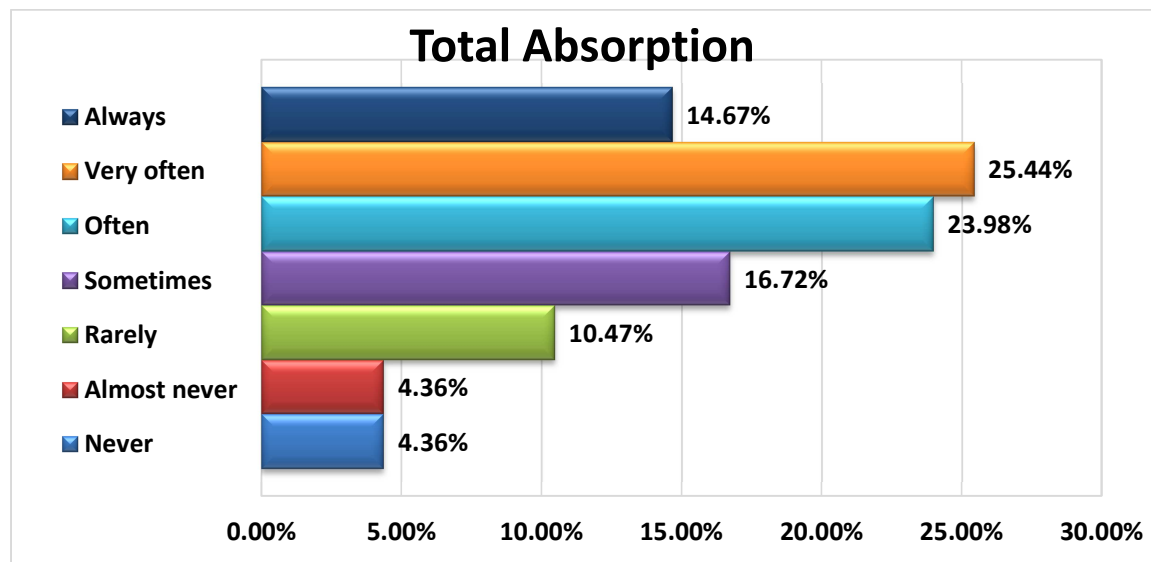


Figure 4.15 Absorption (Total)

Figure 4.15 provides a total graphical representation of the responses for absorption.

From Figure 4.15, which is the total graphical representation of absorption, it is evident that the majority of the respondents showed high levels of absorption with

64.09% of respondents displaying levels of absorption often, very often and always. A total of 16.72% of the respondents were sometimes absorbed. A total of 19.19% of the respondents had a negative response.

The two statements on absorption that received the largest number of negative responses were the following:

- When I am working, I forget everything else around me 21.06%.
- It is difficult to detach myself from my job 23.04%.

By cross referencing the two statements above a total of 15 respondents felt the same about these two factors. The majority of these 15 respondents are younger than 31 years of age (10), male (10), black (7) with less than five years' experience (6) and work in Customer Services (6).

The absorption results for the two statements above may indicate non-commitment and a lack of involvement by employees in their jobs. They are not immersed in their jobs at all – it is only a means to an end.

#### **4.3.2.4 Level of engagement**

A 6-point scale was used for the questions, ranging from 0 for Never to 6 for Always. These responses were then added and divided by the number of respondents, giving a mean (average) value ranging from 1 to 6 with 3 the middle value (lower than 3 indicate low engagement – thus, the closer the mean is to 6, the more engaged the respondents are regarding the specific issue). However, because it was working with categorical variables the mean could not be interpreted as it was. Therefore, the mean for each question was changed into a factor value (FV) or an average score (AS). The FV was then calculated. A mean of 3 is therefore equal to a FV of 0.5 (or 50%). A high FV (> 0.5) indicated that the majority of the respondents are engaged.

**Table 4.1 Variable scales**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Factor Value (FV)</b>	<b>Average Score (AS)</b>
<b>VIGOUR 1</b>	3.791	0.632	
<b>VIGOUR 2</b>	3.870	0.645	
<b>VIGOUR 3</b>	3.861	0.643	
<b>VIGOUR 4</b>	3.878	0.646	
<b>VIGOUR 5</b>	3.929	0.655	
<b>VIGOUR 6</b>	4.183	0.697	<b>0.653</b>
<b>DEDICATION 1</b>	4.435	0.739	
<b>DEDICATION 2</b>	4.139	0.690	
<b>DEDICATION 3</b>	3.896	0.649	
<b>DEDICATION 4</b>	4.548	0.758	
<b>DEDICATION 5</b>	3.904	0.651	<b>0.697</b>
<b>ABSORPTION 1</b>	4.330	0.722	
<b>ABSORPTION 2</b>	3.807	0.635	
<b>ABSORPTION 3</b>	4.243	0.707	
<b>ABSORPTION 4</b>	3.904	0.651	
<b>ABSORPTION 5</b>	3.737	0.623	
<b>ABSORPTION 6</b>	3.174	0.529	<b>0.644</b>

From Table 4.1 it is evident that all factor values are above 0.5, which means that the majority of the respondents are engaged.

