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FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

**EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AS A PREDICTOR OF ORGANIZATIONAL
COMMITMENT AMONGST COTTCO EMPLOYEES, HEAD OFFICE, HARARE**

BY

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DEDICATION

This research study is dedicated to my parents. Thank you Mom and Dad for the love and unrelenting support you always shower upon me. May the Almighty Lord continue to bless you.

I LOVE YOU!

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Essentially, my sincerest thanks and gratitude goes to God Almighty for granting me this opportunity and for the spiritual strength and protection in my life.

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is a concept that is being adopted globally by many organizations because it renders competitive advantage through human capital. This study was mainly focused on employee engagement as a predictor of organizational commitment amongst Cottco employees, Head Office, Harare. The chief aim of this study was to assess the degree to which employee engagement can impact upon the three components of organizational commitment, that is, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment and organizational commitment as a whole. This study adopted the quantitative research approach particularly the correlational design. This prompted the use of questionnaires; in this case, standardized instruments were used. The Gallup Worker Audit by Gallup was used to gauge employee engagement. The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire by Allen and Meyer was used to measure organizational commitment. Fifty five employees, managerial and non managerial staff, participated in the study. The outcomes of the research revealed the levels of engagement within Cottco at critical lows, because only 36.4% represents employees with high levels of engagement while the remaining 63.6 % have low levels of engagement. The findings also indicated that employee engagement can indeed act as a predictor of organizational commitment $r = 0.799$; $p < 0.01$ which is a positive, significant relationship. Employee engagement also had significant positive relationships with normative, continuance and affective commitment where $r = 0.812$, $p < 0.01$; $r = 0.399$, $p < 0.03$; $r = 0.799$, $p < 0.01$ respectively. The low levels at Cottco need to be addressed in order to retain its employees and achieve organizational success.

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ACRONYMS

Cottco:	Cotton Company of Zimbabwe
GWA	Gallup Worker Audit
OCQ:	Organizational Commitment Questionnaire
EE:	Employee Engagement
OC:	Organizational Commitment
AC:	Affective Commitment
CC:	Continuance Commitment
NC:	Normative Commitment

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will give the reader an insight of what the whole dissertation will entail. The researcher will highlight on the background of the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study, research questions, delimitations, limitations, assumptions of the study and also present definitions of the main constructs in the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Organizations across the globe have directed their utmost attention to the concept of employee engagement as it has been regarded as the means for organizations to thrive in the business world rife with competition. According to Saks (2006) employees that are engaged make considerable contributions that positively impacts on bottom line results of the organization. This is because engaged employees have autonomy over their tasks, are highly satisfied with their organization as a wonderful place to work, they are advocates for their organization and products they manufacture; enhance customer satisfaction through superior performance and quality merchandise or goods. This is why employee engagement is regarded as a metric most critical for organizations in the 21st century.

In Zimbabwe, however Nguwi (2012) states that the importance of employee engagement is amplified in the Zimbabwean context because of increased competition, dwindling profit margins and shrinking demand. A national survey of 5222 employees carried out by industrial psychologist in Zimbabwe showed that 40.79 % of the employees are aligned skeptics. They further defined aligned skeptics as employees that know exactly what needs to be done for organizational success, but are reluctant to push the initiative to accomplish these goals. According to Ortiz, Cernaz, Lau and Qin (2013) it is imperative to nurture the concept of employee engagement because disengagement, or alienation, is the locus of control for the paucity of enthusiasm and commitment of employees to the organization. As a result of low engagement levels the survey also showed that employees are no longer committed to the

companies they are currently working for because 52.55% of the respondents surveyed said that they are actively looking for employment elsewhere and 45.75 % said that they would not refer their close associates and relations to their current employers. This means that approximately half of the employees surveyed are not committed to the organizations which they work for. Schroeder- Saulnier (2010) makes reference to a research they did in North America which showed that 60% of employees had planned to pursue new job opportunities if the economy improved in 2010. This is analogous to the situation of The Cotton Company of Zimbabwe (Cottco) in the sense that employees are disengaged and they are only staying because there is uncertainty of alternative employment elsewhere. This warrants one to say that affective and normative commitment has eroded in the organization.

Employee engagement levels can also be influenced by the fit that exists between employees and their work environment (Christian, Garza & Slaughter; 2011). These work conditions have to inspire employees to be more motivated, innovative, more committed and more productive. To ensue this, employees should have access to information, resources, support and opportunities to learn and grow (Okpa, Tarela and Jaja, 2014). Conversely, there is a disparity regarding Cottco employees and the way they view their working conditions, they feel stuck in their jobs because there is lack of supportive organizational structures. Consequently, working conditions are proscripting them to be productive as they should be. Employees are not motivated to accomplish organizational goals and objectives. Khan (1990) argues that consequently employees become withdrawn from their tasks, they employ physical, cognitive and emotional constraints, that is, the state of disengagement. The researcher notes that this is a comparable state to work behavior exhibited by Cottco employees. According to Bhatnagar and Biswas (2010) employees with low engagement levels are not committed to the organisation and do not add value to the organisation as they are consistent under performers. Research carried out by Gallup (2007) cited Christian et al (2011) indicates that organizations in the USA lost over 300 billion dollars in lost productivity because of disengaged employees. It is therefore pragmatic for Cottco to realize the levels of engagement that their workforce has so as to govern against gratuitous losses.

Engaged employees are willing and able to help their company succeed because they completely invest themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally. People who are disengaged on the other hand suppress their physical, cognitive and emotional energies. According to Khan (1990) the job is executed in a manner that is robotic, passive and detached. May et al (2004) further

notes that disengagement is characterized by negative behavior that is counterproductive like absenteeism, lack of commitment and aggressiveness either physically or verbally. The researcher whilst on work related learning at Cottco also noticed the same predisposition as they were more of dubious sick leaves, decreased performance and presenteeism.

The employees were always at loggerheads with management on the way they were treated when it comes to their salaries. Employees felt that the organisation lacked distributive justice. They also felt that their inputs that is, effort, experience and education and the output quotient (salary, promotions and incentives) were not equitable. They also believed that their organisation did not give equitable compensation relative to other organizations in the same economic sector and for the same work. Perceptions that employees have towards their employer are those of distrust because the employer is violating his part of the bargain in the psychological contract. Thus employees are disgruntled by the way the organisation constructs their compensation packages thereby aggravating on dwindling engagement levels. According to Buhler (2006) when employees perceive that they are being treated unfairly they do not strive hard to deliver the best results, they disengage and they reconsider their commitment to the organisation. In other words, they question their commitment to the organisation, is it worth it? Subsequently, there has been a steady corrosion of continuance and normative commitment. Low engagement and commitment levels do not give an organisation competitive advantage. Hence it is a concern that needs to be dealt with.

Globally, organizations are also facing economic crisis and on account of that most of these organizations are going through stressful phases like wage freezes, lost bonuses, increased work demands and downsizing. Though the procedures are necessary for the vitality of the organisation, engagement levels are affected by the way these procedures are implemented. Employees' perceptions are affected by the extent to which the organization respects and cares for them. For example, employees feel that they are regarded as valuable contributors to the organization if they are involved in matters that affect them and the organisation. However, lack of communication causes employees to perceive that they are being treated unfairly. Feelings that top management does not recognize and appreciate their efforts and membership to the organization may surface. Saks (2006) argues that as a result workers are put under emotional labour. Research conducted by May et al (2004) shows that disengaged employees display apathy, disenchantment and social aloofness. The researcher also observed the same trends at

Cottco as employees lack the enthusiasm and dedication to facilitate the attainment of the organisation's goals as a consequence of poor communication within the organisation.

In spite of trying to cut costs there are inconspicuous costs that disengaged employees generate. Research by Ayers (2006) showed that an organisation that only has up to 30% to 50% employees that are engaged approximately 50% to 70% of payroll disbursements by the organisation are ineffectual. The organisation is incurring costs by paying employees that are not Also, having employees that are not engaged compromises the goals and objectives of the company because they will sabotage them through poor performance, low productivity and quality of goods.

Cottco is a big organisation that sponsors farmers to grow cotton through the input credit scheme. This scheme attracts a lot of farmers to become contracted to Cottco because seed cotton is expensive thus many farmers cannot afford to buy it. However, the year 2012-2013 saw a lot of side marketing from the farmers Cottco had contracted resulting in excess losses. Consequently in an attempt to keep business stable the organisation is rigorously cutting costs. This is seen through downsizing and early temporary shut downs. According to Khan (1990) engagement entails a notion of safety and meaningfulness, however attempts to improve organizational effectiveness through concentrated attention on labour costs loosens the grip on psychological safety and meaningfulness. Colquitt et al (2001) asserts that this creates a 'survivor syndrome' which is characterized by fear (unemployment), distrust (job security threatened), work related stress caused by work overload and depression. Employees are not engaged thus they are not obliged intrinsically to be socio-emotionally attached to their work and the organisation. These characteristics are a representation of Cottco employees with low engagement levels which need to be addressed. Failure to address these issues would result in a decrease in customer satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, quality performance deficits, increased absenteeism ,health problems, sick leave and possibly turnover as employees search for alternative employment which offer job security. Thus it is of utmost importance to identify the underlying structure of employee engagement at Cottco that are causing organizational commitment to subside.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Disengaged employees experience high levels of stress, high absenteeism rate, lack enthusiasm for their jobs and do not identify themselves with the organisation. Employees feel that management does not appreciate their contributions towards the organisation given the way they are maltreated. They have discontents concerning their salaries, their working conditions and environment. Dissonance between the individual self and his surrounding in the organisation causes employees to suffer from stress. Hence in order to guard themselves they shy away from work and the workplace (Buhler; 2006). Low engagement levels are associated with poor performance, decreased productivity, poor quality, deviant behaviors (absenteeism, presenteeism, cyber loafing and misuse of expense accounts), physiological, emotional and psychological problems, and customer dissatisfaction and excess losses. Attempts by the organisation to reduce costs have resulted in the exploitation of employees' knowledge, skills and ability when contrasted against pay and rewards. This implies that there has been a breach of employees' psychological contract of fair salaries resulting in employees' distrust towards the organisation. Nevertheless, their endeavors to decrease company costs have boomeranged against them as is evidenced by the low engagement levels. Explicitly the question to be addressed is employee engagement as predictor of organizational commitment.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Though EE is a contemporary concept it has attracted a wide range of attention in the business field because it contributes to organizational success. However the bulk of research and documented literature concerning employee engagement is being done by consulting firms and agencies (Gallup, Hay Group, Aon Hewitt), there seems to be limited research that is contributing in the academic arena. Also, employee engagement is a concept still emerging in Zimbabwe hence there is need to contextualize employee engagement in Zimbabwe.

The present study seeks to explore and to assess the extent to which lack of engagement can affect organizational commitment in an attempt to improve the organizational behavioral processes. This is because high employee engagement levels hinder against turnover and absenteeism whilst boosting performance and profitability rates. According to Schroeder-Saulnier (2010) engagement drivers are not constant across times, countries, regions and organizations. Thus there is need to find out the lead factors that can increase engagement levels

at Cottco that can assist the organisation to implement corrective measures that can boost employees' engagement levels that can positively correlate with organizational commitment.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To discover the levels of EE that employees at Cottco have.
2. To determine the theoretical relationship between engagement and affective commitment.
3. To understand the construct of engagement and how it associates with normative commitment.
4. To find out the correlation between engagement and continuance commitment.
5. To find the effect of engagement on organizational commitment.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the level of employee engagement amongst employees?
2. Is there a relationship between engagement and normative commitment?
3. Do engaged employees have higher levels of continuance commitment?
4. How does engagement affect affective commitment?
5. What is the effect of engagement on organizational commitment?

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study highlights the significance of the study for both academic and practical reasons.

Academic significance

- To the researcher – broadening and augmenting knowledge whilst enhancing and improving research skills.
- To other students – this study can be used as an addition for secondary data information and basis for further research.

Practical significance

- To the organisation (particularly HR department) - the research study should enlighten management on the importance of engaging employees for the benefit of the company. Also, it should also aid management in addressing areas where low engagement levels emanate from to increase organizational commitment.

- To the employees – the researcher hopes that the dissertation will mark a point of change for the employees to gain hope in regards to their work environment and regain their trust in the organisation.

