

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AT THE LAND ADMINISTRATION AUTHORITY LESOTHO

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degree

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Declaration

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

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



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20th May 2021

Date

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Abstract

The Land Administration Authority Lesotho (LAA) has been plagued by high employee turnover and an inability to recruit and retain the best talent. The main issue at the LAA is a lack of employee engagement, as shown by the rising staff turnover rate which reached around 20% in 2018. The primary objective of the study was to determine employee engagement at the LAA. The secondary objectives of the study were to analyse literature on employee engagement, determine the level of employee engagement at the LAA, and to determine the particular drivers that can improve employee engagement at the LAA. The study further presented the drivers of employee engagement, models of employee engagement, and factors influencing engagement.

The quantitative study using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was undertaken to determine the level of employee engagement within the LAA. The results of the UWES indicated that the overall level of employee engagement at the LAA was average.

The study has identified several strategies which the management of the LAA can adopt in order to enhance employee engagement. Leadership should become active in the different activities of the organisation in order to make an impression and encourage workers. Management of the LAA should set work goals that employees will be able to reach.

Key words: *Employee engagement, LAA, organisational culture, leadership, UWES*

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AT LAND ADMINISTRATION AUTHORITY LESOTHO

CHAPTER 1

1.1. Introduction and Background

Recently, organisational management has been seen as the single most notable hindrance to organisational performance. The management models and practices that are being used need to be reviewed, as managers seem to lack the ability to add significant value to their organisations (Joubert & Roodt, 2011). Employee engagement has become a critical metric for organisations in the 21st century. "Employee engagement is directly influenced by the growth of organisations, value addition experienced by employees and employee perception" (Patro, 2013:2). The research has shown that good performance is linked to engaged staff within the workplace environment. High impact leaders generate situations in which staff members are linked to purpose through significant work assignments (King, 2018).

Work engagement is described both as an optimistic emotional and psychological mindset at work that motivates employees to invest mentally, cognitively, and physically in their jobs (Mitonga-Monga, 2018). Bannuka, Kimuli, Muganga and Sendawula. (2018) attest to the awareness that employee performance is a multidimensional paradigm for the determination of organisational success or failure. For global organisations to thrive and reach new heights, the notion of employee engagement should be understood and be instilled by the organisational leadership.

According to Jena, Pradhan and Panigraphy (2018), employees tend to show trust and commitment when they are properly engaged in their work assignments as this stimulates motivation to perform their roles efficiently. To create or preserve their companies' profitability, leaders of organisations must work hard to engage employees (Hammoud & Osborne, 2017). However, Baloch, Sabra and Zia-ur-Rehman (2019) point out that one of the challenges that organisational leaders are faced with in recent years, is ensuring the physical, mental and emotional presence of employees at work.

The 2019 employee engagement report by Tiny Pulse revealed that globally, 43% of employees would likely leave their organisation for just a 10% pay rise elsewhere, compared

to 25% of employees in the previous year. This shows that many organisations are faced with an uphill battle to prove their value or else risk losing employees to competitors. Organisational culture seems to be a driving force for employee engagement, as according to Tiny Pulse (2019), companies with a strong culture and good benefits, such as working from home, casual Fridays or more flexible schedules, would likely instil engagement amongst employees. This notion emphasises the fact that a wrongly articulated corporate culture could be a stumbling block for organisations worldwide to keep their employees engaged.

The 2019 trends in global employee engagement report by Adair and Oehler (2019) shows that global employee engagement has increased from 65% in 2018 to 66% in 2019. The main contributing region to the increase was the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region where China made a positive movement of 3 points and India with 1 point. Engagement in North America has stayed flat, whereas Canada has dropped 3 points in 2018; Europe had a drop of 3 points, as did Sub-Saharan Africa. Economic growths, as well as expansion, have paved ways for organisations to invest in people, and by 2019, two thirds of global employees were engaged compared to the 59% of 2011 trends.

Adair and Oehler (2019) further explain that agility scores are dropping globally, and it is likely because organisations are embarking on new strategies to undo the historical linear thinking and this is becoming a painful learning curve for employees. Leadership, on the other hand, plays a vital role in engaging employees as a leader's engagement influences the prospect of engaged employees. Moreover, attracting and retaining talent is another challenge because it is becoming difficult for organisations to attract the right people and very difficult to retain them due to the current labour market that allows employees the liberty of considering other opportunities (Adair & Oehler, 2019).

Attaining engaged personnel necessitates senior leaders to communicate positively with employees and permit them to work within their ranges of strength, afford consistent feedback on their development, and to consider them holistically, providing due admiration to their personal lives which affect their capability to work optimally (Kelly Adcorp, 2019). According to Kelly Adcorp (2019), as per Gallup engagement survey findings in South Africa, only 9% of the employees were actively engaged. Of the remaining 91%, 45% were actively disengaged, meaning they spoke negatively about their job and work environment. The balanced levels of engagement were amongst highly educated South Africans in professional positions, and this balanced level represented 50% of those that were engaged and the 50% who were disengaged.

Kelly Adcorp (2019) further attests to leadership failings as one of the problems facing employee engagement in South Africa, whereby 67% of employees surveyed indicated that they wished managers could communicate and lead effectively. Moreover, the majority of employees felt they have inadequate opportunities to contribute to work and to the decisions that affect them. Buitendag (2014) points out that, from the South African perspective, employees who are engaged contribute significantly towards their organisation's competitive edge, even though most South African companies have not put in place employee engagement tactics to enhance their competitive edge over their competitors.

As previously mentioned, Adair and Oehler (2019) state that Sub-Saharan African has seen a drop of three points in employee engagement in 2019 and Lesotho being in the region somewhat contributed to the decrease. Lesotho is a country that is landlocked by South Africa, therefore, the behavioural attributes of the South African workforce are somehow similar to Lesotho. The land sector in Lesotho has not been effective in contributing towards the country's economic growth. As per Land Act (2010), no foreigner is supposed to have a title deed of land in the country, thus making it difficult for Lesotho to attract foreign investment. The government of the United States of America, through the Millennium Challenge Corporation, then assisted Lesotho with the establishment of the Land Administration Authority (LAA) to modernise the land administration in Lesotho for economic development.

The LAA has been faced with the dilemma of high levels of staff turnover and the inability to attract and retain talent. Low levels of employee engagement, according to Buitendag (2014), have an adverse impact on productivity, creativity, and long-term sustainability due to high workforce turnover and failure to retain employees. The high cost of replacing talent is an unfavourable result of increased employee turnover. The cost to substitute employees who may have resigned is expected to be up to 150% higher than the cost of replacing those who have resigned.

1.2. Problem Statement

The major problem at the LAA is the low levels of employee engagement, which is evident from the increasing staff turnover, for instance, in 2018 alone, three staff members resigned from the LAA and eight resigned between July 2019 and January 2020. Of the eight that resigned between July 2019 and January 2020, two were from the executive management who were regarded as the pillars of the institution. Aon Hewitt (2015) suggests that engaged workers are eager to stay within the organisation and feel enthusiastic about the

organisation they work for. Moreover, there is a decreased productivity as is evident by the increased turn-around time on the services rendered and poor service delivery to the customers. Dissatisfaction about service delivery by customers is aired through social media platforms, local radio stations, as well as the customer satisfaction survey. Should the existing trend of low employee engagement continue, there will probably be a decreased confidence of the Government towards the LAA and the negative impact on its sustainability, and ultimately, the authority may be closed down.

From the problem statement articulated above, the study's objective is to answer the following questions:

- What is the role of management towards employee engagement in the LAA?
- What is the level of employee engagement in the LAA?
- What is the impact of employee engagement on organisational performance?

1.3. Research Objectives

1.3.1. Primary Objective

- To determine employee engagement at the Land Administration Authority Lesotho.

1.3.2. Secondary Objectives

The study's secondary objectives are listed below, and they will help to clarify the study's primary objective.

- To analyse literature on employee engagement
- To determine the level of employee engagement at the LAA
- To determine the particular drivers that can improve employee engagement at the LAA

1.4. Research Methodology

1.4.1. Research Design

The research design adopted in this study was quantitative, to determine how employees at the LAA could be engaged as part of the strategic decision-making of the organisation.

The study utilised primary data that was gathered from the LAA Head Office in Maseru, Lesotho. A survey using closed-ended questions was used in the form of email questionnaires.

1.4.2. Sampling Strategy

The population of this study was limited to permanent employees of the LAA at the Head Office in Maseru, where 95 employees made a sample size, and structured survey questionnaires, such as the Utrecht work engagement (UWES), was used to conduct the study. Non-probability convenience sampling was utilised in order to have generalised data results.

1.4.3 Data Collection Method

A quantitative data collection technique was used to collect data, in which questionnaires were emailed to all LAA employees.

1.5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical problems emerge from the relationships with other people, other beings (such as animals), and the environment – particularly when there is a possible or definite conflict of interest. In certain situations, doing the right thing may mean prioritising the common good over individual benefits that may be accrued to oneself (Pholoba, 2015).

The five ethical considerations applied in the study are as follows:

1.5.1. Permission Obtained

This was done by writing a formal request to the Director, attaching a letter from the University of the Free State Business School as proof that the researcher is enrolled in the Masters of Business Administration course and is bound to conduct a study within the LAA. The letter of request outlined the process and the objectives of the study. The researcher was ethically cleared to perform a research study by the University of the Free State, with the ethical clearance number UFS-HSD2020/0628/2707.

1.5.2. Informed Consent

The voluntary decision to engage in the research study is known as informed consent. All the participants were asked to give their permission to be part of the study and they were

be given pertinent information to make an informed decision to participate. The participants were fully informed of the purpose, rights and benefits of the research.

1.5.3. Voluntary Participation

Voluntary partaking necessitates that individuals must not be forced into participating in the study, therefore, participation in this study was voluntary in nature.

1.5.4. Confidentiality and Anonymity

In research, all partakers should be guaranteed confidentiality. Participants were guaranteed that any information collected will not be shared with someone who is not specifically interested in the study, and that they would remain anonymous during the study.

1.5.5. Risk of Harm

Researchers must not place participants in a position where they could be harmed as a result of their involvement, according to ethical considerations. Harm can be physical and/or psychological, therefore, all participants were protected from possible harm at all cost by applying confidentiality and anonymity standards.

1.6. Demarcation of the Study

The research's main goal is to determine and analyse employee engagement, as well as how employees can be engaged in carrying out their duties as executive decision-makers within the LAA. The LAA's permanent technical staff and line managers was the target population of the study. The main focus of the study was strategic management, Human Resource Management as a core field of employee well-being and employee engagement study. The participants were put together according to their grades and lines of responsibility.

1.7. Chapter Layout

Chapter 2

This chapter will consist of a literature review on employee engagement, focusing on the evolution of employee engagement, models of employee engagement, and employee engagement as the organisational strategy for sustainable growth.

Chapter 3

The chapter will concentrate on the research methodology and design applied in the study.

Chapter 4

This chapter will be focusing on the quantitative investigations into employee engagement at the LAA, and data obtained will be analysed to draw up the research findings.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 will be dealing with the findings of the study and the recommendations on employee engagement as the strategic decision at the LAA.

1.8. Conclusion

In recent years, employee engagement has developed as a shared organisational term. It relates to an employee's degree of engagement to an involvement in the values and beliefs of his/her employer. An engaged employee is aware of the business context and collaborates with co-workers to enhance job performance for the good of the company.

This study ascertained the level of employee engagement within the LAA and hoped to draw up recommendations to improve the levels of employee engagement for the organisation's sustainable growth and improvement on customer service, as well as increased productivity.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

A wide range of theoretical frameworks have been used to describe employee engagement. Different scholars describe employee engagement from various theoretical viewpoints through their own analytical studies. There is not yet another theoretical framework for employee engagement currently available (Bunchapattanasakda & Sun, 2019).

The needs-satisfaction framework is first revealed in Kahn's (1990) meaning of engagement. Kahn (1990) suggests that employees are thought to be more involved in their jobs when three mental needs are met: importance (a sense of personal return on investment in role performance), safety (the feeling of being able to express and employ oneself without fear of negative consequences to one's self-esteem, status, or career), and availability (sense of having the physical, emotional, and psychological resources essential for capitalising self in role performances). Individuals are more likely to become disengaged if the company fails to provide these services.

2.2. Definition of Employee Engagement

This section will review and present various definitions of employee engagement. The goal is for the researcher to figure out what constitutes an engagement so that he can conclude this section with a proper definition of engagement for the purposes of the study.

The description of engagement introduced by Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzales-Roma, & Bakker, (2002:74) is the most frequently quoted:

Engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption. Vigour is characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Absorption is characterised by being fully concentrated and happily

“engrossed in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly, and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work”.

Employee engagement, according to Zelles (2015), is an optimistic, satisfying, work-related state of mind marked by vigour, dedication, and absorption. Zelles (2015) further attests to the fact that instead of a momentary and unique condition, employee engagement denotes a supplementary determined and omnipresent affective-cognitive condition that is not concentrated on any specific item, occasion, individual, or conduct.

Most researchers used Kahn’s definition of employee engagement, as he introduced the concept of employee engagement in 1990. Employee engagement is described by Kahn (1990), as cited by Pholoba (2015), as employees who are completely physically, cognitively, and deeply immersed in their jobs. The same author also describes engagement as a term with three distinct scopes (physical, cognitive, and emotional) that must all be enabled at the same time in order to create an engaged environment.

