

# The Impact of Employee Engagement on the Performance of an Organisation- A Case Study of Pretoria Portland Cement Zimbabwe Limited (PPC).

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## ABSTRACT

The objective of the paper was to investigate the impact of lack of employee engagement as a major cause for poor performance of the organisation as well as factors that influence employee engagement or disengagement at Pretoria Portland Cement (PPC). This study was geared at assisting PPC management to manage differently for competitive advantage and to lead an engaged workforce that is able to better deal with organisational change and challenges in the future. It also aims to highlight the importance of maintaining a quality work life, by having managers who will nature the employee well-being, which then provides an excellent opportunity for employees' motivation and job satisfaction. The study adopted a mixed methods design where all 75 employees at the Bulawayo factory were given questionnaires and 70 questionnaires were returned leading to 93.3% response rate. The respondents were sampled through purposive sampling as all employees were information rich. The major findings of the study were that fifty-six percent of the respondents were very happy with career opportunities and progression within the company Pretoria Portland Cement (PPC). The reasons that were advanced by the respondents was that PPC is very encouraging to its staff members to study in their area of speciality. Fees is paid for all those who enrol in any university locally and in any SADC university. Total fees and sustenance is paid and study leave is granted. PPC has many ways of rewarding its employees. The employees at every grade are rewarded. There is a staff development programme which allows all employees to polytechnic, university to study several programs which suits them. The employees are allowed to do any of the programmes as long as they assist the organisation to achieve its best. Another system that alleviates plight of the employees which has been adopted by PPC is availing the grocery hamper to all its employees. The study concludes that PPC has an effective reward system which addresses economic and social needs for its workforce. This study recommends that other companies should study and employ the worker engagement model being adopted by PPC which is holistic in nature.

**Keywords:** incentives, employee engagement, effective communication, poor performance.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The study aims to explore how employee engagement affects workplace efficiency. The survival of corporate organisations is dependent on maximizing profits from existing capabilities, while recognizing

and adjusting to the fact that what may work today may not necessarily work in the future. To make or maintain their companies' profitability, leaders of companies must work hard to engage employees. Employees that speak positively about their organizations and those that feel a sense of belonging are also those that remain loyal and will concern themselves with productivity in their roles. It is these types of employees that PPC should strive to have, as they exhibit what is known as engagement characteristics.

Based on employees' experiences, the study seeks to measure their engagement characteristics, establish what prevents them from engaging and determine how engagement influences productivity. Despite the acknowledgement of its importance in business, low levels of employee engagement are reported globally. Various studies like Mishra et.al (2015), Karatepe (2013) and Kang and Sung (2015), show a strong positive correlation of higher levels of employee engagement with stronger business performance or productivity.

Byrne (2014) explained that in practice employee engagement occurs as a state where employees are giving 100% or more to their work. The word engagement has many various explanations. However, the main common explanation is as a verb signifying behaviour and performance, or as a concept for energy, involvement, and efficiency (Byrne, 2014). In the United States (US), only 32% of employees are actively engaged (Mann and Harter, 2016). Mann and Harter (2016) estimate that a 21% increase in organisational profitability could result from improving employee engagement levels in organisations. Global trends in employee engagement reveal that just 24% of employees are reported to be highly engaged and the engagement levels are seen to have retracted in the last year (Adair et al., 2017).

Other researches concerning the topic relates to the barriers that hinder employee engagement. Studies cite the importance of enhancing employee engagement in organisations as an investment that can bring forth good returns. Strategies such as improved leadership, improving work design, improved communication and training are cited amongst the most influential by Anitha (2013) and Jose and Mampilly (2012).

Further enquiry on the topic should be on the training of managers and business leaders on employee engagement as a business tool so they can contribute to the cultivation of a productive work environment and employee well-being. It is also apparent that there is a lack of research in terms of the barriers of engagement and whether strategies, such as effective leadership, "Blue Ocean", and good internal communication, could enhance engagement in organisations. Previous research on the variables has been conducted extensively; however, it has not been effectively examined within the Zimbabwean context. Most of the available literature on the concept is from other African countries, US, Europe and Asia. It is imperative that employee engagement be understood from the Zimbabwean perspective. The unique cultural values and beliefs that Zimbabwe has could pose different findings to what other countries have revealed. Zimbabwean respondents can interpret employee engagement differently. One of the researchers during her attachment at Pretoria Portland Cement (PPC) noticed that managers engaged their employees through Employee Involvement Communication (INVOCOM), Journey Maps and Pulse surveys. All these programs are there to maintain effective communication and improve performance of the organisation.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study sought to respond to the following research questions:-

- What is the relationship between communication and leadership style with employee engagement?
- What factors influence employee engagement or disengagement at PPC?
- What relationship exists between employee engagement, performance and commitment at PPC?

- What interventions are required to improve employee engagement at PPC?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Employee engagement

Mishra et al. (2015) defined employee engagement as “the degree to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of their roles”. Ariani (2013) defined employee engagement, as “the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s preferred self in task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (pological and physical demonstration that the employee understands his/her role in the organization physical, cognitive, emotional) and active, full performances. Employee engagement is psych, and the commitment of stewardship that is manifested in high productivity levels in his/her work.

