

A systems approach to work engagement
in the Department of Finance at the
University of the Free State

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I would like to share the quote that inspired me to enrol for this MBA in the first place:

It's not only children who grow. Parents do too. As much as we watch to see what our children do with their lives, they are watching us to see what we do with ours. I can't tell my children to reach for the sun. All I can do is to reach for it, myself.

Joyce Maynard.

Declaration

“I declare that the field study hereby handed in for the qualification Master’s in Business Administration at the UFS Business School of the University of the Free State is my own independent work and that I have not previously submitted the same work, either as a whole or in part, for a qualification at/in another university/faculty.

“I also cede copyright of the study to the University of the Free State.”

Signed by: Perle Johene du Plessis

Date: 31 October 2016

Abstract

The purpose of the research was to determine how a systems approach could enhance work engagement in the Department of Finance at the University of the Free State (UFS). Drivers for work engagement were identified. Theoretical principles for assessing work engagement were identified through a literature review and key variables influencing work engagement determined. Models to evaluate and assess work engagement were reviewed to define the key drivers of a systems approach to work engagement. A research survey was conducted to validate, compare and contrast interpretations made with regard to a systems approach in order to enhance work engagement in the Department of Finance at the UFS.

A quantitative research design from the perspective of a pragmatist research approach was used. The descriptive study assisted the researcher in providing an overview of the theoretical principles to assess employee engagement, assessing how the theoretical principles relate to the employees at the Department of Finance at the UFS, identifying the drivers of employee engagement to develop a systems approach and identifying areas for further research. The study was quantitative in nature, which limited researcher involvement and eliminated preparation for respondents.

The results of the study indicated that work engagement is driven at three levels at the UFS, namely the individual level, team level and organisational level. The individual level portrayed the employees' internal perspective through vigour, dedication and absorption. The average investment made in individual-level work engagement averaged at 71.5% engagement input. When work engagement at team-level was considered, the drivers derived to assess work engagement at a team level were autonomy, supervisory coaching, performance management and teamwork. Team-level work engagement averaged at 70%. Organisational-level engagement measured three drivers, namely inspiring trust and integrity, extra-role performance and a culture of innovation, to average at 72%.

Recommendations towards addressing existing challenges at an individual work engagement level were to develop clear career paths and increase focus on work for higher productivity. Work engagement at a team level will be enhanced by increasing supervisory coaching. The supervisor should give regular feedback on performance

and communication, knowledge of divisional processes among teams should be enhanced and supervisors should be equipped to form better teams. Organisational work engagement would be enhanced by understanding how actions influence the trust relationship between supervisors and employees.

The benefits of a systems approach to work engagement would be to improve the impact, understanding and monitoring of work engagement strategies by identifying role players and assigning responsibilities at each level. The perception that the success of work engagement is solely in the hands of the employee is diminished, and the influence of the team and organisation can also be considered. Taking the three levels of work engagement into account, time and money can now be directed where they are needed so as to maximise the return on work engagement for the organisation.

Key words: work engagement, employee engagement, systems approach, vigour, dedication, absorption, supervisory coaching

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Chapter 1: Research proposal

1.1. Background

Globalisation and the unstable world economy increase the pressure on employees and organisations to remain competitive (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010). Remaining competitive requires employees to be flexible, innovative and able to handle the complexities they face, all with minor hindrance to processes. Organisations expect increasingly more from employees as far as their workload is concerned. These expectations are either internally generated or created by forces in the external environment. Either way, these expectations also place increasing emotional requirements on employees in order for them to express their commitment to the organisation, their customers and their work (Davila & Pina-Ramirez, 2014).

In many competing organisations, processes and services can be duplicated, but what gives the competitive edge is the employees performing those tasks or dealing with those customers. Due to globalisation and the use of technology, companies are exposed to greater reputational risk, adding pressure on employees to perform every time, all the time. Modern organisations expect employees to be engaged, proactive and committed to high quality performance standards, as well as to take responsibility for their own development (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010).

Davila and Pina-Ramirez (2014) describe work engagement as the backbone of a business and as dynamic over the employee's employment and overall career. Work engagement has respect, trust and performance at its core. Studies by Deloitte (2015) indicate that 78% of business leaders regard work engagement as important, but 75% of organisations have no engagement strategy. According to a Towers Watson Survey conducted in the United States of America (USA), disengagement costs up to \$550 billion per year in lost productivity (Galagan, 2015). Galagan (2015) states that despite great amounts spent on engagement since 2000, the percentage of disengaged employees in the US remains at 66%. An important question is whether organisations know what employees want and, in addition, whether employees know what they want in terms of their work environment and their relationship with their employer.

According to Galagan (2015), academics and consultants have identified common mistakes organisations make with regard to work engagement. Firstly, organisations misinterpret data about work engagement or wrongly act thereon, channelling the money spent and the engagement efforts in the wrong direction. This expenditure, as well as the efforts, could ultimately become wasteful. Secondly, there is poor communication about job expectations to inspire engagement, which can lead to a lack of motivation to perform better. Thirdly, career paths at some levels in the organisation are unclear, leaving employees confused about growth possibilities. Fourthly, it is suggested that the company culture could have an effect on engagement. Employees look up to managers for trust and inspiration, and if employees find managers too lightweight, they become disengaged. Fifthly, it is often perceived that engagement is driven by managers when this may not necessarily be the case, as employees decide for themselves at which level they are prepared to engage. Lastly, when companies are ungenerous with recognition, employees might withhold engagement as they feel that it will not be appropriately recognised. There is no common agreement among academics and consultants as to what employees want, but it could encompass frequent recognition, clear expectations, explicit values about performance, constant pulse taking, more money or none of these requirements (Galagan, 2015).

Employees in the Department of Finance at the University of the Free State (UFS) are not exempt from these requirements. The Department of Finance is a support service of the UFS to students, staff and external clients. The department's main objectives are:

- to uphold the financial policies of the university in support of the university strategies;
- to record accurate, complete and valid transactions in the general ledgers;
- to charge and collect tuition fees from students; and
- to provide guidance to management structures that will ensure financial sustainability (UFS, 2016).

For optimal functionality, the finance department is subdivided into ten divisions: Assets, Budgets, Creditors, Commercial Debtors, Entries into General Ledger, General Bookkeeping, Insurance, Provisioning, Salaries and Tuition Fees.

With the struggling world economy, state pockets are also under pressure. The South African economy is growing at a much slower rate than predicted by the South African Reserve Bank (SARB), i.e. 0.9% vs the required 6% (Monetary Policy Committee [MPC], 2016). Government struggles to keep its promise of “a better life for all”, being constantly crippled by corruption, an inability to create jobs, skills shortages, poverty alleviation and ineffective management in general. Government relies on the higher education sector to address the skills shortages to grow the economy. South Africa will increase the amount spent on higher education with an average of 7.1% from 2014 to 2018, but it seems as if the impact thereof is not enough (Department: National Treasury, 2015). Although South Africa contributes 0.7% of its gross domestic product (GDP) to higher education, this is still remarkably lower than the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average of 1.2% of GDP (Conversation, 2016).

Universities are funded by three income streams, namely government subsidy, student fees and income generated privately by institutions. The government subsidy is the largest form of income, followed by student fees and private income respectively. The subsidy from government declined from 49% in 2000 to 40% in 2012, increasing the liability on students to fund themselves from 24% to 31% for the same period (PricewaterhouseCoopers [PwC], 2014). Universities are under pressure to increase access, so to stay afloat, it was inevitable that tuition fees would increase. Tuition fees at the 23 public universities increased from R12.3 billion in 2010 to R15.5 billion in 2012 (PwC, 2014). The struggling economy and this dependency on tuition fees formed the building blocks for the #FeesMustFall campaign in 2015. Students protested at universities around the country and marched to the Union Buildings on 23 October 2015 to show support. This led to the president, Jacob Zuma, calling a fee increase of 0% at all universities in 2016 (Bateman, 2015).

In addition to the monetary constraints, the transformation agenda in higher education has been neglected, which was the drive behind the #RhodesMustFall campaign and the #OpenStellenbosch campaigns in 2015. The council of the University of Cape

Town ruled that the statue of Cecil John Rhodes should be removed from campus to resolve the immediate racial tension on campus, but addressing the transformation agenda will be a longer process (Hess, 2015). The removal of symbols and statues of apartheid and human injustice blew over to all universities in the country. The Open Stellenbosch movement demanded the immediate change of the language policy to remove Afrikaans as academic language and expressed its frustrations with the slow pace of transformation at the university (Petersen, 2015).

Together with the transformation outcry, student movements of the universities of the Witwatersrand, the Free State and Cape Town as well as Rhodes University demanded that the outsourcing of labour at universities should come to an end. Outsourcing refers to services, like cleaning, gardening and security, that are not core business but are essential to delivering a good academic experience. Outsourced services, in terms of people employed, comprise a large number of people, sometimes almost the same number as academia. Large infrastructure budgets are required to establish and maintain these outsourced services. University management promised to look into funding plans to meet this demand. All the demands made to universities by students have a substantial financial impact and are not supported by an increased government subsidy.

The UFS did not escape the #FeesMustFall campaign and the pressure to accelerate transformation and outsourcing. The UFS committed to plans to expedite the transformation agenda and pay a living wage to service workers instead of insourcing. Making good the difference between the industry minimum wage and a R5 000 cost to company for full-time service workers, on the back of a 4% salary increase for employees in 2016, was a challenge. Employees accepted the below-inflation increase in 2016 but are becoming thinly stretched financially. The impression is also created that employees must fund the endless demands of students. The UFS council accepted guidelines to stop being a parallel medium institution (i.e. Afrikaans and English) to English only from 2017 (SABC, 2015). Change brings about uncertainty, and uncertainty can lead to confusion and mistrust among colleagues, especially when different languages are spoken.

The university is in the process of repositioning itself as an institution and has adopted the vision of a university recognised across the world for excellence in academic

achievement and in human reconciliation. Striving towards this vision requires operational excellence, which includes a culture of service along with doing things correctly the first time (UFS, 2012). With the focus on improving the quality and number of students attending the university as well as expanding academic personnel to service the student complement, the support services are pressurised to be innovative and not increase staff numbers. These changes in processes require engaged employees to increase integration between support service and academic departments, students and external clients. Funds are channelled towards expanding core business, i.e. academia, leaving support service business employees to do more for less.

Given the increased institutional focus on integration, the Finance employees receive negative feedback from academic departments, with complaints about processes that are too cumbersome to support them. Employees in the subdivisions of the finance department perceive their workload to be more than those of their colleagues, resulting in a higher staff turnover compared to other departments. The higher staff turnover hampers the department's business agility, adding pressure on the remaining staff. When departmental recreational functions are proposed, employees take leave to avoid interaction with colleagues.

1.2. Problem statement

The problem is that employees at the finance department at the UFS are currently not engaged, as is evidenced by the factors described in the previous paragraphs. If this situation continues, it could lead to a dysfunctional department that is not contributing optimally to the strategic goals of the UFS. This raises the following research questions:

- What are the theoretical principles for assessing work engagement in an organisation?
- What are the key variables influencing work engagement?
- What does the current work engagement environment in the Department of Finance at the UFS look like?

- What would be the key drivers of a systems approach to work engagement at the Department of Finance at the UFS?

1.3. Research objectives

The primary research objective of the study is to determine how a systems approach could enhance work engagement in the Department of Finance at the UFS. In order to achieve the primary research objective, the following secondary research objectives underpin the study:

- to provide an overview of the theoretical principles with which to assess work engagement in organisations;
- to determine the key variables influencing work engagement;
- to assess the current work engagement environment in the Department of Finance at the UFS; and
- to define the key drivers of a systems approach to work engagement at the Department of Finance at the UFS.

1.4. Research methodology

Research methodology outlines the systematic process by which information was collected to inform the research objectives. The process, discussed below, included the adoption of a research design, a sampling strategy, data collection methods and ethical considerations to best achieve the hallmarks of scientific research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

1.4.1. Research design

The study was conducted using a pragmatist research approach, as different theories for work engagement were applied to practice. A descriptive study was undertaken to assist the researcher in developing a systems approach to work engagement. The study was quantitative in nature to enhance consistency and minimise bias. Business research was done in the natural environment where events proceed normally, i.e. in a non-contrived setting. A field study was conducted using a survey (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

1.4.2. Sampling strategy

Non-probability sampling is used, meaning the findings from the study cannot be confidently generalised to the population. Comprehensive sampling is applied as the whole population was used for the sample, including all employees in the Department of Finance at the UFS. There are 100 employees in the Department of Finance at the Bloemfontein campus, representing the total population. All 100 employees are included in the sample size (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

1.4.3. Data collection methods

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) is used to measure work engagement. The UWES is a self-report questionnaire scored on a seven-point frequency rating scale, varying from 0 (never) to 6 (always) (Seppala et al., 2008).

1.5. Ethical considerations

Sekaran and Bougie (2013) state that ethics in business research refer to a code of conduct or expected societal norms of behaviour while conducting research and pervade each step of the research process. The following ethical considerations apply to the present study:

1.5.1. Objectivity

The conclusions were drawn from the actual facts of the findings, and researcher involvement was limited to prevent bias (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

1.5.2. Voluntary participation

Participation in this research was voluntary, that is, of the respondent's own free will. Measures were taken to ensure that respondents were well informed about the purpose of the study and not mislead (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

1.5.3. Informed consent

All respondents were fully informed about the purpose, rights and benefits of the research and were required to sign a consent form to demonstrate acceptance and understanding (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

1.5.4. Confidentiality and anonymity

The confidentiality of the respondents and their responses was protected, and the researcher protected the respondents' autonomy (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

1.5.5. Data integrity

During and beyond the data collection phase of the research project, participant information was protected through the implementation of a data collection system (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

1.5.6. Demarcation of the field of study

The focus of the study is to identify a systems approach to work engagement in the Department of Finance at the UFS. The study was conducted in the Department of Finance at the UFS. The employees employed in the Department of Finance were involved. The study was conducted in the field of human resource management.

1.6. Layout of the study

Now that the problem area and the aim of the study have been demarcated within a particular research area, the rest of the chapters will be structured in the following way:

Chapter 2: Literature review
Chapter 3: Research methodology
Chapter 4: Data analysis and results
Chapter 5: Conclusion

1.7. Conclusion

The primary objective of the study is to develop a systems approach to work engagement in the Department of Finance at the UFS. This will be done by assessing how key principles and processes of employee engagement manifest in the department to predict a win-win situation for both employer and employee. The next chapter provides an overview of relevant academic literature on the principles and processes of work engagement. This will provide the necessary context within which to assess the status quo in the Department of Finance at the UFS.

Chapter 2: Employee engagement

2.1. Introduction

In a study done by Deloitte (2015), "The Global Human Capital Trends", 87% of 3 300 top businesses in 106 countries ranked work engagement and culture as the top challenges they face. With social media like LinkedIn and Facebook, among many others, employees can obtain information on organisations and their culture in an instant. The aforementioned study has shown that organisations with engaged employees outperform their competition and are able to attract top talent. As the benefits to work engagement and the detriments of not having engaged employees become evident within organisations, it becomes imperative to measure and assess engagement and the underlying culture on a regular basis.

There are varying definitions for work engagement, and for the purpose of this study, some of these are cited in the paragraphs that follow in order to identify key elements of the term. In addition, specific attention is focused on a systems approach to work engagement and the extent to which such an approach could potentially be applied in the finance department of the UFS.

2.2. Definition of work engagement

Permana, Tjakraatmadja, Larso and Wicaksono (2015) describe work engagement as the intensity of employees' emotional attachment to their organisation which influences them to apply greater discretionary effort towards achieving their work goals. A 2008 report of the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) defines work engagement as a heightened connection between employees and their work, their organisation or the people with whom or for whom they work (Leeds & Nierle, 2014). Macey, Schneider, Barbara and Young (2009) provide a working definition of work engagement: the employee's sense of purpose and focused energy that is evident to others through the display of personal initiative, adaptability, effort and persistence directed toward the organisation's goals. Kahn (1990, as cited in Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010) defines work engagement as the harnessing of organisational members' selves in their work role, a process by which they employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance.

Breevaart, Bakker and Demerouti (2013) suggest that engagement in individuals is fluctuating in the short run and illustrated through vigour, dedication and a positive work-related state of mind. Vigour refers to the employee's mental staying power, and dedication to his/her ability to be enthusiastic and inspired by work tasks (Breevaart et al., 2013).

When considering the definitions above, various elements of employees' work engagement can be deduced. These include:

- an intense *emotional attachment* to their organisations;
- said attachment is *voluntary*;
- a sense of *purpose* and *focus*;
- the display of *personal initiative*, *adaptability* and *persistence*; and
- a *positive work-related state of mind*.

In summary, it can be concluded that work engagement suggests a positive impact on the part of the employee on the workplace and vice versa. It could furthermore be argued that sufficient work engagement in an organisation could act as a catalyst for consistently high productivity levels.

For the purpose of this study, the working definition of work engagement of Macey et al. (2009) is adopted and is described as the employee's sense of purpose and focused energy that is evident to others through the display of personal initiative, adaptability, effort and persistence directed toward the organisation's goals. This definition encompasses all the elements stated above. Since the focus of work engagement is the impact an employee has on the workplace, the dimensions of engagement from the employee's perspective are now discussed.

2.3. Dimensions of work engagement

Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) reveal work engagement to reflect three unique but related dimensions:

- i. Vigour is demonstrated through high energy, mental resilience when duties are performed, persistence to continue despite challenges, and the willingness to exert extra effort.
- ii. Dedication is reflected in enthusiasm about one's work, having a sense of purpose, inspiration and pride in the employee's work.
- iii. Absorption is a reflection of concentration, a condition of being immersed in the work role where time goes by quickly, a happiness with the work conditions and finding difficulty detaching from work.

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) will be used to measure work engagement and has been validated in different countries (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). The UWES measures the three dimensions of occupational wellbeing, namely vigour, dedication and absorption. Figure 2.1 depicts the questions pertaining to each of these dimensions. This is a self-report survey that has been used among different occupational groups and is assumed to be a stable indicator of occupational wellbeing (Seppala et al., 2008).



Figure 2.1: Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)

These three dimensions of work engagement, vigour, dedication and absorption, reflect engagement from the employee's internal perspective, but there are also other drivers of engagement that are discussed in the following section.

2.4. Drivers of work engagement

Davila and Pina-Ramirez (2014) and Mone, Christina, Guggenheim, Price and Stine (2011) suggest career development, performance management and financial and external incentives as drivers of work engagement.

2.4.1. Career development

Career development is defined by Mone and London (2009, as cited in Mone et al., 2011) as the accumulation and application of new knowledge and skills over time, including the capacity to view the world through a more informed, inclusive perspective. This is demonstrated when managers provide sufficient opportunities for training and support regarding career development efforts. By so doing, they help foster employee development and drive work engagement. This implies a strong and very direct link between an individual's career development and the extent to which such an individual is engaged in the organisation.