Lalwani (2019) describes employee engagement as employees’ emotional investment in their work in terms of the willingness they have to do a good job and the drive they feel to do so. It is the excitement, dedication and drive that they bring to work, which they use to guide their work. Engaged employees recognise the objectives of the organisation and bring their own goals into line with the organisation’s goals.

According to Macey and Schneider (2008), the practice and research-driven literature testifies to the fact that many definitions of engagement can be derived. Furthermore, meanings can be equated to folk theory, which is the shared innate sense that people, especially leaders in organisations, have about work motivation. Employee engagement is a required state, has an organisational intent, and implies participation, dedication, zeal, excitement, concentrated effort, and vigour, thus it has both attitudinal and behavioural mechanisms, according to these meanings.

It is vital to come up with clarity about what it means to be engaged as an employee. It is therefore against the meaning given above, to conclude that employee engagement is described as an enthusiastic behaviour of an employee vital in achieving the desired organisational goals through the advancement of organisational core purpose. The alternative concept of employee engagement for this analysis is that of Schaufeli et al. (2002).

2.3. Evolution of Employee Engagement

According to Schaufeli (2012), employee engagement first started in business, even though he also believes it was first used in 1990 by Gallup Inc. Employee engagement was abstracted throughout the nineteenth century and has become more prevalent in the new period of turbo-globalism and hyper-complexity, with the competitiveness and development of both the business and the workers in mind (Panda & Padhi, 2015). The word "engagement" first appeared in a research article published by the Academy of Management, titled "Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work" (Dagher, Chapa, & Junaid, 2015).

Personal engagement, job engagement, work engagement and organisational engagement are diverse names used by researchers to refer to the concept of employee engagement (Bhuwaneshwari & Kumar, 2017). As early as 1990, Kahn presented his thoughts on employee engagement through his personal engagement theory, and his theory has laid a strong foundation for today's researchers to further examine the relationship between various employee engagement variables (Bhuwaneshwari & Kumar, 2017).

Chandel (2018) points out that Kahn's (1990) article, "Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work", claims to be the first to use the word engagement. The inspiration of Kahn emanated from the works of Goffman, which is based upon theory that suggests that, in role performances, people carry out momentary attachments and detachments (Chandel, 2018).

Gallup began to develop and expand their Q12 in the mid-1990s. The Q12 is a copyrighted 12-question survey that asks questions such as, "Do you know what is expected of you at work?" and "Do you have a co-worker who is your best friend?" Gallup has raised these questions millions of times, building a valuable database and setting the foundation for employee engagement engineering. The questions posed by Gallup were clear, and the consequences of a more active workforce were interesting (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013).

According to experts from Gallup (2006) there are three kinds of employees at each workplace: (1) Engaged employees – those who are loyal and psychologically accountable to their organisation and are most likely to be long-standing employees; (2) Not engaged employees – those who can be fulfilled with work and are fruitful, but they are not psychologically associated with their organisation, and it is most probable they do not want to stay with the company for a long time; (3) Actively disengaged employees – those who are physically at work, but do not psychologically associate their presence with the job and

their responsibilities, they are not happy with their work and share these emotions with their colleagues (Vira, 2018).

2.4. Dimensions of Employee Engagement

Lee and Ok (2015) maintain that employee engagement is about two individual dimensions, namely fundamental self-evaluation and psychological climate. Employee engagement is defined as (1) the level of physical, cognitive, and emotional participation in workplace, good relations, (2) drive, involvement, effectiveness (similar with vigour, dedication and absorption) and inclination to invest determination and endurance of complications.

Consequently, employee engagement can occur within two dimensions. There is core self-evaluation, which has the connotation that employees subconsciously evaluate themselves against other people, then those insights are shared among members of organisation, also about organisational environment including policies, procedures, and practices (Lee & Ok, 2015). Fundamental self-evaluation has six qualities (Lee & Ok, 2015): (1) self-confidence, (2) self-efficacy, (3) self-acceptance, (4) self-esteem, (5) locus of control, and (6) emotional steadiness. Psychological climate has four qualities: (1) role strain and lack of coordination, (2) job test and independence, (3) leadership expedition and assistance, and (4) work group collaboration, sociability, and warmth.

Work engagement is characterised as an optimistic level of situations relating to employee well-being or job fulfilment and engagement that is marked by energy, participation, and agility (Alsada & Andrianto, 2019). Schaufeli (2006) studied work engagement and found it to be an autonomous, diverse, optimistic, adequate, mind-related effort that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption.

The vigour comes from a high degree of mental drive and stamina while working, the ability to give the best in a task, and perseverance when faced with a challenge (Schaufeli, 2017).

Dedication refers to a person's dedication to a job and his/her sense of value, as well as their passion, creativity, sophistication, and ability to take on a task (Schaufeli, 2017).

Absorption is characterised by intense focus and pleasure in the task at hand. Employees are driven to have a good and fruitful relationship with their work, and they feel they can meet the demands of their careers (Schaufeli, 2017).

Employees who are extremely conscientious are defined as being hard-working, determined, goal-oriented, and achievement-thriving. On the other hand, it is quite the opposite for employees who are low on this personality dimension (Singh, Ramgulum,

Lewis, & Ramdeo. 2019). These dispositions can spur or stimulate an employee's degree of engagement in his/her work to a substantial degree. Employees who may be higher on conscientiousness may be more motivated to devote the additional work hours, may be more absorbed in their work, may take more pride in the attainment of their work and achieving their goals, and may be more determined in getting their work done by virtue of their underlying predispositions. Highly conscientious people have dispositions that enable them to be more concentrated in the workplace, allowing them to achieve their mission and career objectives faster than those who are less conscientious.

2.5. Employee Engagement Drivers

Mercy and Choudhury (2019) assert that workers are highly involved in their jobs because they love the quality of the work they are assigned. Employees who are committed look forward to taking on new roles and challenges, and they regard work as a source of social identity, a vehicle for self-expression, and a means of achieving life perfection.

Leadership style is one other attribute that drives engagement, as according to Popli and Rizvi (2016), employee involvement has a close correlation with transformational leadership. This style of leadership encourages employees to work toward organisational goals by inspiring, motivating, and stimulating them. It also assists leaders in bringing out the best in their subordinates by demonstrating trust in their talents.

Popli and Rizvi (2016) go on to say that a transactional leadership style has a positive relationship with employee engagement, and that leaders who use this style inspire followers by rewarding and appreciating them in favour of work completion. The study not only validates the previously documented transformational leadership-employee engagement relationship, but it also reveals the transactional leadership-employee engagement relationship, particularly among young employees and early in their careers.

Employees' involvement and empowerment in problem-solving schemes and decision-making surrounding their jobs are explained as one of the causes of employee engagement. Employees feel more valued when organisations use decentralised decision-making, and they perform tasks more effectively as a result. Research also claims that empowered employees are more likely to be content with their current organisations. Employees exhibit a constructive affective reaction in terms of low turnover intentions when they are motivated to engage in decision-making processes (Raza & Nadeem, 2017).

The relationship between employee job responsibility and work engagement can be anticipated under the Job Demands Resources (JD-R) paradigm. . Learning opportunities are thought to be a job resource, and are commonly described as those that are physical, psychological, social, and intellectual or organisational characteristics of the job that assist in attaining workplace aims and inspire skills growth, knowledge, and development. The JD-R model suggests a motivational pathway in which work resources are the most important factor in increasing employee engagement since they help workers to achieve their objectives (extrinsic motivation) or fulfil their basic needs (Idris, Dollard & Tuckey, 2015).

Bakker, Gawke and Gorgievski (2017) established that employee entrepreneurship has a positive effect on employee engagement in the Netherlands. Organisations should therefore permit employees to work and develop their entrepreneurship skills for the benefits of the organisation and for themselves.

The degree to which corporate leaders identify and recompense workers for their increased exertions and productivity has cultural implications. In terms of salary, benefits, performance bonuses, succession planning, professional development, and other considerations, companies must effectively compensate their employees' efforts (Odom, Sewell & Taneja, 2015).

Furthermore, according to Odom, Randal, and Taneja (2015), it should be the responsibility of corporate leaders to create a community that will encourage employee engagement, i.e., to show their employees that they care about and respect them. Making corporate citizenship a priority, assessing job processes and contact networks to motivate staff, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance are all things to consider. To strengthen and develop the brand reputation, compensation practices should be reviewed to ensure fairness, and steps to maximise customer loyalty should be prioritised. All these steps, taken together, lead to a global organisation's culture of engagement.

According to Odom, Randal and Taneja (2015), employees are more likely to be approved and actively engage in organisational processes when the workplace atmosphere promotes equality. Staff are more involved in their jobs and their productivity rises because of such democratisation. Consequently, regardless of their place on the organisational ladder, employees' feelings are cherished and respected. Employees who think their opinions are respected are more likely to engage in the decision-making process. They have the accountability and power to make pronouncements in the workplace.

Specific individual-basis voice approaches are often used in the hopes of increasing organisational productivity by encouraging workers to engage in decision-making. Employees are often granted voice practices as vital tools that foster a sense of justice and worth, which is crucial for legitimising an organisation's behaviour against its staff (Farndale, Kwon & Park, 2016). Furthermore, Farndale *et al.* (2016) argue that implementing guiding principles in employee voice to boost employee engagement in high-power-distance cultures can backfire since the atmosphere does not support voice activities that encourage power sharing. Employees in rising societies are less likely to feel like they have a say in how decisions are made to share their preferences and views to avoid confrontation with their employers and the business.

Employees would have developed an understanding of the envisioned voice practices within the organisation, understanding these in light of their power distance principles and interpretation of the fundamental organisational environment, because they have formulated an insight of the envisioned voice practices within the organisation. Thus, the argument is that, before this understanding becomes employee engagement, there is one more step to take. The correlation between obtaining benefit from the company (a job resource) and enhanced work engagement may be tenuous except if the employee has faith that the direct voice practices are properly endorsed (Farndale, Kwon & Park, 2016).

Managers have a crucial part in promoting employee participation in direct voice activities at the micro stage, as the primary mediator in endorsing the activity. Supervisors function as gatekeepers, giving individual workers access to corporate voice practices while also recommending extra vocal techniques focused on their supervisory personality. Despite the fact that some voice practices do have direct connection to the senior leadership, the majority of voice practices are conducted by supervisors at lower levels (e.g. problem-solving groups, proposal arrangements, and one-on-one meetings among management and staff). Since actual enactment is carried out by individual managers, voice activities can be approved and experienced differently (Farndale, Kwon & Park, 2016).

Menara, Ruck and Welch (2017) posit that internal corporate communication is characterised as communication between a company's strategic managers and internal stakeholders, with the goal of promoting loyalty to the company, a feeling of being accepted, understanding of its shifting world, and consideration of its developing objectives.

Employees and managers will share their viewpoints on problems through upward contact, as well as upward problem-solving through opportunities for employees to provide input on

particular topics (Ackers, Marchington, Wilkinson & Dundon, 2004). Employees can communicate with team leaders, middle managers and top management in a variety of ways (Manera, Welch & Ruck, 2017).

Employees may be discouraged from speaking up if they believe senior managers do not want to hear their ideas and management is deaf to them, according to Menara, Ruck and Welch (2017). Management's selective deafness, according to Beugré (2010), can weaken the voice and lead to employee disengagement. Employee voice is a characteristic of employee communication activity, and engaged employees are more likely to communicate ideas, facts, and sentiments related to their job (Menara, Ruck & Welch, 2017).

Kane (2017) suggests that there are three job characteristics that lead to a sense of intent at work. The first is ability variety, which refers to the degree to which a job includes a wide range of acts and allows a person to employ a wide range of skills and abilities. The second is role identity, which refers to the extent to which the job necessitates the completion of an entire section of work from beginning to end with a clear result. The value of the work, or how much it affects other people, is the third attribute.

Hackman and Oldham (1980) elucidate how encouraging workers to have control in their positions fosters a greater sense of responsibility in them. This refers to how much independence, creativity and choice the job offers the employee to schedule his/her work and choose the measures he/she want to use. The final characteristic pertains to the interpretation of consequences. This is job input, or the degree to which influencing work activities provides the employee with clear and succinct knowledge about how operational his or her performance is (Kane, 2017).

Personal development is another aspect that drives employee engagement. Employees should have opportunities for training in preparation for their current positions, as well as growth opportunities, according to Kane (2016). Training and development opportunities are important because they encourage workers to grow and fulfil their potential, train them for further experiments, and introduce them to other positions that might be more appropriate for them (Crawford, Rich, Buckman & Bergeron, 2008). If employers invest in their employees' personal and professional advancement, it indicates that the organisation is dedicated to them and that they are respected (Lee & Bruvold, 2003). Employees become engaged when they feel encouraged, invested in and like they are a part of the company's future (Alfes, Delbridge, Shantz, Soane & Truss, 2013). Management training is also relevant, because it helps managers to become more involved in their own growth. Second,

they use their methods and practices to nurture and expand the interest of the people they manage.

Certain characteristics may be related directly between the individual manager and employees, resulting in circumstances that encourage and reassure work engagement. Constructing a plan that a manager can enforce, control and track with employees makes sense. The approach offered here is called skill-charting. The following significant characteristics of this approach that positively promote interaction are expressed: employee participation in evaluating which skills, when improved, can produce highly positive payoffs; preparation in and for capability growth; direct employee involvement in performance improvement training; and employee commitment to performance evaluation, appraisal, and adjustment (Bandura & Lyons, 2017).