#### **4.3.2.5 Test for reliability**

To test for reliability four variables were constructed, namely: vigour, dedication, absorption and overall engagement. A Cronbach Alpha was calculated in order to determine the reliability of the variables constructed. The Cronbach Alpha determines the reliability of the scale used as well as testing whether or not the items used for a construct/variable actually measured that particular construct. A value above 0.5 was required in order to conclude that it was a reliable scale.

**Table 4.2 Cronbach Alpha values**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Nr of Items</b>
<b>Vigour</b>	0.888	6
<b>Dedication</b>	0.915	5
<b>Absorption</b>	0.890	6
<b>Engagement</b>	0.959	17

As indicated in Table 4.2 from the constructed variables, the Cronbach's alphas were all greater than 0.5 which indicated that the scale was reliable.

#### **4.3.2.6 Tests of normality**

In order to test for group differences, it was first required to test whether or not the four variables vigour, dedication, absorption and engagement were normally distributed. This test had to be done to ensure that the correct tests were used for significant differences. The p-value was compared with a significance level of 0.1. If the p-value was less than 0.1, it could be concluded that the variable was not normally distributed.

**Table 4.3 KS Statistic values**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>KS Statistic</b>	<b>p-value</b>
<b>Vigour</b>	0.112	0.001
<b>Dedication</b>	0.122	0.000
<b>Absorption</b>	0.119	0.000
<b>Engagement</b>	0.100	0.007

\* - KS = Kolmogorov-Smirnov

In Table 4.3 all the p-values for the four variables were less than 0.1 which means that all the variables were not normally distributed. This meant that the T-test and ANOVA could not be used to test whether or not there were significant differences among the demographic groups for each of the variables vigour, dedication, absorption and engagement. Instead, the Mann-Whitney test and the Kruskal-Wallis test had to be used respectively, which are tests used on variables that are not normally distributed. The results of these two tests are discussed below.

#### 4.3.2.7 Mann-Whitney U test

The Mann-Whitney U test is a nonparametric test that allows two groups or conditions or treatments to be compared without making the assumption that values are normally distributed. This test is used to determine if the group means of interval variables differ from one another and it is only used when there are two groups.

Here it was tested whether or not vigour, dedication, absorption, and overall engagement were the same across both gender groups. The p-value was considered and compared with a significance level of 0.1. If the p-value is less than 0.1 it is concluded that these variables differ between the two groups

**Table 4.4 Gender p-values**

<b>Gender</b>	
<b>Variables</b>	<b>P-value</b>
<b>Vigour</b>	0.098
<b>Dedication</b>	0.084
<b>Absorption</b>	0.350
<b>Engagement</b>	0.153

In Table 4.4 the p-values for absorption and overall engagement are 0.350 and 0.153 respectively and these are greater than 0.1. This means that absorption and engagement are the same between males and females. Table 4.4 also shows that the p-values for vigour and dedication are 0.098 and 0.084 respectively and these are less than 0.1. This means that vigour and dedication differ between males and females.

The degrees that the variables (vigour and dedication) differ between males and females were determined by means of calculating the averages. The higher the average, the more vigour and dedication are displayed by that particular gender.



**Table 4.5** Table of average values per gender

Variable	Gender	
	Male	Female
Vigour	24.26	21.68
Dedication	21.77	19.21

For Table 4.5 it can be seen that for vigour, males had an average of 24.26 and females an average of 21.68. This indicated that males displayed higher levels of vigour than females. For dedication, males had an average of 21.26 and females an average of 19.21. This indicated that males displayed higher levels of dedication than females.

#### 4.3.2.8 Kruskal-Wallis test

The Kruskal–Wallis test is used when there is one nominal variable and one measurement variable, an experiment that you would usually analyse using one-way ANOVA, but the measurement variable does not meet the normality assumption of a one-way ANOVA. This test is used when you want to see if the group means of interval variables differ from one another and it is used when there are three or more groups.

Here it was tested whether or not vigour, dedication, absorption, and overall engagement are the same across all age groups, ethnic groups, departments and levels of job grading. The p-value was considered and compared with a significance level of 0.1. If the p-value is less than 0.1 it is concluded that these variables are different among the groups.