1.8 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

1. Low levels of employee engagement lead to negative behavior outcomes of organizational commitment like low performance, absenteeism, social loafing and increased levels of stress.
2. Lack of employee engagement has lead to employee passivity so much that people cannot report fraud even if they see it happening.
3. Participants will respond truthfully towards the survey questions.

1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The conceptual framework of the study is focused on employee engagement and how it can predict organizational commitment. The practical boundary however is focused on Cottco which is located, Number 1 Lytton Road Harare.

1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Listed below are some of the limitations the researcher feels the study may have:

- Fear of victimization because the researcher was once part of the Human Resources department so they might feel that they are being trapped and therefore refuse to contribute towards the research.
- Individual attitudes – some participants may probably be reluctant or slow to respond to the survey questions given by the researcher because they might feel that their privacy is being impinged on. However, the researcher will try to minimize this by making follow ups and explaining to the participants that the whole process will be strictly confidential.

1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

1.11.1 Employee engagement

Employee engagement is the extent to which an employee is drawn in, contented and enthusiastic by the tasks of the job and activities that occur within the organization. According to Khan (1990) engagement and disengagement can be precipitated if the necessary psychological conditions are present. These are the psychological condition of meaningfulness, safety and availability. Meaningfulness is the extent to which employees feel that there is value and worth in the tasks or activities they partake in the organization. Safety is the psychological condition where employees feel that the organizational environment is unbound from apprehensiveness and employees are able to freely participate without adverse effects to their profession or reputation. Availability is the state where the employee feels that they have the capability to influence or control their environment or job either physically, emotionally or cognitively. Disengagement is a state where employees inhibit themselves from physical, emotional or cognitive involvement on issues that concern the organization.

1.11.2 Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment refers to attachment and loyalty. It is mainly comprised of three components as postulated by Allen and Meyer (1990) which are affective, continuance and normative commitment. According to Allen and Meyer (1990) affective commitment occurs once the workers become emotionally involved with the organization and co-workers, employees stay with the organization because they want to. Continuance commitment is when the employee continues membership because they need to as they are inspired by compensation packages that are relative to other organizations. Normative commitment happens when employees feel that it is necessary for them to continue membership with the organization due to the organization's impetus of caring for their employees.

- ❖ The concept of employee engagement will be used interchangeably with EE, organizational commitment shall be substituted with OC, affective commitment with AC, continuance commitment with CC and normative commitment with NC.

1.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Engaging employees can present the organizations with advantageous gains. This is why organizations worldwide are striving to incorporate employee engagement as part of their strategic planning in the pursuit of organizational success. The consequences of engagement levels that are low are rather adverse as they negatively impact on worker's performance, well being and attachment to the organisation which affects profitability of the organisation. Thus the aim of the research is guided towards resolving low engagement levels that are imposing a negative bearing on organizational commitment.

This chapter is an introductory chapter of the dissertation as a whole. It is the focal point of the study as it presents the rationale of carrying out this study as presented in the background of study and the reasons for the importance of the study have also been noted. It also draws attention to the research questions that the researcher needs answers to in order unpack the key constructs in the research study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as the foundation for the study. It gives an overview of the extensive historical research related to the concept of employee engagement and organizational commitment. Conceptualization of the two constructs will be explored in order to gain insight on of employee engagement and how it can predict organizational commitment.

Employee engagement has also been used interchangeably with organizational commitment. Most individuals cannot seem to separate the two concepts though they might appear similar, they are different. The discrepancy between organisation commitment and employee engagement is that organizational commitment is concerned with an individual's identification and attachment to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991; 1997; Ahmadi et al., 2012). EE however is not simply just an attitude, according to Saks (2006) it represents the extent to which an individual is engrossed and deeply involved in the activities that concern the job and the organization. A more detailed distinction will be presented in the body of the chapter.

2.2 CONCEPTUALIZATION OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Nowadays organizations are operating in an environment that is equivocal (given the technological advancement, globalization, continual demands for innovation) organizations are depending on human capital to drive organizational success. According to Steen (2009) employees utilize resources (land, capital and enterprise) in ways that create and sustain competitive advantage to the organisation. This elucidates the reason why the concept of employee engagement has been an issue of concern for most organizations.

Though it is imperative for one to appreciate the notion of employee engagement, there seems to be no clear cut definition that is universal. Consequently, various definitions have been proposed contributing to its ambiguity. According Macey and Schneider (2008) it is almost impossible to find two people defining employee engagement in the same manner. Schneider et al (2009) suggest that there are key components that exist in most of the definitions despite its profuse definitions. According to Wiley, Herman and Kowske (2011) these definitions take account of

enthusiasm for work, commitment, organizational pride, employee alignment with organizational goals and the willingness to exert discretionary effort.

The earliest attempt to describe EE was presented by Khan (1990: 700) as the “simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s preferred self in task behaviors that promote connections to work and others, personal presence and active full role performance.” He further states that during role performances employees utilize their energies physically, emotionally and cognitively. Rich (2006) defined physical engagement as the exertion of physical energy with laziness and vigorous involvement at opposite ends of the continuum. Cognitive engagement entails an individual’s ability to concentrate intensely on the job to such an extent that they lose track of time. Employees’ feelings, ideas and views about the job are connected by emotional engagement to elicit feeling of enthusiasm and pride to the organisation. However, employees become fully engaged according to the disparity of three states that employees have. Khan (1990) presented these three states as meaningfulness (workers feeling that their jobs are worthwhile), safety (feeling as though the work environment is one of trust and supportiveness) and availability (workers having the physical, emotional and psychological means to engage in their job tasks at any given moment). There should be a positive correlation between EE and performance because attention to detail is exercised whilst performing their tasks. Khan (1990) also defines personal disengagement as a state when employees come to be detached from their jobs. According to Rothmann and Jordaan (2006) employees that are not engaged get to a point where they hide their true identity, thoughts and feelings when performing tasks.

May, Gilson and Harter (2004) substantiated Khan’s definition by a research study of approximately of two hundred employees. Their results revealed that indeed the three psychological conditions mentioned by Khan were imperative to determine one’s engagement (May, et al 2004; Shuk & Wollard, 2010). Amongst the three psychological states it was discovered that meaningfulness had the strongest influence in shaping the discrepancy of EE in organizations.

Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) defined engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work related state of mind that is characterized by three interrelated dimensions, namely, vigour, dedication and absorption. Vigour is defined as the ability to display high energy and not easily become lethargic, determination to work through difficulties and achieve organizational success. Dedication is defined as the extent to which one is engrossed in their work because it is thrilling

and gives them a sense of pride and fulfillment. Absorption is a state that is satisfying to such an extent that dissociation from the job is difficult (Bakker et al; 2008). Employees with high levels of engagement are intrinsically motivated by their jobs. They are inclined to utilize their skills, knowledge and ability for productive ends, they are more client-centered, and hence they produce quality goods that meet consumer expectations.

Stander and Rothman (2010) also note that the three dimensions of employee engagement identified by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) correspond theoretically with the three aspects of engagement formulated by Khan (1990) and May et al (2004), namely the physical aspect (vigour), the cognitive aspect (dedication) and the emotional aspect which is absorption.

Maslach and Leiter (1997) define engagement as the exact opposite of burnout. They argue that engagement and burnout are extreme ends of the continuum. Initially, when employees are recruited their levels of engagement are high. However; there is a gradual decline in these levels if there is a divergence from employee expectations, requirements and resources of the job resulting in disengagement or burnout as they termed it. They described burnout as "... a psychological syndrome of exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy which is experienced in response to chronic job stressors" (Leiter and Maslach 2004, 93).

Saks (2006) defines engagement through job and organizational engagement. Job engagement is the employees' psychological state of being completely engrossed in their work because they find their jobs stimulating and worthwhile. When employees identify with the ethics and objective that the organisation aims to achieve and consider their work place as a magnificent place in which to work is considered as organizational engagement. Demerouti et al (2001) posit that employees that are job engaged have an inclination to worker harder and more productively towards organizational goals that they identify as compared to people who are extrinsically motivated.

2.3 CONCEPTUALIZATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT.

It is imperative to consider organizational commitment because it gives insight on the salient features that can determine employees' decision to stay or leave the organisation. It is a variable of management concern when considering the high costs that are associated with high turnover and the costs of recruiting and training new employees whilst decreasing productivity as well. According to McKenna (2012) the benefits of having a committed workforce are enhanced organizational performance, manifested in improved employee attitudes and behaviors, lower levels of absenteeism, higher levels of skills, higher productivity, enhanced quality and efficiency. Thus it is a variable that needs to be explored to understand employee attitudes and behavior in the workplace.

Meyer and Allen (1997:67) and Indartono, Setyabudi and Walandani (2013) define organizational commitment "as the psychological state that characterizes the employee's relationship with the organisation." Thus as stated above it is the individual's mental set that can induce employees' decision to stay or end their association with the organisation. Therefore the organisation can forecast turnover intentions based on this mental states. This psychological state reflects a desire, a need and compulsion to maintain membership in the organisation (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Okpa, Tarela and Jaja, 2013). Thus the people are influenced by different mental states to attach themselves to the organisation. However, Wasti (2005) and Sharma, Anuradha and Bhatnagar (2009) argue that individuals who commit themselves to the organisation out of desire are more apt to remain with the organisation notwithstanding turbulent times that an organisation may be facing. The reverse is true for employees that are committed because they are compelled to do so or because they are evading the costs that are associated with leaving.

For clarity Allen and Meyer (1990) provided a framework with three idiosyncratic features of QC which are affective, continuance and normative commitment. Colquitt et al. (2001) further explain the meaning of the terms, affective commitment is the magnitude of the emotional attachment employees have with the organisation or colleagues that impacts their decision to stay, continuance commitment refers to the extent to which financial gains, (salary, benefit packages, promotions) and the availability of jobs in the market influence the individual's decision to stay and normative commitment implies the feelings of indebtedness and loyalty that employees possess towards the organisation. In spite of the different components employees might possess all of the three psychological states but in varying levels. According to Meyer and

Allen (1997) it can be said that individual employees have a commitment description which features the three components of OC.

The three facets of OC are prompted by divergent factors; consecutively they provoke work related behaviors that are different. Meyer and Allen (1996) discovered that determinants of work behavior had a positive association when AC and NC were quantified but not with CC. Further research by Meyer and Allen (1991; 1997) showed that AC can influence significant relationships between employee's dedication in producing quality goods and the spirit of teamwork. NC could only impact on the determination for quality while CC had insignificant impact. This corroborates the notion that above and beyond turnover individuals with AC, NC and CC display atypical behaviors in the workplace. Organizations that have high commitment strategies experience good retention levels, productivity, quality and employees are happy with the organisation.

When employees start working for an organization they come with predetermined needs, skills and expectations that they expect their employer to fulfill. Several studies have demonstrated that when the organisation is able to provide these kinds of opportunities development of commitment is imminent (Meyer and Allen, 1997). In other words there need to be congruency between organizational goals and personal goals. This supports the supposition of Allen and Meyer's components of organizational commitment and explains why individuals chose to be committed that way.

Research has shown that commitment leads to low labour turnover, less absenteeism, better motivation, improvement in quality of products and improved performance which are key elements which organisation's bottom line; profit and good reputation. According to Sterner (2010) quoted in McKenna (2012) commitment can only mature if and when the behavior of leaders, that is, their words, attitudes and actions concurs with the workforce educating their commitment. Thus it is what leaders decide to do or what they do not do can build up commitment levels in employees. Given the above it implies that OC is an important concept to foster in business strategy.

2.4 WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT AMONGST EMPLOYEES

According to Saul- Schroeder (2010) there is an alarmingly high shrinkage in engagement levels in organizations worldwide. Their research showed that organizations that employ more than fifty people had a mere 34% of employees that categorize themselves as engaged notwithstanding a colossal 50 % labeling themselves as completely engaged . The research also shows that 9% of the employees have organizational engagement. This implies that employees are occupied in jobs that are not challenging and boring. Employees that were job engaged are represented by 7 %. The preceding group feels proud to be part of the organisation but is not willing to cooperate towards its success. Saul- Schroeder (2010) describes them as individuals that are just happy to cheer from the sidelines. The second group may make significant contributions to the organization however because there lacks attachment and identification with the organisation they may leave at any time.