### Productivity

Ali et al. (2013) defined productivity as “that which people can produce with the least effort”. They went further to say that productivity “is a ratio to measure how well an organization (or individual, industry, country) converts input resources (labour, materials, machines etc.) into goods and services. Atkinson (2013) defined productivity as “an economic output per unit of input as the unit of input can be labour hours (labour productivity) or all production factors including labour, machines and energy (total factor of productivity).” Productivity refers to the employees’ continuous efforts to be able to convert inputs into outputs efficiently and sustainably in pursuit of meeting the organisational goals.

### Employee Engagement: A Global Perspective

On a global scale, the percentage of highly engaged employees is reported to be 13% (Mann and Harter, 2016) and 26% are reported to be “actively disengaged” (Bersin, 2015). Mann and Harter (2016) identified various factors that lead to the stagnant engagement levels in the world. Approaches that would lead to changes in individual performance must be supported by strategic, tactical development and solutions that will yield change to organisational culture (Mann and Harter, 2016). Bersin (2015) has revealed five critical elements that make an organisation irresistible and drive employee engagement on a global scale through creating a new model of employee engagement for winning organisations on a global scale. The significant elements include: making work meaningful; fostering great management; establishing a flexible, humane and an inclusive workplace; creating ample opportunities for growth and establishing vision, purpose and transparency in leadership.

### Employee Engagement Surveys

Kumar and Pansari (2015) conducted a study that developed a comprehensive scorecard to measure employee engagement in organisations. The study categorised companies along a continuum of being “disengaged” to “highly engaged. The results of their study indicated that an organization’s overall employee engagement level is directly influenced by the components of employee engagement (employee satisfaction, commitment, loyalty and performance) and therefore the need to integrate these components. On investigating the benefits of employee engagement and working on strategies to improve employee engagement, the findings revealed that companies with higher levels of employee engagement showed higher levels of profits derived from productivity.

Berdarkar and Pandita (2014) shed light on key drivers of employee engagement by analysing specifically three drivers namely, communication, work life balance and leadership. On analysing how these drivers

impact the level of employee performance and wellbeing at workplace of the employees, the concluded that employees are a key asset to any organisation and if they are not given the right space and time to make a perfect blend of work and fun at workplace, then the sense of dis-engagement sets in. Organisation and employees are both dependent on each other to fulfil their goals and objectives therefore, employee engagement should not be a one-time exercise but it should be integrated in the organisational culture. The study goes further to mention that employee engagement should be a continuous process of learning, improvement and action. Thus, organizations today should actively look forward to fulfilling employee`s expectations and thus, create an impact on the performance of employees, which directly affects the organization`s performance.

Karatepe (2013) suggested that work engagement acts as a full mediator of the effects of high-performance work practices (HPWPs) on job performance and extra-role customer service. According to Kumar and Pansari (2015) employee performance is viewed as an aspect of employee engagement whereby low employee morale and low productivity impact the company`s bottom line negatively. Therefore, it is concluded that by keeping employees engaged, there can be a major positive impact on organisations.

Wellins et al. (2017) quoting the work of Kumar and Pansari (2015) opined that organisations should pay more attention on employee engagement since it is said to be a source of competitive advantage. Competitive advantage can also be understood as a measure of organizational productivity. The scholars went on to say that employees who scored high on engagement are more satisfied in their jobs, are not thinking of leaving their organizations and can achieve their performance goals.

Kaliannan and Adjovu (2014) explored the impact of effective employee engagement on organisational success and argued that the concept of organisational success is not infused in tangible results but rather in the organisation`s employees. They noted that executives are obsessed with focusing on brand equity, market share and increasing profitability, yet all these attributes of business success would not be possible without employees. The study describes the role of employee engagement in the success of the organisation as that of a catalyst, whereby employees serve as the drivers behind the steering wheel of their organisations` productivity.

### **Drivers of Employee Engagement**

According to Anyadike (2013) public organisations should embrace human resource planning if employee productivity must be ensured. Human resources planning in public organisations must be matched with the organisations` strategic planning to enable for enhanced employee productivity. Public organisations should learn to embrace human resources outsourcing as a trend in human resource management as it is believed to ensure productivity in the organisations. Organisational policies should be responsive so that they appear considerate to employees` well-being. The following were identified as key drivers of employee engagement:- commitment to employee well-being, communication (two-way), leadership style by immediate management, involvement in decision making, training and development, performance and appraisal, pay and benefits and general work environment. The drivers of employee engagement are detailed below:-

#### **Commitment to employee well being**

Gandy et al. (2014) compared employee overall well-being to chronic disease status, which has a long-established relationship to productivity, as relative contributors to on-the-job productivity. The study used 2629 participants who were employees with diabetes or without any chronic conditions. The results revealed that well-being was the most significant predictor of productivity cross-sectional in a model that included disease status and demographic characteristics. Longitudinally, changes in well-being contributed to changes in productivity beyond what could be explained by the presence of chronic disease or other fixed

characteristics.

### **Communication (two-way)**

A number of researchers have identified different drivers in their studies. Leadership, communication and a work-life balance were observed by Bedarkar and Pandita (2014) as drivers of employee engagement. Under a similar notion Soni (2013) deduced that a culture of respect, constant feedback both from manager to employee and vice versa, counselling and mentoring, as key drivers of employee engagement. Dulagil (2012) states that if there were to be any level of engagement, there needs to be clear communication of the core values and beliefs of the employees. He adds that the transparency about the goals and objectives of the organisation should be evident. Supervisors and managers should demonstrate care about the health and well-being of the employees. There should also be a person-job fit alignment so that people are placed in their areas of capabilities. Managers should trust their employees and create opportunities for growth so that they remain engaged and productive.