##### 4.3.2.8.1 Analysis according to age

**Table 4.6** Age p-values

Age	
Variables	P-value
Vigour	0.006
Dedication	0.002
Absorption	0.015
Engagement	0.005

In Table 4.6 all p-values for vigour, dedication, absorption and overall engagement are less than 0.1. This meant that these variables differ across age groups.

The degrees that the variables differ across the age groups were determined by means of calculating the averages. The higher the average the more vigour, dedication, absorption and engagement are displayed per age group.

**Table 4.7 Average values per age group**

Variables	Average values per Age			
	<30	31-40	41-50	>50
<b>Vigour</b>	20.12	24.74	25.00	<b>27.15</b>
<b>Dedication</b>	18.00	21.56	23.28	<b>24.77</b>
<b>Absorption</b>	20.15	24.00	<b>26.06</b>	25.62
<b>Engagement</b>	58.27	70.30	74.33	<b>77.54</b>

In Table 4.7 it is evident respondents in the age group older than 50 years of age had the highest levels of vigour (27.15) and dedication (24.77). Respondents in the age group 41-50 years of age had the highest level of absorption (26.06). Overall, respondents in the age group older than 50 years of age were the most engaged (77.54), followed by the 41-50 years age group at 74.33. The least engaged were the respondents younger than 30 years of age (58.27).

#### 4.3.2.8.2 Analysis according to ethnicity

**Table 4.8 Ethnicity p-values**

Ethnicity	
Variables	P-value
<b>Vigour</b>	0.180
<b>Dedication</b>	0.049
<b>Absorption</b>	0.016
<b>Engagement</b>	0.050

The p-value vigour is 0.180 which is greater than 0.1. This means that vigour is the same for all ethnic groups. The p-values for dedication, absorption and overall engagement are less than 0.1. This means that dedication, absorption and overall engagement differ among the ethnic groups.

The degrees that the variables (dedication, absorption and overall engagement) differ across the ethnic groups were determined by means of calculating the averages. The higher the average the more dedication, absorption and engagement are displayed by that ethnic group.

**Table 4.9 Average values per ethnic group**

Variables	Ethnicity		
	Black	White	Other
<b>Dedication</b>	21.22	22.39	16.43
<b>Absorption</b>	22.95	25.75	18.86
<b>Engagement</b>	67.64	73.00	55.43

From Table 4.9 it is evident that whites showed higher levels of dedication (22.39), absorption (25.75) and engagement (73) compared to blacks, who had averages of 21.22 for dedication, 22.95 for absorption and 67.64 for engagement.

#### 4.3.2.8.3 Analysis according to department

**Table 4.10 P-values per department**

Department	
Variables	P-value
<b>Vigour</b>	0.002
<b>Dedication</b>	0.000
<b>Absorption</b>	0.001
<b>Engagement</b>	0.000

Figure 4.10 indicates that all p-values for vigour, dedication, absorption and overall engagement are less than 0.1. This means that these variables (vigour, dedication, absorption and overall engagement) differ across departments.

The degrees that the variables differ across the departments were determined by means of calculating the averages. The higher the average the more vigour, dedication, absorption and engagement are displayed by that department.

**Table 4.11 Table of average values per department**

	Department			
	Customer Services	Asset Creation	Maintenance & Operations	Other
<b>Vigour</b>	17.90	23.50	25.77	21.67
<b>Dedication</b>	13.90	21.42	23.63	19.00
<b>Absorption</b>	16.38	23.42	25.71	22.67
<b>Engagement</b>	48.19	68.33	75.12	63.33

From Table 4.11 it can be deduced that the Maintenance and Operations department showed higher levels of vigour (25.77), dedication (23.63), absorption (25.71) and engagement (75.12) than the other departments. The Customer Services department showed the lowest levels of vigour (17.9), dedication (13.9), absorption (16.38) and engagement (48.19).

#### **4.3.2.8.4 Analysis according to job grading**

**Table 4.12 Job grading p-values**

Job grading	
Variables	P-value
<b>Vigour</b>	0.149
<b>Dedication</b>	0.310
<b>Absorption</b>	0.106
<b>Engagement</b>	0.171

From Table 4.12 it is evident that all p-values for vigour, dedication, absorption and overall engagement are greater than 0.1. This means that these variables are the same for all job grading levels. Since it is the same for all job gradings, it was not necessary to distinguish how different job grading experience vigour, dedication, absorption and overall engagement.