Bandura and Lyons (2017) further point out that skill-charting is often used in organisations to recognise spheres of knowledge, skills and abilities. Employees map the skills with the aid of their managers. A real chart showing what is needed for good performance, as determined by a method of studying, listing, and reviewing essential ability and knowledge fundamentals of a task or work (Loyns, 2005). Following the listings are events aimed at enhancing skilled conduct, as well as guidelines for evaluating skilled success and related activities.

Instead of focusing on negative factors that can be reduced or removed, the researcher's study focuses on positive factors that may boost employee engagement. The educational literature has focused on both the beneficial and bad elements of work resources and demands, sometimes known as job resources and job demands (Saks, 2017).

Job resources, according to Saks (2017), are bodily, mental, interpersonal, or organisational characteristics of a job that aid in the achievement of work goals, the reduction of burdens, and the promotion of personal development. Job control/autonomy, involvement in decision-making, role diversity, input, incentives and appreciation, and social support from managers and colleagues are all examples of shared job capital. Organisations, interpersonal and social relations (e.g. manager and colleague solidarity, group dynamics), work structure (e.g. position clarification, involvement in judgement call), and the task itself may all give job tools.

Work demands, according to Saks (2017), are the bodily, mental, interpersonal, or organisational frameworks of a work that require an employee to continue to exert physical, emotional, and/or psychological effort, resulting in physical and/or psychological expenses.

Employment demand can take many forms, including overworking, job instability, position uncertainty, time constraints, and role ambiguity.

Job support, freedom, and job autonomy, supportive co-workers, coaching, input, and possibilities for growth have all been demonstrated to be strongly related to employee engagement. Job features such as autonomy, position diversity, work context, and feedback, as well as peer assistance, problem-solving, and job challenge, are all strongly associated to employee engagement. Demands on the job have a negative impact on employee engagement. Workplace challenges such as administrative problems, emotional tension, organisational politics, resource scarcity, position struggle, and role burden are all detrimental to employee engagement. Physiological strain (the degree of human strength required for the job) and working conditions are both negative aspects (health threats, temperature and noise).

Table 2.1 shows the tools, demands and methods that are needed to increase engagement. These elements were found to significantly predict work engagement as well as a variety of other markers of involvement.

Table 2.1: Drivers of employee engagement

Resources	Demands	Processes
Task and skill variety	Politics	Perception of fairness
Task identity	Role conflict	Trust perceptions
Task significance	Role ambiguity	Psychological contract
Autonomy	Physical demand	Perception of fit
Performance feedback	Work conditions	
Social support	Job insecurity	
Coaching	Role overload	
Opportunities for development		
Rewards and recognition		

source: Saks, 2017

Regardless of the fact that there are many ways to look at social networks, most models indicate User Generated Content as a critical component of social media, especially as compared to conventional media or even Web 1.0, where content is created centrally (Scholz & Sievert, 2017). Social media are digital technologies that bind people to promote

knowledge management and information exchange (Heymann-Reder, 2011). Apart from enhanced knowledge management and information exchange, social media's overall advantages include better coordination of internationally distributed human and output resources, as well as the enhancement of specific flaws in electronic communication tools like email, intranets, and databases. Furthermore, social media is a standard technique for recommendations. In 2014, 10% more customers did their shopping based on social media recommendations than the previous year (Domahidi & Gunther, 2017). Companies are influenced by social media, resulting in businesses 2.0, in which business arrangements as well as the entire technical infrastructure change (Jager & Petry, 2012).

Internal correspondence, rather than just social media, has proven to be more useful. This is because workers expect more visible and understandable details from their employers. Inside communication can improve employees' understanding of their organisation and their own mission by disseminating information and knowledge. This helps save money and time, resulting in happier employees and a more optimistic corporate culture.

It is evident from the assessment of several research studies that employee engagement has a straight effect on organisational efficiency. Only committed workers are likely to be productive. Employee engagement produces loyalty, customer satisfaction, employee retention, increased efficiency, credibility, fascinates talent, shows strong safety records for the organisation, lower turnover, and employee eagerness, complete physical health and, most importantly, the bottom line of the organisation, among other things (Choudhury & Mohanty, 2019).

Table 2.2: below gives the summary of employee engagement drivers

Table 2.2: Summary of employee engagement drivers

Researcher	Theme	Key Findings (Engagement Drivers
Odom <i>et al.</i> (2015)	Engagement drivers and the role of global managers to induce engagement among employees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making a profit from corporate social responsibility 2. Paying attention to the consumer 3. Promoting democracy in the workplace 4. Maintaining a healthy work-life balance 5. A society that rewards success

Ferndale <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Individual employee voice and its recognition on engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Empowering leadership 2. Superiority of affiliation between employee and supervisor
Almehrzi and Singh (2016)	Enabling attributes of employee engagement in public sector	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leader 2. Team 3. Perceived organisational support 4. Organisational culture
Bandura and Lyons (2017)	Employee engagement and skill building issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Honouring the voices of employees about they want 2. Understanding what employee want to learn
Bakker <i>et al.</i> (2017)	Study on impact of employee entrepreneurship skills with engagement level	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of entrepreneurship skills
Saks (2017)	Initiatives of organisations to generate engagement by removing barriers with structural approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Structural approach to generate engagement 2. Removal of engagement barriers
Sievert and Scholz (2017)	Study on digitalisation and internal social media on employee engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social tools in organisation's internal communications
Manera <i>et al.</i> (2017)	Linkage of organisational communication system and employee engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisational communication 2. Recognition of employee voice

Source: Compiled by researcher

2.6. Models of Employee Engagement

2.6.1. Aon Hewitt's Model of Engagement

The Aon Hewitt engagement model contains the organisational drivers and business results of engagement, as well as the individual resulting engagement itself (Aon Hewitt, 2015).

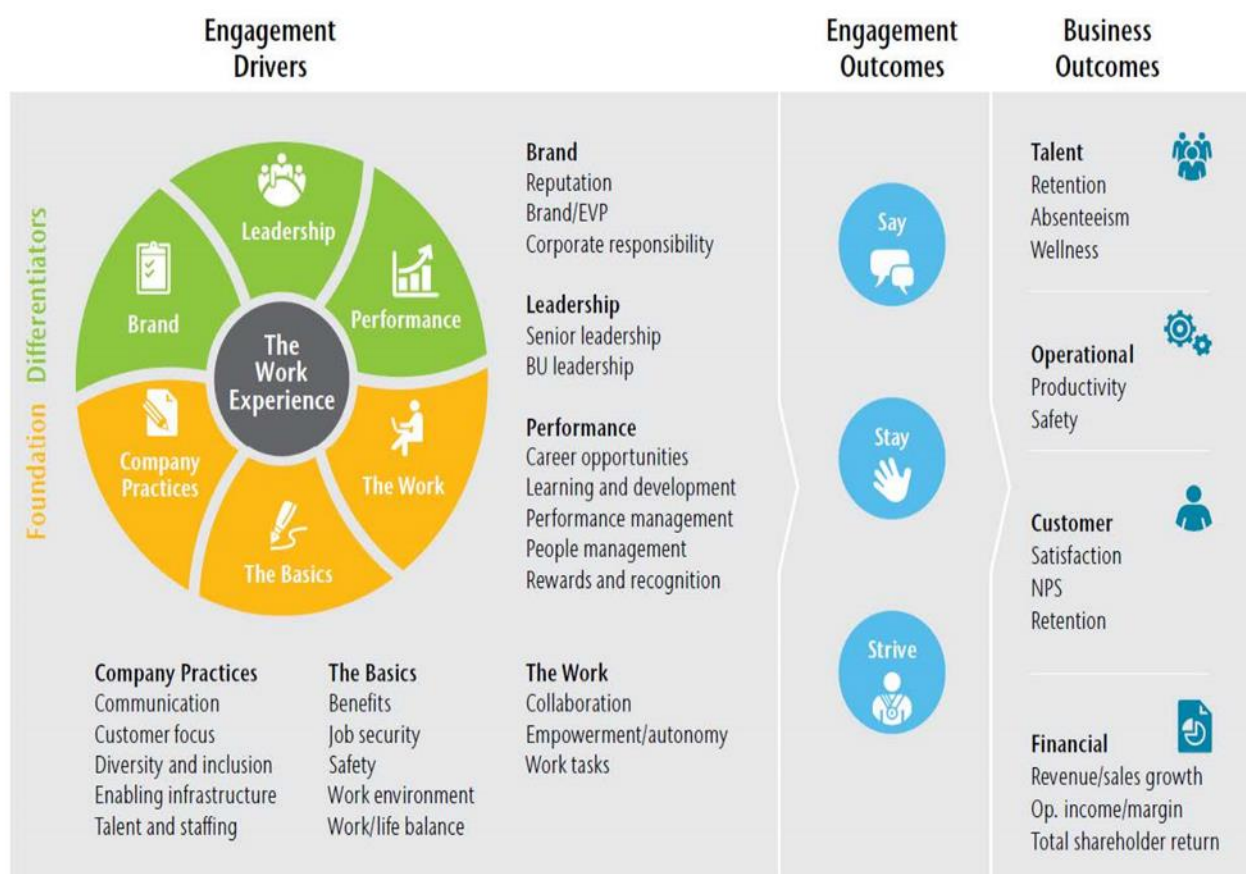


Figure 2.1: Aon Hewitt model of engagement.

Source: Aon Hewitt, 2015

When analysing the Hewitt model, the first point of departure is looking at the engagement outcomes, which determine what employees say about the organisation, how willing they are to *stay* in the organisation and what employees do to *strive* within the organisation. Then the business outcomes follow. The business outcomes are the results that show the level of engagement of employees. Then follows engagement drivers that drive the level of engagement.

The *Say* engagement outcome explains whether employees speak about the organisation in a healthy way and gets the potential employees via what they say (Aon Hewitt, 2015).

The *Stay* engagement outcome means attentiveness and preparedness to work with the organisation and appreciates its goals and finds significance (Aon Hewitt, 2015).

The *Strive* engagement outcome is the condition in which employees make an extra effort to reach both individual and organisational goals (Aon Hewitt, 2015).

Aon Hewitt (2015) portrays the operationalisation of employee engagement as a concept of six items composed of three noticeable features of Say, Stay, and Strive in Table 3 below.

Table 2.3: Operationalisation of employee engagement

Engagement	Content	Operational Definition
“Say”	“Speaks positively about the organisation to co-workers, potential employees and customers”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will not hesitate to recommend this company to a friend who is looking for work. <p>If given the opportunity, I would tell everyone about how wonderful it is to work here.</p>
“Stay”	“Has a powerful sense of belonging and aspiration to be part of the organisation”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would take a lot to get me to leave this organisation. • I hardly think about parting with this organisation to work anywhere else.
“Strive”	“Is motivated and exerts effort toward achievement in their job and for the organisation”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This organisation motivates me to do my greatest work every day. • This organisation stimulates me to contribute more than is usually prerequisite to complete my work.

Source: Aon Hewitt, 2015

2.6.2. Tower Watson Leadership Effectiveness Model

Kavya and Padmavathy (2017) explain that Watson’s research has found that leadership is a central driver of employee engagement and has recognised the following model. This model proposes that leaders should be operative in their work and ‘walk the talk’ so as to engage employees.



Figure 2.2: Leadership effective model

Source: Kavya & Padmavathy, 2017

Kavya and Padmavathy (2017) suggest the following leadership behaviour to foster employee engagement levels:

Set goals for employees to reach

When employees are given flawless goals to work toward and attain, they have a tendency to be more engaged and strengthened. Setting clear goals for employees drives them to work hard to accomplish the organisational goals. Leaders must make it a point to bring into line the employee goals with the organisational goals and these must be achievable (Kavya & Padmavathy, 2017).

Symbolise company vision

“The company’s vision should recapitulate where the company desires to go in the short term as well as in the long term. Often, employees get stimulated and encouraged when they recognise the vision of the company and they apply their energy and work towards achieving the company’s goal. Therefore, leaders should continuously remind employees of the company’s purposes and how to achieve those purposes” (Kavya & Padmavathy, 2017:875).

Be involved in company's culture

For a leader to create a positive impression on employees and inspire them, he/she must get involved in numerous activities of the organisation. When leaders play an active role in the organisational activities, not only will they engage employees, but they will also generate a passionate working environment (Kavya & Padmavathy, 2017).

Be transparent to inspire

Employee should be clear about what is happening in the organisation to be able to contribute towards attaining the organisational goal. When employees are clear about the matters of the organisation, they tend to be inspired to accomplish their personal goals as well as the organisational goals (Kavya & Padmavathy, 2017).

Fake things till you make it

“It is very important for leaders to keep the morale of employees high even in the times of downturn. Faking with employees is sometimes essential so as to keep their spirits high. Employees always look up to leaders for guidance during difficult times; it is therefore prudent for leader to keep employees optimistic during the downturn” (Kavya & Padmavathy, 2017:875).

2.6.3. Saks Model on Engagement

Saks (2006) proposed a new framework of employee engagement that focuses on three key characteristics of employee engagement as part of his research on Antecedents and Consequences of Employee Engagement: (i) the employees and their mental personality and experience; (ii) the capability of the employer to generate a positive environment that stimulates employee engagement, and (iii) collaboration between employees at all levels.

Saks (2006) established an evaluation protocol in the study and demonstrated the interconnection between three factors: antecedents, employee involvement, and consequences. Aspects like job fulfilment, training and development, reward and recognition, and assertive relationship with colleagues and superiors are considered as antecedents that have a straight bearing on the degree of engagement of employees that

can be qualified to aspects like obligation, ownership, satisfaction, contribution, and so forth. The outcomes of the evaluation process can be measured in terms of customer satisfaction and increased performance metrics.