An analysis of the above one can say that 66% of employees are not engaged in a way that is beneficial to the organisation. The composition which constitutes of 50 % disengaged employees and the 9% that are engaged to the organization only represent an elevated 59% of workers on the payroll that are getting their salaries and benefits every month whilst they are doing nothing to help the organisation succeed. A survey by Populus (2012) cited in Okpa et al. (2014) corroborates the above as indicated by their research where they found that 64% of employees in the UK have the necessary knowledge, skills and ability but they are withholding these pre-requisites because their jobs are not challenging enough for them to demonstrate them. Saks (2006) assert that disengagement is associated with intention to leave, this implies that 57% (disengaged employees + employees that are job engaged) of the employees may leave the organization at any time. According to Hillmer, Hillmer and McRoberts (2004) the process of replacing employees, that is, the cost of advertising, hiring, training and supervising a replacement worker approximately amounts to 70% of his or her annual salary. Thus low engagement levels in employees should not be tolerated as they are like a cancer that slowly erodes the financial health of the organisation.

Initially when employees start working for an organisation their engagement levels are high. Notwithstanding there is a significant drop in the engagement levels to 38% in the first six months of being employed and a further decline to 20% after ten years of employment with the organization (Coffman and Gonzalez- Molina, 2002). Considering that the key for business

success is contingent upon the quality and effectiveness of its workforce, low EE levels should be a matter of concern for every organisation. However there is a divergence in the actions of management in addressing engagement. Pech and Slade (2006) argue that though managers and practitioners realize that their employees are not passionate about their jobs or the organisation 44 % of Human Resources practitioners are not keen on addressing the issue of engagement as they regard it as an overwhelming challenge. This is particularly alarming as they are encouraging a further decline on engagement levels that are already dwindling.

According to the statistics provided by Hay Group (2012) and Gallup the employee engagement index for 2011 is 60% indicating a steady increase in engagement levels from the 55% of 2010. Though it is an improvement 40% of the employees globally are still not engaged and that alone is a negative result: engagement levels are still low. Remarkably the employee engagement index (EEI) for 2012 and 2013 still indicates a global percentage of sixty employees that are engaged (Hewitt, 2012; Gallup, 2012 and Hay Group, 2013). Thereby showing that there is a sluggishness of employee engagement globally this therefore means that organizational growth and development is impeded. Previous researchers had revealed that pay had little significance in impacting engagement levels. Surprisingly pay as a driver has moved from number six in 2011 to number three in 2012 (Hewitt; 2013). This implies that the low EE levels may be attributed to inadequate reward strategies. The question is what is management doing to address the impact of compensation on engagement levels?

Luthans and Peterson (2002) assert that there is a crisis that is mounting between management and their subordinates. Employees may quit their jobs but in essence they will be quitting their bosses because of their leadership skills are poor and unbearable. Research by Spencer (2013) showed that 49% of the employees they surveyed had grievances about their managers. A thorough analysis of the results exposed four discrete clusters. The first cluster with 11% of disengaged employees are generally happy with senior leadership and the organisation as a whole (consenting with a high rating) expect for their managers with a low rating. However though employees separate the feelings they have for their managers and those they hold for the organisation and senior leadership, decrease in engagement levels are inexorable. This is because managers and subordinates worker with each other on a daily basis thus if the foundation of their relationship is lethal or dysfunctional employees are bound to be disengaged (Spencer, 2013). Disengagement is also caused by management's failure to communicate effectively with their

subordinates. This has contributed to 15% of the workers who are not satisfied about their manager's failure to align jobs with organizational goals and success, poor communication and poor accountability. 12 % of the employees feel that their managers are not building relationships and supporting the emotional or interpersonal needs of their employees due to lack of recognition, teamwork and personal expression. Employees need for autonomy fairness and personal expression cause employees to disengage when these conditions are not met. This accounted for 11% of low engagement levels despite the high rating they gave to managers for able to drive and enforce organizational goals and objectives (Spencer, 2013).

Research findings of the Unpublished Saratoga Institute cited in Truss et al. (2006) showed that the organizational environment prompted most of the employees to become disengaged where 49% of the people were unhappy with the environment because of bad working conditions, perceived inequity in regards to salaries and benefits, lack of resources to accomplish tasks and organizational goals and a defective reward system. Employees that had grievances towards the characteristics of their job constituted 11% of the survey and their jobs lacked autonomy and novelty, thus they were boring and unchallenging.

Employees that are not engaged are usually despondent at work and vigorously convey the feeling. Also, the effect that these employees have is unconstructive as their laments perpetually disturb other team members and obliterate the accomplishments of their engaged colleagues (Gallup, 2006, 2009 & 2013). Disengaged employees are consistent underperformers; they are neither interested in their jobs nor are they innovative towards the success of the organization,

A colossal proportion of employees have low engagement levels that are attributed to poor leadership characteristics, poor working conditions and job characteristics. This serves to highlight that management is not doing a good job at keeping their employees happy. When engagements levels are low, employees are not goal oriented thus their effort is not directed towards the success of the organisation. This affects bottom line results of the organisation. Studies by Gallup (2006, 2009 & 2012) indicated that engagement is causing a major outcry in organizations in America as the losses range approximately from two hundred to three hundred and fifty billion dollars every year due to diminution in productivity.

Towers Watson (2012) argues that though the modern world of business is filled with stress on a daily basis, some of it is necessary because it increases energy whilst performing work roles.

However, certain environments can impose stress in a negative way if the environment is encumbered with excessive workloads and consistent demands of the employee's time (Towers Watson, 2012; Hewitt, 2013). This therefore leads to low levels of disengagement as there is a strain of an individual's resources and the demands of the job. Studies by Towers Watson (2012) indicate that 58 % of employees globally feel that their organisation does not promote a healthy work environment and a balance between home and work. Thus a massive number of employees are unhappy in the organizations in which they work. Crabtree (2013) cites research findings by Gallup (2012) which indicated that the utmost numbers of employees that are disengaged were detected in Middle East and North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa with 35% and 33% correspondingly. This implies that developing countries are at battle with the concept of EE and inconsistencies in the economy straggles employee engagement.

2.5 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND NORMATIVE COMMITMENT.

According to Meyer and Allen (1997) normative commitment is determined by employee's feelings of obligation and loyalty to the organisation. Mowday et al (1979) alludes that organizations that socialize their workforce in a culture that accentuates loyalty educe normative commitment. The organizational values, mission and goals are integrated and become an important component of individual identities. Thus by creating consistency between individual and organizational goals, values and mission normative commitment is developed.

Engaged employees enjoy their time at work; they are empathetic towards their colleagues and transfer their engagement to others. Khan (1990) cited in Ortiz et al. (2013) found that engaged employees spend a considerable amount of time in and out of their formal work schedule with other organizational members. The social information theory by Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) cited in McKenna (2012) suggests that the more time that engaged employees spend with others increases the chances that employees have meaningful interactions where accepted behaviors and expectations of the organisation are communicated. According to May et al (2004) the interactions that engaged employees have increase their loyalty toward the organisation while building up collective identification with others. Social identification has been identified as factor that can influence normative commitment.

Employees that are obligated to stay with an organisation feel that they owe the organisation their duties especially in instances where the organisation is loyal to its employees like providing

the necessary benefits and rewards. As a result the behavior of employees with high normative commitment never strays from organizational goals because they feel that they should repay the debt bestowed upon them by the organisation.

Employees engage when they feel that they are investing themselves in roles that have extrinsic (promotion, performance based pay, salary) and intrinsic rewards (recognition by significant others, job satisfaction, autonomy). However, leaders may elude when it comes to issues of rewarding employee's accomplishments and reprimanding those that would have performed poorly. According to Senge (1990) this contravenes previously set organizational culture and values of rewarding performance which weakens employee engagement. This implies that employees who perceive that they have been treated unjustly are distressed because their efforts are not being recognised and appreciated as a result normative commitment is eroded because they no longer have that sense of moral obligation towards the organisation. Meyer et al (1993) asserts that when an organisation creates a climate of loyalty and trust, employees stay because they ought to in order to deliver their part of the bargain in as far as the psychological contract is concerned.

A study by Gallup organization in the UK showed that organizations that create apprehensive and culpable cultures have low engagement levels. Such cultures do not reinforce a loyalty and trust culture thus as a result employee's normative commitment erodes. Employees are no longer obligated to stay with the organisation; employees just go through the activities in the organisation but there lacks *passion* in the execution of work roles. This is because the workplace is not psychologically safe and the work lacks meaning (Khan, 1990).

2.6 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND CONTINUANCE COMMITMENT

Continuance commitment is employee's inclination to continue working for the organization because they are terrified of the costs that are coupled with terminating their membership with the organisation and lack of alternative employment in the market (Allen & Meyer, 1997). Recognition of the high costs that accompanies leaving discourages employees to leave the organisation.

Allen and Meyer (1990) assert that the costs that are associated with leaving are made apparent in two ways. Initially, employees are disinclined to leave the organisation because they do not want to lose the benefits they have come to acquire from the organisation due their years of

service. These benefits include retirement packages, seniority status and specialized and untransferable job skills. Secondly, employee's perceptions that finding a similar job would be difficult because of the hostile job market inhibit employees from leaving the organisation. Thus individuals remain with the organisation because of the detrimental effects that leaving can impose upon them.

Becker (1960) cited in Meyer and Allen (1997) proposed a side-bet theory which indicates that the need to remain part of the organisation happens with the intention of clinging on to the side bets that have accumulated, that is pension packages, seniority (Meyer & Parfyanova, 2010; Wasti, 2005). Perpetual membership according to continuance commitment is based on the premise of weighing losses that compliment leaving relative to the rewards associated with staying in the organisation. Thus encouraged by the need to receive rewards employees engage in positive work behavior.

Sudden activities in organizations of downsizing as strategies of cutting costs have created an atmosphere of fear and apprehension as employees wonder for the security of their jobs which leads to low levels of employee engagement. Employee's continuance commitment might also be shaken because despite the fact that employees might acquire their retirement packages the antecedent that had caused an individual to continue working for the organisation might not have been for the packages. Probably it might have been because employees enjoy their seniority status, revel in the social networks, job satisfaction and challenges that come with the nature of their job. Appraisals of job insecurity cause individuals to disengage from their jobs and lower their continuance commitment compelling them to search for alternative employment elsewhere which offer job security.

2.7 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT

Engaged employees drive personal energies into role behaviors and display the self within the role cognitively, emotionally or physically (May, 2004). Employees that have affective commitment towards their organisation strongly believe in the organizational culture, values and goals mainly because they correspond to their own values and goals (Mowday et al, 1979; Wasti, 2005). Accordingly, workers are keen to stay with the organisation and contribute towards organizational success. Emotionally attached employees are driven more by intrinsic factors. According to Meyer et al (1998) strong affective attachment can also be elicited when employees

enjoy their time at work and can rely on their employers to satisfy their needs and create constructive and supportive work environments.

Armstrong (2012) argues that the basic tenet of employee engagement is employee voice. It entails a bottom up –top bottom process, where leaders and employees interact and employees participate in matters of the organisation that impact towards organizational success and some of the issues which might affect the employees. According to Morrison and Milliken (2000) cited in Cooks (2008) the concept of employee voice encourages employees to employ themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally. This is because employees are empowered, they feel that they have an influence over their fate at work because they are included in making contributions over things they value and that actually matter. The working environment will be packed with the necessary conditions, that is, meaningfulness, safety and availability which are necessary for the growth of EE. Consequently employees develop affective commitment towards the organisation. This implies that employees with employee engagement relate with the organizational mission and are prepared to utilize the emotional, cognitive and physical energies essential to achieve performance. A study of 50 000 employees in the UK found by Aon Hewitt (2013) that the employees with high levels of EE had strong AC and as a result they performed 20% better than their colleagues.

Research carried out by Gallup (2012) showed that engaging employees boosts employee's health and well being. Their research indicated that 62% of engaged employees describe that their physical health has improved as a result of positive, supportive work environment. Discernment of the organisation as a salubrious place to work intensifies employee's level of support for the organisation. According to a study carried out by White (2008) cited in Christian et al (2011) 41% of engaged employees said despite the struggles that their organizations are facing they are willing to remain with the organisation. This implies that employees have strong affective commitment to as a consequence of employee engagement. Thus employees that are engaged stay with the organisation because they want to.