Farouk (2014) explored the attitude of employees on productivity. The study included communication as a driver of employee engagement in organisations. The study refers to the assumption made by scholars, that if employees were included in the decision-making process of matters concerning their work and more so if they are given the opportunity to make decisions themselves, there would be positive benefits for both the employee and the organization. If organisations could endeavour to improve the process of informing, employees about issues and changes in relation to their work environment, employees would be more likely to be initiative and suggest improvements, which in turn increase the productivity of their work.

### **Leadership style by immediate management**

Karaa et al. (2013) conducted a study to test the notion that transformational leadership style is more effective than transactional leadership style by fostering employee well-being enhancing quality of work life and life satisfaction as well as increasing organisational commitment and decreasing employee burnout. The study used 443 participants from Turkish 5-star hotels. The findings support the positive effect of transformational leadership in the hospitality industry, which implies that hospitality managers should be trained to use a transformational leadership style to enhance employee well-being, a significant predictor of productivity. Theory shows that exercising authentic and supportive leadership improves employee engagement.

### **Involvement in decision making**

Ariani (2013) examined the relationship between employee engagement, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. A significant positive relationship between employee engagement and OCB was revealed by the study. It further explains OCB as the occurrence of behaviours that result in efficient and effective functioning of the organization that is increased by the engaged employees. These behaviours are identified as; high energy demonstrated by employees, the eagerness to meet goals. Strategies to increase OCB suggested in the study as having maintained the social systems that support the performance of the organisation, like involving employees in decision-making. These were identified by Ladley et al. (2015) as creating more group interactions and by Sharath (2014) as cultivating and promoting a workplace where there is more;

- Altruism, where individuals are willing to assist one another in their work;
- Courtesy, such that colleagues are able to inform each other about issues that may increase or reduce their workload like being absent from work;

- Sportsmanship where employees are encouraged to have tenacity, accountability and not exhibit negative behaviour when things do not go as planned.

### **Training and development**

A study by Anitha (2014) identified the key determinants of employee engagement and how they relate in terms of predictability of productivity. In this causal study, 700 questionnaires were administered upon which 383 were valid responses. The study found that the identified factors such as leadership, compensation, training and development and workplace well-being as predictors of employee engagement. Training and development was identified to be the most important determinant of engagement levels of employees. It can thus be said that these factors determine the extent to which employees are engaged at work.

A study conducted by Bal et al. (2013) looked at the developmental and accommodative HRM as enhancers of employee engagement and commitment. Some researchers argue that this type of HRM as one that enhances employee outcomes rather than HRM that is equipped to adjust with organisational decline. Developmental HRM refers to training, job enrichment and is known to aim at increasing the ability to perform better at one's job, thereby contributing to productivity. As found by Jose and Mampilly (2012) it is expected that when a company develops its employees, they will reciprocate by working hard to support the organisational effectiveness. The provision of training improves service accuracy and is equivalent to rewarding people.

### **Performance and appraisal**

The importance of enhancing employee engagement in the organisation is shown by Jose and Mampilly (2012) in an article which was based on satisfaction with HR practices and employee engagement. The study reveals that if an organization engages in performance management and appraisal, they will in turn feel obligated and thus be motivated to do their best to support the organisation's goals. The study also implies that employees are not fully utilized and increasing their engagement levels would tap into their maximum potential, which could elicit good returns for the company.

### **Pay and benefits**

Yamoah (2013) examined the relationship between compensation and productivity using a case study approach. The study used 60 respondents from the banking industry in Ghana. The results indicated a significant relationship between compensation and productivity. In support of that finding, Chung, et al. (2013) wrote a report that sheds insights on how different elements of the compensation plan enhance productivity. The report provides evidence that bonuses enhance productivity across all segments. Over-achievement commissions help sustain the high productivity of the best performers even after attaining quotas. Quarterly bonuses help improve performance of the weak performers by serving as pacers to keep the sales force on track to achieve their annual sales quotas. Remuneration can be made attractive to employees by introducing incentives, bonuses or holiday vouchers to acknowledge good performance.

### **General work environment**

Appiahene et al. (2014) conducted a study to investigate Information Communication Technology (ICT) usage as predictor of teachers' productivity in Schools/Institutions. The study used 650 participants who were teachers from both public and private schools in Kumasi Metropolis of Ghana. The findings of this study revealed that schools in Kumasi Metropolis are currently making headways towards participating in the global acceptance and use of ICT. The teaching profession in Ghana is a challenging one and quick

access to and retrieval of appropriate teaching methods and notes by teachers, lectures, researchers etc. in the emerging digital era requires effective implementation and use of ICT in Schools.

### **Employee Engagement and Organizational Productivity**

Anita (2014) examined the impact of employee engagement on employee performance and results revealed that employee engagement had significant impact on employee performance, which is a significant predictor of productivity. Employee engagement is related to customer loyalty/engagement, profitability, productivity, turnover, safety incidents, shrinkage, absenteeism, patient safety incidents and quality (defects). The scholar highlights the fact that human related issues were previously neglected by organisations whereas it has become known that employee satisfaction yields higher profitability. It is concluded that lack of knowledge and ability by managers to consider people engagement as key drivers of organisational productivity is a challenge that further research must still address. In agreement with previous studies, it is also stated that employees with higher engagement levels tend to reduce staff turnover and absenteeism, factors that prove employee engagement is attached to organisational performance.