## **4.4 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presents the findings of research conducted at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office in Bloemfontein. The overall results indicate that the majority of the respondents are engaged. The research also show that the males are more engaged, respondents older than 50 years of age are more engaged, the

white ethnic group is more engaged and lastly that of all the departments represented by the respondents, the Maintenance and Operations department is the most engaged. The level of disengagement amongst black females younger than 31 years of age with less than 5 years' experience working in Customer Services is alarming. The study highlighted two profiles: a white male older than 50 years of age working in the Maintenance and Operations department who is highly engaged versus a black female younger than 31 years of age with less than 5 years' experience working in the Customer Services department who is the least engaged.

The next section focuses on the findings and recommendations of the study, as well as the limitations.

## **CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter 4 the results obtained from the quantitative study was analysed. The following chapter provides an overview of the findings of the quantitative data from the study conducted at Eskom Free State Operating Unit Head Office on the level of employee engagement. The chapter also contains the limitations of the study and recommendations to enhance further studies into employee engagement at Eskom Free State.

The results obtained from the study can add great value to the organisation. By knowing the current employee engagement levels, future employee engagement initiatives can be planned and the relationship between employee engagement and the biographical factors of its employees can be understood.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections, namely questions concerning the biographical information of the respondents, and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) questionnaire that measured employee engagement. The respondents were measured in order to evaluate the current level of employee engagement at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office in Bloemfontein. The biographical information responses assisted in determining the relationship between employee engagement and the biographical characteristics of employees.

### **5.2 CONCLUSIONS**

#### **5.2.1 Evaluating employee engagement**

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) questionnaire consisted of 17 questions and had three sub-scales or themes, namely vigour (6 questions), dedication (5 questions) and absorption (6 questions). Vigour is characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience. Dedication is characterised by a sense of significance and inspiration. Absorption is characterised by being fully engrossed in one's work.

The overall results indicated that the majority of the respondents are engaged. For vigour the score was 65.3%, 69.7% for dedication, and 64.4% for absorption. This is an indication of healthy levels of employee engagement at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office in Bloemfontein. Respondents showed perseverance and resilience even when things do not go according to plan. Respondents also feel enthusiastic and find meaning and purpose in what they do. The work that is being done makes them proud. They feel happy when they work intensely and time flies as a result of that.

There were, however, areas that need attention. The results for vigour indicated a work environment that is not very supportive, meaning there is not a good work–life balance and employees are unwilling to go the extra mile for the organisation and easily get tired when doing their job. Respondents did not feel like going to work in the morning and did not have high levels of energy and mental resilience.

The results for dedication paint a picture of employees who do not find their jobs inspirational or challenging and this may be because they cannot see the link between what they do and the organisation's overall goals.

The absorption results indicate non-commitment and a lack of involvement by employees in their jobs. They are not immersed in their jobs at all – it is only a means to an end. Non-commitment, according to Armstrong (2009), is organisation-oriented, and employees who are not committed are not inclined to put much effort into their work and have no interest in the organisation or desire to stay there. This may be caused by not providing opportunities for job advancement and not giving recognition for high performers.

### **5.2.2 Relationship between employee engagement levels and the biographical factors of employees**

The biographical section consisted of seven questions that required respondents to answer questions related to their age, gender, ethnicity, years of service, the department they worked in, their job grading and finally their highest qualification.

The research showed that males were more engaged than females. Respondents older than 50 years of age were the most engaged, the white ethnic group was more engaged and lastly, of all the departments, the respondents representing the Maintenance and Operations department are the most engaged. It was, however, alarming to notice the level of disengagement amongst black females younger than 31 years of age with less than 5 years' experience working in the Customer Services department. The study highlighted two profiles: a white male older than 50 years of age working in the Maintenance and Operations department, who is highly engaged versus a black female younger than 31 years of age with less than 5 years' experience working in the Customer Services department, being the least engaged.

The findings concerning males and older employees being more engaged supports what Schaufeli and Salanova (2003) found in their research as noted in Section 2.6.2. An eye opener was the difference in engagement between ethnic groups. Vigour was the same for all ethnic groups, but dedication, absorption and overall engagement differ among the ethnic groups. The black ethnic group showed lower dedication, absorption and overall engagement compared to whites.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section presents the recommendations from the study. It will greatly assist management to have better focused employee engagement interventions.

#### **5.3.1 Interventions to maintain and improve current employee engagement levels**

Although the current employee engagement levels indicate that the majority of respondents are engaged continuous interventions are still required from leadership to maintain and improve it further.

Conduct roadshows with staff to share the business priorities and focus areas. Use these roadshows to also highlight and reinforce the part each employee plays in achieving said priorities. Ensure that all Executive leadership is present at these roadshows to indicate a supportive management team. It is important that there are two way conversations at these roadshows and employees are allowed to engage



and provide input. All agreed actions must be acted on and regular updates provided to employees on progress.