2.4.2. Performance management

Performance management serves as a platform for the organisation to align the employees' actions and behaviours to the organisational strategy. Mone et al. (2011) have constructed a conceptual framework that displays manager behaviours associated with both performance management and driving employee engagement. Performance management activities include setting goals for both performance and development, providing regular feedback and appreciation, managing career development, conducting appraisals bi-annually as a minimum and creating a trusting environment where employees feel empowered (Mone et al., 2011). Manager behaviours that drive work engagement during performance management include joint goal setting, linking the employees' work-role objectives to the organisation's strategy, steering career development, the allocation of resources, work-life balance, workplace flexibility and the measurement of an employee's progress in achieving the desired results (Mone et al., 2011; Davila & Pina-Ramirez, 2014). The fact that performance

management is an ongoing process implies that management should ensure that it forms part of an effective and transparent system aimed at being equally advantageous to employees and the organisation.

2.4.3. Relationship with manager

Hogan, Hogan and Keyser (2010, as cited in Leary et al., 2013) suggest that 75% of working adults perceive their relationship with their direct supervisor as the most stressful part of their job. Davila and Pina-Ramirez (2014) regard the manager-employee relationship as the most important factor in engagement. The importance of the manager-employee relationship could be seen to emanate from the fact that managers are expected to get maximum output from employees, on the one hand, to the benefit of the organisation, but should, on the other hand, also facilitate employees' achieving their individual ambitions. In this regard, Maxey (2014) suggests that employees see coaching and mentoring by their supervisor as important tools to performance feedback and career development.

2.4.4. Managerial coaching

Given the importance of the manager and the impact he/she has on the engagement process, Milner and MacCarthy (2016) suggest that a managerial coaching approach, where managers provide coaching to their direct reports or teams, can turn transformational leadership into practice and furthermore enhance engagement. Coaching focuses on partnering and enhancing the capabilities of the coachee (employee being coached) and not the extraordinary skills of the coach (Milner & MacCarthy, 2016). The skills and behaviours of the managerial coach include: (i) trust and respect, (ii) ethics, (iii) goals and vision, (iv) motivation and optimism, (v) involvement and clear expectations, (vi) encouragement of innovation, (vii) coaching (viii) delegating, (ix) inclusive and diverse opinions, (x) a supportive climate, (xi) two-way communication and (xii) personalised interactions (Milner & MacCarthy, 2016). Trust is a critical element in the coaching relationship. Trust and respect are initially established in the coaching relationship but have to be reaffirmed throughout (Cardus, 2013; Milner & MacCarthy, 2016). High ethical standards should always be upheld, whether the coaching is formal or informal (Milner & MacCarthy, 2016).

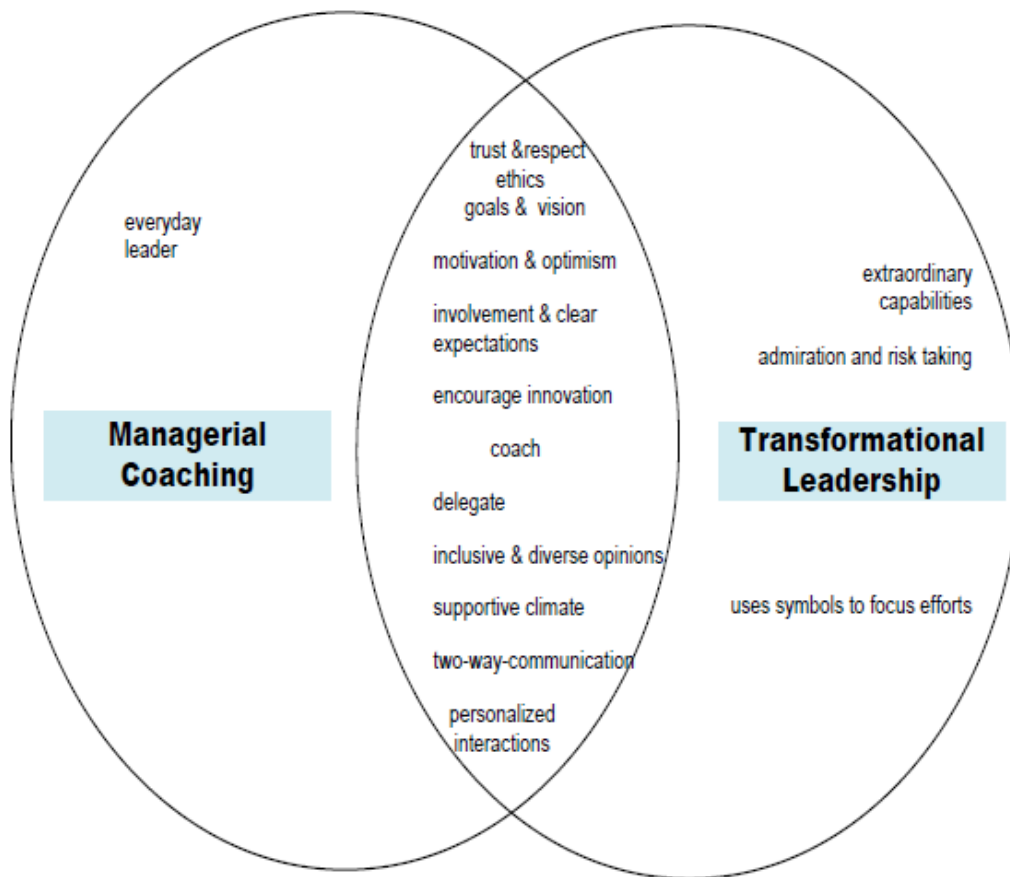


Figure 2.2: Managerial coaching approach

According to Maxey (2014), the enhancing of managers' coaching skills can be taught. This implies that the organisation should ensure that each employee in a supervisory or managerial role is equipped with the necessary skills to perform a coaching role. This is essential as employees need to understand how their key performance indicators enhance the organisational goals (Milner & MacCarthy, 2016; Cardus, 2013; Davila & Pina-Ramirez, 2014). Through the coaching approach and by giving responsibility and ownership to employees, they will be enabled to find their own ways of reaching organisational goals (Milner & MacCarthy, 2016; Cardus, 2013; Davila & Pina-Ramirez, 2014). In order to achieve goals, the coach and the coachee should both demonstrate commitment (Milner & MacCarthy, 2016).

When employees are involved throughout the goal-setting process, they will feel involved and more willing to work towards the goals. The goal-setting process can be used by the manager to communicate the employer's expectations to the employees.

In this way, meaningful goals can be set that assist employees to reach their key performance indicators (Milner & MacCarthy, 2016). During coaching, the manager must allow the employee to make mistakes and learn from them. When employees feel that the environment is safe to experiment, this will spur them to be innovative (Milner & MacCarthy, 2016).

The coaching manager should create learning opportunities for the employees and should encourage a coaching culture (Milner & MacCarthy, 2016). This can also be achieved by delegating tasks to the extent that the employees are empowered to function autonomously or exchange knowledge with peers in the organisation (Milner & MacCarthy, 2016). Throughout the coaching process, the manager must actively be supportive, listen to employees, have empathy and establish a personal connection with employees (Milner & MacCarthy, 2016).

2.4.5. Working autonomously

Cardus (2013) suggests that when employees are left to work autonomously, to a certain extent, they will display self-directed behaviour and feel responsible for the choices made. This instils trust and steers work engagement positively. A study conducted by Breevaart et al. (2013) concludes that daily self-management is positively related to employees being more engaged, thus applying more skill, dedication and resilience to their work.

Currently, the landscape of the workplace is changing. Employees require more flexibility in working hours and want to work from any location. This flexibility requires employees to be able to manage themselves and their working hours, and they are subsequently less supervised. Employees who can regulate themselves can also save the organisation money as the burdens of external managers are lessened. Self-management means that employees are responsible for their behaviour and decisions (Breevaart et al., 2013). Based on a theoretical framework of self-management by Manz (1986), Stewart, Courtright and Manz (2011) describe the process of self-management as consisting of the following steps: Firstly, the individual or team assesses the current situation and compares him/her/itself to the norms and standards expected. Secondly, the individual or team engages in behaviour that will bridge the gap between the desired outcome and the current state. Lastly, the impact of new

behaviour is assessed and acts as input in the assessment of the new current state, which will again trigger the process of bridging the gap.

Self-management strategies derived from this theory are (i) self-observation, (ii) goal setting, (iii) self-cueing, (iv) self-reward/criticism and (v) rehearsal/refinement (Stewart et al., 2011). Politis (2015) adopts the description of these strategies from Manz (1992):

- i. Self-observation means to be aware of when and how certain behaviours occur and deciding on which to reinforce or disregard. In this state, an employee is self-aware, and progress of work performance is tracked
- ii. When self-cueing, an employee utilises physical cues to be reminded of tasks.
- iii. Self-goal-setting refers to an employee setting personal goals towards which to work.
- iv. Self-rewards and self-punishment reflect an employee's behaviour both physical and mentally in success and failure
- v. Rehearsal/refinement refers to an employee enhancing the possibility of success by practising activities before the actual performance.

Politis (2015) concludes that self-management behavioural strategies are a predictor of entrepreneurial orientation, which in turn influences creativity and productivity. The study further suggests that employers should consider recruiting employees who possess these self-management behavioural strategies as they increase creativity and productivity and could furthermore assist organisations to gain a competitive advantage (Politis, 2015). As self-management is a skill that can be trained, organisations could not only rely on recruiting people with this competency but could also expand this skill from within the organisation itself (Politis, 2015; Mantz, 1992).

2.4.6. High performance work practices: Training, empowerment and rewards

Karatepe (2013) confirms that high-performance work practices, as manifested in training, empowerment and rewards, lead to work engagement, which in turn led to

increased job satisfaction and extra-role customer satisfaction. Extra-role customer satisfaction refers to tasks performed beyond the normal call of duty (Karatepe, 2013). Karatepe (2013) describes (i) training as providing employees with solid technical knowledge of policies and processes as well as interpersonal skills to do their work; (ii) empowerment as the scope and capacity employees have to commit and make decisions to fulfil their duties and please customers; and states that (iii) rewards should be fair and adequate for the difficulty of the tasks.

Rewards/compensation refer to the remuneration employees obtain in exchange for their time, effort and knowledge sacrificed for the benefit of the organisation (Rubel & Kee, 2015). Employees differ in what they value, and it is important to understand these differences to be able to motivate them (Galagan, 2015). Rewards could be monetary, in the form of basic pay and bonuses, or non-monetary, like flexible working hours. The reward system should be transparent and easily accessible to employees. Rewards can also be linked and managed through the performance management system (Conway, Fu, Monks, Alfes & Bailey, 2015). The link to the performance management system is elaborated in the discussion of a systems approach.

Other factors which do not drive the engagement process but individually or collectively could have a significant impact on engagement are now discussed.

2.4.7. Job fit and availability of skills

Human resources execute the organisational goals by applying their knowledge, skills, experience, behaviours and attitudes at work (Nienaber, 2016). The shift in the economy from being commodity-based to being knowledge-based changed the landscape of necessary skills in the economy (Nilsson & Ellström, 2011). Organisations used to sell goods and services as primary exchange, but bargaining has now shifted to what is known, requiring a different skill set from employees. Despite organisations' best efforts to recruit, retain and develop the best competencies, shortages occur. Organisations also struggle to optimise the available competence to gain or retain a competitive advantage. Factors like globalisation, competition for talent and the immobility of human resources due to family, economic and career reasons are put forward as reasons for this unavailability of skills (Nilsson & Ellström, 2011).

Job fit is defined by Imandin, Bisschoff and Botha (2014) as the degree to which an individual experiences his/her personality and values as matching their current job. Imandin et al. (2014) further suggest that a good fit increases the engagement in behaviour that has positive outcomes for the organisation and broadens the emotional and physical comfort range in which employees can express themselves.

2.4.8. Generational analysis of employees

When the age profile of staff is assessed, the Baby Boomers (born between 1945 and 1964) are now retiring, leaving a gap in expertise that should be replaced (Solnet, Kralj & Kandampully, 2012). The transfer of knowledge would typically be to the new generation Y (born between 1979 and 1994), who have a different approach to work expectations than their predecessors (Solnet et al., 2012; Nienaber, 2016). A skills drain can be avoided by organisations through timely succession planning and knowledge transfer. Solnet et al. (2012) and Nienaber (2016) highlight the characteristics of generation Y as follows: (i) The generation is more committed to their own skills development than commitment to the employer. (ii) Significant emphasis is placed on competence from managers. (iii) Productivity and skills development are valued. (iv) Work-life balance is elevated in importance to work-life integration and this explains why (v) this generation requires flexible working hours. These characteristics of generation Y have a direct influence on the organisational culture and engagement (Deloitte, 2015).

2.4.9. Organisational culture

It is often said that organisational culture will eat strategy for breakfast. As previously mentioned, human resources leaders from 106 countries took part in a global survey conducted by Deloitte (2015), and 87% of organisations found organisational culture and engagement as their top challenges. Organisational culture is defined by Schein (2010, as cited in Miller, 2015) as the way things are done at an organisation, and can be divided into three levels: values (beliefs or charters), artefacts (physical expressions such as dress code, company reports and environment) and assumptions (thought processes, feelings and behaviour).

Miller (2015) further suggests that it is commonly accepted that culture can be changed through planned mediations. Deloitte (2015) highlights three critical

principles to bring about culture transformation. Firstly, the culture tone is set at the top, meaning leaders should be held accountable for the culture that they display. Secondly, the organisational policies and processes should be aligned with the strategy/purpose as well as with the values supporting the strategy. Thirdly, the results of the culture transformation should be measurable and reported organisation wide. A positive organisational culture fosters higher work engagement, which entails not only drawing the best talent but also retaining it, as well as increased profitability in the long run (Deloitte, 2015).

2.4.10. Trust

Van der Ohe (2016) indicates that increased trustworthiness is related to increased work engagement. Van der Ohe (2016) considers trust to be a workplace-relevant belief or attitude ascribed to a colleague and is demonstrated in three dimensions. Firstly, the employee trusts the organisation by investing time and effort into the organisational goals and wants to gain psychological safety in return. Secondly, the employee trusts the manager to perform an action based on an expectation, without having control over the manager. Lastly, the employee builds trust by helping a co-worker, which leads to helping behaviour in return.

Ghani and Hussin (2009) propose that behaviours such as sharing information, explaining decisions or actions, being truthful and transparent during decision-making, aligning actions with the organisational strategy and honouring promises all create a supportive climate. Not engaging in forceful behaviour or threats also increases managers' trustworthiness.

The drivers of employee engagement have now been established, but it is evident that models are necessary to coordinate, manage and implement these drivers.

2.5. Work engagement models

For the purpose of this study, two models that measure work engagement are discussed:

- the theoretical model of employee engagement (Imandin et al., 2014)
- the job demands-resources (JD-R) model.

The two work engagement models are discussed briefly to highlight their main constructs and their relevance to this study.

2.5.1. Theoretical model of employee engagement (Imandin et al., 2014)

Imandin et al. (2014) have developed a model to measure work engagement among managers in South Africa, based on the following eleven constructs:

- i. cognitive drivers (doing meaningful tasks that are safe and with appropriate resources)
- ii. emotional engagement (investing intrapersonal intelligence like self-awareness and acknowledging one's own thoughts and feelings)
- iii. behavioural engagement (extra effort displayed in pursuit of achieving organisational goals)
- iv. feeling valued and involved
- v. engaged leadership team (leadership who embed the vision and unlock exceptional performance)
- vi. inspiring trust and integrity (walking the talk)
- vii. nature of my job (refers to employee participation and autonomy)
- viii. connection between individual and company performance (refers to employee's level of understanding the performance of the organisation and how best to enhance it)
- ix. career growth opportunities (having a clearly defined career path and being satisfied with progress made)
- x. stress-free environment (an environment where employees can be innovative and productive)
- xi. change management (more engaged employees adapt better to change).

Although this questionnaire was found to be a valid research tool to measure work engagement, it has not been widely used and will not be used in this study.



Figure 2.3: Theoretical model of employee engagement

2.5.2. Job demands-resources model

The job demands-resources (JD-R) model measures job demands versus the resources available to increase employee wellbeing (increasing employee engagement and decreasing burnout and job strain) and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006). Job demands refer to those aspects (physical, psychological, social or organisational) of the job that require sustained cognitive and emotional effort and skill, and can be associated with physical or psychological costs such as high work pressure, role uncertainty and emotional demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006). Job resources are classified as aspects of the job (physical, psychological, social or

organisational) that assist in attaining organisational goals, reduce job demands or stimulate personal growth, learning and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006).

The model is applicable to a variety of professions and can highlight strengths and weaknesses at an individual, team or organisational level (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006). Bakker and Demerouti (2006) present a dual process whereby job demands that lead to stressors can lead to job strain, and job resources are motivational in nature and can lead to high work engagement. Seeing that this study is on work engagement only, this JD-R model is not used.

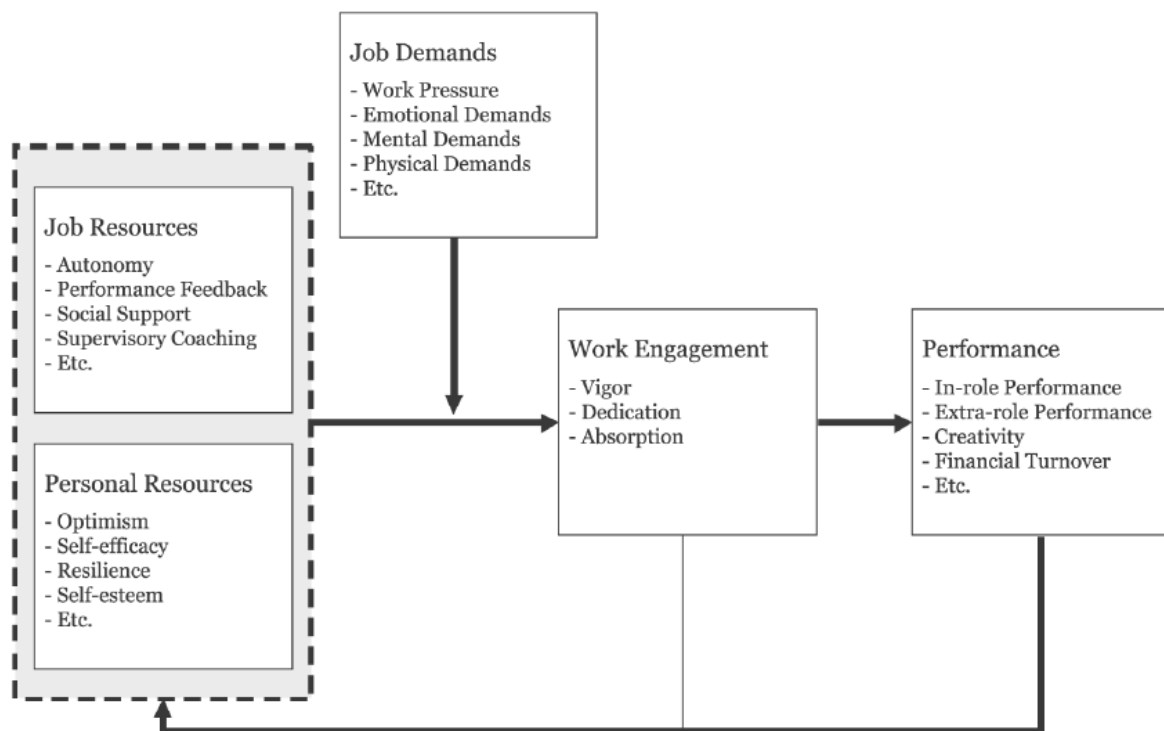


Figure 2.4: Job demands-resources (JD-R) model

This study focuses on understanding which elements of the engagement process are controlled by managers and which are controlled by employees, with the view to define a system to support engagement in order to positively influence employee behaviour. Arguments put forward by Maxey (2014), Cardus (2013) and Leeds and Nierle (2014) suggest that work engagement can be improved through a systems approach, i.e. making it a systematic part of the employee's workday. The next section describes systems theory and its applicability to work engagement.