According to Farouk (2014) it has been shown that employee engagement does impact organizational productivity. Regarding previous studies that have been conducted, the study proposed that if an organisation has employees whose engagement levels are above average, it is almost twice as likely to be successful. Research introduces a motivational factor into the engagement concept in that it explains that what makes engaged employees to be more productive is the fact that they are more motivated than the disengaged one. The inverse relationship is also shown where low levels of employee engagement are detrimental to performance. This research also confirms that the engaged employees exercise an element of care in what they do and their efforts in contributing to the success of the organisation and therefore will have a greater sense of ownership and accountability. In so doing, they become less absent from work and more willing to take on more responsibility and have initiative as well. This confirms the theory that engaged employees are more committed and loyal to their organisation and are not inclined to leave their organizations feel a sense of belonging (Farouk 2014).

### **Barriers to Employee Engagement and Job Commitment**

All research refers to the absence of the determinants of employee engagement as a hindrance to engagement, or largely as factors that result in poor engagement levels in the organisation. Generally, studies indicated poor communication, a hostile work environment and poor leadership as major barriers to employee engagement. The absence of these factors was reported as major barriers because of the significant role they play in building a culture of transparency and trust between management and employees. Some studies pointed out the importance of organisations showing congruence between employees and their jobs. Several studies revealed that if an employee is not aligned to his job, will experience stress, burnout and dissatisfaction, and will find it difficult to engage and connect to his work. Studies also emphasised the absence of employee well-being as detrimental to employee engagement. It has been empirically shown that when employees feel that they are not cared for and are not given autonomy to re- design their jobs, they lose interest and enthusiasm in their jobs (Kazimoto, 2016).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Self Determination Theory (SDT) was used to study human motivation, personality and best functioning. Literature shows that the quality of motivation is what matters in predicting successful outcomes more than the amount of motivation. As described by Cherry (2016), SDT is centred on three psychological needs and is driven by intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. For people to engage, they need to feel competent, connected and autonomous. As applied to the study, if people experience positive meaning in their work, they become motivated to perform better because they experience a psychological sense of

connectedness, competency and autonomy. People want more than just a salary, and are looking for a sense of belonging in their organisations and when they feel this, they become more engaged and motivated. According to Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2014), during the process of engagement the employee becomes self-motivated and is driven and energised to perform and thus increasing productivity. Employee engagement represents a motivational assemble and a forecaster of organizational outcomes.

Theories such as Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) have been advanced to explain employee engagement and organisational performance. In this study, SDT provides a framework to study employee engagement at PPC. The SDT claims that people are often motivated by external factors such as reward system, grades, evaluations or the opinions others have of them. It further explains that there is an interchange between these extrinsic forces with the intrinsic motives and individual needs.

The formal SDT has six mini-theories, which are summarized below:

### **Cognitive Evaluation Theory**

Cognitive Evaluation Theory discern between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The theory assumes that the different types of motivation activate different reactions towards work. For example, intrinsically motivated employees will be more absorbed, interested and creative in their jobs, as opposed to extrinsically motivated ones who will be working with the objective of receiving tangible rewards (Bhuvanaiah and Raya, 2014).

### **Organismic Integration Theory (OIT)**

The Organismic Integration Theory assumes that extrinsically motivated behaviour is regulated in different ways and proposes that when an employee can relate and feels competent in their job, they will internalize their job activities (Bhuvanaiah and Raya, 2014).

### **Causality Orientation Theory**

Causality Orientation Theory assumes that the way people acquaint themselves to their surroundings influence how they will be motivated to perform. This theory proposes three types of orientations, which are:- autonomous orientations which are a result of an employee being satisfied with their basic needs; strong controlled orientation, which are a result of the level at which the employee is competent and can relate to their work and Impersonal orientations, resulting from an employee's inability to meet all three of these needs ( Bhuvanaiah and Raya 2014).

### **Basic Psychological Needs Theory**

The Basic Psychological Needs Theory assumes that human beings have three basic psychological needs: a need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Deci and Ryan (2014) have shown that need satisfaction is necessary for people's healthy development, engagement, motivation, and well-being. The three basic psychological needs are present and need to be satisfied at all levels of human functioning at the specific-task level (a given job task), at the domain level (work or family), and at the global level (personality) (Deci and Ryan, 2014).

### **Goal Contents Theory**

According to SDT, people will be driven by goals, and some of these goals that individuals pursue are more likely to promote wellbeing than other goals (Kasser and Ryan, 1996).In particular, some goals, such as those that relate to community support, personal growth, and the formation of close relationships are called intrinsic (Kasser and Ryan, 1996). These goals foster autonomy, competence, and relatedness.