Emotionally attached employees are predisposed to display positive work behaviors that are advantageous to the organisation like attendance, performance and staying with the organisation. Van Knippenberg and Schie (2000) assert that identification of individual employees with the company's culture, values, mission and goals is crucial because recognition of these characteristics helps employees to define themselves as members of a specific societal group.

Also, they argue that identification encourages the unification of similar feelings that members of the in- group also share which gears employees towards a common goal. This in turn fosters strong affective commitment of employees to the organisation.

Empirical evidence indicates that leadership styles have an effect on the engagement levels that are within the company. The working conditions in the workplace as imposed by leaders can influence individuals to choose the ideal self that fits that environment. According to Khan (2005) collective interactions among groups (departments, areas, units) within the organisation can cause either engagement or disengagement levels of employees. However, if leaders are constantly looking for faultiness and blaming in other groups whilst favoring others, employees defend themselves by withdrawing from the work role. This implies that there is lack of emotional connections amongst these groups which leads to low affective commitment. This is because the employees no longer identify themselves as members of the group that are working towards the same goals and objectives.

2.8 THE EFFECT OF LOW ENGAGEMENT ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

OC has been studied as consequence of EE. According to Riketta (2002) absence of engagement in an organisation has been held liable for employee's lack of commitment and motivation. As illustrated by Gallup (2007) a study in the United States of America (USA) showed that only 29% of the employees are actively engaged, 54% are not engaged and 17% are actively disengaged. Disengagement is associated with high labour turnover, absenteeism; health related problems like stress and increased use of leave days. This shows that there is a decrease in organizational commitment because employees are not happy to spend most of their time at work. They attend work begrudgingly because there is lack of alternative employment elsewhere. According to a report by Hay Group (2013) two fifths of the global workforce have discontentions concerning their current employers and want to change employment as soon as the labour markets improve.

According to Aon Hewitt (2013) leaders may make decisions that are necessary for contemporary stability in the organisation whilst disregarding future implications of their decisions. This is so in the case where cutting costs (salaries, rewards, labour costs and development costs) precede the major concerns for organizations in times of economic

turbulence. They argue that at such times engagement levels reach crisis lows because management is no longer concerned with engaging their employees as they believe that employees are obligated to stay because of the need for job security (Right Management, 2009). These solutions however are short term and compromise long term goals. Engaged employees mark the difference between surviving and thriving in organizations. Thus lack of which would result in losses of the best employees that contributed to the organisation as they leave the organisation when conditions improve in the labour market.

Leadership styles that leaders implement influence the engagement levels that employees have towards the organisation. A study by Christian et al (2011) supports the view that inept leadership skills results in low engagement levels. When employees are not actively engaged they are not interested in contributing to what the organisation is trying to achieve. The study showed that they produce outcomes that are not beneficial for the organisation like poor performance, low commitment, low job satisfaction and high turnover intentions.

A study by Robinson (2007) showed that high levels of engagement, normative and affective commitment were witnessed in management staff especially senior executives than any other group. The key driver behind their engagement was their take home pay. The discrepancy between their salaries and the least paid worker was too high. When employees perceive that the processes and the systems that are within the organisation are unjust they disconnect themselves from the job and the organisation. According to Wasti (2005) such employees are drawn towards job vacancies that have better offers and are more likely to leave the organisation (low organizational commitment). In addition to their earnings the second influential factor was the composition of their role attributes like challenge, authority, and autonomy, access to information, company resources and growth opportunities. Contract workers who are paid by the hour had the least levels of engagement and disputably this category is comprised of people who have little or no control over their jobs and work experience.

Furthermore, employees with low employee engagement do not trust their organization which erodes normative commitment. According to Khan (2005) disengaged employees are despondent and they demoralize engaged employees and they disparage colleagues that are working at achieving organizational success. Thus such employees will be trying to drag their engaged employees along with them so that the organisation suffers. Colquitt et al (2001) argues that low engagement levels that lead to the erosion of normative commitment are detrimental to the health

of the organization. Employees with low normative commitment can destroy organizational reputation by external discussions that connoted with negativity. This will therefore make it impossible for the organisation to draw new talent to the organisation.

2.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.9.1 Khan's model of engagement

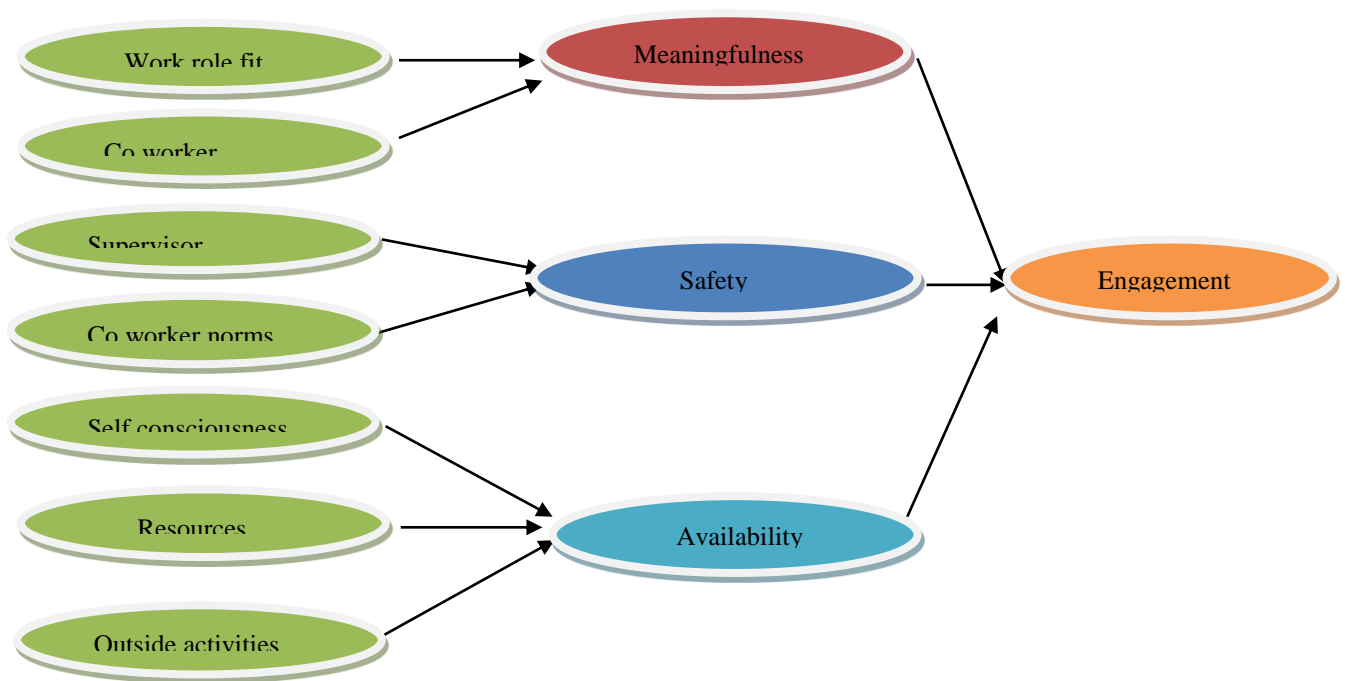


Figure 1 Adapted from May et al (2004): Path- analytical framework of engagement

The model developed by Khan (1990) is the first research on engagement and it will provide the basis of this research study. It was from this research that Khan came up with the concept of personal engagement (employee engagement) and personal disengagement (disengagement) and how each concept differed from the other. Moments of engagement or disengagement are predisposed to the three psychological conditions that is, meaningfulness, safety and availability.

The psychological state of meaningfulness occurs when individuals feel that they contributing in the organisation in a way that is relevant to the success of the organization. Hence job enrichment is a positive predictor of meaningfulness provided that the characteristics of the job have variety, learning opportunities and autonomy. Also, work role fit and fulfilling

interpersonal interactions with co workers correlate positively with meaningfulness. This implies that meaningfulness is an important state where lack of it would result in employees disengaging from work.

The state of psychological safety necessitates that individuals are able to involve themselves in their work roles that are devoid of trepidation of negative penalties to reputation or occupation (Kahn, 1990; May et al 2004). In this case feelings of safety can be prompted by interactions of supervisor and co worker where they support and trust each other. According to May et al. (2004) when individuals feel that they have the physical energy, emotional energy and cognitive energy they are said to be psychologically available. However, availability can also be negatively influenced by outside activities and feelings of insecurity, for example, heightened self consciousness and decreased self-confidence. The results of Khan and May et al. exemplify engagement from a psychological perspective and highlight the chief features that regulate the discrepancy between engagement levels.

2.9.2 JOB RESOURCES MODEL

Demerouti et al (2001) define job resources as the physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of the job that may be purposeful in attaining set goals and objectives. Thus the energy and enthusiasm that individuals thrust in the job depends whether or not the organisation has provided the indispensable prerequisites to carry out the job. Rothmann, Sebastiaan and Rothmann (2010) affirm the above mentioned view that job resources have a positive relationship with EE.

According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) and Alzahmi (2013) job resources are found at several levels they can be the organisation (compensation packages, job security, and performance appraisal), interpersonal and social relations that is supervisor and co-worker support, team relations, organisation of work which refers to role clarity, involvement in the decision making and task that is, performance feedback, skill variety, task significance, task identity and autonomy. These stimulate engagement in employees because it covers the basic concept of intrinsic motivation which ensures goal- oriented behavior and perseverance when pursuing work goals. Also these job resources ensure that employees are engaged as the climate is marked with the psychological states mentioned by Khan (1990) of meaningfulness, availability and safety. Job resources mediate the relationship between employee engagement and organisation

commitment (Saks, 2008). This therefore means that employees that are highly engaged have higher levels of organizational commitment towards their organisation. However, if the environment lacks the above mentioned factors employees do not focus their emotions, energies and passions in conducting work (Khan, 2005).

2.9.3 PERSONAL RESOURCES MODEL

Personal resources are associated with the individual's ability and belief that they can influence the environment they work in effectively. Research by Xanthopoulou et al (2007) displayed that engaged employees believe that the demands set for them are within their capabilities and they can fulfill them (self efficacy). Also, engaged employees constantly focus on the positive side of things (optimism) and they also believe that cooperating in organizational activities provides them with an opportunity to satisfy their needs (organizational based self esteem). This implies that workers that have adequate levels of self efficacy, resilience and self esteem have the necessary prerequisites to assemble resources and contribute to the high levels of engagement they display in their tasks.

2.9.3 SOCIAL ECONOMIC THEORY

The Social Economic Theory (SET) provides a formidable hypothetical justification for employee engagement (Saks, 2006). This theory is based on the premise that individuals become indebted to each other as a result of the collaborations that exists between two groups who depend on each other for reciprocal gains. The SET is centered on the belief that the extent to which the parties adhere to the rules of exchange determines the levels of trust, loyalty and shared commitments between the employee and the employer. However these relationships develop over time of interactions (Saks, 2006). Thus as a result employees are more likely to go above and beyond prescribed roles when management is consistently complimenting the socio-emotional exchange that exists between them. Notwithstanding, when employees perceive that their organisation is exploiting the investments they contribute to the organisation, they respond with decreased levels of loyalty, trust and fewer contributions to the organization. Robinson (2007) support the above mentioned view that engagement as a concept that is two ways between employees and the organisation.

2.10 KNOWLEDGE GAP

According to Saks (2006) and Ortiz et al. (2013) affective commitment is an attitude that is a consequence of employees that are engaged with their organizations. There is profuse literature documented in regards to the concept of employee engagement and affective commitment. Notwithstanding there is rather a limited exploration of employee engagement and its effect on normative or continuance commitment. Hence the researcher intends to address the inadequacy of literature in regard to normative and continuance commitment by supplementing the limited body of research. Thus the researcher intends to add valuable knowledge on the effects of engagement on the two types of commitment. Consequently it can add to the study of employee engagement and organizational commitment as a whole.