2.6. Work engagement through a systems approach

Griffen (1999, as cited in Minnaar & Bekker, 2005) describes a system as an interrelated set of elements that individually do not represent the same value as the whole, and describes systems theory as an ongoing, repetitive process that feeds input from the environment and requires processing (i.e. management) and operational intervention to produce physical output which ultimately determines the value added or destroyed.

While studying employee engagement, one should constantly be reminded of its significance in affecting competitiveness and the attainment of organisational goals. Organisational goals are informed by the organisational strategy. The achievement of organisational goals directly reflects organisational performance and, ultimately, the sustainability of the organisation.

Martins and Martins (2002) and Kast and Rosenzweig (1985) describe systems theory as emphasising the interdependence between different subsystems and elements in an organisation. The organisational systems model developed by Martins (1989, as cited in Martins & Martins, 2002) explains the interaction between organisational subsystems like goals, structure, management, technology and psycho-sociological factors. The primary determinants of behaviour in the workplace is dependent on the complex interaction which takes place at different levels, between individuals, groups, other organisations and the external environment (Martins & Martins, 2002). The employee's perceptions and experiences are the most fundamental part or basis of the engagement process, as depicted in figure 2.5.

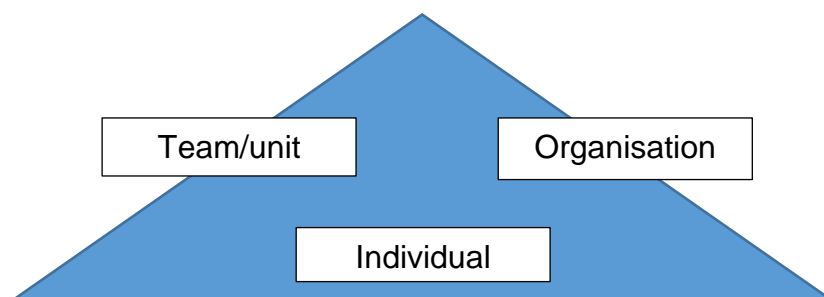


Figure 2.5: Organisational system

Nienaber (2016) conceptualises work engagement at three different levels in the organisation, namely the individual level, team/unit level and organisational level. This concept is diagrammatically depicted in figure 2.5. At an individual level, the employee's work role is assessed and together with that, his/her willingness to invest effort and energy and to display mental toughness while duties are executed (Nienaber, 2016). Individual engagement refers to a work role, and it is therefore impossible to separate engagement from the organisation and organisational goals. Organisational goals are created to achieve synergy, where the sum is greater than the individual parts, and this also applies to the levels of engagement. The sum of the individual work role contributions is less significant when compared to the team's/unit's performance. The same concept applies to the team's/unit's contribution when compared to the organisation as a whole, but engagement for each employee will be enhanced when they understand how their work role contribute, firstly, to their team/unit's goals and, ultimately, to the organisational goals (Shantz & Alfes, 2015). Understanding the link between individual work roles and team/unit and organisational goals adds meaning and significance to employees' perceptions and experiences at work. Influencing perceptions and experiences induces positive behaviours and attitudes. Nienaber (2016) further highlights that the managers are the golden thread that links the individual-level goals to the team and the organisational goals.

The dimensions related to work engagement can be depicted by using the three levels, as shown in table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Dimensions of work engagement

Level	Theoretical model of employee engagement	JD-R model	UWES
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive drivers (doing meaningful tasks that are safe and with appropriate resources) • Emotional engagement (investing intrapersonal intelligence like self-awareness) • Behavioural engagement (extra effort displayed in pursuit of achieving organisational goals) • Feeling valued and involved • Connection between individual and company • Career growth opportunities (having a clearly defined career path and being satisfied with progress made) 	<p><u>Job demands</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical costs • Psychological costs such as high work pressure, role uncertainty and emotional demands like optimism, self-efficacy and resilience <p><u>Job resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical aspects • Psychological aspects • Social aspects <p>(All associated with reducing job demand or stimulating personal growth, learning and development)</p>	<p><u>3 Dimensions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vigour: exerting high levels of energy and mental toughness while working • Dedication: being highly involved and experiencing pride and enthusiasm for one's work • Absorption: being fully concentrated on work so that time goes by quickly

Level	Theoretical model of employee engagement	JD-R model	UWES
Team/unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of my job (refers to employee participation and autonomy) • Stress-free environment 	Job resources and job demands that assist in attaining team goals, e.g. autonomy, supervisory coaching and performance feedback	
Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change management • Engaged leadership team • Inspiring trust and integrity (walking the talk) 	Job resources and job demands that assist in attaining organisational goals, e.g. culture of innovation, extra-role performance and financial targets	

Although the UWES measures engagement only at an individual level, this model is still appropriate for the purpose of this study because of its reliability and the possibility of comparing the findings to other studies or departments in the higher education sector. Galagan (2015) warns organisations to avoid probing employees for their concerns without responding to them.

To enhance engagement from a team/unit perspective, Conway et al. (2015) suggest that the performance management system should link the organisational strategy, human resources processes and work engagement drivers into an interrelated process. During the performance management process, managers and employees jointly set objectives, measure and monitor results, identify further development needs and incentivise performance to attain organisational goals (Conway et al., 2015). In order to maximise the value from the performance management system, organisational members should make a mind shift from utilising performance management as a stick with which to hit to a process to enable. This will require managers to include as an objective, for example, coaching as a way to enable employees. Steering the behaviour that will establish the desired organisational culture was discussed in the above-mentioned literature. Managers should be held accountable for the level of employee engagement and organisational culture they create.

Looking at engagement at an organisational level, Covey (1999) suggests that organisational goals can only be achieved if the reward system and the value system are aligned systematically. Employees are thus systematically steered to make choices aligned with the organisational goals.

Human resource processes can be structured and focused to ensure an engaged workforce (Stone, Deadrick, Lukaszewski & Johnson, 2015). Stone et al. (2015) define the goals of human resource processes as including recruitment and selection of talented incumbents, improving employees' skills and ability through training and development, managing and increasing employee performance, and motivating and retaining a talented and diverse workforce.

Regarding recruitment and selection, employees are sourced who will fit the job competency levels, which include knowledge, skill and experience. The interview

process is the employee's first impression of the organisational culture, and the induction procedures thereafter support this impression of the organisational culture. Suitable training solutions for career development areas and proper career planning allow employees to take control of their career path. The measurement of performance should allow employees to independently measure performance against clearly defined organisational goals.

Stone et al. (2015) suggest that organisations can use technology to support human resource systems to improve the response time and access to employee information in, for example, e-recruitment, e-training, employee self-help systems and e-compensation systems. Using technology does not change the human resource goals but enhances them. Increased access through e-recruitment widens the applicant pool and enhances the probability of sourcing innovative, creative and skilful individuals. Skills development and training through e-training improves the response time in which training can take place, allows each individual to learn at his/her own pace and diminishes geographical boundaries. E-performance management assists with the alignment of individual performance with organisational goals, can track performance throughout the evaluation period and can even prompt managers to discuss performance with employees. Employees can be motivated and retained through e-compensation systems where access to individual internal data (job descriptions, remuneration data and evaluation data) is increased and errors are minimised (Stone et al. 2015).

When systems theory is taken into consideration, it is evident that work engagement can be steered and influenced at every level, i.e. individual, team/unit and organisational.

2.7. Conclusion

The concept of work engagement, the drivers of the engagement process as well as models to implement and drive engaged behaviour were identified in this chapter. This literature review has shown how the landscape has changed, from viewing engagement as only dependent on the employee and the employer as a pure investor in the process, to a set of interrelated processes that can systematically be steered to result in positive employee behaviour. The role of the manager in the engagement

process was unpacked, and the importance of management taking responsibility for the level of engagement was highlighted.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology that was followed to answer the research questions.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.1. Introduction

Research methodology outlines the systematic process by which information was collected to inform the research objectives. The process discussed below included the adoption of a research design, a sampling strategy, data collection methods and ethical considerations to best achieve the hallmarks of scientific research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

3.2. Research design

The research design set the plan according to which data were collected, measured and analysed to attain a solution for the problem that guided the research project (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The study was conducted using a pragmatist research approach, as different theories for employee engagement were applied to practice. Pragmatism stems from the perspective of the “father of pragmatism”, John de Wey, that the truth is constantly changing and based on the context of the current reality (Hayes, 2015; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). De Wey describes truth as a by-product of the process of solving problems and says that it is constantly recreated (Hayes, 2015). Pragmatism is outcome driven and focuses on what works in practice (Hayes, 2015). The ontology of pragmatism has a high regard for the reality and influence of human experience, which is ideal for the purpose of this study (Hayes, 2015).

Employee engagement at the lowest level, i.e. the individual level, is a personal experience and every individual’s truth or reality was required to determine the engagement of the team and, ultimately, the department. An employee’s current reality can constantly change and is influenced by internal and external factors. This clarifies why engagement should be monitored regularly, as an employee’s experience can be influenced. The epistemology of the research questions required an objective relationship between the researcher and the respondents.

A descriptive study was undertaken. The descriptive study aimed to organise, summarise and add meaning to data to enhance their usefulness (Hayes, Bonner & Douglas, 2013). The descriptive study assisted the researcher in providing an

overview of the theoretical principles to assess employee engagement, assessing how the theoretical principles relate to the employees at the Department of Finance at the UFS, identifying the drivers of employee engagement to develop a systems approach and identifying areas for further research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

The study was quantitative in nature, which means that researcher involvement was limited with no preparation for respondents needed. Business research was done in the natural environment where events proceed normally. This non-contrived setting was the Department of Finance at the UFS. A field study was conducted using a survey (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

The quantitative research approach limited the opportunity to probe respondents and the original data collection instrument, the UWES. This enhanced consistency and minimised bias. With limited researcher involvement during data collection, insights and the meaning of data could only be deduced after data were collected and the opportunity for re-interviewing respondents was limited (Cooper & Schindler, 2011).

The study required the different theoretical principles of employee engagement to be studied and validated to understand what drives employee engagement. Quantitative research is particularly useful when quantitative predictions of data should be made and assists the researcher in creating a situation that eliminates the confounding impact of many variables, allowing the reliable assessment of cause-and-effect relationships (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Cause-and-effect relationships were not part of this study, however.

The use of quantitative methods to collect data is a fairly quick process which is particularly useful for larger sample sizes. As many statistical programmes are available with which to analyse data, this process also becomes less time consuming and maintains a clear distinction between facts and judgements (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). It produces results that are precise, numerical and quantitative and that are relatively independent of the researcher in terms of effect size and statistical significance (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The separation of the researcher and the findings could enhance the credibility of the research in the eyes of those in power, such as management or project sponsors (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

When the quantitative research was conducted, weaknesses identified by Johnson and Owueguzie (2004) were considered, namely that the researcher's categories and research theories may not reflect the local population's understanding, that the researcher may miss out on phenomena while concentrating on established theories (called confirmation bias) and that the knowledge produced may be too abstract and general for local situations and contexts.

3.3. Sampling strategy

Non-probability sampling was used, meaning each individual did not have an equal chance of being selected and the probability of being selected was unknown. The findings from the study cannot be confidently generalised to the population. Comprehensive sampling was applied as the whole population was used for the sample, including all employees of the Department of Finance at the UFS. There are 100 employees in the Department of Finance working at the Bloemfontein campus, representing the total population. All 100 employees were included in the sample size. Employees are divided into different divisions, each with a specific function and responsibility. Employees within divisions are appointed at different job levels, with different functions to support segregation of duties and adequate internal controls.

3.4. Data collection methods

The UWES as well as a questionnaire developed by the researcher were used to measure work engagement. This was done to measure engagement at all levels, individual, team and organisational.

Participation involved completing a 5-part questionnaire on a 7-point frequency rating scale and took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Basic demographic information like gender, age, time of employment in the department and highest qualification were included in the survey without jeopardising participants' anonymity. Demographic information was required to draw more meaningful conclusions from the questionnaire.

Self-report questionnaires were used because of the short time frame in which data were collected, the researcher could explain the research topic and encourage the respondents to give honest responses, and the questionnaires were less expensive and time consuming than interviews (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

The reliability and validity of questionnaires were considered in terms of Cronbach's alpha coefficients to ensure that the research questions are answered. The reliability of a questionnaire is a test of how consistently an instrument measures a concept (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Testing validity refers to how well the measuring instrument measures the concept (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Generally, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient above 0.75 is regarded as acceptable.

3.4.1. Utrecht Work Engagement Scale

The UWES is a self-report questionnaire scored on a 7-point frequency rating scale, varying from 0 (never) to 6 (always) (Seppala et al., 2008). This questionnaire was included to measure employee engagement at an individual level as well as at a team level. The UWES measures three dimensions of employee engagement where vigour, dedication and absorption should be demonstrated towards work. Vigour, dedication and absorption have been discussed at length in the literature review. Using a standardised questionnaire enabled the researcher to make meaningful comparisons and will also assist managers in making better-informed decisions about employee engagement data. Should a follow-up survey be conducted, results will be easily comparable, but a follow-up survey is not covered by the present study. The reliability and validity of the UWES has been proven by different studies in different countries (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter & Taris, 2008; De Bruin, Hill, Henn & Muller, 2013). Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the three dimensions were: vigour, $\alpha = 0.88$, dedication, $\alpha = 0.91$ and absorption, $\alpha = 0.85$, which ensures reliability and validity (De Bruin et al., 2013).

3.4.2. Self-developed questionnaire

The self-developed questionnaire tested engagement at a team and an organisational level. This self-report questionnaire scored on a 7-point frequency rating scale, varying from 0 (never) to 6 (always). Questions were chosen based on the content of the research topic. The following were considered in relation to questions selected: shorter questions were preferred, the educational level and frames of reference of respondents were considered when the language was selected, closed questions were selected to assist respondents in making quick and easy selections, questions

were positively worded, and loaded questions that would elicit biased responses were avoided (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

3.5. Ethical considerations

Sekaran and Bougie (2013) state that ethics in business research refer to a code of conduct or expected societal norms of behaviour while conducting research and pervade each step of the research process. The following ethical considerations applied to this study:

3.5.1. Permission obtained

Ethical clearance to conduct the study was obtained from the Ethics Committee and the Senior Director of Finance of the UFS (see Annexure A).

3.5.2. Objectivity

The conclusions were drawn from the actual facts of the findings, and researcher involvement was limited to prevent bias (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The research stemmed from the curiosity and interest of the researcher and was not a request from management to use engagement results in a specific context.

3.5.3. Voluntary participation

Participation in this research was on a voluntary basis, that is, of the respondent's own free will. Measures were taken to ensure that respondents were well informed about the purpose of the study and not misled (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The researcher explained and clarified the topic of employee engagement to respondents before the questionnaires were completed. Employees were made aware that they were selected on the basis that they were employed in the Department of Finance at the UFS. They could withdraw from the survey at any time without penalty or comment before submitting the questionnaire. After the questionnaire had been submitted, due to the anonymity thereof, it was not possible to withdraw the questionnaire.

3.5.4. Informed consent

All respondents were fully informed about the purpose, rights and benefits of the research and were required to sign a consent form to demonstrate acceptance and

understanding (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). It was explained that there were no direct benefits for the employee in completing the questionnaire but that the research will help the employer to create and understand employee engagement in the Department of Finance at the University of the Free State. Apart from daily risks faced by employees, participation in the survey did not add any new risks nor did it increase existing risks to employment.

3.5.5. Confidentiality and anonymity

The confidentiality of the respondents and their responses was protected and the researcher protected the respondents' autonomy (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Respondents were seated apart from each other so colleagues could not see each other's responses. All identifiable information was destroyed after the questionnaires had been processed.

3.5.6. Data integrity

During and beyond the data collection phase of the research project, information about respondents was protected through the implementation of a data collection system (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). During data analysis, questionnaires were processed in a secluded office. After processing, the questionnaires were locked up in a cupboard with the researcher having sole access. Data will be destroyed responsibly after completion of the study.

3.5.7. Demarcation of field of study

The focus of the study is to identify a systems approach to employee engagement in the Department of Finance at the UFS. The study was conducted in the Department of Finance at the UFS. The employees employed in the department were involved. The study was conducted in the human resource management field of study.

3.6. Conclusion

The research design was systematically unpacked to inform the research questions. This included clarification of the research design, where a pragmatist perspective was followed to conduct a descriptive study. Non-probability sampling was used with a comprehensive sampling strategy, as all the employees of the finance department of

the UFS took part in the survey. Data were collected using two questionnaires, namely the UWES and a self-developed questionnaire, to understand engagement at different levels. Research was done in an ethical manner to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents as well as the integrity of the research data. The next chapter focuses on the results of the study.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and results

4.1. Introduction

The primary objective of this study was to determine how a systems approach could enhance work engagement in the Department of Finance at the UFS. In order to achieve this, the purpose of this chapter is to analyse and interpret the results of the data collected.

Sessions were organised during which two questionnaires were handed out to employees of the Department of Finance at the UFS. The specific results of the survey are presented below, followed by a discussion thereof. Of the 100 targeted employees, 76 responded to the questionnaires, hence a response rate of 76%. Descriptive and inferential statistics were computed and analysed from the data and substantive conclusions construed. The biographical data are discussed first, followed by an analysis of the UWES and, lastly, the results of the self-report questionnaire.

4.2. Biographical data

In this section, the biographical characteristics discussed are the respondents per division, age, qualification, tenure at the department and total work experience.

4.2.1. Divisions in the Department of Finance

Figure 4.1 depicts the six main divisions at the Department of Finance. The participation in the survey per division were as follows: 89% from Assets, 100% from Commercial Debtors, 58% from Financial Aid, 77% from General Ledger, 81% from Provisioning and 68% from Tuition Fees. Only employees who work at the main campus were asked to participate in the survey. Each division reports to one manager and, ultimately, to the Senior Director of Finance. The findings indicate that most of the respondents were from the general ledger division, followed by the provisioning and tuition fees divisions. The general ledger division is also the biggest division in Finance, followed by Provisioning and Tuition Fees. The sample of respondents is thus representative of the employees working in the divisions at the finance department.