Figure 2.3: Saks model on engagement

Source: Saks, 2006

2.6.4. Robinson, Perryman and Hayday Model

Robinson, Perryman and Hayday (2004) proposed another employee engagement model, which suggests that employee engagement is a favourable attitude maintained by employees in the course of the organisation as well as its principles. The model also recognised how an engaged employee is someone who is aware of the business environment and collaborates with co-workers to improve job performance and contribute to the organisation's success. The model emphasises that employees' obligations to the organisation are possible when the organisation prioritises employee development and cultivation, as seen in Figure 2.4.

Robinson, Perryman and Hayday Model on Employee Engagement

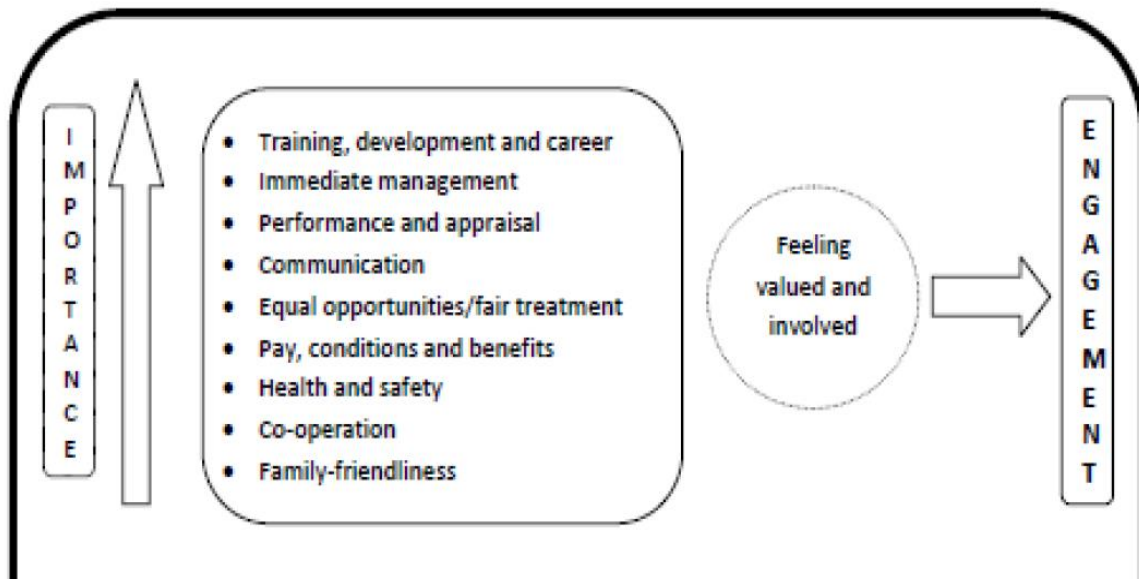


Figure 2.4: Robinson, Perryman and Hayday model on engagement

Source: Panda & Padhi, 2015

2.7. Factors influencing Employee Engagement

2.7.1. Leadership

The organisation is a shared effort of different people working together for one goal. Employees are a valued resource for the organisation and play the most important role. Leadership is an essential element of all organisations. The shared role of the leadership approach has its effect on employee engagement over different variables that impact employee engagement that will indeed fulfil the organisational efficiency goal leading towards its effective process. Organisations have not only been successful because of the worker's input towards the organisation's definitive goals. As an alternative, there is an important characteristic that is very essential to an organisation's success and employee's performance, which is the active leadership style of the leaders who lead their followers in the organisation (Awais, Khalid, Mehmood, Rahat & Raza, 2017).

Baloch, Sabra and Zia-ur-Rehman (2019) affirm that identity leadership inventory was established and authenticated to effectively make use of leaders' collective identity of "us" with their particular team members. While taking into account representational substance in the form of observed identity, prototypically, identity leadership also incorporates metaphorical, genuine and structural concerns in the form of identity progression and identity entrepreneurship.

Employees show more engagement when they work in the system of teams and are also involved in job making and devotedly shape their work environment (Tims, Bakker, Derks & Van Rhenen, 2013). The extent to which leaders craft a follower-centred work environment promotes a shared sense of 'us' and, in return, followers are anticipated to demonstrate more engagement into their work after they notice their leaders' conduct (Baloch, Sabra & Zia-ur-Rehman, 2019).

Dougan (2015) points out that if engagement is to thrive, the leadership must be committed to it. This necessitates that senior leaders, middle managers, first-line supervisors, and union leadership within the organisation establish engagement expectations that are well understood and communicated within the organisation.

Agencies that positively engage employees have established an effective communication strategy that confirms that all employees receive reliable and timely communications. If employees are not hearing from agency leaders on a regular basis, they feel left out of the loop and will expect the worst and begin to create their own reality. Over time, organisations that regularly communicate with employees and lobby their input will cultivate an engaged workforce that feels valued (Dougan, 2015).

2.7.2. Organisational Culture

Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers (2015) suggest that organisational ethics culture includes both structured (ethics code, incentive, learning) and informal (interpersonal behaviour, social standards) processes that influence employees' decision-making, dedication, and involvement in order to keep immoral conduct at bay and to correct misconduct.

The main features of work environment culture contain the following: (i) clearness, which is the level which ethical standards are established to be tangible and comprehensible in the organisation; (ii) supervisors that are on the same page; (iii) executive management, that is the point to which they serve as mentors, valuing and observing the organisational moral standards; (iv) practicability circumstances made by the organisation to allow employees to comply with the social norms; (v) supportability, as in the degree to which the organisation develops support tools (the willingness to act in an ethical manner) among employees and managers in order to meet prescriptive standards; (vi) transparency, as the extent to which the effects of one's actions are visible to everyone in the company; (vii) discussability, in terms of chances to deliberate on morals matters internally, and (viii) sanctionability, as the

degree to which employees trust that wrong-doing is recognised and disciplined and moral behaviour rewarded (Mitonga-Monga, & Cilliers. 2015).

2.8. Conclusion

In conclusion, employee engagement plays a vital role towards the performance, sustainability and profitability of every organisation. Organisational leadership should be on the forefront, stimulating their followers to be engaged and this can be attained by leadership taking cognisance of attributes such as recognising employee voice, having a reward culture, enhanced communication within the working environment, and developing employees to their fullest potential. Moreover, organisations should adopt employee engagement models within the work context, as set out by different researchers.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001), research methodology refers to all of the steps that a researcher goes through when conducting research. The research methodology that was used in the research, derived from the historical and literature reviews presented in previous chapters, was further explained in this chapter. It also provided the framework of the research methodology, design and sample selection used in the study, as well as the ethical considerations. The data utilised was acquired by a self-administered study containing two questionnaires – the UWES measurement tools that measure the three psychological components of engagement, as explained, and the biographical questions. The primary objective of this research was to determine employee engagement at the LAA.

3.2. Research Design

“Epistemology (truth) is the perspective we place on how we may come to know this world” (Ryn, 2018:2). The study's epistemological orientation was therefore of a positivist nature. As the research concentrated on employee engagement, which was a theme to human inferences, it was assumed as positivism in as much as quantitative methods were utilised. Although quantitative methods are utilised to obtain data on employee engagement levels, comprehending and analysing the data requires more than deduction.

The approach to be followed in this study was quantitative. As a result, a quantitative analysis strategy focused on enumerating and assessing variables in order to reach conclusions. It involved the usage and study of statistical data using explicit statistical methods in order to address questions such as who, how much, when, where, how many, and how. According to Aliaga and Gunderson (2002), quantitative analysis methods include gathering numerical data and analysing it using mathematical methods, especially statistics, to explain a problem or phenomenon.

Quantitative research stresses impartiality and is therefore particularly useful when it is possible to collect quantifiable measurements of variables and extrapolations from population samples. For data collection, quantitative analysis uses standardised protocols and systematic instruments. The information is gathered in a methodical and analytical

manner. Finally, statistical methods are used to analyse numerical data, which is commonly done with software such as SPSS, R, or Stata (Almeida, Faria & Queirós, 2017).

Almeida, Faria and Queirós (2017) uphold that surveys are a research system that permits the gathering of data straight from a person involved in the research via a set of questions arranged according to a certain logic. It is one of the most used quantitative techniques, since it permits finding information about a specified phenomenon, through the construction of questions that replicate the sentiments, insights and actions of a group of individuals.

3.3. Sampling

Sampling, according to Fridah (2002), is the activity, practice, or process of choosing a proper sample, or a representative section of a population, for the goal of defining criteria or attributes of the entire population. The LAA employs around 95 employees who made up the population of the study. The sample comprised of all 95 full-time employees at the Land Administration Authority Lesotho. The method was selected because of its simplicity to conduct and the diminished restrictions inherent in it, thus permitting any employee to participate if he/she so desires. Therefore, the study utilised convenience non-probability sampling, whereby the UWES questionnaire was emailed to all 95 permanent employees of the LAA. Telephone extensions were used to keep contact with participants. Moreover, reminders were sent via email service of the LAA as the researcher is an employee of the LAA with access to email addresses of participants.

Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method in which themes are picked for their accessibility and proximity to the researcher. The themes are nominated since they are the simplest to employ for the study and the researcher did not deliberate select themes that are demonstrative of the whole populace. This technique is stress-free, quick, and most of the time less costly and least bothersome convenience sample results when the more convenient straightforward units are selected from a population for observation (Maheshwari, 2017).

According to Maheshwari (2017), convenience sampling is used by researchers not only because it is simple to use, but also because it has some other research benefits. This sampling technique can also be used to show that a particular quality of a factor or occurrence exists within a sample. These studies are also ideal for establishing connections between various phenomena. While using convenience sampling, it is critical to define how your sample differs from the best randomly selected sample. It is also crucial to identify

people who may be overlooked during the selection process or who are heavily represented in the sample.

Convenience sampling is selecting participants because they are often readily and easily available. It is widely used to get around many of the limitations that come with testing. Using friends or co-workers as a sample, for example, is better than targeting strangers (Taherdoost, 2016).

3.4. Data Collection Method

The method of data gathering was a survey method through a questionnaire instrument, as the researcher sent questionnaires to the participants and collected their responses by objective means. Data was gathered from full-time employees of Land Administration Authority Lesotho.

A questionnaire is a research tool that involves a series of questions and other stimuli aimed at gathering information from respondents. Questionnaires have several benefits above other sorts of surveys, including the fact that they are less expensive, demand less energy from the interviewer than oral or telephone surveys, and typically include standardised responses that make data gathering simple. Questionnaires are a set of open-ended or closed-ended questions that respondents must respond to. To conduct a questionnaire, use of the telephone, mail, electronic mail, fax, live in a crowded place or in an institution, and other methods can be applied (Kabir, 2016).

The data collected was gathered via a self-administered survey, entailing a measurement tool called UWES. The statistical data from this tool was collected by means of a Likert scale questionnaire. The causes of low levels of engagement were established based on the researcher's observed tendencies and trends, allowing the researcher to suggest potential improvement strategies.

Surveys provide numerous benefits. Two of the most vital benefits are the high representativeness of the whole population and the low cost of the technique when linked to other substitutes. Conversely, the dependability of survey data is reliant on the survey organisation and the correctness of responses provided by the participants (Almeida, Faria & Queirós. 2017).

This method of data collecting was chosen due to its convenience of use and follow-up, as well as the fact that all the personnel have access to email. It allows participants to reflect

on their personal experiences before responding to the questions (Cooper & Schindler, 2011).

The main quantitative data was collected through a standardised survey that was divided into two sections. The respondent's biographical details were the first section, and the UWES, which also tested composite psychological involvement, was the second.

To validate the use of UWES in South Africa, Rothmann and Storm (2003) studied the South African Police Services' internal reliabilities of vigour, dedication and absorption as the engagement gauges of the UWES, as well as the concept similarity and prejudice for different racial groups in their sample. They found that the gauge has satisfactory levels of internal reliability.

As described in Chapter 2, the UWES questionnaire assesses the three psychological aspects of engagement. The UWES is based on a concept of engagement that considers vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) developed UWES because of the benefits of workplace engagement, which seems to be the complete opposite of burnout. Whereas burnt-out employees feel fatigued and contemptuous, their engaged colleagues feel vigorous and enthusiastic about their work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The elements that speak to high energy levels and endurance, the desire to put forth effort, not becoming easily weary, and perseverance in the face of adversity are used to assess vigour. When it comes to work, people who score high on vigour have a lot of energy, enthusiasm and stamina, while people who score low on vigour have less energy, enthusiasm and endurance (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Dedication is measured by factors such as developing a feeling of purpose in one's work, feeling enthusiastic and satisfied for one's work, and feeling driven and challenged by it. People who have a high level of dedication agree wholeheartedly with their work because it is meaningful, exciting, and challenging to them. Furthermore, they are frequently passionate and gratified of their work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Absorption is described as being absolutely and completely immersed in one's job and making it difficult to extract oneself away from it, causing time to pass rapidly and one to overlook everything going on around them. All of the individuals who score highly on absorption say they are often deeply invested in their jobs, that it overwhelms them, and that they have trouble distancing themselves from it as it carries them away. Consequently,

everything else around them fades into the background, and time appears to speed up. Many with a low absorption score may not feel caught up or immersed in their work, nor do they have trouble withdrawing from it. They often do not miss much in their environment, including time (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The UWES elements were scored on a 7-point frequency scale ranging from 0 ('never') to 6 ('always') (See Appendix B).