2.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented a detailed analysis of the concept of employee engagement and organizational commitment. The main purpose was to direct the researcher on the important aspects to concentrate with correspondence to the given research domain. It also presented on the research models. Previous researches were also merged in this chapter so that the researcher can determine the gap that exists between where their researches lacked and how this study can contribute to the body of knowledge.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at the methodology used in the research study. According to Evans (2007) the methodology is used to describe in detail how the study was conducted. This is with specific reference to the research design, population that will be used in the research study, research instruments including the justification for using such. The current chapter looked at the data collection procedures, the data presentation, analysis of the data and the ethical considerations the researcher observed whilst carrying out the study.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The researcher applied the quantitative approach to discover the underlying sources behind certain effects. Coolican (2004) illustrates that the goal of the quantitative method is to determine the extent to which a particular phenomena influences the other. Johnson and Christensen (2008) assert that the objective of quantitative research is to explain and predict data, in a statistical way with the aim of generalizing the results to a larger population. The basis for this approach is factual thus it is not susceptible to any prejudices. This research approach is therefore pertinent in the study as it provides a gauge of what is really happening by describing the relationship that exists between the variables of concern in an impartial way.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of a research design is to channel or direct the research on the way in which the central research questions are to be dealt with. This is with specific reference to the sampling procedure, the research instruments and the evaluation methods that the researcher adopted to search out the answers. In this particular study the researcher employed the correlational research design.

The correlational design is a form of non experimental research design which is used to ascertain the degree to which two factors are related such that values for one variable may predict changes in the values of a second variable (Kumar, 2007). The researcher made use of the Pearson

product moment correlation to determine the direction and strength of relationship that exists between EE and OC through the formulated research questions.

The correlational design is a method which does not involve control of the environment by the researcher. This means that this form of method does not require any manipulation from the researcher as in the experimental design. Participants in the study will be able to respond to the questionnaires in their own opinions as they will not be manipulated to respond in a particular manner to certain questions. This therefore means that the researcher will be able to get accurate and reliable results that can give insight on the research study. Also, the researcher can be guaranteed that the results gained from the questionnaires address and reflect levels of engagement that are within the organization so that the recommendations for change have a positive effect. The correlational research design was also chosen because it conserves time; information can be collected from many subjects at one time through the use of questionnaires.

3.4 TARGET POPULATION

Kumar (2007) posits that the target population refers to the total number of objects the researcher is focused on. The researcher's focus of study is The Cotton Company of Zimbabwe (Cottco), Head Office, Harare which has a population of 100 employees including managerial and non managerial staff.

3.5 SAMPLE POPULATION

The researcher selected a small number of participants from the target population. However the population should constitute participants that are representative of the overall population that is being targeted. In this particular study the researcher will use 55 employees inclusive of managerial and non managerial staff. A population sample is chosen specifically in order to save time, cost and effort while conducting the research.

3.6 SAMPLING PROCEDURES

In order to ensure that the population sample results will be a true representative of the target population the researcher through the probability sampling technique specifically the use of the stratified random sampling method. Stratified sampling accords all employees that are within target population an equal chance of being included in the sample populations. The stratified random sampling technique is essentially of relevance when populations are divided in sub groups or strata. The sample units or elements in this study will be drawn from each strata (department) independently where in this case according to the eight departments that are within Cottco which are Finance, Human Resources, MIS, Corporate Services (Purchasing and Administration issues), Ginning and Sales, Marketing and Public Relations, Audit and Engineering.

3.7 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

3.7.1 Gallup Worker Audit (Q12)

The Gallup Worker Audit was adopted to determine employee's level of engagement at Cottco. According to Harter, Schmidt, Agrawal and Plowman (2006, 2009 & 2013) there are two employee surveys that are quite extensive. The first one is concerned with the consequences of employee's attitudes towards the organisation. These include satisfaction, loyalty, pride, customer satisfaction and organizational commitment. The second one focuses on issues that can be changed and drive the consequences previously mentioned. The GWA is focused on the latter description of employee survey and constitutes of 12 questions where supervisory or managerial level can drive the change. Generally, its emphasis is centered upon the organizational environment, that is, perception of recognition and rewards, role clarity, fit between requirements and abilities, resources and receiving feedback. Thus high or low levels of employee engagement are influenced by the workplace conditions as they are the unpremeditated causes of engagement.

According to (Gallup, 2006) the establishment of this instrument exceeds thirty years of qualitative (problem oriented) and quantitative research (consequence oriented). Thus one can ascertain that GWA has psychometric properties (reliability and validity) because the incorporation of two methods of inquiry compliments data and erases the limitations of either qualitative or quantitative data that the two may have.

It consists of twelve questions which are called the Q12; consisting of a five point scale indicating strong disagreement to strong agreement. Harter et al (2009) assert that the Q12 provides a substantial benchmark of employee engagement, making it the most widely used engagement instrument to measure employee engagement with 5.4 million responses from employees from different countries and organizations. This is because the GWA is an instrument that measures the dynamic forces at work that can prognosticate consequences that are vital for the organisation and recommendations that are applicable in the real world. Meta analysis studies by Gallup (2006, 2009, & 2013) show that those organizations with great scores on the Q12 benefit from low staff turnover, a huge profit margin in sales, intensified efficiency, improved consumer allegiance, organizational commitment and other manifestation of better-quality performance.

3.7.1.2 Reliability and Validity

According to Harter et al (2002) the GWA also includes the psychological conditions of engagement, that is, meaningfulness, safety and availability. It considers, person and organisation fit, role fit (meaningfulness), employee's discernment of their duties and perceptions of the organisation towards the employees (safety) and prospects for self advancement (availability). Thus it mirrors respondent's engagement levels to the organization through questions formulated empirically and that indicate levels of meaningfulness, availability and safety.

According to Havenga, Brand and Visagie (2013) and Zyl, Lewellyn, Deacon, Elmarl and Rothmann (2010) previous studies performed in the African context using the GWA have a Cronbach alpha ranging from 0.80 to 0.92. This indicates that the GWA can be utilized in the African context because it is free from cultural bias though it is a standardized instrument developed in Europe.

3.7.2 ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

The researcher adopted the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) with 24 items developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) to measure employee's organizational commitment. Eight questions fall under each dimension of OC, that is, AC, CC and NC. The OCQ is an essential instrument to use because it is linked to significant work concepts such as turnover, absenteeism, job involvement and leadership (Mathieu and Zajac; 1990). The OCQ questionnaire gives insight

of employee's views of their jobs and the organisation. The questionnaire can reveal the extent to which employees are committed to Cottco and with which dimension of commitment amongst affective, continuance and normative commitment are employees mostly committed. Notwithstanding, the total average gained from the twenty four items will be representative of the commitment levels that the participants have to the organisation. Realizing the levels of commitment within the organisation can aid in the understanding of how employee engagement plays a part in influencing these levels.

3.7.2.1 Reliability and Validity

The OCQ will be used in this study because of its proficiency of yielding reliable results. Prior researches by Mowday et al (1979) signify that the OCQ has sufficient psychometric properties and all the data obtained from the OCQ signify a reliability and validity that is positive. According to Meyer and Allen (1997) the reliability of the organizational commitment questionnaire has internal consistencies of the three dimensions where affective commitment has 0.85; continuance commitment has 0.79 and normative commitment has 0.73 and the overall reliability estimates exceed 0.79. The construct validity of organizational commitment questionnaire is based on the fact that there is a positive association between the suggested precursor factors. This implies that the OCQ by Allen and Meyer is a valid instrument for measuring commitment. The OCQ has also been tested and used in the African context and the studies have reported that they are indeed reliable and valid.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The researcher asked permission from Human Resources Management of Cottco to carry out the study. The researcher handed out the questionnaires personally for the purpose of confidentiality. The respondents were given questionnaires which were collected the following working day.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

Nunally and Bernstein (1994) assert that the primary goal of data analysis is to determine whether results support a given claim about a given behavior. The researcher used Statistical Package for Social Sciences for windows version 21 in analyzing data. It involved the Pearson-product correlation moment coefficient and in the analysis of data. It is used to analyze the direction and force of the association between variables. The association of the variables can

either be a positive correlation where a change in one variable cause the other variable to also change in an analogous manner or negative correlation where the changes in one variable differ from the changes of the other variable (Tredoux and Durrheim,2002). The correlation ranges from a positive one to a negative one. The closer the results are to positive one or negative one indicates that there is a cause and effect relationship that exists between the variables.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics in research are created to guide researchers or practicing psychologists in their conduct to ensure that they value integrity, impartiality and respect for individuals (Russell and Roberts, 2001). Failure to uphold these ethical considerations make the research void and unacceptable to the scientific community. The researcher observed the ethic of informed consent where the participants knew the purpose of the study and how the information will be used to benefit the organization and the employees. Confidentiality was also exercised by the researcher through the questionnaires that the respondents were given which were written in an anonymous fashion in order to protect the participants from harm.

3.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter was all about how the research is going to be carried out. It takes particular interest in the research design, the population sample, the research instruments and the data collection procedures and data analysis procedure the researcher will employ in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results that the researcher gathered after collecting data for the research study. Thus this study deals with the data presentation and analysis of the results obtained which will be tackled in accordance with the research methodology and research questions.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA INFORMATION

A total of fifty five questionnaires were given to employees, and managerial staff and all of the questions were answered. This represented a 100 % response rate; were 80% (n= 44) of the questionnaires were respondents by males while the remaining 20% (n=11) were respondents by females.

4.2.1 Gender

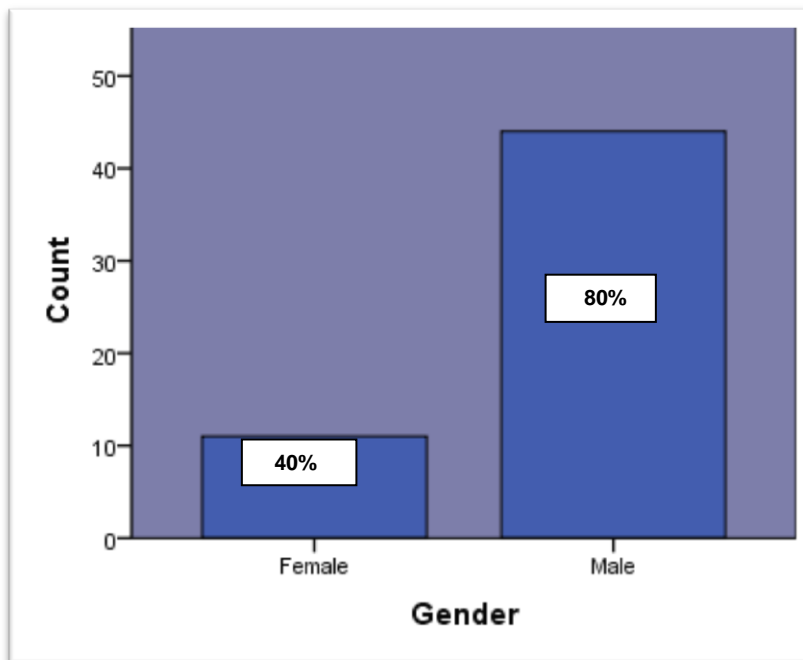


Figure 2 Gender

From the above it can be inferred that Cottco is an organisation that is largely governed by men while women form the minor portion.

4.2.2 Age

Table 1 Age

(N=55)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
21-30 Years	27	49.1	49.1	49.1
31-40 Years	18	32.7	32.7	81.8
Valid 41-50 Years	6	10.9	10.9	92.7
51+	4	7.3	7.3	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

According to the results gathered the majority of the respondents 49.1% (n=27) are aged between 21-30 years, followed by the age group 31-40 years with 32.7% (n=18). The age group 41-50 and 51+ had the least respondents of 7.3 % (n=4) and 3.6% (n= 2) respectively.

4.2.3 Length of working service

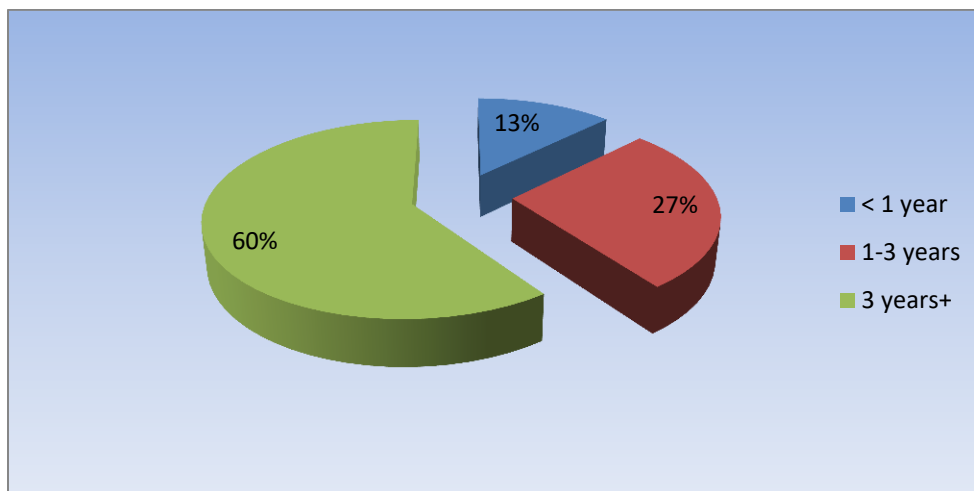


Figure 3 Length of service

(N=55)

The results indicated that 60% (n= 33) have worked with the organization for a period of more than three years; whereas 27.3% (n= 15) have worked with the organisation for a period of one to three years and 12.7% (n=7) have worked with the organization for less than a year.