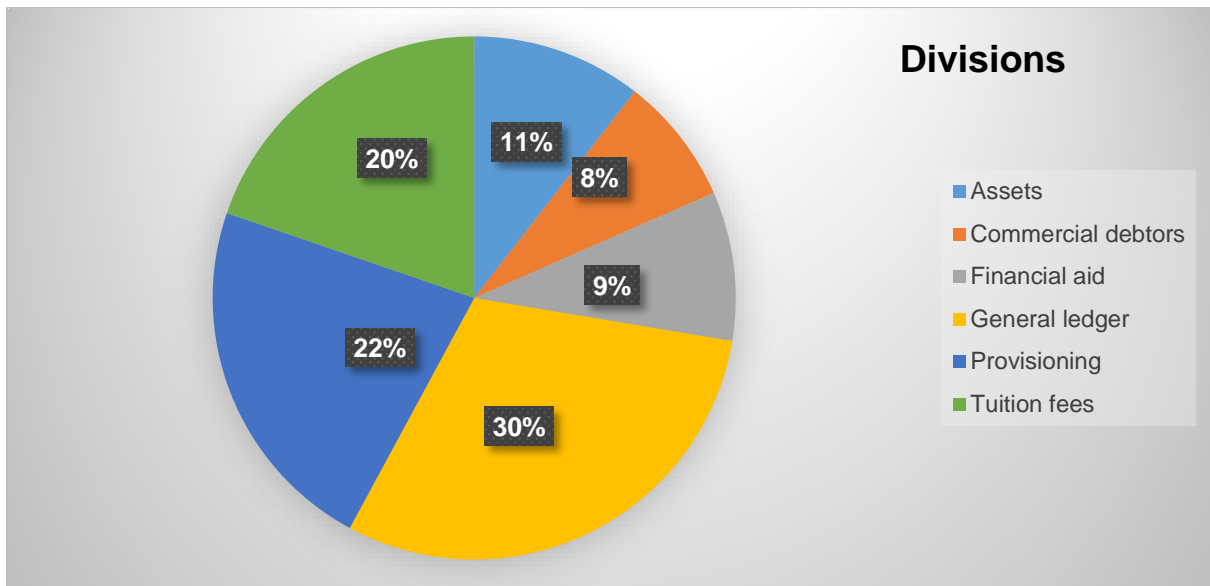


Figure 4.1: Divisions

4.2.2. Respondents by age

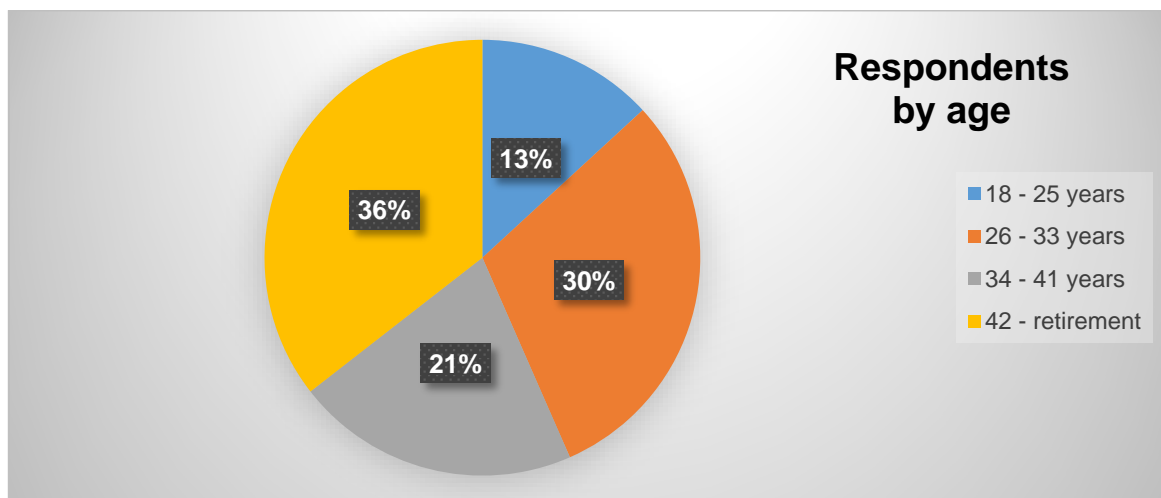


Figure 4.2: Respondents by age

From figure 4.2 it can be deduced that 64% of employees are below 41 years old and 36% of employees are above 42 years old. This is representative of the population in Finance because vacancies are filled with younger employees as normal attrition occurs in the workplace.

4.2.3. Respondents by qualification

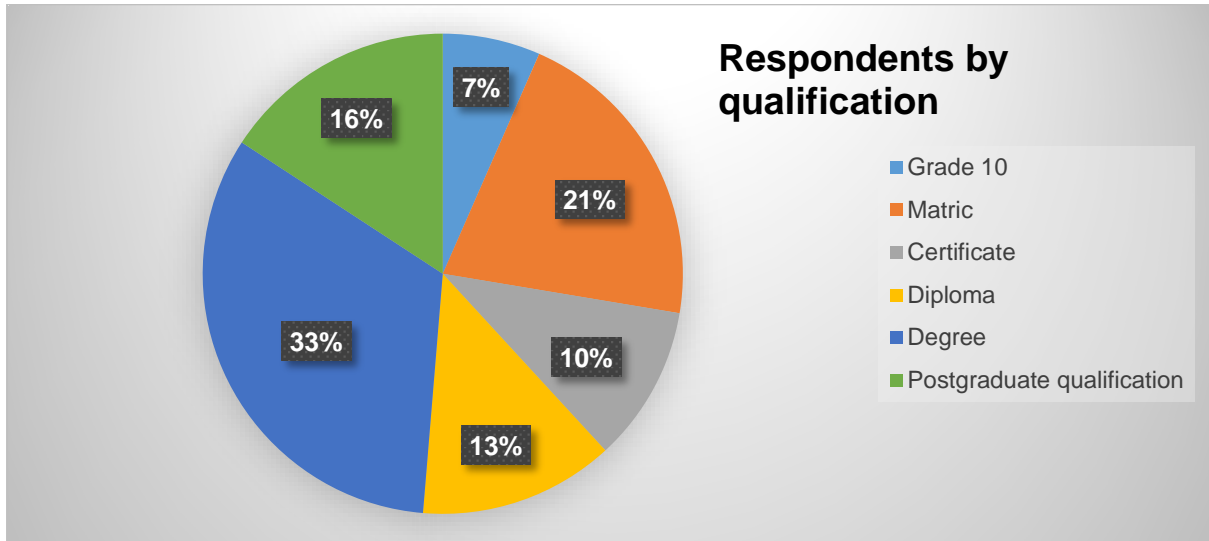


Figure 4.3: Respondents by qualification

From figure 4.3 it can be seen that 62% of respondents have at least a diploma as a minimum qualification. Only the two entry-level positions within the department do not require a degree or diploma as a minimum. The department offers a one-year learnership programme where graduates with a B.Com degree gain experience within the finance department. The trend is that the interns apply for the entry-level positions as they become vacant. This causes the entry-level positions to be mostly filled by employees who have degrees.

4.2.4. Tenure of respondents at the department

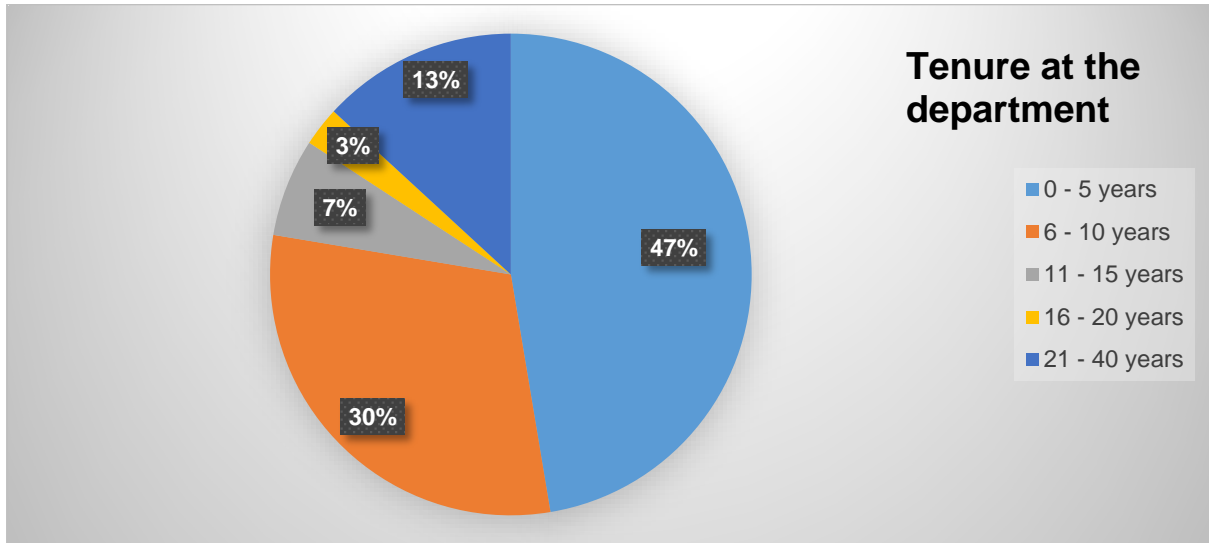


Figure 4.4: Tenure at the Department of Finance at the UFS

Figure 4.4 shows that 47% of the employees have been with the department for 5 years, and less and 30% of employees between 6 and 10 years. This means that 77% of the employees have been with the department for less than 10 years. Furthermore, 64% of employees are 41 years and younger, i.e. generation Y. It is commonly known that members of generation Y move between jobs often. This supports the literature that generation Y is more committed to their own knowledge and skill than being loyal to an employer. There is also a tendency for employees in Finance to move to the academic departments. The finance department has less flexibility in working hours and fixed month-end processes where employees cannot take leave unless it is a crisis.

4.2.5. Total work experience of respondents

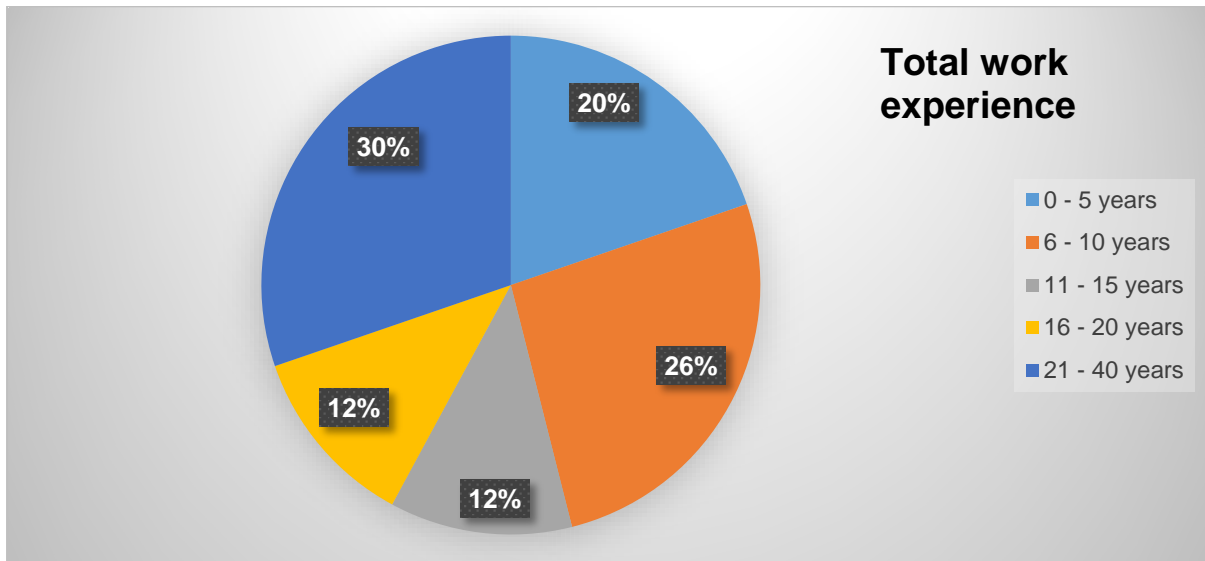


Figure 4.5: Total work experience of respondents

There is a good balance of work experience among staff, with 20% of employees having work experience of 0–5 years, 26% having work experience of 6–10 years, 24% having work experience of 11–20 years and 30% having work experience of 21–40 years. According to the literature, in the knowledge economy, employees are hired for their skills, knowledge and experience to achieve organisational goals. Organisations state the minimum work experience and qualifications when advertising jobs to ensure suitable candidates are sourced. The literature also confirms that work experience is one of the demographics that influence work engagement.

4.3. Data analysis of work engagement

The study focuses on work engagement at three levels: at an individual level, at a team level and at an organisational level. The drivers under each level were assessed on a seven-point Likert scale. The scale used to interpret the components ranged from nil to six, with nil corresponding to never; one corresponding to almost never, a few times per year or less; two corresponding to rarely, once a month or less; three corresponding to sometimes or a few times per month; four corresponding to often or once a week; five corresponding to very often or a few times a week; and six corresponding to always or every day.

4.3.1. Work engagement at an individual level

Work engagement at an individual level was assessed using the UWES under three drivers, namely vigour, dedication and absorption. The data on vigour, dedication and absorption were analysed by examining frequency distributions.

4.3.1.1. Vigour

Figure 4.6 and figure 4.7 represent vigour as a driver of work engagement at an individual level.

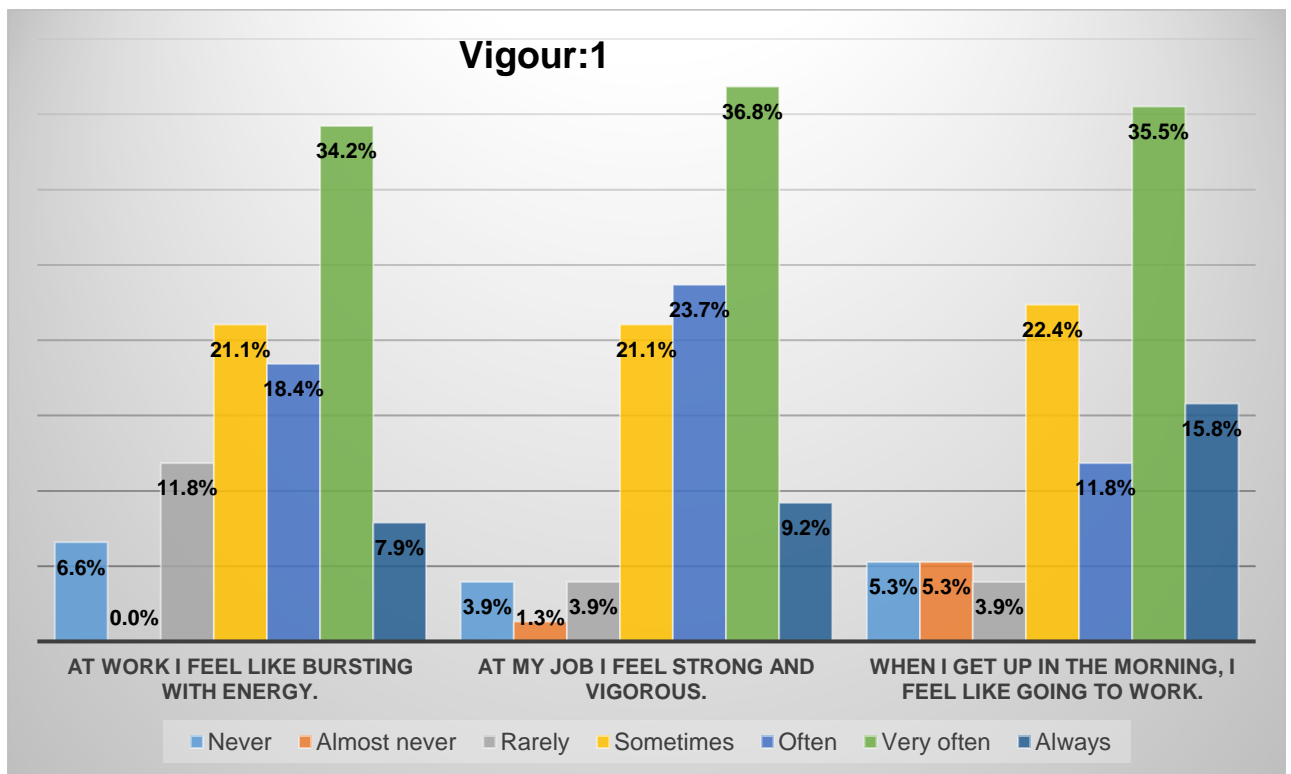


Figure 4.6: Vigour 1

The descriptive statistics on vigour presented in figure 4.6 indicate the focused energy levels that employees exert on their work. When the responses “very often” and “always” of the three questions were assessed, the average response for focused energy levels was only 46%, which is low.