3.5. Ethical Considerations

3.5.1. Permission Obtained

Permission obtained refers to the permission granted to the researcher to conduct a research study within a specific organisation. For this research study, full consent was obtained from the Director of Corporate Services at the LAA, as per Human Resources Policy and Procedures. This was done by writing a formal request to the Director and attaching a letter from the University of Free State Business School as proof that the researcher was enrolled in the Masters of Business Administration course and was bound to conduct a study within the LAA. The letter of request outlined the process and the objectives of the study. Moreover, the University of Free State had ethically cleared the researcher to conduct a research study and the ethical clearance number issued is UFS-HSD2020/0628/2707.

3.5.2. Informed Consent

Informed consent is a process in which a person studies key facts about an experimental trial, together with possible risks and benefits, before deciding whether or not to partake in a study (Nnebue, 2010). The participants were asked to give consent to partake in the study and all the necessary information was provided to them for the informed decision. The goal of the study, the dangers involved, and the study's advantages were all explained to the participants.

3.5.3. Voluntary Participation

Voluntary participation means that a person gives his or her consent to participate in a study knowingly, willingly, intelligently, and in a transparent and visible manner (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). In order for it to be considered voluntary, people must not be forced into

engaging in the study. Only workers who were willing to complete the standardised questionnaire were included in this research.

3.5.4. Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity applies to hiding things by not mentioning respondents' racial or cultural backgrounds, not referring to them by their names, or not disclosing any other personal details about them (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). The researcher handled all data obtained from the questionnaires with caution and confidentiality, and respondents were told that data collected would not be exchanged with someone who was not directly part of the study. To ensure that the respondents remain anonymous, no identifiable personal details were requested from them.

3.5.5. No Harm

No harm refers to a description of any realistically expected and possible conceivable harm or risks to the theme or to others, of partaking in the research project that should be highlighted to participants. If research-related damage such as physical, psychological, social, financial, or otherwise is conceivable in research that is more than minimal risk, clarification must be provided of whatever voluntary compensation and treatment will be provided (Nnebue, 2010). All participants were protected from any possible harm by applying confidentiality and anonymity standards.

3.6. Conclusion

In concluding this chapter, it is worth mentioning that the research methodology that was utilised in this quantitative research study was discussed. The researcher used convenience non-probability sampling and intended to include 95 permanent employees of the LAA as the sample size. The results of the data collected were generalised across the population. The study made use of a survey that entailed two different sections, namely biographical questions and the UWES. Consideration was also afforded to the ethical considerations that guided the research.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. Introduction

In Chapter 1 of the field study, the context and research question, as well as an overview of the theory of employee engagement, were discussed. According to the literature review, employee engagement has three dimensions as well as antecedents (Chapter 2). The primary objective of this study is to determine the employee engagement at the LAA. The research methodology used to collect the data was presented in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 4, the results based on the data from the questionnaire will be examined and evaluated. The aim of this chapter is to examine and analyse the data gathered during the study. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first section of the questionnaire collects the answers to Section A. Respondents' biographical details were obtained in Section A of the questionnaire, which was used as an independent variable and to correlate answers to the dependent variables covered in Section B. The results are reviewed in this chapter to assess the current level of employee engagement at the LAA.

The response rate as well as the analysis of the engagement survey will be discussed in the following section.

4.2. Response Rate

The questionnaire was originally completed by 51 people via email – five of them had missing data, so they were removed from the study. The data analysis was based on 46 observations. As a result, 46 responses were used out of a total sample size of 91, resulting in a response rate of 48.4%, which was used for data analysis.

The absolute size of the sample size, rather than its relative size, is significant, according to Bryman and Bell (2011). An increased sample size does not guarantee increased accuracy, but it does increase the probability of sample error precision and decreases sampling error. As a result, one factor to consider when determining sample size is how much of a sampling error one is willing to accept. Without follow-up emails and reinforcements, email response rates can only be about 25–30% (Fincham, 2008). As a result, the 48.4% response rate is adequate for generalising the results.

The results of the biographical data of Section A of the questionnaire will be discussed in the section to follow.

4.3. Analysis and Interpretation of Biographical Data

Figures 4.1 to 4.8 show the graphic representation of the details collected from Section A of the questionnaire. Almost all the respondents are of African descent and speak both English and Sesotho fluently. Following the respective figures, is a brief discussion of the data.

4.3.1. Years of Serving at the LAA

Figure 4.1 shows that 65% of the respondents have more than 6 to 10 years of experience working at the LAA, while 35% of the respondents have fewer years' experience of working at the LAA, with years of experience ranging from 1 to 6 years.

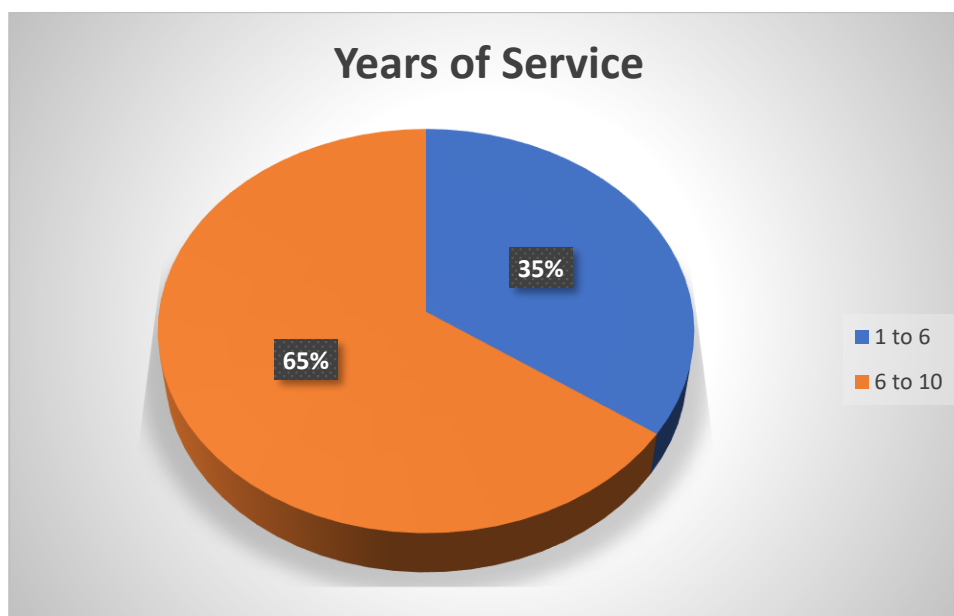


Figure 4.1: Years of serving at the LAA

Source: Compiled by researcher

The LAA, like most organisations, is undergoing rapid change, owing primarily to external factors such as technological advancements. These changes necessitate a new understanding of the dynamics, and the function of change agents is becoming increasingly relevant, with implications for employee engagement. The fact that the majority of respondents have more than six years of experience with the LAA highlights the importance of striking a good balance between experience and a willingness to improve.

4.3.2. Age

The second question in Section A of the questionnaire required respondents to indicate the range of their age, dispersed between 18 years to 34 years, then from 35 years to 65 years.

Figure 4.2 depicts that majority of respondents were employees of the age between 35 and 65 years (59%). The other group of respondents was the age between 18 and 35 years (41%).

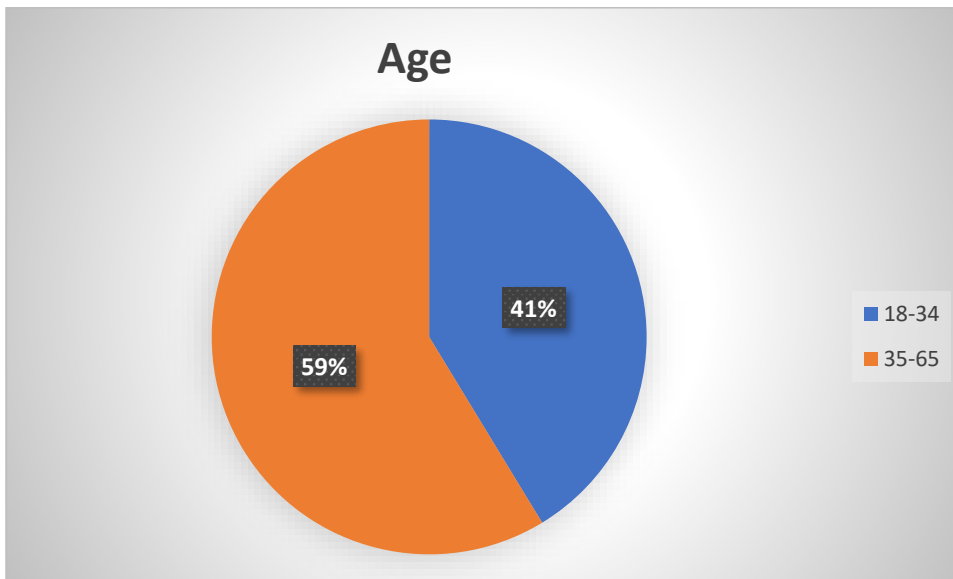


Figure 4.2: Age distribution of respondents

Source: Compiled by researcher

The age range of 35 to 65 which makes up the most respondents is a mixture of four generations: Traditionalists/Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y/Millennials. Traditionalists were born between 1928 and 1945; they are civic-minded, loyal, good team players, and place greater emphasis on rules. They often need ample training to boost their engagement levels. Baby Boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, are the second generation. This older generation thrives in a competitive world and prefers one-on-one interaction. They are easy to engage, but since they rely on personal satisfaction and engagement, they can be quickly disengaged.

Generation X is the third age group in the age range of 35 to 65. Born between 1965 and 1980, they offer a strong mixture of traditional work ethic, innovative disposition, and tech knowledge. Generation X usually gets disengaged when there is low social interaction and low shared values within the workforce. The fourth generation is Generation Y/Millennials.

Born between 1981 and 1999, they have high aspirations for their workplace and prefer immediate feedback and acknowledgement. To keep these workers engaged, significant engagement initiatives will be needed, as they are easily bored and often change jobs.

The second age range of 18 to 34 of respondents is the combination of Generation Y and Generation Z. Generation Z was born 1997 or later. They are even more tech-savvy than Millennials and use their technical skills to enhance any project they work on. Setting clear expectations with them about their roles, pervading onboarding processes with prospects for social collaboration, and teaming them with mentors can help this generation to get more engaged in their working environment. For Generation Z, being engaged means having a lot of opportunities for career and personal advancement. Engagement refers to an organisation's ability to tap into its workers' passion, intellect, and enthusiasm for their employment. Some of the respondents in this age range are Generation Z, as they fall within the age range spanning 18 to 34.

4.3.3 Gender

Table 4.1 shows the gender distribution of respondents.

Table 4.1: Gender distribution of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	17	37
Female	29	63
TOTAL	46	100

Source: Compiled by researcher

Most respondents (63%) were female, which validates the fact that there are more female than male employees at the LAA. It is worth noting that when recruiting employees at the LAA, there are no gender preferences because both women and men are equally valued, leading to highly engagement workplaces.

4.3.4 Marital Status

Figure 4.3 shows the marital status of the respondents.

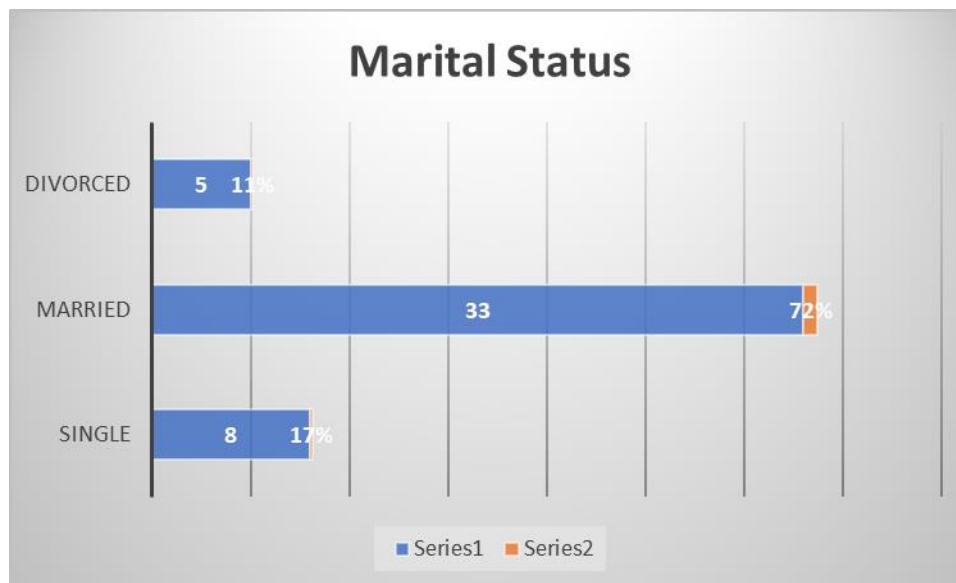


Figure 4.3: Marital status of respondents

Source: Compiled by researcher

Figure 4.3 depicts that the majority of the respondents are those that are married (72%), 17% of the respondents are single, while 11% are divorced. Another biographic variable that could have an effect on employee engagement is marital status. According to Chowdhury, Haque and Azim (2013), married employees are more engaged at work than their single co-workers. The explanation for this may be that marriage comes with more commitments, which makes a steady job more desirable and significant. Employee engagement is also influenced by work security. As shown in Figure 4.3, the LAA has both married and unmarried employees amongst their respondents. It is therefore prudent for the researcher to assess the effect of employee engagement based on marital status.