4.2.4 Employment status

Table 2 Employment status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Permanent	14	25.5	25.5	25.5
Valid Contract	41	74.5	74.5	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

With regards to status of employment the bulk of employees are contract workers 74.5% (n=41) while 25.5% (n=14) constitute workers that are permanently employed. From the above one can extrapolate that there is a huge margin of 49% (n=27) between contract employees and permanent employees, which indicates that the majority of employees are faced with job insecurity problems with specific reference to the ongoing exercise of cutting costs through labour reduction.

4.2.5 Employee grade

Table 3 Employee Grade

	Frequency	percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Management	11	20.0	20.0	20.0
Valid Non Management	44	80.0	80.0	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

The questionnaire also had a sub category for employees to fill whether they were managerial or non managerial. The survey response showed that 80% (n= 44) of the employees that responded were non managerial and 20% (n=11) of the employees that responded fall under the management category of which two were females.

4.2.6 Employee grade versus employee status, length of service and age

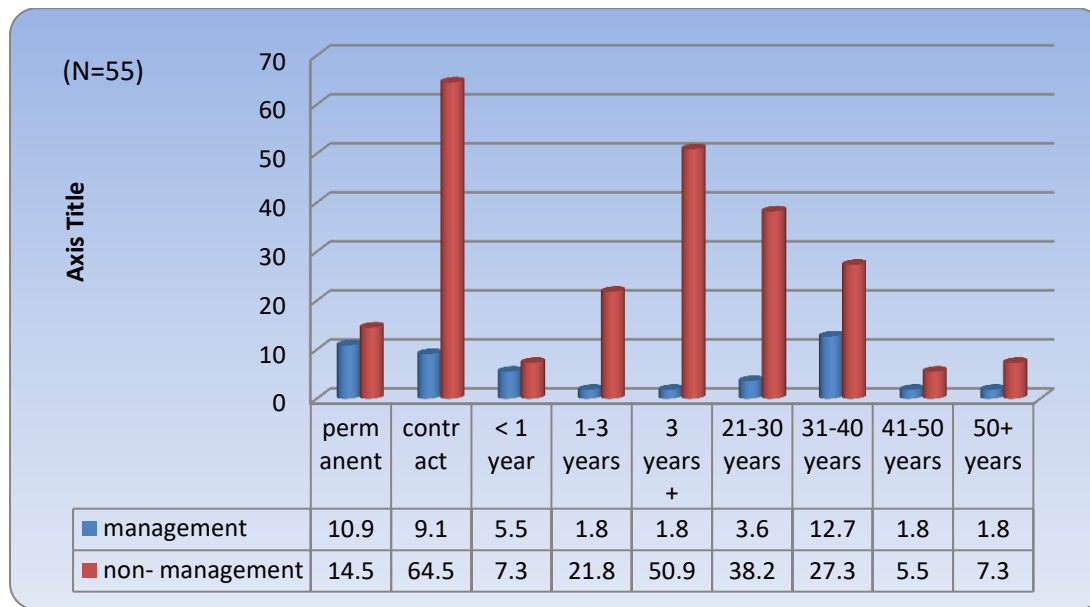


Figure 4 Employee grade vs employee status, length of service & age

The figure above shows the management category is inclusive of permanent and contract employees 10.9% (n=6) and 9.1% (n=5) correspondingly. It also shows that some of the employees that are in the management category have been with the organisation for less than a year, 5.5% (n=3). The majority of employees have been with the organization for more than three years are not in the management category and they are also contract workers 50.9% (n=28). A favorable number of employees are contract employees in non management that have been with the organization for a period of one and three years. The findings also indicate that the non-management category nests the majority of the 21-30 age group which has 38.2% (n=21) whereas the management category has 3.6% (n=2), in the 31-40 age group the non management has 31.7% (n=17) while the management has 12.7% (n=7). The age group 41-50 and 51+ holds the least employees for both categories 5.5% (n=3), 5.5% (n=3) for non management and 1.8% (n=1), 1.8% (n=1).

4.3 SURVEY RESPONSE

The researcher gathered data from Cottco employees (N=55). All the questionnaires were answered reflecting a 100% response rate. The results obtained were analyzed according to the following research questions:

1. What are the levels of engagement among employees?
2. Is there a relationship between engagement and normative commitment?
3. Do engaged employees have higher levels of continuance commitment?
4. How does engagement affect affective commitment?
5. What is the effect of engagement levels on organizational commitment?

4.4 RESEARCH QUESTION ONE: WHAT ARE THE LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT AMONGST EMPLOYEES?

The levels of employee engagement for Cottco employees was measured using the GWA (Q12) with a five point Likert scale type ranging from ‘1’ strongly disagree to ‘5’ strongly agree. The ‘3’ which denotes neutral responses were calculated by the researcher as disagreements because they represent hesitance from the employees to reveal the truth. The totals gained for individual responses demonstrate the levels of engagement that the employees have towards the organisation.

4.4.1 Question 1: I know what is expected of me at work

Table 4 **Organizational goals and job alignment** (N=55)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Neutral	4	7.3	7.3	7.3
Strongly Disagree	5	9.1	9.1	16.4
Strongly Agree	9	16.4	16.4	32.7
Disagree	11	20.0	20.0	52.7
Agree	26	47.3	47.3	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

The results indicate that 47.3% (n = 26) agree while 16.4% (n=9) strongly agree that they know what is expected of them by the organization. However, 7.3% (n= 4) are not sure what the organization requires from them whereas 20% (n=11) disagree and 9.1% (n=5) strongly disagree that they do not know what is expected of them in the organisation. This implies that a total of 63.7% (n = 35) know what is expected of them by the organisation outweighing 36.4% (n=20) of the employees who suggest that they do not know what is expected.

4.4.2 Question 2: I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.

Table 5 Resources

(N=55)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Neutral	5	9.1	9.1	9.1
Strongly Agree	7	12.7	12.7	21.8
Strongly Disagree	8	14.5	14.5	36.4
Agree	12	21.8	21.8	58.2
Disagree	23	41.8	41.8	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

The above table indicates that the majority of the responses were biased towards repudiating the question, 41.8% (n=23) disagree, 14.5% (n=8) strong disagree and 9.1% (n=5) were neutral while 21.8% (n=12) agreed and 12.7% (n=7) strongly agreed. This implies that

4.4.3 Question 3: I have the opportunity to do what I do best everyday

Table 6 Skills, knowledge and ability

(N=55)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	9	16.4	16.4	16.4
Disagree	16	29.1	29.1	45.5
Neutral	17	30.9	30.9	76.4
Agree	8	14.5	14.5	90.9
Strongly Agree	5	9.1	9.1	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

This question required the respondents to indicate the extent to which their job allows them to make use of their skills, knowledge and abilities (SKA) with regard to their job. The results indicated that 30.9% (n=17) are neutral, 29.1% (n=16) disagree, 16.4% (n=9) strongly disagree, 14.5% (n=8) agree while 9.1% (n=5) strongly agree.

4.4.4 Question 4: In the last seven days I have received recognition or praise for doing good work

Table 7 Reward and recognition (N=55)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	2	3.6	3.6	3.6
Neutral	8	14.5	14.5	18.2
Agree	9	16.4	16.4	34.5
Strongly Disagree	13	23.6	23.6	58.2
Disagree	23	41.8	41.8	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

The responses made to the above question demonstrate that 41.8% (n=23) disagree, 23.6% (n=13) strongly disagree, 14.5% (n=8) were neutral while 16.4% (n=9) agree and 3.6% (n=2) strongly agree. The results suggest that employees do not receive recognition or praise as constantly as was required by the question.

4.4.5 Question 5: My supervisor or someone at work seems to care about me as a person

Table 8 Work life balance (N=55)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	13	23.6	23.6	23.6
Disagree	12	21.8	21.8	45.5
Neutral	5	9.1	9.1	54.5
Agree	22	40.0	40.0	94.5
Strongly Agree	3	5.5	5.5	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

The above table indicates that 40% (n=22) agree to the above question, 5.5% (n=3) strongly agree, 9.1% (n=5) were neutral, 21.8% (n=12) disagree and 23.6% (n=13) strongly disagree. Though the results are slightly biased towards employees who disagreed, they also highlight that supervisor's care about their employees.

4.4.6 Question 6: There is someone at work who encourages my development.

Table 9 Personal development

(N=55)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	1	1.8	1.8	1.8
Neutral	4	7.3	7.3	9.1
Agree	12	21.8	21.8	30.9
Disagree	17	30.9	30.9	61.8
Strongly Disagree	21	38.2	38.2	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

The table illustrates that 38.2% (n=21) strongly disagree, 30.9% (n=17) disagree, 21.8 % (n= 12) agreed, 1.8 % (n=1) strongly agreed while 7.3% (n=4) were neutral. This question addresses the psychological condition of safety and availability. This is so because it entails the extent to which employees feel that there is someone at work who acknowledges the need for person role fit (availability). The safety notion comes out when people have jobs that fit their strengths, talent and ability. The majority of the respondents contradicted the question implying that there lacks a clearly defined structure that addresses the above.

4.4.7 Question 7: At work my opinion seems to count

Table 10 Organizational communication

(N=55)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Neutral	3	5.5	5.5	5.5
Agree	5	9.1	9.1	14.5
Disagree	13	23.6	23.6	38.2
Strongly Disagree	34	61.8	61.8	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

The above question carried the most discontentions, 61.8% (n=34) strongly disagree, 23.6% (n=13) disagree, 9.1% (n=5) agree and 5.5% (n=3) were neutral. The results obtained indicate that there is lack of communication between management and the general workforce.

Q8: The mission or purpose of my organization makes me feel my job is important

Table 11 Organizational and job fit

(N=55)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	16	29.1	29.1
	Disagree	9	16.4	45.5
	Neutral	2	3.6	49.1
	Agree	25	45.5	94.5
	Strongly Agree	3	5.5	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0

The above table indicates that 45.5% (n=25) agree to the question, 5.5% (n=3) strongly agree, 29.1% (n=16) strongly disagree, 16.4% (n=9) disagree and 3.6% (n=2) were neutral. The results above indicate that those who were in favor and those who contradicted inclusive of the indecisive ones are almost equal notwithstanding the responses are biased towards those who agreed. Thus there is organizational and job fit within the organization.

4.4.9 Q9: My fellow employees are committed to doing quality work

Table 12 Team work and quality

(N=55)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	10	18.2	18.2
	Disagree	11	20.0	38.2
	Agree	13	23.6	61.8
	Strongly Disagree	21	38.2	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0

The results indicated that 38.2% (n=21) strongly disagree, 20% (n=11) disagree 23.6% (n=13) agree and 18.2% (n=10) were neutral. The majority of the respondents disagreed to the above question implying that employees feel that their co workers are not working efficiently enough to achieve organizational success.

4.4.10 Q10: I have a best friend at work

Table 13 Interpersonal relations

(N=55)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	5	9.1	9.1	9.1
Disagree	14	25.5	25.5	34.5
Neutral	8	14.5	14.5	49.1
Agree	26	47.3	47.3	96.4
Strongly Agree	2	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

The results indicated that 47.3% (n=26) agree, 3.6% (n=2) strongly agree, 25.5 % (n= 14) disagree, 9.1 % (n=5) strongly disagree and 14.5% (n=8) were neutral. However though the percentage of those who agree 50.9% (n=28) outweighs those who disagree 49.1% (n= 27), it only does so with a small margin of 1.8% (n=1).