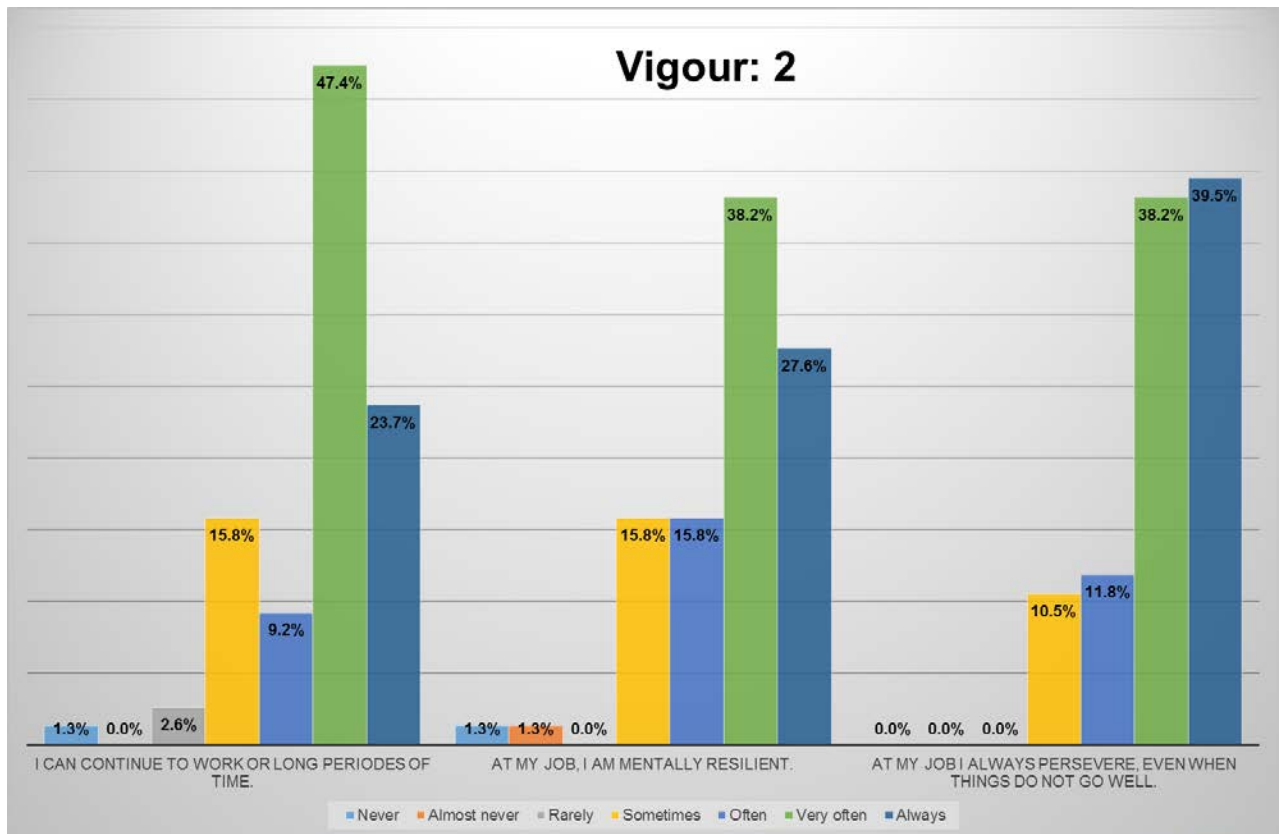


Figure 4.7: Vigour 2

In figure 4.7, vigour, as indicated in the literature, is demonstrated through perseverance to continue despite challenges, mental resilience and a willingness to exert extra effort. As the responses “very often” and “always” for the three questions in figure 4.5 averaged 71.5%, it is evident that employees persevere and are mentally resilient at the workplace. A lot of the work in the department is process driven, where processes are dependent on one employee finishing a task as input for another process. There is also great emphasis on segregation of duties, which is mostly monitored and controlled on the computerised accounting system.

4.3.1.2. Dedication

The frequency distributions on dedication are depicted in figure 4.8 below.

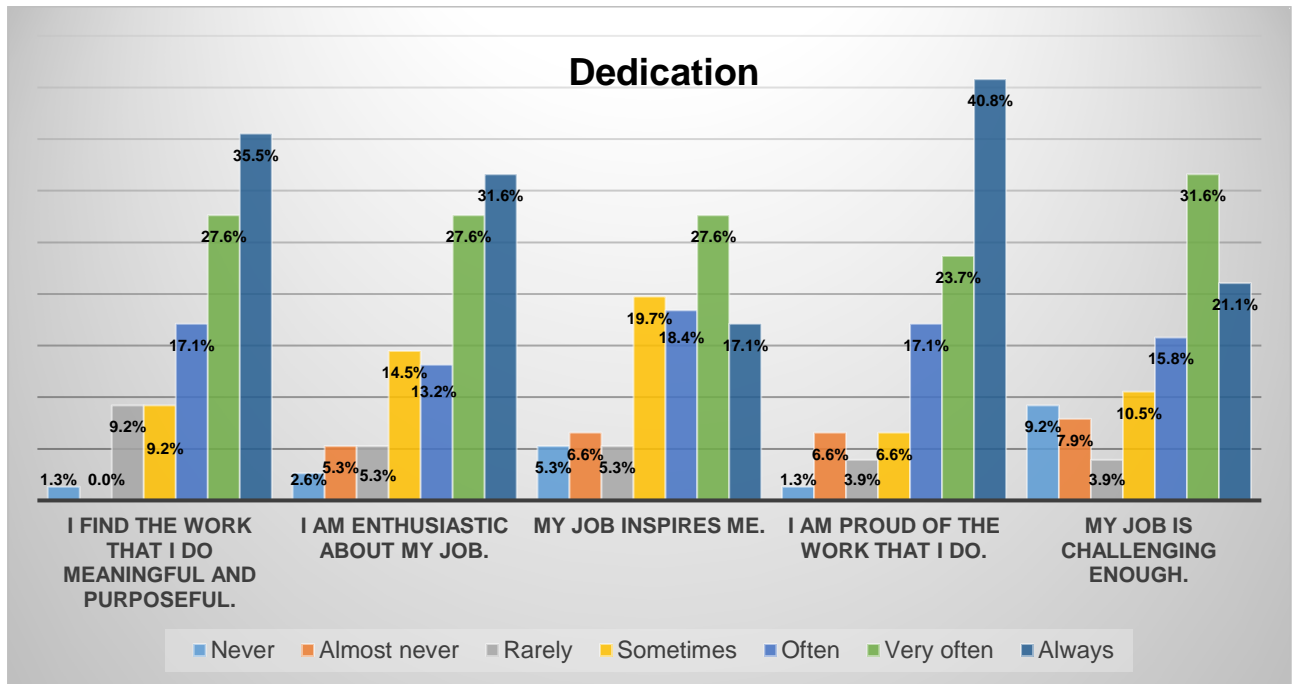


Figure 4.8: Dedication

When the scores for “very often” and “always” in figure 4.8 are combined, 63.1% of respondents found their work meaningful and purposeful, 59.2% were enthusiastic about their job and 64.5% were proud about the work that they do, but only 44.7% felt inspired by their job. Furthermore, only 52.7% found their job challenging enough.

The lower scores indicated above are understandable if the age and tenure of respondents at the department are considered. Respondents could still aspire for higher positions in the organisation as 64% are below 41 years and 77% of respondents have been with the department for less than 10 years and could want more responsibility to advance their careers.

4.3.1.3. Absorption

The frequency distributions on absorption are depicted in figure 4.9 and figure 4.10 below.

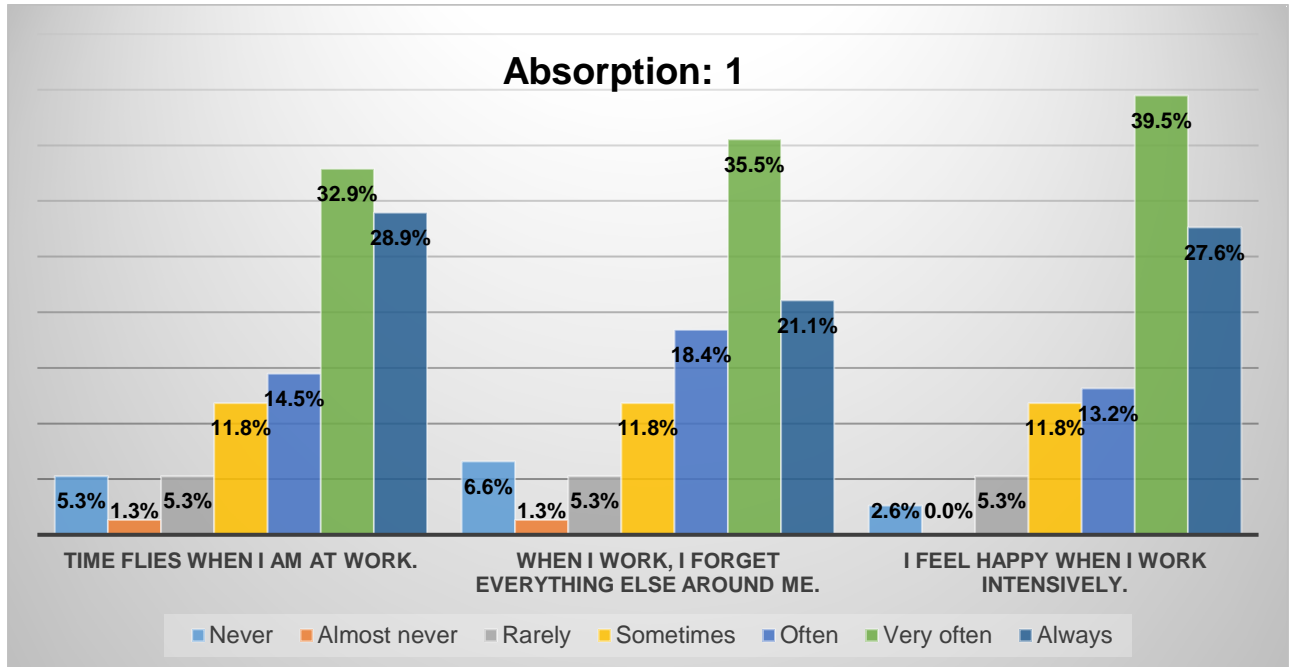


Figure 4.9: Absorption 1

In the literature, absorption is described as a reflection of concentration where time goes by quickly, a happiness with the work condition, a condition of being immersed by the work role and finding it difficult to detach oneself from the work.

The “very often” and “always” responses for absorption in figure 4.9 reveal that absorption is 61.8% for all three questions. This is an alarming factor for the capacity of and the commitment to the department as only 61.8% of the respondents enjoy being fully immersed in work while they are at work. In a time where austerity is on the forefront, the capacity of each employee should be reviewed.

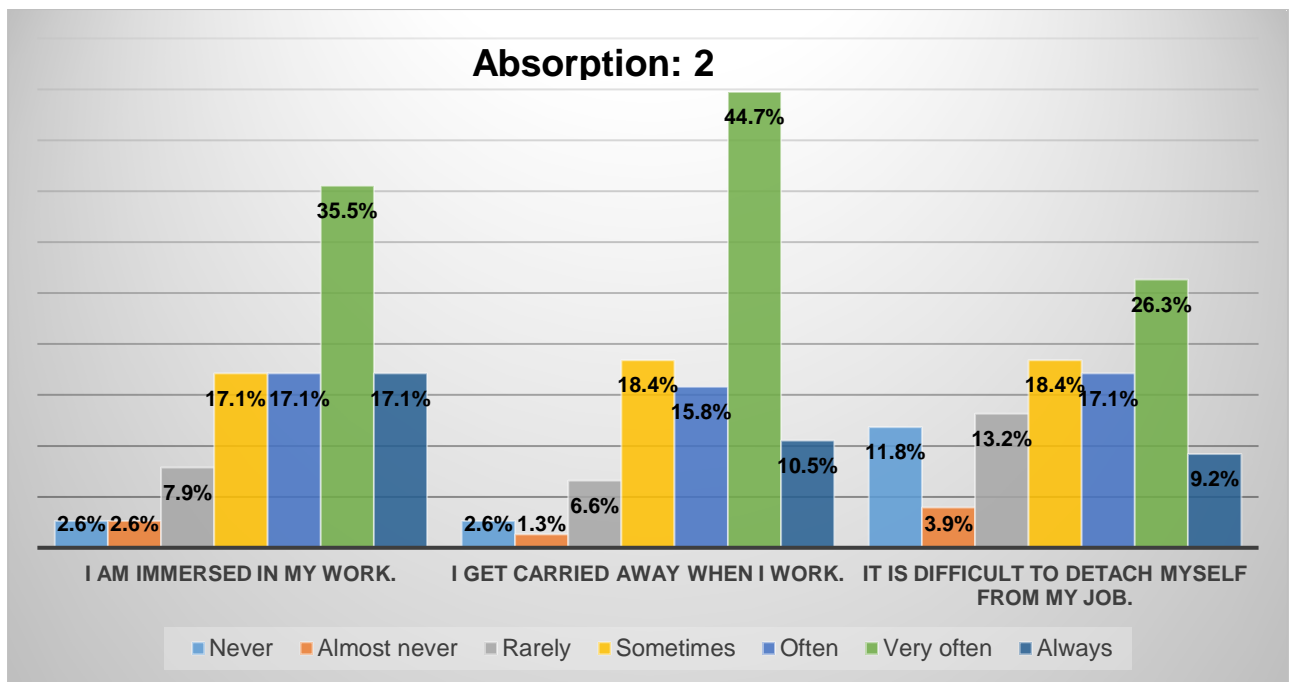


Figure 4.10: Absorption 2

It can be seen in figure 4.10 that 52.6% of the respondents were very often and always immersed in their work, while 55.2% very often and always got carried away when they worked. However, only 35.5% of the respondents very often and always found it difficult to detach themselves from their jobs.

Considering the age and characteristics described in the literature, members of generation Y place great emphasis on work-life balance. A total of 64% of the respondents are 41 years and younger, thus generation Y.

4.3.1.4. Individual-level work engagement summary

When engagement from an individual perspective is assessed, the scores for the three dimensions are vigour at 4.38, dedication at 4.31 and absorption at 4.18. All these scores show average engagement input from employees. It is worrying to know that only average effort is made by employees when engagement at an individual level is assessed. The uncertainty caused by student protests about fees, violence, low salary increases and language policy issues that is currently experienced in the higher education climate is thus affecting work engagement

4.3.2. Work engagement at a team level

The drivers of work engagement at a team level have been defined as autonomy, supervisory coaching, performance management and teamwork. The frequency distributions for each driver are discussed in the following sections.

4.3.2.1. Autonomy

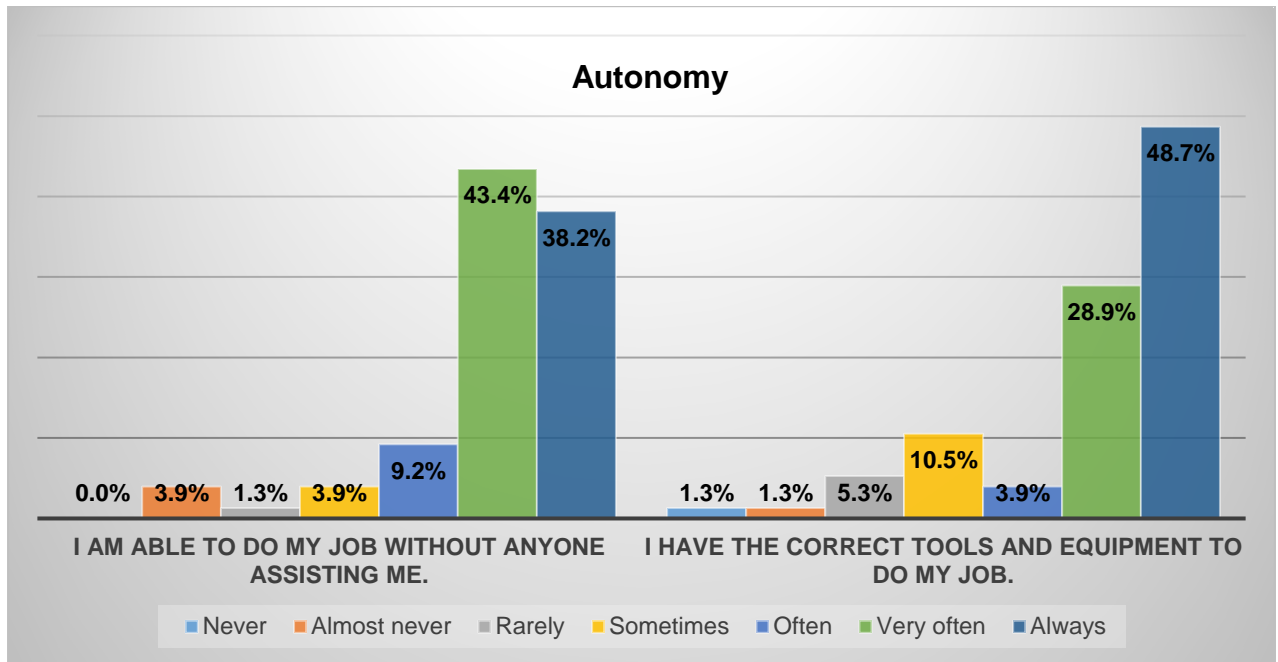


Figure 4.11: Autonomy

The financial environment requires segregation of duties, monthly and cyclical deadlines and reporting on a computerised accounting system, all of which make it easier to assess which employees need assistance, whether it is a lack of knowledge or experience. As shown in figure 4.11, respondents confirmed this, as 81.6% and 77.6% very often and always feel that they are able to do their jobs without assistance and that they are equipped to do so.

4.3.2.2. Supervisory coaching

The frequency distributions on supervisory coaching are depicted in figure 4.12 below.

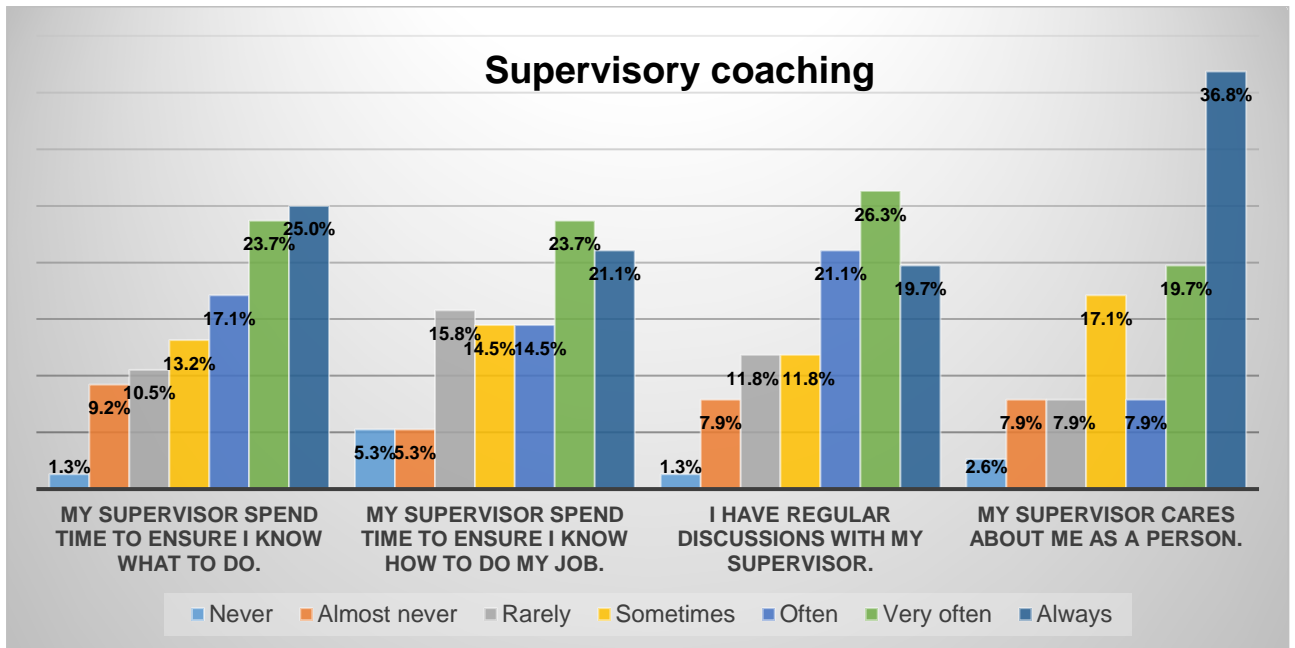


Figure 4.12: Supervisory coaching

As stated in the literature, the relationship with the supervisor is the most important relationship that can affect engagement. As shown in figure 4.12, when asked if their supervisor spent time to ensure employees know what to do and how to do their job, the average score was 46.8% for the responses “very often” and “always”. Of the respondents, only 46% revealed that they had regular discussions with their supervisors when the responses “very often” and “always” are added. Furthermore, 56.5% of respondents felt that their supervisor cares about them as a person when the responses “very often” and “always” are added.