4.3.5. Educational Background

Question 5 of Section A of the questionnaire required the respondents to state their level of education. Figure 4.4 depicts the respondents' education levels.

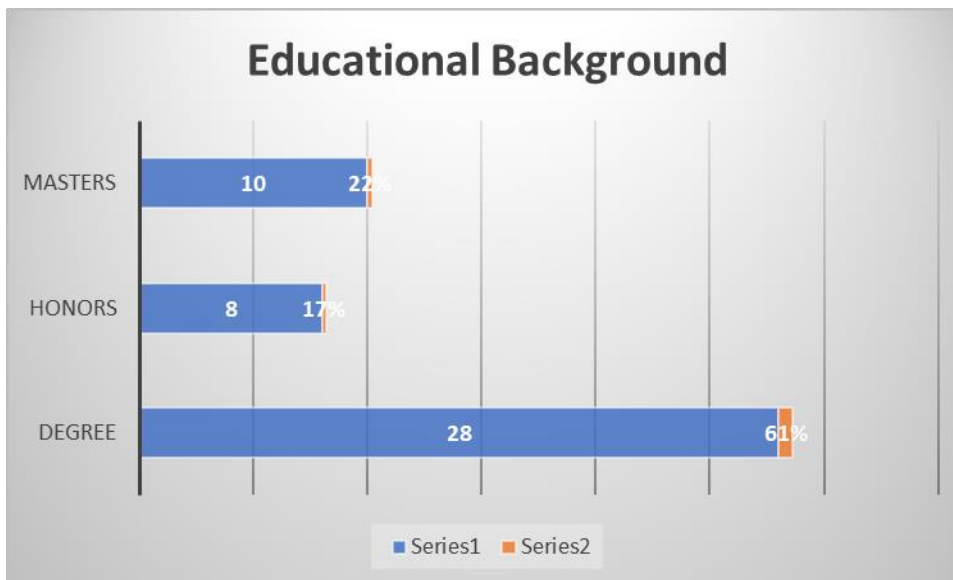


Figure 4.4: Educational background of respondents

Source: Compiled by researcher

The figure shows that 61% of the respondents have a bachelor's degree. Of the respondents, 22% have a master's degree and 17% have honours degrees. These figures indicate that most of the employees at the LAA have some form of university education. The figure also affirms the fact that a bachelor's degree is the minimum educational prerequisite for the majority of positions at the LAA, with the exception of drivers and assistants, who are in short supply within the organisation.

The education levels of respondents are a strong indicator of the intellectual levels of engagement required by the LAA employees, as well as the process that they can understand. This enables the LAA leaders and management to comprehensively understand employee engagement and its importance to the performance of the institution. A university degree can lead to a variety of benefits, such as better career opportunities and higher lifetime income, but it does not ensure employment engagement.

4.3.7. Level of Employment

Question 7 of Section A of the questionnaire required the respondents to state their level of employment within the LAA. Figure 4.5 shows the employment level of the respondents.

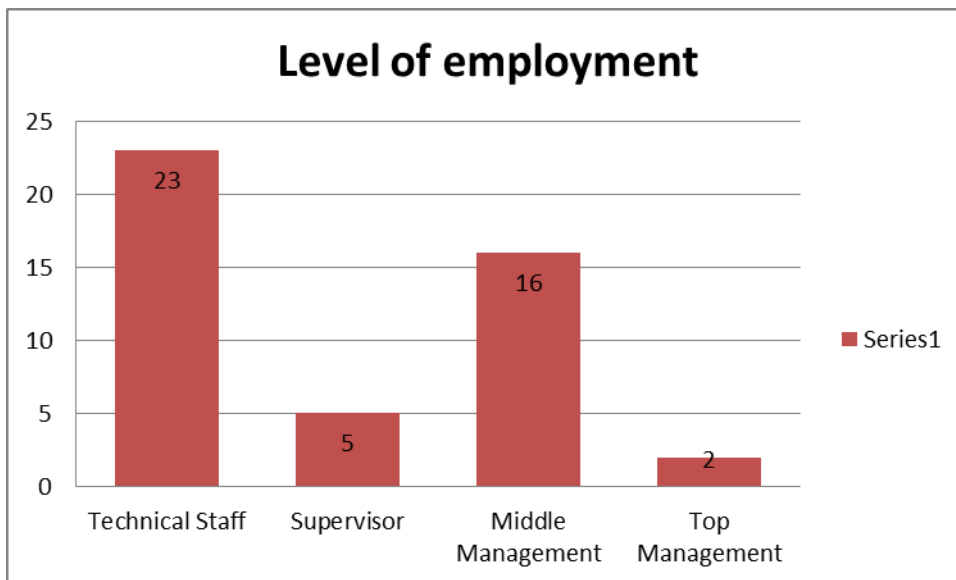


Figure 4.5: Level of employment of respondents

Source: Compiled by researcher

Figure 4.5 shows that most respondents were technical staff (50%). Like many other organisations, the LAA's hierarchy structure is in the form of a pyramid. Technical staff are at the lower level of the hierarchy, that is, at the bottom of the pyramid. They represent the majority of the staff complement. This reflects the descriptive level of education, with the majority of respondents holding a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education. According to the researcher, there is a match between available skills and job levels that need those skills.

The second-highest number of respondents were middle management that made up 35% of the response rate. Workers at the supervisory level accounted for 11% of the respondents; these employees are also classified as technical personnel. Senior management accounted for just 4% of the respondents. According to the researcher, this 4% of respondents, who are known as the LAA's leadership, are at the heart of driving employee engagement levels.

Biographical variables were used as independent variables to compare answers to the UWES questionnaire's dependent variables. The biographical items used to determine the composite engagement were based on engagement by years of service, engagement by age, engagement by gender, engagement by marital status, engagement by educational background, and engagement by level of employment.

The results of Section B of the questionnaire will be analysed and interpreted using descriptive statistics in the following section.

4.4. Analysis and Interpretation of UWES Data

Each item was assessed on a 7-point Likert-type scale in Section B of the questionnaire, which surveyed three-factor engagement based on the UWES. The respondents were asked to rate how often they felt specific emotions. Calculated values ranging from 6 (every day) to 0 (never) were used to complete the quantitative analysis.

The three dimensions of engagement, vigour, dedication, and absorption, as well as the respondents' composite engagement level based on the UWES, were assessed in Section B of the questionnaire. Explanatory tables will be used to evaluate and interpret Section B of the questionnaire in order to assess the various levels of engagement as well as the respondents' overall engagement level.

4.4.1. UWES

The respondents were asked to rate how much they felt certain emotions. Every day, a few times a week, once a week, a few times a month, once a month or less, a few times a year or less, or never.

Absorption is measured by the following six UWES statements:

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

The following five UWES statements measure dedication:

- I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose

- I am enthusiastic about my job
- My job inspires me
- I am proud of the work that I do
- To me, my job is challenging

Vigour is measured by the following six UWES statements:

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

The reliability of UWES, as well as mean percentage norms that interpret the engagement results of the respondents are discussed in the following section.

4.4.2. Reliability of the UWES

Table 4.2 shows the reliability statistics of the UWES questionnaire used to determine the engagement levels of LAA employees based on vigour, dedication and absorption.

Table 4.2: Reliability analysis of UWES questionnaire

	Vigour	Dedication	Absorption	Engagement
Raw_alpha	0.89	0.89	0.86	0.94

Source: Compiled by researcher

The reliability of UWES was analysed by using the reliability statistics and one sample t-test. In terms of reliability statistics, the Cronbach’s alpha (measure of internal consistency; that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group) of engagement is 0.94. Therefore, this suggests that engagement variables have relatively high internal consistency. Absorption variables have a Cronbach of 0.86, also suggesting high internal consistency, while both vigour and dedication have a Cronbach of 0.89, in the same manner suggesting high internal consistency. Table 4.3 shows the mean percentage norms.

Table 4.3: Mean percentage norms

	Vigour	Dedication	Absorption	Engagement
Very low	<=2.42	<=2	<=1.83	<=2.18
Low	2.43 - 3.67	2.01 - 3.40	1.84 - 3.08	2.19 -3.18
Average	3.68 - 5.00	3.41 - 5.40	3.09 - 4.67	3.19 - 4.94
High	5.01 - 5.67	5.41 - 6.00	4.68 - 5.92	4.95 - 5.74
Very high	>=5.68	>=	>=5.93	>=5.75
n	46	46	46	46
mean	4.18	4.25	3.8	4.07
stdev	1.03	1.45	1.25	1.16
se	0.14	0.2	0.17	0.16

Source: Compiled by researcher

It is shown in Table 4.3 that the total number of respondents (N) is 46. The mean score of vigour as a variable of engagement is 4.18, which therefore means the level of vigour amongst respondents is average as it falls between 3.68 and 5. The statistical analysis also shows the mean of 4.25 under the dedication variable, thus confirming that the level of dedication amongst the respondents is average, as it falls within 3.41 to 5.40. The absorption variable has the mean of 3.8 and it falls within the range of 3.09 to 4.67, also confirming the level of absorption as average. The composite engagement within the LAA has the mean of 4.07, thus indicating that the level of engagement within the LAA is average as it falls within the range of 3.19 to 4.94.

4.4.2. Absorption

According to Bakker and Schaufeli (2004), employees who score high on absorption, are those that are usually happily captivated in their work, and they feel engrossed by their work. They have difficulty disengaging from it because it carries them away. Figure 4.6 depicts the absorption level of respondents.

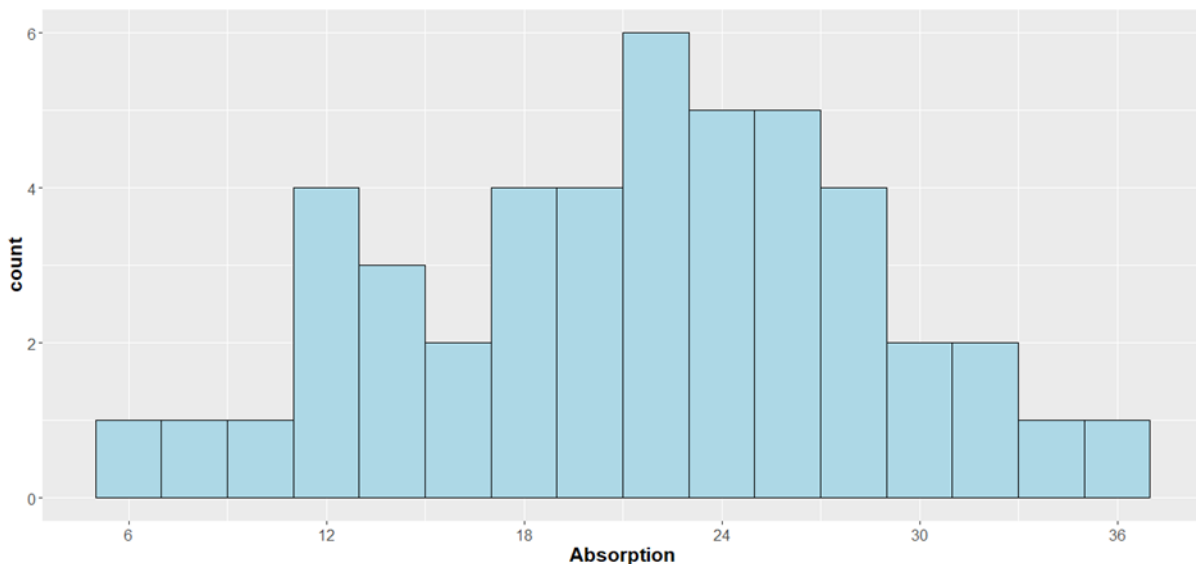


Figure 4.6: Absorption level

Source: Compiled by researcher

Numbers that are near 0 on the scale show the number of respondents who indicated they are never absorbed in their work, around 6 are those who indicated that they are almost never absorbed, around 12 are those who said they are rarely absorbed, around 18 are those who indicated that they are sometimes absorbed, around 24 are the ones who indicated that they are often absorbed, then around 30 are those who showed that they are very often absorbed, followed by near 36 who indicated that they are always absorbed.

In Figure 4.6, it is illustrated that around 7% of the respondents answered, 'almost never' to the absorption variables, around 20% answered 'rarely' to the variables, around 30% of the respondents gave a 'sometimes' answer to the absorption variable, another 30% of the respondents answered 'often' to the variables, around 9% answered 'very often', and around 4% answered 'always' on the absorption variable. Table 4.4 depicts reliability analysis of absorption.

Table 4.4: Reliability analysis of absorption

raw_alpha	sta.alpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	ase	mean	sd	median_r
0.86	0.86	0.86	0.5	6	0.03	3.8	1.2	0.49
lower	alpha	upper	95% Confidence boundaries					
0.86	0.86	0.92						
Min.	1st Qu	Median	Mean	3rd Qu	Max			

5	16.5	22	21.8	26	36			
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Source: Compiled by researcher

The Absorption scale ranges between 0 and 36. The scale was created by adding the absorption variables. The scale shows excellent internal consistency and has a very high Cronbach alpha of 0.86. The median and the mean are 22 and 21, respectively. Thus, confirming that level of absorption is 'often'.

4.4.2. Dedication

Employees with high dedication scores are more likely to associate with their work since it is meaningful, inspiring, and challenging. Furthermore, they are usually enthusiastic and pleased with their work. Those who score low, on the other hand, do not identify with their work because it is not important, inspiring or challenging to them, and they are neither enthusiastic nor proud of it (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2004).