Q11: In the last six months someone at work has talked to me about my progress

Table 14 Performance Management

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Neutral	5	9.1	9.1	9.1
Disagree	9	16.4	16.4	25.5
Agree	10	18.2	18.2	43.6
Strongly Disagree	31	56.4	56.4	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

(N=55)

From the table above it is apparent that most of the employees feel that the organisation rarely provides feedback on these goals. The results indicated that 56.4% (n=31) strongly disagree, 16.4% (n=9) disagree, 9.1 % (n=5) were neutral 18.2% (n=10) strongly agree. The greater portion of employees contravened this question suggesting that employees are not provided with the yardstick to track their progress.

4.4.12 Q12: This last year I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow

Table 15 Learning and growth

(N=55)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	4	7.3	7.3	7.3
Neutral	5	9.1	9.1	16.4
Valid Agree	7	12.7	12.7	29.1
Strongly Disagree	39	70.9	70.9	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

70.9% (n= 39) strongly disagree that they have had opportunities to learn and grow, 7.3% (n=4) disagree, 9.1% were neutral, and 12.7% (n=7) agree. The results indicate that in terms of training and development the company does little to add to the growth of its employees. The researcher might point out that the proportion of employees that agreed might be management staffs that are permanent.

4.4.13 What are the levels of engagement amongst employees?

Table 16 Levels of engagement

(N=55)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
16- 26 Low Employee Engagement	35	63.6	63.6	63.6
Valid 30- 40 High Employee Engagement	20	36.4	36.4	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above indicates the levels of engagement that employees have towards their organization. 63.6% (n= 35) have low levels of engagement, 36.4% (n=20) of the employees have high levels of engagement. The results indicate that the majority of employees have low levels of engagement.

4.5 RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGAGEMENT AND NORMATIVE COMMITMENT?

Table 17 Correlation of Employee Engagement and Normative commitment

		Employee Engagement	Normative Commitment
Employee Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.812**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	55	55
Normative Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.812**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	55	55

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The researcher conducted Pearson product moment correlation coefficient in order to find the relationship between employee engagement and normative commitment. The two variables, as is highlighted in the table above showed that there is a strong and positive relationship which is significant between employee engagement and normative commitment, $r = 0.812$, $p < 0.01$.

4.6 RESEARCH QUESTION THREE: DO ENGAGED EMPLOYEES HAVE HIGHER LEVELS OF CONTINUANCE COMMITMENT

Table 17 Correlation of Employee Engagement and Continuance Commitment

		Employee Engagement	Continuance Commitment
Employee Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.399**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	55	55
Continuance Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.404**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	55	55

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table indicates that there is a moderate positive association between employee engagement and continuance commitment; $r = 0,399$, $p < 0.03$ reflecting the significance of the relationship.

4.7 RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR: HOW DOES ENGAGEMENT AFFECT AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT?

Table 18 Correlation of Employee Engagement and Affective Commitment

		Employee Engagement	Affective Commitment
Employee Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.788**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	55	55
Affective Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.788**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	55	55

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between employee engagement and affective commitment was explored using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r). The results as indicated by the table above imply that there is a statistically strong and positive relationship between employee engagement and affective commitment; $r = 0.788$, $p < 0.01$.

4.8 RESEARCH QUESTION FIVE: WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF LOW EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT?

Table 19 Correlation of low Engagement levels and Organizational Commitment

(N=55)

		Employee Engagement	Organizational Commitment
Employee Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.799**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	55	55
Organizational Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.799**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	55	55

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results as indicated by the table above imply that there is a statistically strong and positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational commitment; $r = 0.799$, $p < 0.01$.

4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter presented the results that the researcher gathered from data collection. The research findings were presented and analyzed and interpreted in the context of the research questions. The pattern that emerged indicated that indeed employee engagement can predict organizational commitment.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this chapter is to present a summary of the research findings on employee engagement as a predictor of organizational commitment. It also includes the conclusion and researcher's point of view in regards to the research questions. This chapter also highlights on the recommendations that the researcher feels are significant in addressing the issues within Cottco.

5.2 REVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

The intention of the researcher was to provide correlational information concerning the variable of employee engagement and how it can act as a predictor of organizational commitment. The data collection took place from 10 and 11 April 2014.

5.3 DISCUSSION RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

5.3.1 The levels of engagement amongst employees.

The results from the analysis indicated that 63.6% (n=35) of the employees had low levels of employees and 36.4% (n=20) have high levels of engagement. Comparison of the results gathered in this study and with those carried out by Crabtree (2013) indicate that there is an diverse comparison from the levels of EE from Middle East and North Africa and sub Saharan Africa which indicate that the 35% and 33% of individuals represent the number of employees that are not engaged. The levels of engagement at Cottco are slightly comparable to the global levels of engagement where the global average is of engagement 42% for low engagement levels and 58% for employees that are engaged.

The EE levels at Cottco are quite daunting. This suggests that employees come to work just to log in or schedule in their time but no significant contributions are made towards the attainment of organizational goals. This has a negative result on bottom line results, that is, profit and productivity. This is because there lacks passion, efficiency and tasks are performed

perfunctorily. Employees are not willing to go that extra mile for their company. Thus unless the organization addresses the issue of engaging its employees they will remaining stagnant and find it very difficult to achieve organizational success. This suggests that employee engagement levels are precarious for Cottco.

5.3.2 The psychological condition of meaningfulness

The responses to the GWA will be analyzed using Khan's (1990) psychological conditions that influence engagement, that is, meaningfulness, safety and availability. GWA questions which represent meaningfulness are Q1, Q4, Q7, Q8, Q9 and Q11. The safety dimension is represented by Q4, Q5, Q6 and Q10. The psychological condition of availability is demonstrated by Q2, and Q3.

Generally, the findings showed that the employees know their duties and responsibilities as expected by the organisation. This highlights that there is a significant attempt by the organization to let employees know what they require of them in order to achieve organizational goals. However, the ones who disagreed and remained neutral shows that there are some areas where duties and responsibilities are not clearly articulated to the employees. This highlights on the ambiguity of communication from top management to functional employees.

Cottco is not an organisation that regularly employs intrinsic and extrinsic strategies of rewarding or recognizing the efforts made by employees towards the organization. Thus the aspect of meaningfulness which contributes to EE is lacking because employees feel that the organization does not appreciate the contributions that they make to the organization leading to physical, cognitive and emotional withdraw. The SET by Saks (2006) also validates the finding that senior management at Cottco are violating the rules of exchange thereby allowing engagement levels to deteriorate because employees no longer trust the organization.

Findings on the effect of job characteristics and organizational goals in determining individual worth and value demonstrate that employee's perceptions are at equilibrium. There is a small margin of those who affirm to the question and those who deny. Harter et al. (2002), Wildermuth and Pauken (2008) confirm that employee's perceptions that work matters and their work provides continuous learning and growth facilitate or impede engagement.

The general workforce does not have the opportunity to feed their views and opinions upwards, yet it is the primary connection point between the majority of employees and management. This suggests that though management and the general employees are ‘working’ towards achieving the same goals and objectives of the organizational success, it seems like they are working independently of each other which makes their attempts futile. The personal resources model authenticates the finding that non- participation in issues of the organisation or employees’ jobs creates low levels of engagement. Employees withdraw their personal resources, that is, their self efficacy, resilience, optimism and self esteem.

Employees have discontentions towards the lack of feedback from management. This implies that there is lack of meaningfulness because employees do not get feedback from the work goals they are given. Thereby prompting employees to disengage because there lacks the motivation and from the organization to employ themselves cognitively, physically and emotionally in their work goals because they cannot track their progress. The job resources model by Demerouti et al (2001) also emphasize on the importance of performance appraisal, task significance, involvement in decision making and performance appraisal in creating or inhibiting EE.

5.3.3 The psychological condition of safety.

The relationship that managers have with their subordinates indicates that the atmosphere of safety is not entirely practiced. This suggests that the climate is filled with distrust, lack of openness, trust and threats. This implies that employees at Cottco are not satisfied and enthusiastic about their organization as a good place in which to work. Thus employees are not performing at their full potential because the environment does not allow them to challenge and take initiative. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) and Saks (2006) substantiate the notion that lack of safety in the work place leads to low levels of engagement.

Findings also indicated that the majority of the respondents feel that their jobs do not fit their strengths, talent and ability. According to studies by Harter et al (2002) there is need for employee development because lack of which causes disengagement. The interpersonal relations at Cottco indicate that the environment does not accommodate the psychological notion of safety because individuals do not entirely trust each other without fear of negative consequences. Employees work in an environment where they constantly look over their shoulder. Khan (2005)

refers to such an environment as containing bobby traps. With this in mind the researcher notes that it is becomes difficult for Cottco to contend with its competitors with a workforce that has EE levels that are below average. It is very difficult for them to reach their targets within the recovery period and buying of cotton. This will in turn affect their profits margins.

5.3.4 The psychological condition of availability

The majority of employees (general employees) lack the psychological condition of availability because they feel they cannot employ themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally in work roles that do not have adequate resources. According to Armstrong (2012) materials and equipment do not refer only to the physical equipment, it also refers to information that employees may need in order to execute their duties properly. This suggests that information flow from top (management) to bottom (general employees) is disproportionate. Harter et al. (2002) argue that people need the necessary pre-requisites in order to become engaged. Thus lack of which causes employees to disengage as is represented in the findings. Most of the employees are currently employed in jobs that do not make use of their SKA. Thus the researcher can discern that employees lack the psychological condition of availability.

The results also indicate that the majority of the age group is 21-40. Employees in this age group are the most active and productive age group in an organisation in terms of innovativeness, productivity and performance. This age group is usually at the prime of their career and is therefore more inclined, willing and able to take risks of career change. The group is a high departure risk group because the young working force is looking for career growth, however, the older workforce has the higher tenure and is less likely to leave this means there are less opportunities for the younger workforce-glass ceiling. Thus the younger workforce will stay long enough with the organization to gain experience and exposure needed for them to find more opportunities in other organizations. This implies that unless Cottco find strategic means of engaging this age group, Cottco is just a training ground for competitors.

The researcher noted that most of the questions came from issues to do with reward and recognition, performance appraisal, learning and development, organizational communication and organizational resources. The results indicate that the majority of employees have low levels of engagement. However though 36.4% (n=20) indicate that they have high levels of

engagement, employees that have engagement levels that range from 30-36 are considered as those employees whose engagement levels can decrease if management does not address the issues of employee engagement. This implies that Cottco should change its approach in terms of the way they treat their employees because the discrepancy between high and low levels of engagement is too high.

5.4 DISCUSSION RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

5.4.1 The relationship between employee engagement and normative commitment.

The parameters for practical significance between variables are set and described in accordance with the guidelines set by Cohen (1988), who states that a correlation is practically significant if $r = 0.10$ (small effect), $r = 0.30$ (medium effect) and $r = 0.50$ (large effect). The results indicated that there is strong positive relationship between employee engagement and normative commitment which is significant, $r = 0.812$, $p < 0.01$. This indicates that as one variable increases or decreases the other variable also increases or decreases. The two variables employee engagement and normative commitment have an effect that is above the 0.50 set by Cohen (1988) which shows that the relationship has a large effect which is significant.

According to the research findings the levels engagement are at critical lows which implies that the levels of normative commitment are also low since it is a positive correlation. This suggests the lack of employee engagement from the organization of Cottco has impacted on the sense of loyalty and obligation that employees feel towards the organisation. According to Meyer and Allen (1997) employees are obligated to stay because they feel that they owe the organization. However Cottco is doing little to fulfill their part of the bargain within the SET of non- monetary and monetary rewards thereby eroding employee's sense of loyalty and obligation to stay with the organization. Also, with reference to the personal resources and job resources model employees cannot occupy themselves in work roles of an organization that does not appreciate and acknowledge their contributions to the organization. Consequently their sense of loyalty and obligation are diminished. The notion that EE levels and NC levels are low implies that there may be unnoticeable frauds at Cottco which may be high because employees feel that they do not owe the organization. Conversely, the organization owes them because of the repressive environment that is imposed upon them. Employees are not bound by feelings of loyalty or

obligation thus Cottco is most likely to face shortages of a skilled workforce as employees seek alternative employment elsewhere.