It is common for supervisors to ensure that employees can work independently, i.e. that they know what to do and how to do the job, but having regular conversations once the employee can do the job is not part of the culture. As confirmed by the literature, the supervisor is the golden thread between the employee and the organisation, so more effort should be invested by the supervisor to make an impact on work engagement.

4.3.2.3. Performance feedback

The frequency distributions on performance feedback are depicted in figure 4.13 below.

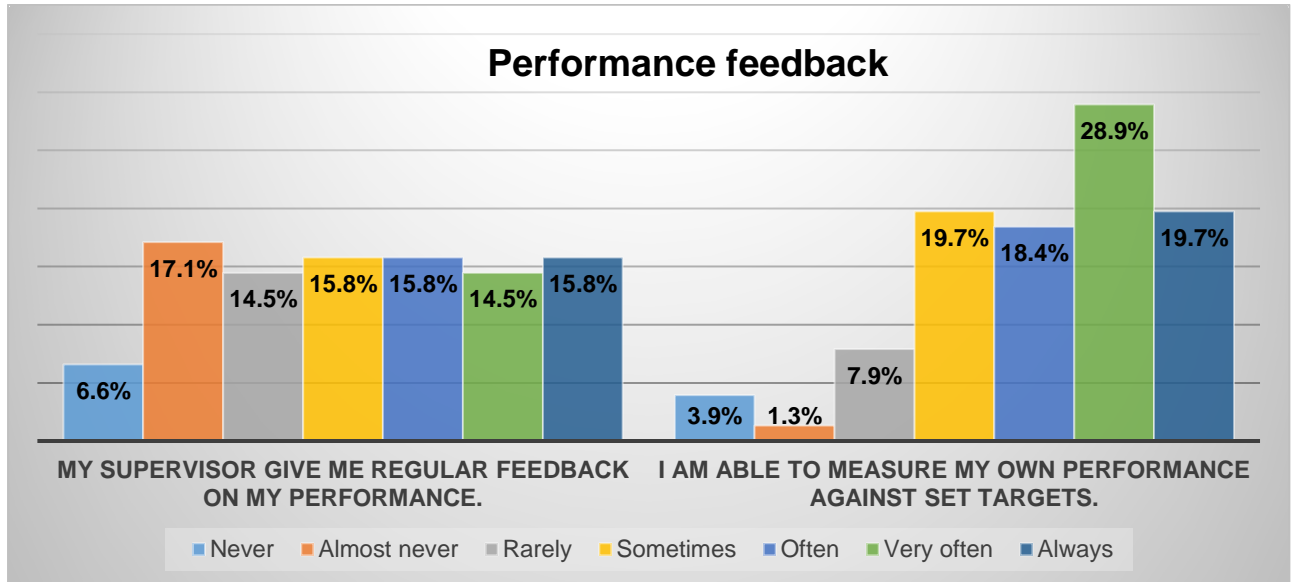


Figure 4.13: Performance feedback

Performance management is currently a bi-annual process, but from figure 4.13 it is evident that employees would like to have more feedback and discussions with supervisors. Only 14.5% of the respondents indicated that they very often receive regular feedback from their supervisor on their performance, while 15.8% indicated that they always have this experience. Of the respondents, 28.9% are very often able to measure their own performance against set targets, while 19.7% indicated that they are always able to do so.

This result supports the literature that employees regard coaching and mentoring by their supervisor as important tools to performance feedback and career development.

4.3.2.4. Teamwork

The frequency distributions on teamwork are depicted in figure 4.14 below.

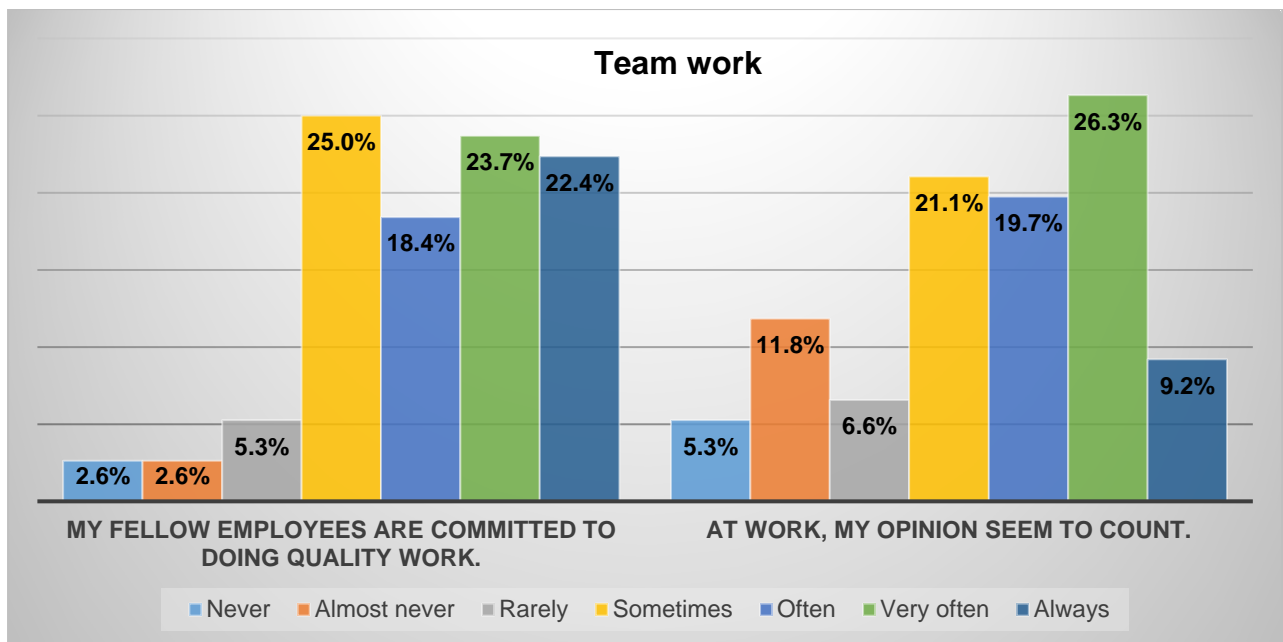


Figure 4.14: Teamwork

Descriptive statistics in figure 4.14 indicate that 46.1% of respondents very often and always experienced their fellow employees to be committed to doing quality work. Furthermore, only 35.5% of the respondents felt that their opinion seems to count at work, when the responses “very often” and “always” are combined.

A typical characteristic of members of generation Y is that their own skills development, and thus their own opinions, are more important than commitment to the employer. This finding confirms the literature.

4.3.2.5. Summary of team-level work engagement

As stated in the literature, engagement at team level can be enhanced by the supervisor. Employees want supervisors to mentor and coach them to advance their careers. The supervisor plays a vital role in making employees feel that their opinion counts and creating teams where the sum is more than the individual parts. Currently the supervisors are not held accountable for the teams they create.

4.3.3. Work engagement at an organisational level

Work engagement at organisational level is driven by inspiring trust and integrity, a culture of innovation and extra-role performance. The frequency distributions of these drivers are discussed below.

4.3.3.1. Inspiring trust and integrity

The frequency distributions for inspiring trust and integrity are depicted in figure 4.15 below.

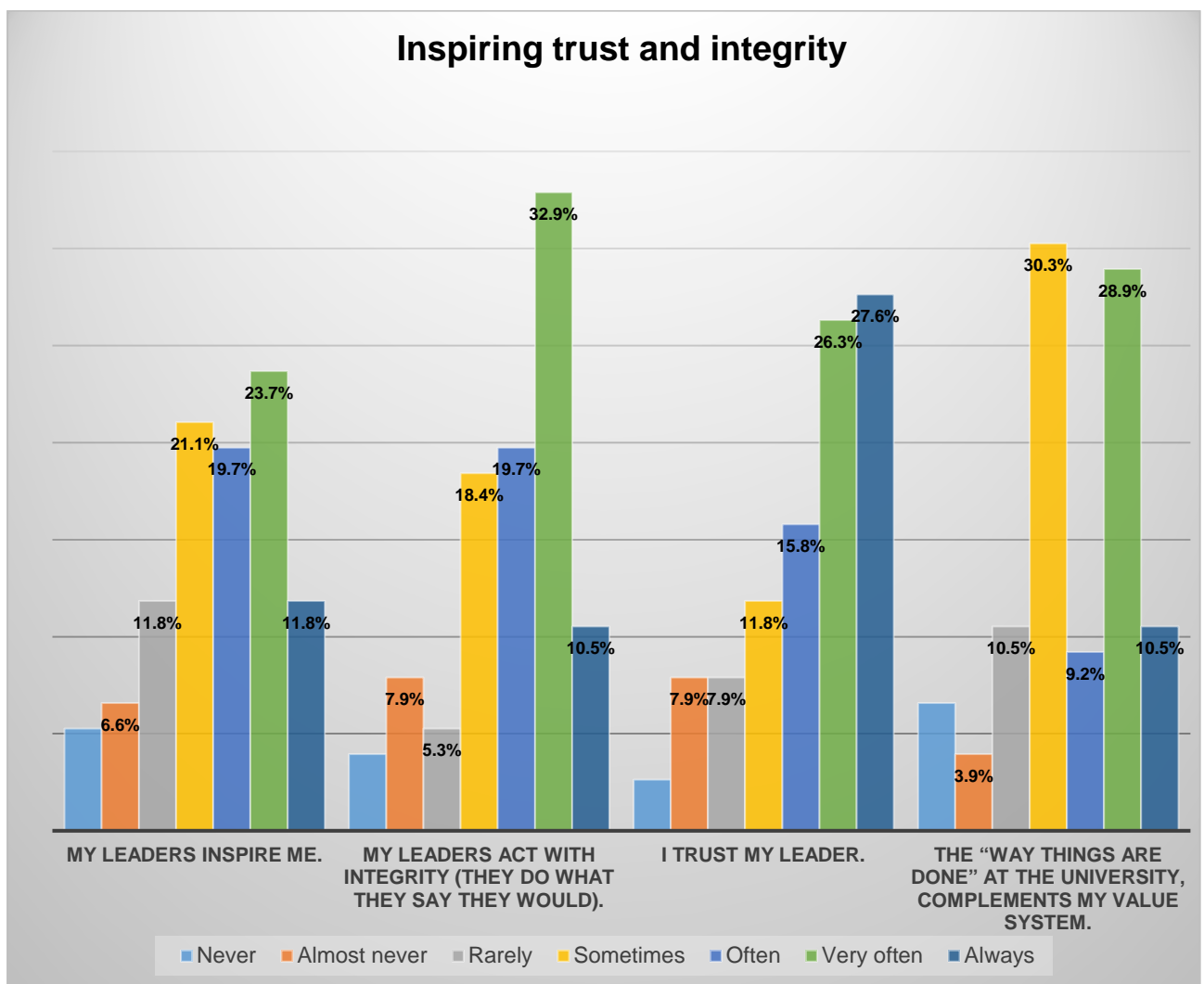


Figure 4.15: Inspiring trust and integrity

Based on figure 4.15, when the responses “very often” and “always” are combined, only 35.5% of respondents indicated that they felt inspired by their leaders, 43.4%

experienced that leaders act with integrity (they do what they say they would do), while 53.9% of respondents trusted their leader.

Furthermore, 39.4% of the respondents revealed that “the way things are done at the university” complements their value system, when the scores of “very often” and “always” are combined. For all other responses, figure 4.15 shows that they declined towards “never”, but in this particular response, “sometimes” is the highest with 30.3%.

The university is currently going through fundamental changes like the language policy change and uncertainty due to student unrest regarding fees. There is also uncertainty about how government is going to subsidise the 0% increase that students requested while expecting universities to insource contract workers. Staff might not always feel that they would be able to handle such fundamental changes the same way.

4.3.3.2. Culture of innovation

The frequency distributions on a culture of innovation are depicted in figure 4.16 below.

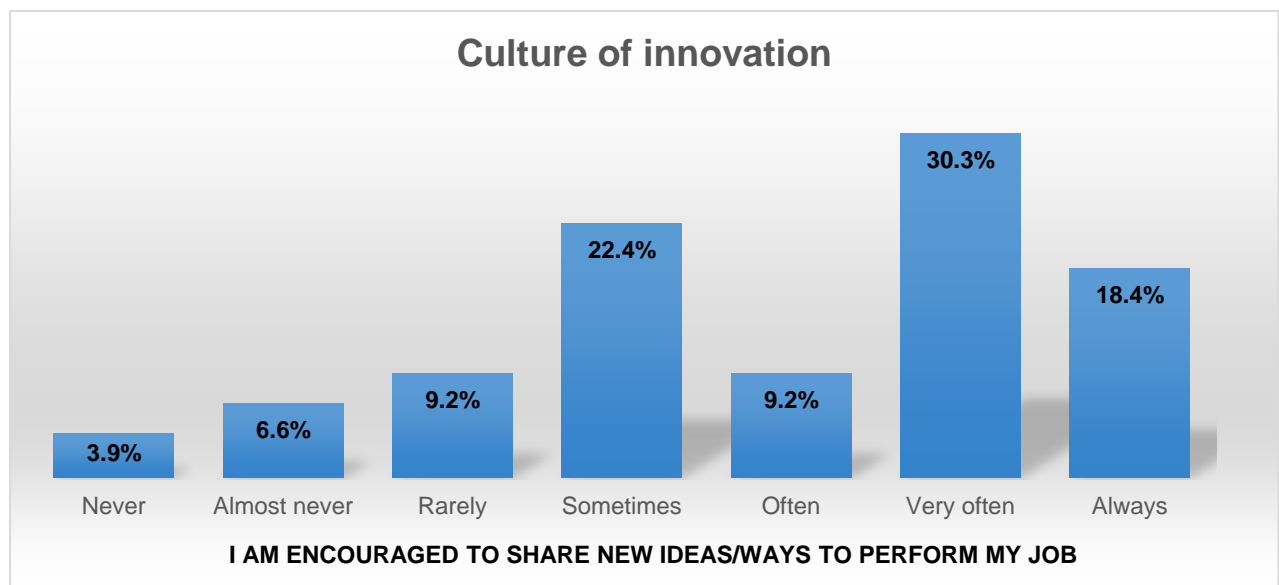


Figure 4.16: Culture of innovation

Figure 4.16 shows that 9.2% of the respondents indicated that they are often encouraged to share new ideas or ways to perform their jobs, while 30.3% very often and 18.4% always had the same experience. If the scores for “often” to “always” are added, the response is 57.9% positive.

If the response for sometimes is added to the previous 57.9%, it shows that 80.3% of respondents were exposed to the culture of innovation, but it is not yet embedded. The literature suggests that culture can be changed through planned mediations, of which more are required in the finance department. When the culture at the university is considered, leaders are not yet held accountable for the culture that they display.

4.3.3.3. Extra-role performance

The frequency distributions on extra-role performance are depicted in figure 4.17 below.

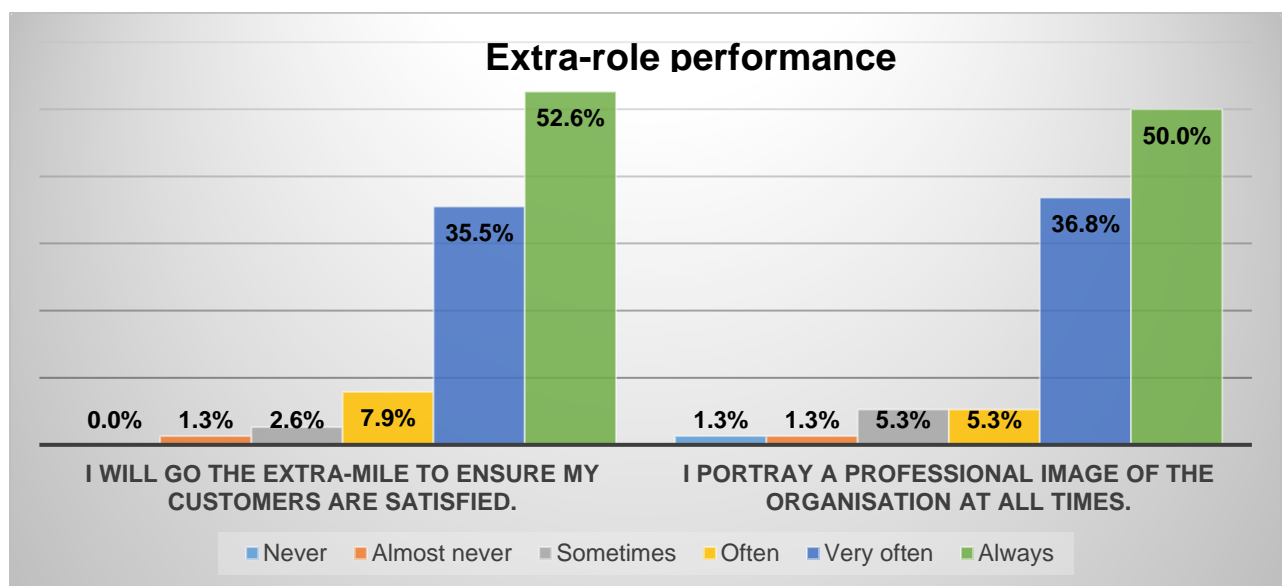


Figure 4.17: Extra-role performance

As shown in figure 4.17, 35.5% of the respondents indicated that they will very often go the extra mile to ensure that their customers are satisfied and 52.6% indicated that they will always do this. In addition, 36.8% of the respondents said that they very often portray a professional image of the university, and 50% always portray a professional image of the university.

Both the responses for extra-role performance are very high, indicating that staff at the Department of Finance are engaged to better the image and reputation of the organisation.

4.3.3.4. Summary of organisational-level work engagement

In figure 4.15, for inspiring trust and integrity, the frequency distributions' of the responses "very often" and "always" were averaged, which calculated to 43%. As stated in the literature, trust is a workplace-relevant belief, where employees invest time and effort in exchange for psychological safety and trust that the manager will perform an action based on an expectation. The university was confronted with fundamental issues like language policy changes, insourcing of contract workers and student protests, leaving uncertainty and unfulfilled expectations from leaders.

Considering the culture of innovation, the responses for "very often" and "always", which added up to 48.7%, show that employees have been exposed to such a culture, but work needs to be done to embed it.

The very high average score, 87%, for the responses "very often" and "always" of extra-role performance indicated that staff are committed to positively portraying the university and creating a good client experience through these difficult times.