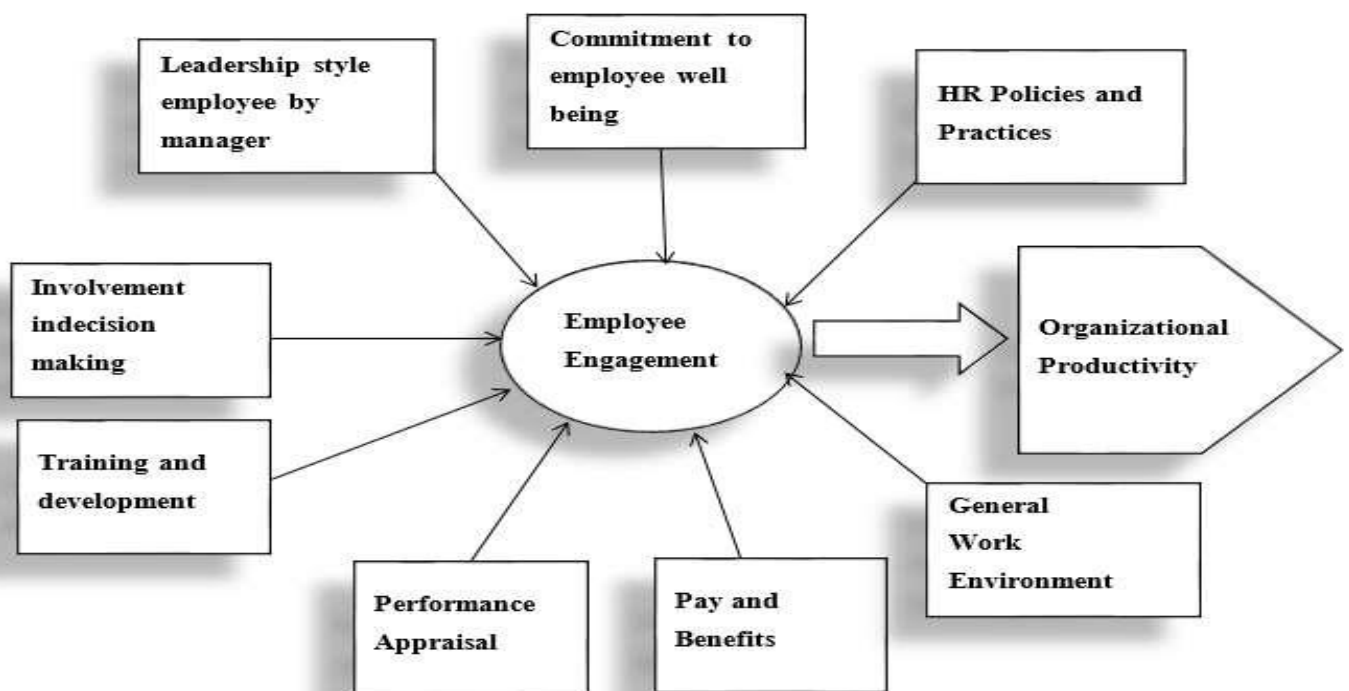
Consequently, these goals which seem enjoyable, challenging, fulfilling, and important are called intrinsic motivation (Kasser and Ryan, 1996). These motivations then enhance persistence and improve human wellbeing.

### Relationships Motivation Theory

People want to feel connected and meaningfully related to others (Deci and Ryan, 2014). According to SDT, there is a fundamental psychological need for a human being to experience relatedness. People find relatedness to be inherently satisfying and thus essential to human wellness because they require it to be vital and to thrive (Deci and Ryan, 2014). Meyer and Gagne (2008) used the SDT theory in their study on employee engagement and identified psychological needs for job competency, autonomy and relatedness as underlying factors for employee engagement. Meyer and Gagne (2008) believe that a theory that can be used to guide research and practice on employee engagement is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). In their article, they look at employee engagement from a SDT perspective and identify the underlying mechanisms as being the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs for job competency, autonomy and relatedness. Their study further proposes that there is enough evidence to support that a lack of satisfaction leads to poorer performance and reduces psychological well-being. The outcomes of their research reveal a strong relationship between a good psychological well-being of employees and employee engagement.

### Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1 Impact of employee engagement on productivity model



Source: Researchers’ Creation

Employee engagement is the independent variable and productivity is considered as the dependent variable.

The empirical research findings show that dimensions of HR policies and practices, commitment to employee well-being, communication, leadership, involvement in decision making, training and development, performance appraisal, pay and benefits and general work environment have a positive effect

on organizational productivity. Moreover, good internal communication with leadership style correlated with employee positive attitude and commitment to the organization.

A study by Anitha (2014) also found that the variables that had an impact on employee engagement were working environment, leadership, employee development, and team and co-worker relationship. Employee engagement had a significant impact on employee performance. A great focus and effort is required particularly on the factors such as workplace well-being and HR policies as they showed a significantly higher impact on employee engagement and hence employee performance (Anitha, 2014).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The authors have chosen the abductive approach for this study as it was assumed that it will allow for objectivity, predictability and will enable the findings to be generalized back to PPC population. This ensured that effective recommendations were made to the company management. The mixed methods approach (that is qualitative and quantitative research) was used to gather information from middle management, senior management and the general staff members at PPC.

The sample size is a very significant characteristic of any research. The sample consisted of Bulawayo Factory employees. The ages of the participants ranged between 21 years to 60 years with varying service lengths. Researchers chose to use a census of the whole population of employees at the Bulawayo factory since all the respondents were information rich. Some employees failed to return the questionnaire and the sample size became 70.