5.5 DISCUSSION RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

5.5.1 Engaged employees have high levels of continuance commitment.

The parameters for practical significance between variables are set and described in accordance with the guidelines set by Cohen (1988), who states that a correlation is practically significant if $r = 0.10$ (small effect), $r = 0.30$ (medium effect) and $r = 0.50$ (large effect). The calculation of Pearson product moment correlation indicated that the relationship between employee engagement and continuance commitment is a moderate positive that is significant, $r = 0.399$, $p < 0.03$. This demonstrates that as one variable increases the other variable also increases. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient is above 0.30 set by Cohen (1988) as the medium effect hence the relationship has a moderate significance. The outcomes of the research indicated that the levels of engagement are low. This therefore implies that the levels of continuance commitment are also low given that it is a positive correlation.

According to Allen and Meyer (1993) employees stay with an organization because they are not ready to lose the accumulated side bets (pension packages, pay, seniority and social networks) that they would have acquired. Studies by Hewitt (2013) indicated that pay has become an influential factor in determining engagement. However, because senior management is reluctant to provide substantial compensation packages employees have no feelings to continue their employment with their organization. The pension packages and seniority do not contribute significantly in this study to measure continuance commitment because the majority of employees are contract and non-managerial employees. Their continued existence in the organization is attributed to the lack of alternative employment elsewhere. This implies that Cottco is currently employing individuals that might leave at any time. Thus Cottco may be on the verge of losing its skilled people to competitors.

5.6 DISCUSSION RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR

5.6.1 How does engagement affect affective commitment?

The parameters for practical significance between variables are set and described in accordance with the guidelines set by Cohen (1988), who states that a correlation is practically significant if $r = 0.10$ (small effect), $r = 0.30$ (medium effect) and $r = 0.50$ (large effect). Analysis of employee engagement and affective commitment with Pearson product moment correlation point toward the fact that there is a strong and positive relationship between employee engagement and affective commitment; $r = 0.788$, $p < 0.01$. This suggests that as one variable increases the other variable also increases. The (r) for the two variables is above 0.50 set by Cohen (1988) which implies that the association of the two variables has a large effect.

According to Meyer and Allen (1997) employees with affective commitment stay with the organization because they have become emotionally attached to the organization thus they stay because they want to. Notwithstanding the findings indicate that the low levels of engagement have also impacted on the levels of affective commitment meaning that they are also low. According to Armstrong (2012) one of the basic tenets of EE is employee voice. Employees feel valued when they are able to make contributions to things that are beneficial to the organization. As indicated by the results employees do not have the platform to exercise this right to voice their concern which has contributed to the low levels of engagement. As a result this has affected employee's emotional attachment to the organization because the organizational environment is not packed with the necessary conditions that facilitate employee engagement. Thus the organization is contravening the rules within the SET because the organization expects the employees to give their all in the organization whilst they do not give back. Also the personal resources and job resources have validated the reason why there are low levels of engagement at Cottco.

Employees at Cottco have low levels of AC because the EE levels are low. This implies that Cottco consists of employees that no longer care about the well being of the organization. According to the industrial psychologists in Zimbabwe such employees are aligned skeptics because though they identify with organizational goals they are no longer willing to exert their physical, emotional or cognitive energies on its behalf. This suggests that Cottco will find it very

difficult to achieve organizational success. Discontentions of employees and the lack of determination to produce quality goods may discredit the credibility of the organization which may drive customers away affecting profitability rates.

5.7 DISCUSSION RESEARCH QUESTION FIVE

5.7.1 The effect of engagement on organizational commitment.

The parameters for practical significance between variables are set and described in accordance with the guidelines set by Cohen (1988), who states that a correlation is practically significant if $r = 0.10$ (small effect), $r = 0.30$ (medium effect) and $r = 0.50$ (large effect). The results of the Pearson product moment correlation demonstrated that there is a statistically strong and positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational commitment; $r = 0.799$, $p < 0.01$. This suggests that as one variable increases the other variable also increases. The (r) for the two variables is above 0.50 set by Cohen (1988) which implies that the association of the two variables has a large effect.

The results also indicated that the majority of employees (general workforce) represent the major proportion of low engagement levels while the management that participated in this survey is engaged. This study is comparable to the study by Robinson (2007) which showed that management has higher levels of engagement. Employees have low levels of engagement because there is lack of autonomy, challenge, access to information, reward, recognition and performance appraisal system that is fair, company resources and growth. In view of the fact that there levels of engagement are low and the relationship between employee engagement and organizational commitment is positive, the levels of organizational commitment are also low. The lack of initiative from Cottco to engage its employees has affected their OC levels to such an extent that their intentions of continuing membership with the organization are very low. This implies that Cottco as an organization might be on the verge of demise as employees are no longer attached to the organization.

5.8 CONCLUSION

Employee engagement is without a doubt a key variable in organizational settings. This is so because of its ability to predict organizational commitment that is crucial in determining employee's intention to leave. The course of employee's disgruntlements that led to low levels of engagement were centered around rewards and recognition, relations with peers or supervisors, opportunity for growth or advancement, work life balance, communication, resources and support. The organizational culture of Cottco has highlighted the notion that it does not take the concept of engaging its employees seriously as it ignores issues pertinent for high levels of engagement. However, the results of the study indicate that the levels of engagement are at critical lows and henceforth need to be addressed.

This study sought to identify the impact of employee engagement on organizational commitment with the three components of organizational commitment as a whole. The results indicated that employee engagement can definitely act as a predictor of organizational commitment.

5.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Below is a list of recommendations that the researcher feels the organization should adopt in order to increase engagement levels that can positively impact with organizational commitment.

- The company should remove the systemic barriers which affect the full participation of workers. Factors such as efficient communication, trust, intrinsic and extrinsic incentives should be considered. There is the need for constant sharing and feedback of information between management and employees and that is paramount for the engagement, affective and normative commitment as well as motivation.
- Decentralization - the company should involve employees in the decision making process. This can positively impact on organizational success because the general employees might have new ideas that can bring the direction of the organization in a new way that is beneficial to the organization. According to Armstrong (2012) there is what is called escalation of commitment. This is a tendency by management to hold on to strategies that have worked before. However, due to globalization and competition these strategies need to be reviewed from time to time because previous ideas may no longer be

effective, for example, the Input credit scheme. Thus the researcher feels that the inclusion of employees in the decision making process can give insight to the organization whilst engaging them and allowing their levels of organizational commitment to blossom in the process.

- Utilization of skills - in order to discourage boredom and increase job satisfaction human resources should make sure that employees are working in work stations that make use of the skill, knowledge and ability.
- The company should consider increasing the number of their permanent workers by converting long serving contract workers. It should be noted that workers who have secure tenure deliver better performance and this is critical for the success of the business.
- All the Management and supervisors should build strong relationships with employees, and have a strong team interaction and lead in a “people-centered” way. The ivory tower approach should be avoided so as to create a positive engagement environment.

5.9.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study applied the correlational research design. As highlighted in chapter three the goal of correlational design is to determine whether there is a relationship between two variables. However, it does not explain the reason why such a relationship exists. Thus the researcher recommends that a further study adopting the qualitative research design be used for the same population because it can strengthen the perceptions that the general workforce, HR practitioners and the business field have towards the concept of employee engagement and organizational commitment.

5.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The present chapter evaluated the research findings with specific reference to the research questions. The findings indicated that there are low levels of engagement within the organization of Cottco. The low levels of engagement have also affected employee’s commitment to the organization, thereby validating the claim that employee engagement can act as a predictor of organizational commitment.

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Appendix 1

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

My name is Abigail Mirazi. I am currently doing a Bachelor of Honors Degree in Psychology as Midlands State University. The topic under study is *employee engagement as a predictor of organizational commitment*. I am kindly requesting your support through your participation to this research by responding to this questionnaire. The questionnaire will approximately require ten minutes of your time and will contain thirty six questions which are answered using a scale of 1 to 5. Your participation will be of great help to me towards the completion of my study. Your responses will be dealt with the utmost confidentiality and will **ONLY** be used for the purposes of this study. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Abigail Mirazi

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

What is your grade category (Tick as appropriate): Management
Non-Managerial

Length of Service Below 1 year
1 to 3 yrs
Above 3 years

Employment status Permanent
Contract

Age 21- 30 years
31- 40 years
41- 50 years
51 + years

Gender Female
Male

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please tick under the number that closely matches your opinion

1= Strong disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Please do not write down your name or signature

		1	2	3	4	5
1	I know what is expected of me at work.					
2	I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.					
3	I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.					
4	In the last seven days I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.					
5	My supervisor or someone at work seems to care about me as a person.					
6	There is someone at work who encourages my development.					
7	At work my opinions seem to count.					
8	The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.					
9	My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.					
10	I have a best friend at work.					
11	In the last six months someone at work has talked to me about my progress.					
12	The last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.					

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please tick under the number that closely matches your opinion

1= Strong disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Please do not write down your name or signature

AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT SCALE

		1	2	3	4	5
1	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation.					
2	I enjoy discussing about my organization with people outside it.					
3	I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own.					
4	I think that I could easily become as attached to another organisation as I am to this one.					
5	I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization.					
6	I do not feel emotionally attached to the organization.					
7	This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.					
8	I do not feel a 'strong' sense of belonging to my organisation.					

CONTINUANCE COMMITMENT SCALE

		1	2	3	4	5
1	I am not afraid of what might happen if I lose my job without having another one lined up.					
2	It will be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.					
3	Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my organization now.					
4	It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organization now.					
5	Right now staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.					
6	I feel that I have very few options to consider leaving this organization.					
7	One of the few consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives.					
8	One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice.					

NORMATIVE COMMITMENT SCALE

		1	2	3	4	5
1	I think that people these days move from company to company too often.					
2	I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organisation.					
3	Jumping from organisation to organisation does not seem at all unethical to me.					
4	One of the major reasons I continue to work in this organization is that I believe loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain.					
5	If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere I would not feel it was right to leave my organization.					
6	I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to the organization.					
7	Things were better in the days when people stayed in one organization for most of their careers.					
8	I do not think that to be a 'company man' or 'company woman' is sensible anymore.					

THANK YOU!!!

Appendix 2

DISSERTATION

SUPERVISOR- STUDENT AUDIT SHEET

DATE	ACTIVITY/CHAPTER	SUPERVISOR'S NAME & SIGNATURE	STUDENT'S NAME & SIGNATURE
28/01/14	Chapter one	M. Maseko	A. Mirazi
09/02/14	Corrections chapter one	M.Maseko	A. Mirazi
25/02/14	Chapter two	M. Maseko	A. Mirazi
17/03/14	Corrections chapter two	M. Maseko	A. Mirazi
17/03/14	Chapter three	M. Maseko	A. Mirazi
18/03/14	Corrections chapter three	M. Maseko	A. Mirazi
01/04/14	Corrections reviewed chapter three	M. Maseko	A. Mirazi
20/04/14	Chapter four	M. Maseko	A. Mirazi
29/04/14	Corrections chapter four	M. Maseko	A. Mirazi
25/04/14	Chapter five	M. Maseko	A. Mirazi
29/04/14	Corrections chapter five	M. Maseko	A. Mirazi
30/04/14	First draft	M. Maseko	A. Mirazi
01/02/14	Corrections first draft	M. Maseko	A. Mirazi

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

Appendix 3

Midlands State University



Established 2000

P BAG 9055
GWERU

Telephone: (263) 54 260404 ext 261
Fax: (263) 54 260233/260311

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Date.....

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE WITH DISSERTION INFORMATION
FOR... MIRAZI ABIGAIL SINGATIA
BACHELOR OF PSYCHOLOGY HONOURS DEGREE

This letter serves to introduce to you the above named student who is studying for a Psychology Honours Degree and is in his/her 4th year. All Midlands State University students are required to do research in their 4th year of study. We therefore kindly request your organisation to assist the above-named student with any information that they require to do their dissertation.

Topic: Employee engagement as a predictor of organizational commitment

For more information regarding the above, feel free to contact the Department.

Yours faithfully
F. Ngwenya
F. Ngwenya
Chairperson



Appendix 4



THE COTTON COMPANY OF ZIMBABWE LIMITED

10 April 2014

Midlands State University
P Bag 9055
Gweru

Dear Sir/Madam

Ref: Request for assistance with dissertation information for Miss A Mirazi

This letter serves to confirm and advise that we have given the consent for Abigail S. Mirazi to carry out her study for the given topic; Employee engagement as a predictor of organizational commitment at the Cotton Company of Zimbabwe.

For more information feel free to contact the Human Resources Department (771981-5).

Yours faithfully


T Guta
Human Resources Executive

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