4.4. Reliability

A Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to determine the reliability of the scale used as well as to test whether or not the items used for a construct/variable actually measure that particular construct. A reliable variable would be indicated by a value that is above 0.6. The work engagement variables that were constructed are vigour, dedication, absorption, autonomy, supervisory coaching, performance feedback, teamwork, inspiring trust and integrity, a culture of innovation as well as extra-role performance. Responses of the relevant questions were summarised on the UWES questionnaire as follows: questions 1–6 for vigour, questions 7–11 for dedication and questions 12–17 for absorption. On the self-report questionnaire, the variables were laid out as follows: questions 1–2 for autonomy, questions 3–6 for supervisory coaching, questions 7–8 for performance feedback, questions 9–10 for teamwork, questions 11–14 for inspiring trust and integrity, question 15 for a culture of innovation and questions 16–17 for extra-role performance.

Table 4.1: Cronbach's alpha of work engagement constructs

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Vigour	0.851	6
Dedication	0.896	5
Absorption	0.875	6
Work engagement	0.944	17
Autonomy	0.574	2
Supervisory coaching	0.903	4
Performance	0.653	2
Teamwork	0.564	2
Inspiring	0.892	4
Extra-role performance	0.773	2
Self-report	0.920	17

Only the variables with a Cronbach's alpha that is greater than 0.6 were constructed and used in the analysis of variance to follow. From the constructed variables, all the values of Cronbach's alpha were greater than 0.6 except for autonomy, teamwork and culture of innovation. Where Cronbach's alpha was less than 0.6, the individual statements were used separately and a chi-square test was used.

4.5. Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in this study, particularly the means and standard deviations. Data are presented through simplified graphics and summaries about the sample and the measures. In calculating the mean and mean percentage, the average measure and thus the level of engagement for each of the drivers of engagement was measured. Measurement included the overall level of engagement, i.e. individual, team or organisational, as well as the results for each of the drivers. The higher the mean percentage is above 50%, the more engaged respondents are and vice versa.

Table 4.2: Mean, mean percentage and standard deviation

Variables	Mean	Mean %	Median	Std. Deviation
Vigour	26.29	73.0%	27.00	6.12
Dedication	21.57	71.9%	22.50	6.93
Absorption	25.09	69.7%	27.00	7.32
Work engagement	72.95	71.5%	77.00	18.70
Supervisory coaching	16.17	67.4%	17.00	6.08
Performance	7.37	61.4%	7.00	2.97
Inspiring	15.27	63.6%	16.00	5.69
Extra-role performance	10.57	88.0%	11.00	1.84
Self-report	70.89	69.5%	73.50	17.52

The mean percentages of all the constructs were above 50% but below 73%, except for extra-role performance which was 88%, indicating respondents to be on average engaged.

For the variables autonomy, teamwork and culture of innovation, which could not form a summated scale, separate descriptive statistics were calculated on the individual items. This was done using the factor values (FV), where a mean value of each of the statements was estimated, ranging from 0 to 6 with 3 being the middle value (lower than 3 indicates that respondents are fundamentally less engaged, and the closer the mean is to 6, the more engaged the respondents are regarding the specific issue). The mean for each question had to be changed into an FV or an average score (AS). The FV was then calculated. This ranges between 0 and 1, or can be converted into a percentage. A mean of 3 is therefore equal to an FV of 0.5 (or 50%).

Table 4.3: Factor values of variables which could not form a summated scale

Variables		Mean	FV
Autonomy	I am able to do my job without anyone assisting me.	5.01	83.6%
	I have the correct tools and equipment to do my job.	4.96	82.7%
Teamwork	My fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.	4.14	69.1%
	At work, my opinion seems to count.	3.54	59.0%
Culture	I am encouraged to share new ideas/ways to perform my job.	3.91	65.1%

A high FV (> 0.5) indicates that the majority are engaged with the specific issue in the statement. The FVs per construct are discussed separately.

The FVs of divisions are compared to each other in table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Depiction of engagement between different finance divisions

Driver	Question	Division	Mean	FV
Autonomy	I am able to do my job without anyone assisting me.	Assets	5.38	89.6%
		Commercial debtors	4.33	72.2%
		Financial aid	5.14	85.7%
		General ledger	5.09	84.8%
		Provisioning	4.82	80.4%
	I have the correct tools and equipment to do my job.	Tuition fees	5.13	85.6%
		Assets	5.38	89.6%
		Commercial debtors	5.67	94.4%
		Financial aid	4.86	81.0%
		General ledger	4.87	81.2%
Teamwork	My fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.	Provisioning	4.65	77.5%
		Tuition fees	5.00	83.3%
		Assets	3.75	62.5%
		Commercial debtors	4.67	77.8%
		Financial aid	5.00	83.3%
	At work, my opinion seems to count.	General ledger	4.00	66.7%
		Provisioning	4.12	68.6%
		Tuition fees	4.00	66.7%
		Assets	3.00	50.0%
		Commercial debtors	4.50	75.0%
Culture of innovation	I am encouraged to share new ideas/ways to perform my job.	Financial aid	4.00	66.7%
		General ledger	4.04	67.4%
		Provisioning	3.71	61.8%
		Tuition fees	3.40	56.7%
		Assets	3.88	64.6%
		Commercial debtors	5.17	86.1%

When autonomy was assessed, all divisions have indicated levels above 72%, which is high on both questions. This is in accordance with the financial environment where proper segregation of duties is key, monthly and cyclical deadlines exist and processes follow on each other.

In the assessment of teamwork, employees at the assets division were convinced to a lesser degree (62.5%) that fellow employees are committed to doing quality work, followed by those at General Ledger and Tuition Fees (both with 66.7%). Only 50% of employees in the asset division indicated that their opinion seems to count, followed by the general ledger division with 53.6%. The supervisors in both the assets and general ledger divisions should be sensitised on the perceptions of staff and how to improve engagement at team level.

The tuition fees division indicated by 56.7% that a culture of innovation is fostered, and the highest indication was from Commercial Debtors with 86.1%. Tuition Fees deals with students and is expected to follow processes and consistently apply the policies and procedures of the organisation. In this division, more than one person

performs the same function, and innovation is only implemented once all staff members are trained. In Commercial Debtors, an electronic invoicing system was only implemented in 2012. Only one person performs a task, making it easier to streamline processes and leaving room for a culture of innovation.

4.6. ANOVA analysis

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests whether or not there are significant differences among the different groups. ANOVA is used when one wants to assess whether the group means of interval variables differ from one another and when there are three or more groups. It was used to compare how total engagement levels and subcomponents of divisions, age groups, education groups, tenure groups (years working at the university) and experience groups differ among divisions. If the p-values are less than 0.1, then there are differences in the engagement levels among the different groups. If the p-values are greater than 0.1, then there are no differences in the engagement levels among the biographical groups.

4.6.1. ANOVA per division

4.6.1.1. P-value per division

Table 4.5 below depicts the p-values of engagement levels per division.

Table 4.5: P-value: Engagement level per division

Variables	p-value
Vigour	0.21
Dedication	0.04
Absorption	0.12
Individual level work engagement	0.08
Supervisory Coaching	0.60
Performance feedback	0.90
Inspiring trust and integrity	0.34
Extra-role performance	0.63
Team and organisational level work engagement	0.62

The p-value for dedication was less than 0.1, which indicates that there are significant differences in the dedication engagement levels among the different divisions. The p-

value for individual work engagement was 0.08, which is less than 0.1. This indicates that there are significant differences in the total individual work engagement levels among the different divisions. The p-values for all the other engagement variables were greater than 0.1, which indicates that there are no significant differences among the different divisions. Significant differences in dedication and total individual engagement were found, so further testing is required. The test performed was the Tukey HSD test.

4.6.1.2. Tukey HSD post hoc test per division

Significant differences in dedication and individual-level work engagement were found. There was thus a need to do a post hoc analysis to determine which of the divisions have significant differences. The test used was the Tukey HSD test.

Table 4.6: Tukey HSD for p-value differences per division

Variable	Division group		Mean Difference (I-J)	p-value
Dedication	General ledger	Tuition fees	5.94	0.09
	Provisioning	Tuition fees	6.73	0.06
Individual-level work engagement	Provisioning	Tuition fees	19.16	0.04

For dedication, the differences were between those working in the general ledger division and the tuition fees division, as well as between those working in the provisioning division and the tuition fees division. For individual-level work engagement, the difference was between those working in the provisioning division and the tuition fees division. The #FeesMustFall campaign forced the university to loosen the controls regarding debt collection. The tuition fee division was affected to a large extent as student debt is on the rise and there is no strategy in place yet that would not cause protest to erupt.

4.6.2. ANOVA per age group

Table 4.7: P-value: Engagement level per age group

Variables	p-value
Vigour	0.00
Dedication	0.00
Absorption	0.00
Individual-level work engagement	0.00
Supervisory coaching	0.18
Performance feedback	0.09
Inspiring trust and integrity	0.00
Extra-role performance	0.82
Team and organisational-level work engagement	0.00

Significant differences for all variables, except supervisory coaching and extra-role performance, were found compared to the age groups. A post hoc analysis determined which of the divisions have significant differences.

4.6.2.1. Tukey HSD post hoc test per age group

Table 4.8 below depicts the p-values of engagement levels per age group.

Table 4.8: Tukey HSD for p-value differences per age group

Dependent Variable	Age groups		Mean Difference (I-J)	p-value
Vigour	26 - 33 years	34 - 41 years	-6.32	0.00
		42 - retirement	-7.71	0.00
Dedication	18 - 25 years	42 - retirement	-7.28	0.01
	26 - 33 years	34 - 41 years	-6.36	0.01
Absorption	18 - 25 years	42 - retirement	-8.95	0.00
		34 - 41 years	-5.55	0.09
	26 - 33 years	42 - retirement	-9.10	0.00
		34 - 41 years	-7.23	0.00
Performance feedback	26 - 33 years	42 - retirement	-10.78	0.00
Inspiring trust and integrity	18 - 25 years	26 - 33 years	-2.00	0.08
		42 - retirement	6.26	0.01
Individual-level work engagement	18 - 25 years	42 - retirement	-5.07	0.01
		34 - 41 years	-20.42	0.00
	26 - 33 years	42 - retirement	-19.91	0.00
		42 - retirement	-27.43	0.00
Team and organisational-level work engagement	18 - 25 years	26 - 33 years	18.04	0.02
	26 - 33 years	42 - retirement	-15.59	0.01

As shown in in table 4.8, differences exist mostly between 18–25 years and 42–retirement and between 26–33 years and 42–retirement. The age groups 18–33 years are part of generation Y, who the literature confirms have a different perspective on what the relationship with the employer should be like than the age group 42 years and above.

4.6.2.2. FV per age group

Table 4.9: FV per age group

Driver	Variables	Age	Mean	FV
Autonomy	I am able to do my job without anyone assisting me.	18 - 25 years	4.90	81.7%
		26 - 33 years	4.43	73.9%
		34 - 41 years	5.50	91.7%
		42 - retirement	5.26	87.7%
	I have the correct tools and equipment to do my job.	18 - 25 years	5.50	91.7%
		26 - 33 years	4.17	69.6%
		34 - 41 years	5.19	86.5%
Teamwork	My fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.	42 - retirement	5.30	88.3%
		18 - 25 years	4.90	81.7%
		26 - 33 years	3.57	59.4%
		34 - 41 years	4.19	69.8%
	At work, my opinion seems to count.	42 - retirement	4.33	72.2%
		18 - 25 years	4.20	70.0%
		26 - 33 years	2.70	44.9%
		34 - 41 years	3.19	53.1%
Culture of innovation	I am encouraged to share new ideas/ways to perform my job.	42 - retirement	4.22	70.4%
		18 - 25 years	4.10	68.3%
		26 - 33 years	3.39	56.5%
		34 - 41 years	3.88	64.6%
		42 - retirement	4.30	71.6%

In table 4.9, it can be seen that employees in the age group 26–33 years have the lowest engagement percentage of 44.9%, followed by 34–41 years with 53.1%, when asked if their opinion seems to count. From table 4.4 it is also evident that these employees reside mostly within the assets and general ledger divisions. The literature confirms that the supervisor or manager is the golden thread that links the employee to a team and helps the employees understand their role within the organisation. The managers must be informed about the status of the employees' perception and trained to engage better with staff and form a team. All other variables in table 4.9 are at an acceptable engagement level.

4.6.3. ANOVA per qualification

The following categories were combined for better statistical analysis:

- grade 10 and matric to form “matric and below”
- certificate and diploma to form “certificate and diploma”
- degree and postgraduate qualification to form “degree and above”.

4.6.3.1. P-value per qualification

Table 4.10 below depicts the p-values of engagement levels per qualification.

Table 4.10: P-value: Engagement level per qualification

Variables	p-value
Vigour	0.24
Dedication	0.01
Absorption	0.08
Individual-level work engagement	0.04
Supervisory coaching	0.94
Performance feedback	0.72
Inspiring trust and integrity	0.51
Extra-role performance	0.38
Team and organisational-level work engagement	0.72

The p-values of dedication, absorption and individual-level work engagement were less than 1, indicating significant differences between levels of qualifications. The HSD Tukey test highlighted the differences, as described below.

4.6.3.2. Tukey HSD post hoc test per qualification

Table 4.11 below depicts the post hoc test per qualification.

Table 4.11: Turkey HSD post hoc test per qualification

Variables	Qualification		Mean Difference (I-J)	p-value
	Certificate & diploma	Degree & above		
Dedication	Certificate & diploma	Degree & above	5.62	0.01
Absorption	Matric & below	Degree & above	4.19	0.09
Individual-level work engagement	Certificate & diploma	Degree & above	11.49	0.08

For dedication, the differences were between those who have a certificate and/or diploma and those who have a degree and above. For absorption, the differences were between those who have matric and below and the employees with a degree and above. Significant differences in individual-level work engagement were also shown between those who have a certificate and/or diploma and those who obtained a degree and above.

It is difficult for somebody without a degree to apply for promotional positions as the minimum requirement for most positions is a degree. The university offers study benefits within the field of an employee’s job and that would not materially affect operations. Commerce degrees at the university can only be studied full time, which makes it impossible for employees to enrol for undergraduate studies even though they have the benefit. An employee entering the department with matric and below must first obtain a commerce degree part-time and privately to be considered for supervisory positions. This causes disengagement and frustration among employees.

4.6.3.3. FV per qualification

Table 4.12 below depicts the FV per qualification.

Table 4.12: FV per qualification

Drivers	Variables	Qualification	Mean	FV
Autonomy	I am able to do my job without anyone assisting me.	Matric & below	5.24	87.3%
		Certificate & diploma	5.11	85.2%
		Degree & above	4.84	80.6%
	I have the correct tools and equipment to do my job.	Matric & below	4.90	81.7%
		Certificate & diploma	5.00	83.3%
		Degree & above	4.97	82.9%
Teamwork	My fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.	Matric & below	4.24	70.6%
		Certificate & diploma	4.22	70.4%
		Degree & above	4.05	67.6%
	At work, my opinion seems to count.	Matric & below	2.95	49.2%
		Certificate & diploma	3.83	63.9%
		Degree & above	3.73	62.2%
Culture of innovation	I am encouraged to share new ideas/ways to perform my job.	Matric & below	3.48	57.9%
		Certificate & diploma	4.00	66.7%
		Degree & above	4.11	68.5%

Respondents who have matric and below had the lowest engagement score of 49.2% when asked if their opinion seems to count at work. Respondents who have matric and below also had the lowest engagement score of 57.9% when asked if they are encouraged to share new ideas or ways to perform their jobs. Employees with a qualification of matric and below find it extremely difficult to use the study benefits offered at the university to improve their qualifications due to operational requirements (in terms of time away from work to attend class) of the department, leading to disengagement.

4.6.4. ANOVA per tenure

The following categories were combined into one category, “11+ years”, for better statistical analysis:

- 11–15 years
- 16–20 years
- 21–40 years.

4.6.4.1. P-value per tenure in the department

Table 4.13 below depicts the p-values of engagement levels per tenure at the department.

Table 4.13: P-values for tenure at the department

Variables	p-value
Vigour	0.05
Dedication	0.00
Absorption	0.00
Individual-level work engagement	0.00
Supervisory coaching	0.26
Performance feedback	0.14
Inspiring trust and integrity	0.17
Extra-role performance	0.73
Team and organisational-level work engagement	0.14

The p-values of vigour, dedication and absorption at the individual level of work engagement were less than 0.1, indicating significant differences between engagement drivers and staying at the Department of Finance. The HSD Tukey test was used to highlight the differences.

4.6.4.2. Tukey HSD post hoc test per qualification

Table 4.14 below depicts the p-values of the Tukey HSD test for tenure at the Department of Finance at the UFS.

Table 4.14: Tukey HSD post hoc test per tenure at the department

Variables	Tenure groups		Mean Difference (I-J)	p-value
	0 - 5 years	11+ years		
Vigour	0 - 5 years	11+ years	-4.00	0.06
Dedication	0 - 5 years	6 - 10 years	-5.68	0.00
		11+ years	-6.64	0.00
Absorption	0 - 5 years	6 - 10 years	-5.44	0.01
		11+ years	-7.84	0.00
Individual-level work engagement	0 - 5 years	6 - 10 years	-13.98	0.01
		11+ years	-18.48	0.00

For vigour, dedication and absorption, the differences were mainly between those who have been with the department for 0–5 years and 11+ years.

4.6.4.3. FV per tenure at the Department of Finance at the UFS

Table 4.15 below depicts the FV per tenure at the Department of Finance at the UFS.

Table 4.15: FV per tenure

Drivers	Variables	Tenure	Mean	FV
Autonomy	I am able to do my job without anyone assisting me.	0 - 5 years	4.86	81.0%
		6 - 10 years	5.09	84.8%
		11+ years	5.24	87.3%
	I have the correct tools and equipment to do my job.	0 - 5 years	4.86	81.0%
		6 - 10 years	5.17	86.2%
		11+ years	4.88	81.4%
Teamwork	My fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.	0 - 5 years	4.03	67.1%
		6 - 10 years	4.22	70.3%
		11+ years	4.29	71.6%
	At work, my opinion seems to count.	0 - 5 years	3.36	56.0%
		6 - 10 years	3.43	57.2%
		11+ years	4.06	67.6%
Culture of innovation	I am encouraged to share new ideas/ways to perform my job.	0 - 5 years	3.61	60.2%
		6 - 10 years	3.87	64.5%
		11+ years	4.59	76.5%

Respondents who have been with the department for 0–5 years and 6–10 years had the lowest engagement scores of 56% and 57.2% respectively when asked if their opinion seems to count at work. All other engagement scores in table 4.15 are at an acceptable level.

4.6.5. ANOVA per total work experience

The results are presented in Table 4.16 below.

4.6.5.1. P-value per total work experience

Table 4.16: P-value per total work experience

Variables	p-value
Vigour	0.01
Dedication	0.00
Absorption	0.00
Individual-level work engagement	0.00
Supervisory coaching	0.42
Performance feedback	0.48
Inspiring trust and integrity	0.02
Extra-role performance	0.75
Team and organisational-level work engagement	0.14

The p-values of vigour, dedication, absorption, individual-level work engagement and inspiring trust and integrity were less than 0.1, indicating significant differences between engagement drivers and total work experience. The HSD Tukey test was used to highlight the differences.