In the study the researchers used questionnaires and semi structured interviews to collect data from the PPC population. The study responded to the following key research questions:-

- What is the relationship between communication and leadership style with employee engagement?
- What factors influence employee engagement or disengagement at PPC?
- What relationship exists between employee engagement, performance and commitment at PPC?
- What interventions are required to improve employee engagement at PPC?

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The qualitative analysis of data was gathered from interviews whereas the quantitative part was from questionnaires from all the staff members at PPC. The data collected using a questionnaire were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS while that collected through interviews was analysed through content analysis.

### **What is the Relationship between Communication and Leadership Style with employee engagement?**

#### **Communication and new developments within the company**

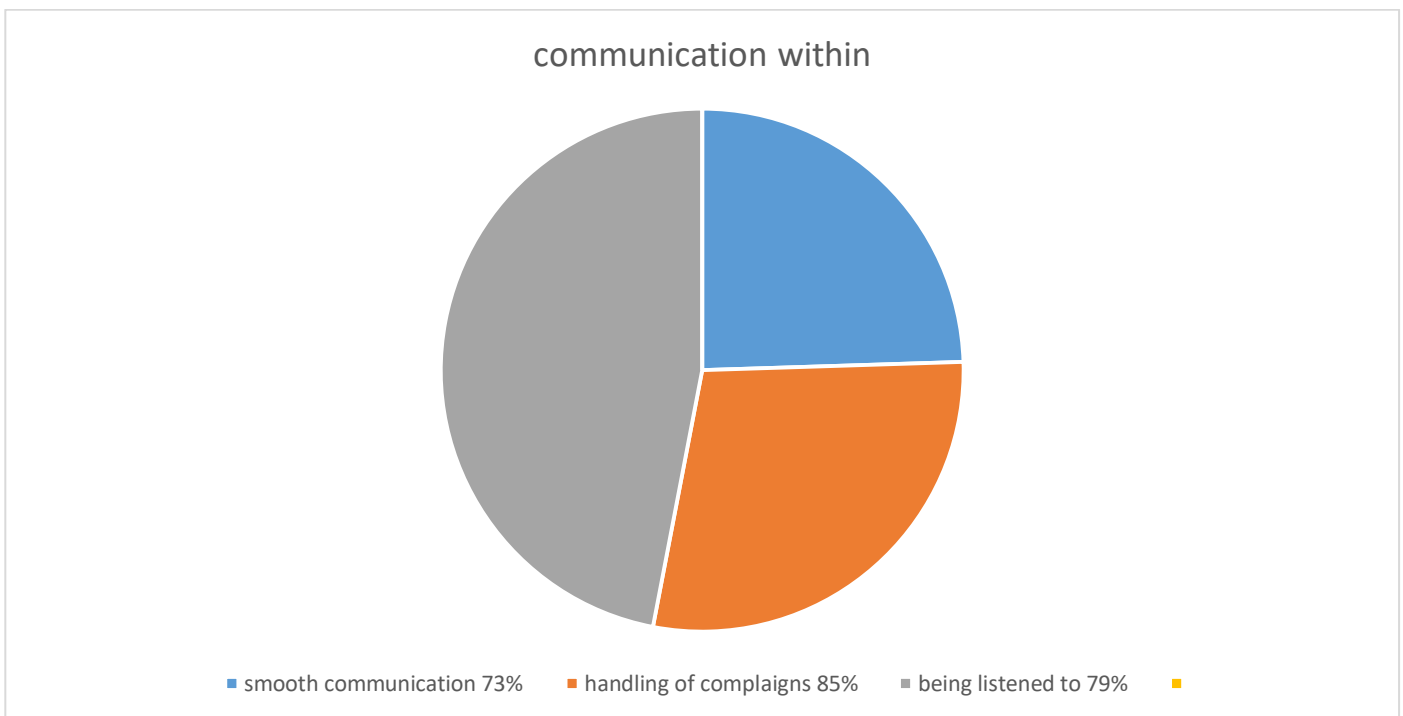
Mixed responses were obtained concerning the relationship between communication and leadership. Sixty-one percent were of the very strong view that the communication systems are very inclusive and workers are allowed to communicate vertically, diagonally, horizontally and timely. Only ten percent said that there is need to revisit the communication systems in the organisation. They said that those who are in the lower levels feel alienated as a result of fear and low self-esteem.



Source: Survey data 2024

### The flow of information between employees and managers

Seventy-three percent of the respondents totally agreed information freely flows between all employees and managers. This according to the respondents facilitates smooth communications between management and all the workers and everyone is kept abreast with developments within the organisation. There cannot be progress where there is no coordination.



Source: Survey data 2024

Everyone is listened too in the organisation. Furthermore, there is a proper grievance handling mechanism. This was said by 85% of the respondents. All complaints were dealt with expeditiously. This is done to ensure that production and engineering work is not disturbed. There is a very high level of professionalism. The workers feel valued when communicated too frequently. More so, when their contributions are taken on board when decisions are made.

### **Company managers clearly communicate the strategic objectives of the firm**

Sixty-three percent of the respondents were of the strong view that company managers effectively and clearly communicated strategic objectives of the company as well as sharing vision of the company. Each category of workers is seriously considered and their views are seriously taken on board in decision making. Respondents were of the strong views that because the company takes serious interests in their worthiness, thus they view inclusiveness as acceptance by the company management. This gives these professionals more opportunity to scale high in the ladder of production.