Figure 4.7 depicts the dedication levels of the respondents.

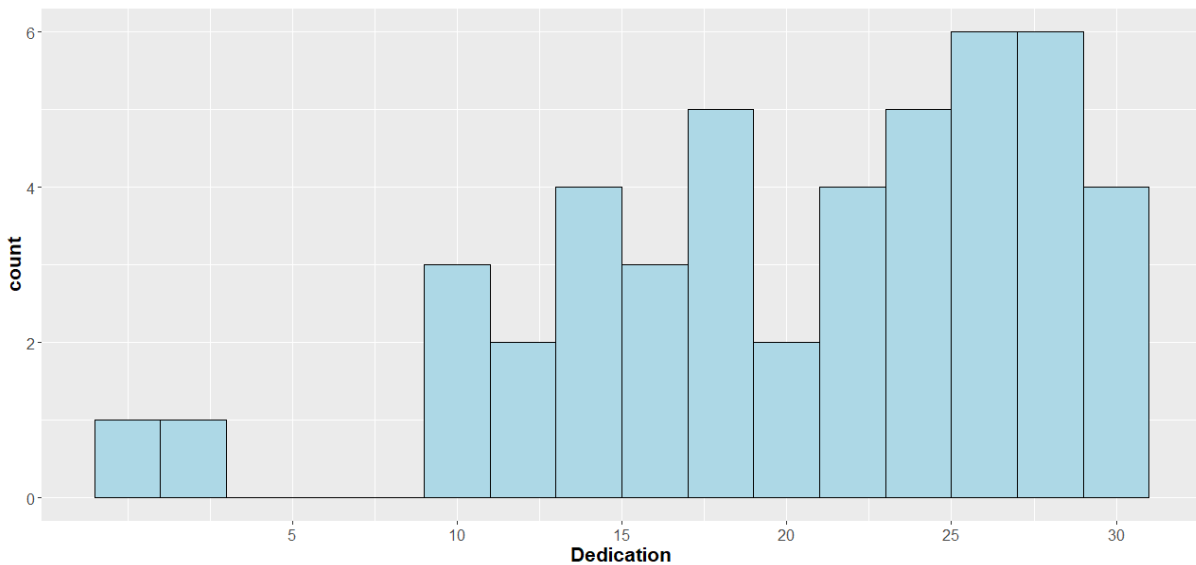


Figure 4.7: Dedication level

Source: Compiled by researcher

Numbers that are near 0 on the scale show the number of respondents who indicated they are never dedicated to their work, around 5 are those who indicated that they are almost never dedicated, around 10 are those who said they are rarely dedicated, around 15 are those who indicated that they are sometimes dedicated, around 20 are the one who

indicated that they are often dedicated, then around 25 are those who showed that they are very often dedicated, followed by near 30 who indicated that they are always dedicated.

Figure 4.7 indicates that about 4% of the respondents gave 'never' as an answer to some of the dedication variables, around 20% of the respondents answered 'rarely' to dedication variables, 17% of the respondents said they are 'sometimes' dedicated to their work, around 24% of the respondents said they 'often' feel enthusiastic about their work, 26% of the respondents answered 'very often' to the dedication variables, while around 9% said they are 'always' dedicated to their work. Table 4.5 shows the reliability analysis of dedication.

Table 4.5. Reliability analysis of dedication

raw_alpha	sta.alpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	ase	mean	sd	median_r
0.9	0.91	0.9	0.66	9.7	0.022	4.2	1.5	0.65
lower	alpha	upper	95% Confidence boundaries					
0.86	0.9	0.94						
Min.	1st Qu	Median	Mean	3rd Qu	Max			
0.00	16.25	22	20.78	27	30			

Source: Compiled by researcher

The dedication scale ranges between 0 and 30. The scale was created by adding the dedication variables. The scale shows excellent internal consistency and has a very high Cronbach alpha of 0.90. The median and the mean are 22 and 20.78, respectively. Thus, confirming that level of dedication is 'often'.

4.4.3. Vigour

Bakker and Schaufeli (2004) point out that employees with a high score on vigour are usually filled with much energy, zest and stamina when working. In contrast, employees with a low score on vigour have less energy, zest and stamina as far as their work is concerned. Figure 4.8 depicts vigour levels of the respondents.

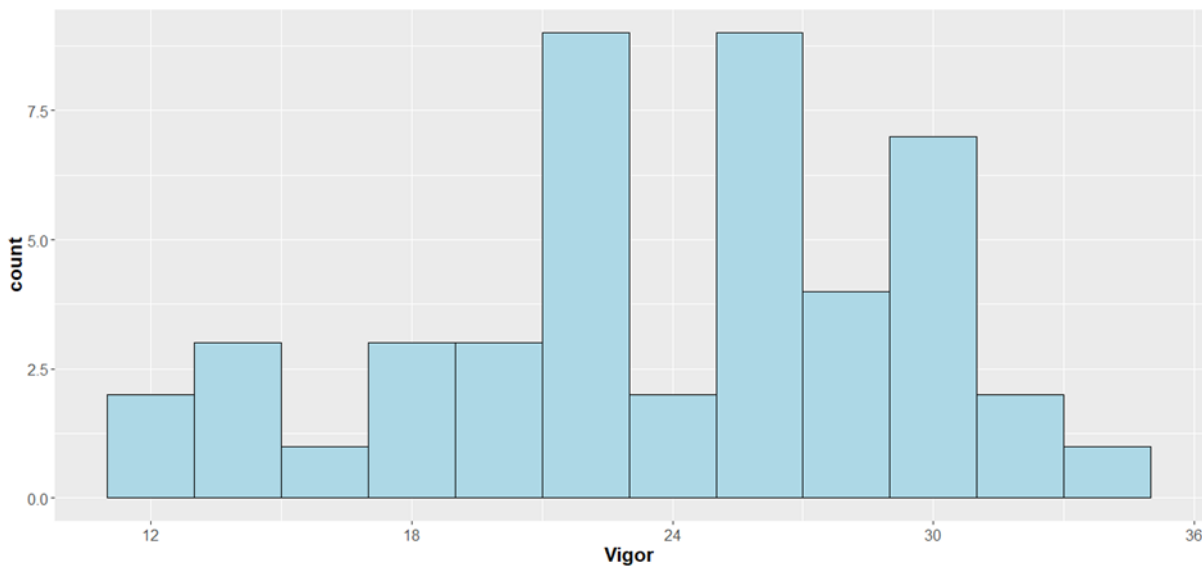


Figure 4.8: Vigour level

Source: Compiled by researcher

Numbers that are near 0 on the scale show the number of respondents who indicated they are ‘never’ vigorous in their work, around 6 are those who indicated that they ‘almost never’ feel vigour in their work, around 12 are those who said they are ‘rarely’ vigorous, around 18 are those who indicated that they ‘sometimes’ feel vigour, around 24 are the ones who indicated that they are ‘often’ vigorous, then around 30 are those who showed that they are ‘very often’ energetic, followed by near 36 who indicated that they are ‘always’ energised.

It is shown in Figure 4.8 that 14% of the respondents ‘almost never’ have energy when performing their duties, around 33% of the respondents said they are ‘sometimes’ filled with zest and stamina when undertaking their daily work, about 30% of the respondents are those that said they are ‘often’ filled with energy and zest when executing their work, and around 23% of them are ‘very often’ filled with energy, zest, and stamina when doing their work. Table 4.6 shows the reliability analysis of vigour.

Table 4.6: Reliability analysis of vigour

raw_alpha	sta.alpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	ase	mean	s d	median_r
0.79	0.79	0.8	0.38	3.7	0.043	4.2	1	0.33
lower	alpha	upper	95% Confidence boundaries					
0.71	0.79	0.88						
Min.	1st Qu	Median	Mean	3rd Qu	Max			

11	21.25	25.50	24.24	28.75	34			
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Source: Compiled by researcher

The vigour scale ranges between 0 and 36. The scale was created by adding the items. The scale shows good internal consistency and has a Cronbach alpha of 0.79. Dropping the items 'resilient', 'mentally' and 'persevere' slightly increases reliability of the vigour scale. However, the increase is not enough, so the researcher kept the two variables. The median and the mean are 25 and 24, respectively, thus, confirming that level of vigour is 'often'.

The next section will analyse and interpret the composite engagement levels based on the biographical data within the LAA workforce.

4.4.4. Comparing Engagement with Biographical Data

4.4.4.1. Engagement by Years of Service

There are nine respondents who have been serving the LAA for 1 to 5 years, making up 20% of the respondents, whereas 80% of the respondents are those that have worked for the LAA for the past 6 to 10 years. Therefore, for respondents who served the LAA for 1 to 5 years, one respondent is 'almost never' engaged, two are 'rarely' engaged, four respondents are 'sometimes' engaged, and two are 'often engaged'. For the respondents who have served for 6 to 10 years, only one is 'never' engaged, six are 'almost never' engaged, the other six are 'sometimes' engaged, 15 of the respondents are 'often' engaged, seven of them are 'very often' engaged, whereas two are 'always' engaged. Table 4.7 shows the statistical analysis of engagement by years of service.

Table 4.7: Statistical analysis of engagement by service

Service: 1 to 6					
Min	1st Qu	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max
26	55	69	67	75	96
Service: 6 to 10					
Min	1st Qu	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max
20	52	70	66.78	81	99

Source: Compiled by researcher

The mean and the median for two groups, as shown in Table 4.6, are the same, 67 and 70, respectively. This led the researcher to conclude that years of service does not influence engagement in this sample. Even though the data analysis of years of service shows no influence on engagement, Rice (2009) points out that new employees tend to be more engaged but as the years of service increase, their duties become monotonous and they start to be disengaged.

4.4.4.2. Engagement by Age

Of the 46 respondents, 19 were aged between 18 and 34, making up 41% of the respondents. A total 27 of the respondents were aged between 35 and 65 and made up 59% of the respondents. In the age group of 18 to 34, one respondent is 'never' engaged, one of the 19 is 'almost never' engaged, six are 'rarely' engaged, eight are 'sometimes' engaged, two are 'often' engaged and one is 'very often' engaged. In the age range of 35 to 65, one respondent is 'never' engaged, seven of them are 'rarely' engaged, those that are 'sometimes' engaged are 11, six are often engaged, and two of them are 'very often' engaged. Table 4.8 depicts the statistical analysis of engagement by age.

Table 4.8: Statistical analysis of engagement age

Age: 18 to 34					
Min	1st Qu	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max
26	51	62	62.79	76	96
Age: 35 to 65					
Min	1st Qu	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max
20	55	73	69.67	83.50	99

Source: Compiled by researcher

The age range of 18 to 34 has both a median and a mean of 62, thus confirming that level of engagement amongst these respondents is 'sometimes'. Employees who have high expectations of their workplace and prefer immediate feedback and appreciation are those who fall into this group. The age group of 35 to 65 has the median and the mean of 73 and 70, respectively, thus confirming that level of engagement in this age group is 'often'.

According to Shukla, Adhikari and Singh (2015), age and work experience are related factors to employee engagement. Usually when an employee grows with age, work experience also increases. This is due to the stability and maturity in life that comes with

growing in age, thus experiencing job satisfaction and engagement. The data analysis of this study shows that the participants of the age range 35 to 65 are 'often' engaged compared to age band of 18 to 34 who are 'sometimes' engaged. The analysis therefore confirms that the older employees are more engaged than their younger counterparts.

4.4.4.3. Engagement by Gender

Amongst 46 respondents, 29 of them were female, consisting 63% of the respondents, while male respondents were 17 making up 37%. Of the 29 female respondents, two of them are 'never' engaged, seven are 'rarely' engaged, 13 of them are 'sometimes' engaged, five are 'often' engaged, and two of them are 'very often' engaged. For the male respondents, three of them are 'almost never' engaged, four of the male respondents are 'rarely' engaged, two of them are 'sometimes' engaged, seven of them 'often' engaged, while one of the male respondents is 'always' engaged. The statistical analysis of engagement by gender is presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Frequency analysis of engagement gender

Female					
Min	1st Qu	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max
20	55	70	67.62	81	95
Male					
Min	1st Qu	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max
34	52	70	65.47	75	95

Source: Compiled by researcher

The median and the mean of the female group were 70 and 68, respectively, which then concludes that female respondents are 'sometimes' engaged. The median and mean of the male respondents were 70 and 65, respectively, confirming that male respondents are also 'sometimes' engaged.

The differences in gender have been found to ascertain the level of engagement. Women are more committed than men, as they are able to overcome more barriers than men to get to their positions in the workplace (Marcus & Gopinath, 2017). According to Shukla, Adhikari, and Singh.(2015), women are observed to be more focused and competent, and hence

more engaged in their work. The data analysis of this study therefore contradicts the literature obtained as it shows both men and women having the same level of engagement.

4.4.4.4. Engagement by Marital Status

The total number of single respondents were eight, which therefore represents 17% of the respondents. Another 33 were those that are married, and they represent 72%. Of the nine single respondents, one is ‘almost never’ engaged, four of them are ‘rarely’ engaged, two are ‘sometimes’ engaged, and one is ‘often’ engaged. For the married respondents, two indicated that they are ‘almost never’ engaged, around eight of them indicated that they are ‘sometimes’ engaged, 14 of the married respondents indicated that they are ‘often’ engaged, while nine indicated that they are ‘very often’ engaged. The statistical analysis of engagement by marital status is shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Frequency analysis of engagement by marital status

Single					
Min	1st Qu	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max
34	48.75	56	59.62	72.75	83
Married					
Min	1st Qu	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max
20	55	73	68.45	84	99

Source: Compiled by researcher

The median and the mean of the single respondents are 56 and 60, respectively, indicating that, on average, the single respondents are ‘rarely’ engaged. For those that are married, the median and the mean are 73 and 68, respectively, thus confirming that they are ‘sometimes’ engaged.