4.6.5.2. Tukey HSD post hoc test per total work experience

Table 4.17 below depicts the p-values of the Tukey HSD test for total work experience.

Table 4.17: Tukey HSD post hoc test per total work experience

Variables	Experience		Mean Difference (I-J)	p-value
	0 - 5 years	21 - 40 years		
Vigour	0 - 5 years	21 - 40 years	-5.63	0.02
	6 - 10 years		-5.27	0.02
Dedication	0 - 5 years	21 - 40 years	-10.36	0.00
	6 - 10 years		-6.20	0.01
	11 - 20 years		-6.14	0.01
Absorption	0 - 5 years	21 - 40 years	-9.79	0.00
	6 - 10 years		-8.14	0.00
	11 - 20 years		-5.17	0.06
Inspiring trust and integrity	0 - 5 years	6 - 10 years	4.93	0.04
	6 - 10 years	11 - 20 years	-4.59	0.05
		21 - 40 years	-4.50	0.04
Individual-level work engagement	0 - 5 years	21 - 40 years	-25.79	0.00
	6 - 10 years		-19.60	0.00
	11 - 20 years		-14.60	0.03

For vigour, dedication, absorption and individual-level work engagement, the differences were mainly between those who have 0–5 years’ experience and those who have 21–40 years’ experience. For inspiring trust and integrity, there were differences in the engagement levels of employees with 0–10 years’ experience and those with 11–40 years’ experience. Employees entering the department are mainly young, African candidates of generation Y, while the employees with 11–40 years’ experience are mainly White generation X or baby boomers. The literature confirms that these individuals perceive their employer and workplace differently and that these perceptions influence the culture of the organisation.

4.6.5.3. FV per total work experience

Table 4.18 below depicts the FV per total work experience.

Table 4.18: FV per total work experience

Drivers	Variables	Experience	Mean	FV
Autonomy	I am able to do my job without anyone assisting me.	0 - 5 years	4.60	76.7%
		6 - 10 years	4.70	78.3%
		11 - 20 years	5.28	88.0%
		21 - 40 years	5.35	89.1%
	I have the correct tools and equipment to do my job.	0 - 5 years	5.27	87.8%
		6 - 10 years	4.50	75.0%
11 - 20 years		4.50	75.0%	
Teamwork	My fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.	0 - 5 years	4.33	72.2%
		6 - 10 years	3.95	65.8%
		11 - 20 years	3.89	64.8%
		21 - 40 years	4.39	73.2%
	At work, my opinion seems to count.	0 - 5 years	3.67	61.1%
		6 - 10 years	2.90	48.3%
		11 - 20 years	3.67	61.1%
		21 - 40 years	3.91	65.2%
Culture of innovation	I am encouraged to share new ideas/ways to perform my job.	0 - 5 years	3.73	62.2%
		6 - 10 years	3.55	59.2%
		11 - 20 years	4.22	70.4%
		21 - 40 years	4.09	68.1%

Respondents who with 6–10 years’ work experience had the lowest engagement score at 48.3% when asked if their opinion seems to count at work, as well as an engagement score of 59.2% when asked if they are encouraged to share new ideas

or ways to perform their jobs. All other FV engagement scores are at an acceptable level.

4.7. Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that work engagement at the University of the Free State is driven at three levels, i.e. the individual level, the team level and the organisational level. The individual level, portrayed in Table 4.2 and which included the employees' internal perspective, vigour, dedication and absorption, invested as average engagement input of 71.5%. When work engagement at team level was considered, taking into account autonomy, supervisory coaching, performance management and teamwork, the level of work engagement averaged at 70%. Organisational-level engagement measured the drivers, namely inspiring trust and integrity, extra-role performance and a culture of innovation, to average at 72%. This average score of engagement contradicts worldwide trends measured by Galagan (2015) that only 44% of employees are engaged. This can be explained by the systematic approach followed where engagement is supported on all three levels in the Department of Finance at the UFS. Having analysed the results of the work engagement survey conducted at the UFS Department of Finance, the next chapter provides recommendations for addressing existing challenges or shortcomings as well as an overall conclusion of the study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, a summary of the study, its limitations and recommendations to determine how a systems approach could enhance work engagement in the Department of Finance at the UFS are discussed.

5.2. Conclusions of the study

The primary objective of this study was to determine how a systems approach could enhance work engagement in the Department of Finance at the UFS. The primary objective of this study was reached by identifying drivers for work engagement. In order to achieve this, two secondary objectives were set. The first secondary objective was to provide an overview of the theoretical principles to assess work engagement in organisations.

A literature review was conducted to provide an overview of the theoretical principles to assess work engagement, determine key variables influencing work engagement, evaluate models to assess work engagement and define the key drivers of a systems approach to work engagement. The literature review was followed by a research survey conducted to validate, compare and contrast interpretations made with regard to a systems approach to enhance work engagement in the Department of Finance at the UFS.

Systems theory, as described by Martins and Martins (2002), was used to determine the levels of work engagement and how human behaviour at work is influenced by it. Human behaviour at work, through interaction with individuals, groups and their external environment, were considered at three levels, namely individual, team and organisational work engagement. Drivers of work engagement were defined at each level through the study of work engagement principles and work engagement models. A study of the theoretical principles found work engagement to be a voluntary and intense emotional attachment to the organisation, displayed through personal initiative, adaptability and persistence, where employees have a sense of purpose and focus and maintain a positive work-related state of mind.

The second secondary objective was to determine the key variables influencing work engagement. Ten variables that could influence work engagement drivers were identified, namely career development, performance management, relationship with manager, managerial coaching, working autonomously, high-performance work practices, job fit and availability of skills, generational analysis of employees, organisational culture and trust. Based on two models and the UWES, which is used to test work engagement, key drivers of work engagement were identified at each level. The models and scale used to identify the drivers per level were:

- the theoretical model of employee engagement
- the JD-R model
- the UWES.

The third secondary objective was achieved by assessing the current work engagement environment at the Department of Finance at the UFS based on the systems approach. The UWES was used to assess work engagement at an individual level, and a self-report questionnaire was developed to test work engagement at a team level and an organisational level.

The fourth secondary objective was to define the key drivers of a systems approach to work engagement at the Department of Finance at the UFS. Work engagement at individual level was found to be average when vigour, dedication and absorption were tested. Differences for vigour, dedication and absorption were found mainly between those who have been with the department for 0–5 years and those who have been there for more than 11 years.

When dedication was assessed, only 44.7% of the respondents felt inspired by their job, and only 52.7% found their job challenging enough. Absorption is a reflection of concentration and being immersed in the work in such a way that one finds it difficult to detach oneself. When employees were asked if, when at work, they forget everything else around them, the response was 56.6%, and only 35.5% found it difficult to detach themselves from their work. The responses supported the general characteristics of generation Y, which elevates work-life balance to a high priority in their jobs.

At the team level, where autonomy, supervisory coaching, performance management and teamwork were tested, the level of work engagement averaged at 70%. The study highlighted the lack of sufficient supervisory coaching where 46.8% of the respondents indicated that their supervisor spent time to ensure they know what to do and how to do their job, 46% indicated that they have regular discussions with their supervisors, and 56% of respondents felt their supervisor cares about them. As stated in the literature, the betterment of the supervisor-employee relationship is key to enhance work engagement. For performance feedback, only 30.3% of employees said they had regular discussions on their performance with their supervisor, and 48.6% were able to measure performance against set targets. The teamwork driver showed that only 46.1% of respondents experienced their fellow employees as committed to do quality work, while only 35.5% felt that their opinion counts.

At the organisational level, work engagement was assessed by the variables inspiring trust and integrity, extra-role performance and a culture of innovation, averaging 72%. When the driver inspiring trust and integrity was assessed, only 35.5% of respondents felt inspired by their leaders, 43.4% experienced that leaders act with integrity (they do what they say they would do) and 53.9% trusted their leader. Trust and integrity are very fragile concepts because once they are broken, they take a long time to repair. Respondents revealed that 39.4% agreed that “the way things are done at the university” complements their value system. In the assessment of the culture of innovation, it was evident that 48.7% of respondents were exposed to culture of sharing new ideas, but the culture was not yet embedded. Extra-role performance was very high at 88.1% for going the extra mile for customers and 86.1% for always portraying a professional image of the university.

The assets division was only 62.2% convinced that fellow employees are committed to doing quality work, while only 50% of respondents from this division felt that their opinion seems to count. The tuition fees division indicated by 56.7% that a culture of innovation is fostered, with the highest indication of such a culture in Commercial Debtors.

Recommendations will now be made based on the findings in the data analysis.

5.3. Recommendations

5.3.1. Career development with clear career paths

There was a difference between the level of dedication among respondents from the tuition fees division and the general ledger and provisioning divisions. The level of dedication was also lower for employees who have a certificate or diploma and those who have a degree and above. When dedication was assessed, only 44.7% felt inspired by their jobs, and only 52.7% found their job challenging enough. Considering the age and tenure at the department, the low scores could be because respondents still aspire for higher positions in the organisation or want more responsibility to advance their careers. Clear career paths are very important both for younger employees and those who have been with the department for longer. It is important to address the dedication of employees who do not have a degree regarding what training and career development opportunities are available in the department, as failing to do so may lead to total disengagement of those employees.

5.3.2. Increased focus on work for higher productivity

Only 56.6% of respondents indicated that they forget everything else around them when at work. This is an indication of employees' concentration on work at hand and ultimately a reflection of productivity. In the times of austerity that the organisation is facing, the capacity of each employee should be assessed to identify where capacity still exists.

5.3.3. Increased supervisory coaching

There is currently not a culture of supervisor-employee interaction aimed at tracking progress and giving feedback. The practice is to get employees to work autonomously and then only intervene once problems occur. Supervisors should be held responsible for regularly meeting with employees and discussing work performance. A minimum meeting target should be set and supervisors coached on how to conduct these meetings. The planned interventions will open the communication channels between supervisors and employees, which could lead to enhanced work engagement.

5.3.4. Supervisor should give regular feedback on performance

Respondents indicated that only 30.3% have regular discussions with supervisors regarding feedback. Feedback on performance is currently at most a bi-annual discussion, so the process comes across as being a stick with which to hit employees. Having more regular or even monthly performance meetings could change this process and afford employees a chance to improve in areas where the acquired standard is not yet met.

5.3.5. Enhance communication and knowledge of divisional processes among teams

Only 46.1% thought that their colleagues are committed to doing quality work, which reflects a low level of teamwork in the organisation. A knowledge-sharing meeting should be held where one division shares its purpose, successes and struggles and another division can ask questions to clear up perceptions. This will enable divisions to understand processes within the department and identify opportunities to streamline. Supervisors should ensure that these meetings are held in the correct spirit and that they enhance communication and understanding among divisions. Having open discussions could also provide a platform where employees can voice their opinions and where these could be considered in a sensible way. Open discussions could also encourage employees to review processes and could embed a culture of innovation.

5.3.6. Equip supervisors to form better teams

Supervisors should be equipped with tools on how to form better teams. They should also be held responsible for the teams they create. Building stronger teams increases efficiency and communication and ultimately increases work engagement. This could be done formally or informally by training, coaching and mentoring interventions.

5.3.7. Supervisors and employees must understand how actions influence the trust relationship

Employees and supervisors must understand how their actions influence the trust relationship. Employees firstly trust the organisation by investing time and effort for

psychological safety in return. The employees trust that managers will act according to an expectation, and they also create trust by assisting fellow employees. Through regular communication, managers should ensure that the employees' expectations are met and that the actions taken by management are explained and justifiable.

5.3.8. Expanding the impact and influence of the systems approach

Identifying key drivers for work engagement at individual, team and organisational level enhances the understanding of work engagement and assists in the monitoring thereof. Pinpointing efforts needed in a specific driver could ensure resources are allocated to the problem instead of taking a blanket approach. This could make employees feel that their needs are attended to, whereby work engagement could increase.

5.4. Limitations

It was the first time work engagement was measured per division within the finance department. The assessment, for the purpose of this field study, only included employees located in Bloemfontein and not employees stationed at the QwaQwa campus. In order to holistically benefit the UFS, the assessment could at a later stage also be conducted at the QwaQwa campus.

5.5. Conclusion

The success of investing resources in work engagement was previously only perceived to be left up to the employee, without considering the influence of the team and organisation as a whole. By identifying a systems approach to work engagement, role players and responsibilities can be assigned to each level. Work engagement can now be managed and monitored at all three levels, i.e. individual, team and organisation. This could save time and money as resources could be directed where they are needed in order to generate a greater return on work engagement for the organisation.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire cover letter

Mrs P.J. du Plessis
8 John van der Rietstreet
Langenghovenpark
Bloemfontein
9301

1 July 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

I am currently enrolled for a Masters Degree in Business Administration (MBA) and part of the requirements of obtaining the degree is the completion of a research project.

The title of the research project is A systems approach to employee engagement in the department of Finance at the university of the Free State. The primary objective of the research is to determine how a systems approach could enhance employee engagement in the department of Finance at the UFS.

In order to complete the research project I request that you participate by completing the following questionnaires. The questionnaires will take approximately 10 minutes.

Please complete the questionnaires on or before 22 July 2016. You can leave the questionnaire at your Head of Division.

Relevant ethical considerations are being observed by the researcher while conducting this study. Permission was obtained from Mr. Chris Liebenberg, Senior Director Finance and dr. Lis Lange, Vice-rector Academics. The data will be kept anonymous and no identification questions are included. The information will be kept confidential and in the reporting of the findings mention will only be made to the overall findings.

Participation in this research is on a voluntary basis. Please complete the informed consent document on the next page to confirm that you were aware of the voluntary participation at the end of this information letter. The researcher will not interfere in anyway with the information given on the respondents' questionnaires.

Where clarity is required, the researcher can be contacted at:

K305, George du Toit Building, University of the Free State

Contact nrs: Office - 051 401 7251

Cell phone - 083 447 8027

Email address: duplessisp1@ufs.ac.za

Your time and effort taken in completing the questionnaire are appreciated in advance.

Thank you for contributing to the success of this research.

Regards

Perle du Plessis

Please complete the consent form and hand this form in separately from your questionnaires:

The title of the research project is A systems approach to employee engagement in the department of Finance at the university of the Free State. The primary objective of the research is to determine how a systems approach could enhance employee engagement in the department of Finance at the UFS.

I hereby give free and informed consent to participate in the above mentioned research study.

- I understand what the study is about, why I am participating and that I can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I give the researcher permission to make use of the data gathered from my participation.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B: Questionnaire on work engagement

Biographical data

a. Which division in Finance are you working in at the UFS?

Division	Tick ✓ or ✗	For office use only
Assets		1
Commercial Debtors		2
Financial aid		3
General ledger		4
Provisioning		5
Tuition Fees		6

b. How old are you?

Age	Tick ✓ or ✗	For office use only
18 – 25 years		1
26 – 33 years		2
34 – 41 years		3
42 - retirement		4

c. What is your highest qualification?

Qualification	Tick ✓ or ✗	For office use only
Grade 10		1
Matric		2
Certificate		3
Diploma		4
Degree		5
Post graduate qualification		6

d. How long have you been in the department of Finance at the University?

Years at the department of Finance at the UFS	Tick ✓ or ✗	For office use only
0 - 5 years		1
6 – 10 years		2
11 – 15 years		3
16 – 20 years		4
21 – 40 years		5

e. What is your total work experience?

Total work experience	Tick ✓ or ✗	For office use only
0 – 5 years		1
6 – 10 years		2
11 – 15 years		3
16 – 20 years		4
21 – 40 years		5

UWES - Questionnaire on work engagement

Complete the following questionnaire using the scale below.

- Never = 0
- Almost Never, a few times a year or less = 1
- Rarely, once a month or less = 2
- Sometimes, A few times a month = 3
- Often, Once a week = 4
- Very Often, A few time a week = 5
- Always, every day = 6

	UWES Questions on work engagement	Never = 0	Almost Never, a few times per year or less = 1	Rarely, once a month or less = 2	Sometimes. A few times per month = 3	Often, Once a week = 4	Very often, a few times a week = 5	Always, every day = 6
1.	At work I feel like bursting with energy.							

UWES Questions on work engagement		Never = 0	Almost Never, a few times per year or less = 1	Rarely, once a month or less = 2	Sometimes. A few times per month = 3	Often, Once a week = 4	Very often, a few times a week = 5	Always, every day = 6
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 to work or long periods of time.							
5.	At my job, I am mentally resilient.							
6.	At my job I always persevere, even when things do not go well.							
7.	I find the work that I do meaningful and purposeful.							
8.	I am enthusiastic about my job.							
9.	My job inspires me.							
10.	I am proud of the work that I do.							
11.	My job is challenging enough.							

UWES Questions on work engagement		Never = 0	Almost Never, a few times per year or less = 1	Rarely, once a month or less = 2	Sometimes. A few times per month = 3	Often, Once a week = 4	Very often, a few times a week = 5	Always, every day = 6
12.	Time flies when I am at work.							
13.	When I work, I forget everything else around me.							
14.	I feel happy when I work intensively.							
15.	I am immersed in my work.							
16.	I get carried away when I work.							
17.	It is difficult to detach myself from my job.							

Self-report questionnaire on work engagement

Complete the following questionnaire using the scale below.

- Never = 0
- Almost Never, a few times a year or less = 1
- Rarely, once a month or less = 2
- Sometimes, A few times a month = 3
- Often, Once a week = 4
- Very Often, A few time a week = 5
- Always, every day = 6

Self-report questions on work engagement		Never = 0	Almost Never, a few times per year or less = 1	Rarely, once a month or less = 2	Sometimes. A few times per month = 3	Often, Once a week = 4	Very often, a few times a week = 5	Always, every day = 6
1.	I am able to do my job without anyone assisting me.							
2.	I have the correct tools and equipment to do my job.							
3.	My supervisor spend time to ensure I know what to do.							
4.	My supervisor spend time to ensure I know how to do my job.							

Self-report questions on work engagement		Never = 0	Almost Never, a few times per year or	Rarely, once a month or less = 2	Sometimes. A few times per month = 3	Often, Once a week = 4	Very often, a few times a week = 5	Always, every day = 6
5.	I have regular discussions with my supervisor.							
6.	My supervisor cares about me as a person.							
7.	My supervisor give me regular feedback on my performance.							
8.	I am able to measure my own performance against set targets.							
9.	My fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.							
10.	At work, my opinion seem to count.							
11.	My leaders inspire me.							
12.	My leaders act with integrity (they do what they say they would).							
13.	I trust my leader.							
14.	The “way things are done” at the university, complements my value system.							

Self-report questions on work engagement		Never = 0	Almost Never, a few times per year or	Rarely, once a month or less = 2	Sometimes. A few times per month = 3	Often, Once a week = 4	Very often, a few times a week = 5	Always, every day = 6
15.	I am encouraged to share new ideas/ways to perform my job.							
16.	I will go the extra-mile to ensure my customers are satisfied.							
17.	I portray a professional image of the organisation at all times.							

18. Do you have any recommendations that will enhance work engagement in the department?