There is briefing daily before each shift starts work so that every member is abreast of trends and developments (INVOCOM). That way, the employees are well kept informed. Employees are engaged on a daily basis since they are given a chance to identify problems from the previous day and come up with solutions to avoid similar problems.

### **What factors influence employee engagement or disengagement at PPC?**

The majority (96%) indicated that the most important factor influencing their engagement at PPC was their commitment towards serving the organisation. An overwhelming majority (88%) also indicated that they were very engaged in their work, although only 68% of them indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs. A further 73% indicated that they would speak very highly of their organisation demonstrating a sense of pride. Not too many respondents indicated that they were engaged in other aspects of the organisation apart from their jobs, with only 58% indicating that they spoke and participated in other organisational aspects. Participants seemed much divided on the level of stress that they experienced with their jobs. There were almost an equal number of participants who agreed overall (38%) and who disagreed overall (37%). The remaining 25% opted to remain neutral or were undecided on whether the jobs were a source of stress to them or not. Deducing from these responses, it is concluded that; employee commitment, job satisfaction, a sense of pride, are factors that strongly influence employee engagement at PPC. It can also be said that some degree of employee engagement exists. Equally so, it can be concluded that job stress has an influence on the level of disengagement in the company.

### **What Relationship exists between employee engagement, performance and commitment at PPC?**

#### **Good performance is well rewarded by the company**

PPC has many ways of rewarding all its employees at every grade. There is a staff development programme which allows all employees to colleges, university to study several programmes which suits them. The employees are allowed to do any of the programmes as long as they assist the organisation to achieve its best. Secondly, there is better salary scale for all the grades which is commensurate with experience, training and education. According to 85% of the respondents, they strongly maintained that all professionals are rewarded handsomely.

There is a well-resourced school that covers Early Child Development (ECD) and then grades one to seven. The school has all the teaching and learning materials for the teachers and learners respectively. The classrooms are well furnished and so are teachers' houses. There is also a library that has lots of reading

materials. Parents do not have to worry about doing school run and paying for expensive textbooks at libraries.

Accommodation allowance is provided to those who do not reside in company accommodation. The company provides decent accommodation to its workforce as well as meaningful transport systems to and from town to PPC Centre.

In addition, there is an educational allowance to those who have school going children. There is a set scale of fees paying. A particular benchmark is available which is used as a standard. Educational allowance is only enjoyed by those who have school and university going children. If one does not have children, it is not the fault of the organisation.

Another system that alleviates the plight of employees which has been adopted by PPC is availing the grocery pack to all its employees. The grocery pack includes 10 kilograms of rice, 10kilograms of flour, 10kilograms of sugar, 10 litres of cooking oil, 30 kilograms of mealie meal, 10 kilograms of washing powder, 2 cases of peanut butter and jam and other small items. This has been assisting employees very much.

There is also a well-equipped clinic manned by fully trained nurses and all medical needs of PPC staff are met at the clinic. This clinic serves all the workforce of PPC and their families. It has all the medicines as compared to Bulawayo City Council Clinics.

The above mentioned facilities and schemes are a result of previous engagement surveys. This shows that PPC managers do not only listen to employee wishes but also act upon their requests.

### **What Interventions are required to improve employee engagement at PPC?**

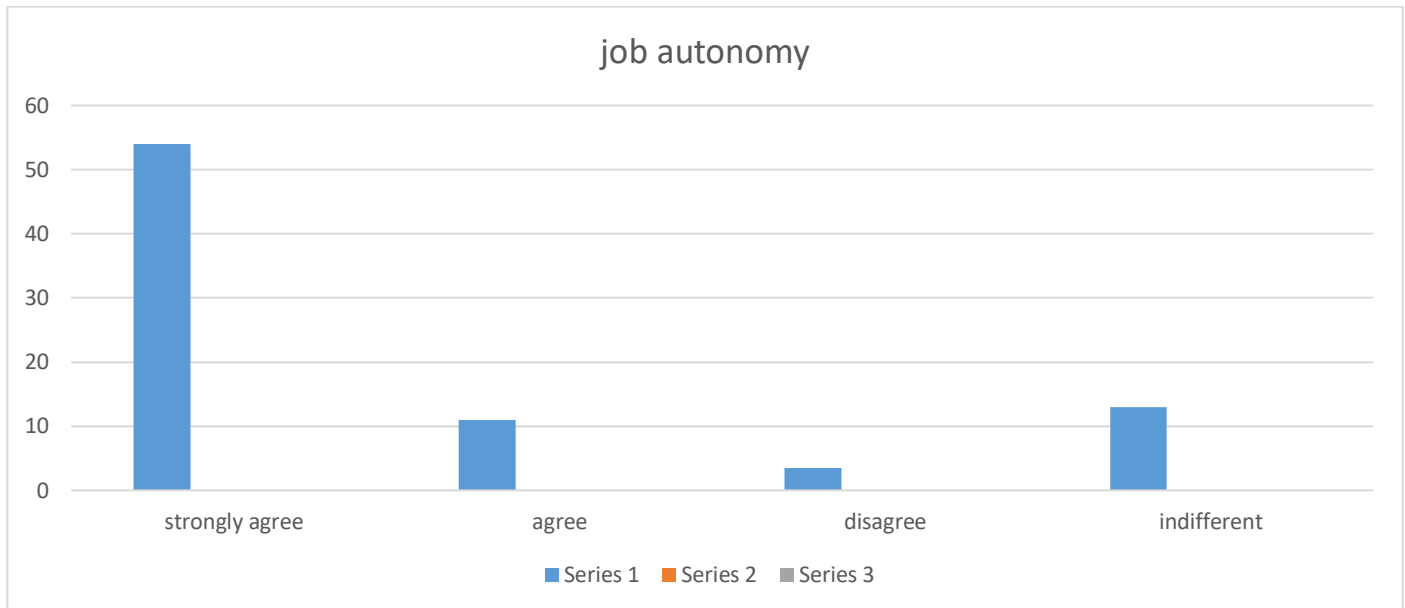
To answer this objective, participants were asked to comment in writing on what changes they would like to see happening at PPC, which would make them happy at work. They were also asked questions geared towards uncovering what would motivate them to work harder and in relation to leadership treatment. In terms of interventions that PPC could implement to enhance employee engagement, most respondents mentioned good compensation packages, adequate resources, additional training and development, fair and equal treatment and involvement in policy changes and decision-making. This demonstrates the extent to which employees are not happy with the way these factors are currently, at PPC.