Create engagement platforms at various sites. An introduction of an Employee Engagement E-bulletin can be considered as a means to reach all employees and to create awareness.

Conduct quarterly employee engagement surveys in the Free State Operating Unit to see if the interventions are having the desired effect.

### **5.3.2 Future employee engagement interventions for Customer Services department**

Future interventions to increase engagement should focus on especially the customer services department since these employees were disengaged. Management should ensure that employees have adequate job resources, that it is a correct job fit and that there is leadership support to enable employees to do their jobs well.

It is also important to note that interventions should focus on young employees who are younger than 31 years of age. Consider voluntary job rotations if possible.

### **5.3.3 Further Investigations Required**

Further investigation is required on the use of the internationally based and developed Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) in a South African context since the findings highlighted engagement differences among ethnic groups.

Since the sample only consisted of employees working at Eskom Free State Operating Unit Head Office in Bloemfontein, it is recommended that further studies be expanded to other field offices of the Free State Operating Unit.

## **5.4 CONCLUSION**

The primary objective of the study was to evaluate employee engagement at Eskom Distribution Free State Operating Unit Head Office in Bloemfontein. The secondary objectives addressed the relationship between employee engagement and

biographical factors at Eskom Distribution Free State. In Chapter 5 the research findings were provided to meet said objectives. It also focused on the overall conclusions with reference to the literature study, research methodology and the study results. In closing, recommendations are made in order for the organisation to maintain and even improve their current engagement levels and for future research on employee engagement.

The study contributes towards evaluating the current levels of employee engagement at Eskom Free State Operating Unit Head Office in Bloemfontein and also provides an understanding of which biographical profiles at Eskom Free State Operating Unit Head Office are the most engaged and which are disengaged. This will allow management to better focus their future employment engagement strategies.

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## APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

<b>SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION</b>
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Please mark your answers with an X in the appropriate block

**1. What is your age?**

≤ 30		31-40		41-50		51-60		> 60	
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**2. What is your gender?**

Male	Female
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**3. What is your race?**

Black		Coloured		Indian		White		Other	
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**4. How many years have you worked for Eskom?**

0-5 years		6-10 years		11-15 years		>15 years	
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**5. Please indicate in which department you are working**

Customer Services		Human Resources		Asset Creation		Maintenance & Operations		Finance	
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**6. What is your job grading?**

T05- T10/T11		T12/P13		M/P14/15- 16		M/P17- 18	
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**7. What is your highest qualification**

Matric		Diploma		Degree		Post Grad	
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**SECTION B: EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

The following statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, insert the "0" (zero) in the space after the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you feel it by inserting the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Rarely Once a month or less	Sometimes A few times a month	Often Once a week	Very often A few times a week	Always Every day

1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy \_\_\_\_\_
2. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose \_\_\_\_\_
3. Time flies when I'm working \_\_\_\_\_
4. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous \_\_\_\_\_
5. I am enthusiastic about my job \_\_\_\_\_
6. When I am working, I forget everything else around me \_\_\_\_\_
7. My job inspires me \_\_\_\_\_
8. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work \_\_\_\_\_



9. I feel happy when I am working intensely \_\_\_\_\_
10. I am proud on the work that I do \_\_\_\_\_
11. I am immersed in my work \_\_\_\_\_
12. I can continue working for very long periods at a time \_\_\_\_\_
13. To me, my job is challenging \_\_\_\_\_
14. I get carried away when I'm working \_\_\_\_\_
15. At my job, I am very resilient, mentally \_\_\_\_\_
16. It is difficult to detach myself from my job \_\_\_\_\_
17. At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B: LETTER OF CONSENT



Date:  
30 Jan 2015  
Enquiries:  
Mr Len Turner  
Telephone:  
+27 11 800-5184

To: The Registrar  
Free State University

### ETHICS CLEARANCE: CONFIRMATION OF ESKOM INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND SECURITY CLEARANCE FOR MASTERS RESEARCH – MR. LLEWELLYN BOK

This memorandum serves as an ethics clearance; confirmation of Eskom intellectual property rights and security clearance for the continuation of Masters level research and write-up by Mr. L. Bok. The research topic is "to determine the level of employee engagement at Eskom Distribution Free State".

Mr. Bok has followed due internal processes in terms of gaining permission for this research.

It must be noted that this general clearance is for a limited period only, which will be for the rest of the financial year 2014 till end 2016, and in no way waives Eskom's Intellectual Property Rights.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Len Turner".

**Len Turner**  
Senior Consultant  
Talent and Skills Management