According to Jain, Jain and Sharma (2018), marital status is also used to determine the level of engagement. Married employees were found to be more engaged than unmarried employees. The family responsibility in married employees was found to be a main reason behind the engagement level of married employees compared to unmarried employees. The data analysed appears to confirm the literature obtained, as it shows married employees as being ‘sometimes’ engaged compared to unmarried employees who were found to be ‘rarely’ engaged.

4.4.4.5. Educational Background

Education background was also used as a variable to test the engagement level of the respondents. The education background variable in the biographical questionnaire prompted the respondents to indicate their highest level of education. From the observations obtained, as shown in Figure 4.4, 28 respondents have bachelor's degree as their highest level of education, and 18 of the respondents have a postgraduate degree to the level of a master's degree.

Amongst the 28 respondents with bachelor's degrees, two of them indicated that they are 'almost never' engaged, around four of them said they are 'rarely' engaged, 11 indicated that they are 'sometimes' engaged, six of them are 'often' engaged, four indicated that they are 'very often' engaged, followed by one who indicated that she or he is 'always' engaged.

For the respondents with postgraduate degrees, three indicated that they are 'rarely' engaged, around two said they are 'sometimes' engaged, while seven showed to be 'often' engaged, four of them indicated that they are 'very often' engaged, whereas two of them indicated that they are 'always' engaged. The statistical analysis of engagement by educational context is shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Statistical analysis of engagement by educational background

Degree					
Min	1st Qu	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max
20	51.75	67.50	64.04	78.25	96
Postgraduate Degree					
Min	1st Qu	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max
44	59.50	73.50	71.17	84	99

Source: Compiled by researcher

From Table 4.10, it is shown that the median and the mean of respondents with a bachelor's degree were 68 and 64, respectively, thus confirming that respondents with first degrees are often engaged. The median and mean of respondents with a postgraduate degree were around 74 and 71, respectively. These therefore confirm that respondents with postgraduate degrees are 'often' engaged.

In a survey performed in 30 European countries, Hakanen, Ropponen, Schaufeli, and De Witte (2019) discovered that employees with higher academic achievement were also much

more likely to be engaged at work, whereas employees with lower levels of education were less engaged. Data analysis on educational background of the respondents contradicts the literature as it shows that the respondents with a postgraduate degree and first degree are equally engaged.

4.4.4.6 Employment Level

The biographical questionnaire further prompted the respondents to indicate their employment level within the LAA. This variable was also used to determine engagement level amongst the respondents. Amongst the 46 employees who participated in the study, 23 were technical staff and another 23 were at the management level. Of the 23 technical staff, two indicated that they are ‘almost never’ engaged, five said that they are ‘almost never’ engaged, six indicated that they are ‘rarely’ engaged, about seven indicated that they are ‘often’ engaged, and three showed that they are ‘very often’ engaged. On the management level, two indicated that they are ‘rarely’ engaged, one showed that he or she is ‘sometimes’ engaged, 12 indicated that they are ‘often’ engaged, while seven of them indicated that they are ‘very often’ engaged, whereas one indicated to be ‘always’ engaged. Table 4.12 presents the statistical analysis of engagement by level of employment.

Table 4.12: Statistical analysis of engagement by level of employment

Technical Staff					
Min	1st Qu	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max
20	48.50	55	59.57	76	95
Management					
Min	1st Qu	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max
44	68.50	75	74.09	84	95

Source: Compiled by researcher

Table 4.10 shows the median and mean to be 55 and 60, respectively, for technical staff, thus confirming level of engagement as ‘sometimes’. The median and the mean at management level were 75 and 74, respectively, indicating ‘often’ as the engagement level of this group.

According to Shukla, Adhikari and Singh (2015), profession type and organisational level have an impact on engagement; senior executives have higher levels of engagement than

lower-level workers. The engagement level of management level appears to be greater than that of technical staff. The analysis of data therefore agrees with the literature obtained.

4.5. Summary of Findings

The level of engagement within the LAA is average, as shown by the results of the UWES-17 norms. This could mean that the LAA as an organisation does not do enough to ensure employee engagement. The inferential analysis shows that years of service within the LAA does not have an influence on engagement. The age group of 18 to 35 shows engagement level as 'sometimes', which means this age group needs more attention from leadership towards their engagement. As for the age group of 35 to 65, the analysis shows the engagement level of 'often' and this could mean that this age group might have some aspects of engagement drivers that talk to them. Both male and female groups have the same engagement level, and this could mean both genders need the same engagement strategies to be fully engaged. In terms of the marital status variable, the respondents who are not married seem to be less engaged as compared to those who are married. This therefore suggests that the LAA should place more focus on single employees to increase their engagement level.

4.6. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to examine and interpret data from a review of the antecedents and dependent variables of employee engagement as specified in the study's theoretical context. This chapter was divided into two parts. Section 4.3 contains the answers to Section A of the questionnaire, which evoked biographical information from respondents and served as the study's independent variables. Section 4.4 contains the responses of Section B of the questionnaire which was represented by the UWES questionnaire in which Section A was used as the dependent variables to determine engagement level at the LAA.

The next chapter will highlight the conclusion of the study and provide recommendations to the findings, as well as highlighting the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1. Introduction

The primary objective of Chapter 5 is to reflect on the research and make recommendations based on the findings. The responses to the study's primary and secondary objectives, as seen in Chapter 1, will be expanded upon in this chapter. The limitations that the researcher encountered during the study will also be further highlighted in this chapter. In addition, the researcher will present the suggestions for the LAA's strategic decisions to be taken in order to improve employee engagement.

5.2. Conclusions to the Study

The primary objective of this research was to determine employee engagement at the LAA Lesotho. The main reason behind undertaking the study was to help the management of the LAA to ascertain the level of engagement amongst the employees. The LAA has been experiencing an increased staff turnover since 2018. Moreover, the organisation was experiencing a reduction in productivity. The level of employee engagement at the LAA was determined in Chapter 4 of the study. Based on the UWES, which graded each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale, the study of employee engagement was conducted using the three dimensions of engagement: absorption, dedication and vigour.

The first secondary objective of the study was to analyse the literature on employee engagement. This objective was discussed in the study's Chapter 2, in which the researcher presented the drivers of employee engagement, models of employee engagement, and factors influencing engagement that the management of the LAA should consider, in order to increase employee engagement.

The second secondary objective was to figure out how engaged the LAA's employees were. In Chapter 4 of the study, the three components of employee engagement were used to assess the degree of engagement. The findings revealed that all three dimensions, namely absorption, dedication and vigour were on an average level.

The third secondary objective was to determine the particular drivers that can improve employee engagement at the LAA. The researcher identified these drivers in Chapter 2 of the study. Amongst the drivers presented in the literature review, the researcher identified

the following drivers to enhance employee engagement at the LAA, based on the findings presented in Chapter 4.

The first driver is the role of managers to induce employee engagement. Organisational managers should strive to promote democracy in the workplace, while also maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Recognising and rewarding employees is another aspect that managers should take into consideration in order to drive employee engagement (Odom *et al.*, 2015).

The second driver emphasises the importance of recognising an individual employee voice in order to increase engagement; personal level direct voice techniques are often used in the hopes of increasing organisational performance, based on the alleged benefits to workers of being able to participate in decision-making (Farndale, Kwon & Park, 2016).

The third driver is the linkage of the organisational communication system and employee engagement. Employee communication behaviour is characterised by employee voice, and engaged workers are more likely to express job-related thoughts, information and sentiments (Menara, Ruck & Welch, 2017).

Initiatives of organisations to generate engagement by removing barriers with structural approaches is the fourth driver identified. Instead of focusing on negative factors that can be reduced or removed, the focus should be on positive factors that may boost employee engagement. Such positive factors could be reducing workloads and promoting personal development, job control/autonomy, involvement in decision-making, and role diversity, amongst others (Saks, 2017).

The fifth driver is about creating genuine social bonds and shared support at work. For managers, the best way is to build conditions where workers can befriend one another and to encourage employee friendships (Buitendag, 2014).

5.3. Recommendations

The researcher recommends the following actions to be undertaken to boost employee engagement amongst LAA employees:

5.3.1. Set clear goals

The first recommendation is that management of the LAA should set work goals that employees will reach. The first step in engaging employees is to set clear and attainable work goals. Setting goals motivates workers to work hard and finish what they start.

Employees who do not have a clear understanding of their job goals are more likely to experience tension and lose motivation, leading to disengagement at work.

5.3.2. Leadership involvement in organisational culture

The second recommendation is about leadership involvement in the organisational culture. Leadership should become active in the different activities of the organisation in order to make an impression and encourage workers. Leaders who take an active interest in an organisation's activities will not only engage workers, but will also foster a positive work climate, in as much as organisations that foster collaboration stay together.

5.3.3. Inclusive decision-making

The third recommendation is to establish a culture of participatory decision-making and transparent, effective communication. Employees who engage in the decision-making process are often more likely to assume responsibility for the consequences of those decisions. Employee engagement can be improved by promoting an open work environment in which workers can share their ideas and suggest new ways of doing things. Management must however keep workers informed about the company's success and their role in its growth. To meet the radically different generations, the communication strategies used should entail a variety of communication channels.

5.3.4. Link engagement with performance improvement

The fourth recommendation has to do with a linkage of engagement with performance improvement. Management should always provide opportunities for workers to advance within the company and provide learning and development opportunities for them to be excited about working there. Furthermore, a consistent performance management strategy should be in place to enable workers to perform at their best in compliance with the organisation's objectives. Management must reward and appreciate workers who perform well, in order to inspire them to do more.

5.3.5. Develop employees

The fifth recommendation is that management should create an environment of individual development to induce engagement within the employees. Employees should be able to receive training in preparation for their current position, as well as prospects for advancement. Employees should be given opportunities for training and development

because it encourages them to flourish and achieve their full potential. Employers who invest in their employees' personal and professional development demonstrate that the organisation cares for them and values them. Employees become engaged when they feel encouraged, invested in, and like a part of the company's future.

5.4. Limitation of the Study

A limitation of the study was that it suffered a non-response bias of 54% out of a sample size of 95 employees as only 51 responded to the questionnaire. The reason for the low response could be due to absence of some of the employees from work that was caused by COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and shift-work schedule that took place around June 2020.

5.5. Concluding Remarks

The objective of the study was to determine employee engagement at the Land Administration Authority Lesotho. It is therefore the belief of the researcher that the study managed to achieve the primary objective as outlined in Chapter 1 of the research project.

This study outlined the importance of the role that the organisational leadership should play in taking interest in the employee voice within the working environment, career aspirations of the employees, and developing employees for the benefit of the organisation, as well as the benefit of individual employees. Moreover, the study highlighted the importance of rewarding and recognising employees for the good work they are doing, as this goes a long way in engaging employees.

Organisational leadership should encourage two-way open communication, as well as assisting in the creation of a harmonious working environment in which workers support and assist one another and are committed to employee well-being. If engagement is to thrive, the leadership must be committed to it. This requires that the organisation's senior leaders, middle managers, first-line supervisors, and union leadership develop engagement standards that are well understood and communicated.

It is therefore necessary for LAA management to create an environment that would prompt employees to want to stay working for the LAA, thus speaking positively about it to co-workers, potential employees, and customers.

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ANNEXURE A: Biographical Questions and Work & Well-being Survey (UWES)

Please mark with X the box that is applicable to you

1. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WITH THE COMPANY?

1 – 5 Years	
6 – 10 Years	
11 – 15 Years	
More than 15 years	

2. AGE:

20 – 30 Years	
31 – 40 Years	
41 – 50 Years	
More than 50 years	

3. GENDER:

Male	
Female	
Gender non-conforming	

4. MARITAL STATUS:

Single	
In a relationship	
Married	
Divorced	
Separate	
Remarried	

5. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL:

Less than matric/Senior certificate	
Short courses less than one year	
Certificate after matric/Senior certificate	
Diploma after matric/senior certificate	
Degree	
Honours	
Masters	
PhD	

6. LANGUAGE:

Afrikaans	
English	

Sepedi	
SeSotho	
SeTswana	
TshiVenda	
IsiZulu	
IsiXhosa	
Other	

7. LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT

Top management	
Middle management	
Supervisor	
Employee	

8. ETHNIC GROUP:

Asian	
African	
White	
Coloured	
Indian	

Work & Well-being Survey (UWES) ©

The following 17 statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, type the '0' (zero) in the space before the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you feel it by typing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

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

1. _____ At my work, I feel bursting with energy
2. _____ I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose
3. _____ Time flies when I'm working
4. _____ At my job, I feel strong and vigorous
5. _____ I am enthusiastic about my job
6. _____ When I am working, I forget everything else around me

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

Shortened version (UWES-9); VI= Vigor; DE = Dedication; AB = Absorption

Dear Sir/ Madam

**PERMISSION FOR MR. PETER MAJORO TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT LAA
ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

This is to certify that your above student of the following student number 2017138849 who is also the employee of the Land Administration Authority (LAA) as the Administration Manager will be granted permission to conduct research at our institution in regard to our Human Resources policies and other related policies as per his chosen topic: **Employee Engagement**.

For any further enquiries, you can contact me herein the undersigned.

Kind Regards



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