### **The degree of autonomy to perform jobs**

Fifty- four percent of the respondents strongly agreed that there is so much autonomy. There is so much specialisation among the staff members such that they are given room to be autonomous. The company believes in its workers and their level of training and expertise and as a result, professionals are not supervised like students on internship. Professionals are given leeway to do their work so that they are not constrained by too much monitoring and supervision. This has brought about initiative on the part of engineers and those on production side.

A small percentage of respondents that is approximately 13% were totally indifferent and when asked to explain their position, they were of the view that people need strong supervision constantly. Otherwise mistakes will be made that affect production.

The researchers asked the category of respondents why there is an increase in production when there is minimum supervision among the production department. These respondents were unable to give meaningful explanations.



Source: Survey data 2024

### Satisfaction with career opportunities for advancement

Fifty- six percent of the respondents were very happy with career opportunities and progression within the company PPC. The reason that was advanced by the respondents was that PPC is very encouraging to its staff members to study in their area of speciality. Fees is paid to all those who enrol in any university locally and in any SADC university. Total fees and sustenance is paid and study leave is granted.

So far mostly those who have been going for studies include those in production, engineering, and management and this level of education has tremendously improved performance. A smaller percentage of twelve percent somewhat agrees with the above sentiments. When asked to explain their somehow weak responses, they said they did not have qualifications so they do not qualify for staff development. Questioned whether they had Ordinary level or Advanced Level or diplomas, their response was negative.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Reflecting from the analysis, findings derived and conclusions drawn the following key issues are recommended:-

1. PPC should continue with its current strategy of training and development of employees since it is key to enhanced production and efficiency in the organisation. However, staff training and development should cater for those without qualifications as well so that they grow professionally. For example, those without Ordinary level examination certificates could attend evening classes and advance themselves.
2. Laissez-faire leadership at PPC especially for engineers, production managers and other managers may lead to mistakes which can affect production negatively, so there is need to improve supervision and monitoring at these levels.
3. Channels of communication at PPC should be open within the organisation to enable departments to effectively and efficiently communicate as long as all is in line with achieving the goals and objectives of the organisation. There is need to revisit the Communication system in the organisation to avoid a situation whereby lower level employees feel alienated and left out.
4. PPC should practice fair, equal treatment and employee involvement in policy changes and decision

making.

5. The company should widen its engagement levels to cover all aspects of the organisation not to be biased towards specific jobs and their improvement. For example, provide fair compensation, adequate resources as well as additional training and development just to mention a few.
6. It is recommended that policy makers should adopt the positive policies of retaining experienced professionals such as engineers, production managements and human resource specialists as is the case with PPC. Key to this retention according to PPC strategic document is payment of meaningful salaries, non-monitory incentives, educational allowances for staff children, staff development for staff who are sent for staff development by the company, housing facilities.
7. For other institutions be they private or public, they must seriously engage their employees on a number of issues that include salary, staff training and development, medical aid schemes, pension schemes etc. PPC management must not be hostile to employees who demand better treatment at work. There is need for the organisation to recognise those who achieve educationally and professionally so that they are given what is due to them in terms of salaries. In this way, the employees will notice they are an asset and the organisation regards them that way.
8. PPC should come up with ways of dealing with job related stress. The employees affected by job stress should be provided with the necessary help from trained health professionals.

## CONCLUSION

Productivity is the goal for any company's competitive advantage. This study sought to investigate the impact of employee engagement on the performance of an organisation: a case study of Pretoria Portland Cement (PPC) Zimbabwe Limited. Data was collected through questionnaires' and interviews. Some key conclusions were reached relating to the findings of the study. Employee engagement was found to have an influence on productivity at PPC, which is why managers should consider the strategies of monitoring and enhancing employee engagement, through conducting employee engagement surveys and feedback sessions, to motivate employees. PPC should continue with its current strategy of training and development of employees as it enhances production and efficiency in the organisation. Channels of communication at PPC should be open within the organisation to enable departments to effectively and efficiently communicate as long as all is in line with achieving the goals and objectives of the organisation. Communication is at the heart of success of PPC.

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