

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP:

HOW CAN MANAGERS INCREASE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

A Dissertation presented to the Department of Business and Media
Selinus University of Sciences and Literature

In fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By
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DECLARATION

I do hereby attest that I am the sole author of this project/thesis and that its contents are only the result of the readings and research I have done.

The contents in the dissertation are the results of the research that I have done on the topic and my personal experience. The research submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Selinus University is my original work. The material, articles and data referred to in the dissertation have been cited in the thesis.

Signature:

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, Jonas K. Randolph (of blessed memory) and Sophia Inez Grace Randolph (nee Lusztig) who believed in me and who have supported me throughout my life especially in whatever I have strived to do academically.

It is also dedicated to my daughter and son who bring joy and meaning to my life every day and give me purpose in all that I do. I hope this will inspire them to work very hard and go beyond their limits in order to achieve their goals.

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ABSTRACT

The 21st century, mainly characterised by a rapid adoption of new technologies, and fuelled by a knowledge economy and large-scale migration, has brought about many changes. The most significant of these are climate change, and the rise of artificial intelligence. Changes in the workplace caused by digitalisation and globalisation have also influenced the nature of employer-employee dynamics, also known as the manager-employee dyad. In addition to these changes is the pandemic caused by COVID-19. The repercussions of this were felt in all aspects of life, including the workplace. Managers who already had to deal with problems, such as communication between teams, and tracking team productivity, now had to reflect seriously on the wellbeing of their employees, on employee engagement and on an uncertain future.

Even though numerous books and essays have been published about the challenges that managers are facing in this century, there is still a need for more research to be done about what managers can do to improve employee engagement. This issue, especially post-COVID, has become urgent; it needs to be addressed in order to improve the effectiveness of communication in the workplace. The focus of my research questions was to find out if emotional intelligence (EI) is one of the key factors leaders can use to foster better relations between team members; and if so, how EI can be used to increase employee engagement.

To answer these research questions, I adopted an empirical and iterative approach, and my analyses were based on a survey in which a questionnaire was sent to 25 managers. The preparation phase involved a literature review; a study of the solutions and reflections raised by previous research on the subject was conducted to complete and narrow down the direction I took for the following steps of my thesis. I did not observe multiple teams; this was in order to allow more depth of understanding regarding the group on which I focused.

Competency, communication, and consistency are needed in a managerial role; however, managers must be self-aware, and communicate better with their employees, in order to stay connected to them. In short, managers must create a relationship-management environment in which employees can thrive.

The findings of my thesis indicate the need for more research work to be done on EI and employee engagement. To be an executive leader demands a behavioural change towards being more proactive and methodical. The positive mindset of managers should also reflect in their attitudes, which will, in turn, impact their respective teams, thus creating a thriving environment for employee engagement.

CHAPTER ONE (INTRODUCTION)

1.1 BACKGROUND

Executive leaders are at the forefront of their organisations. According to Drucker (2004), effective executive leaders were all found to follow the same eight practices.

- They asked ‘What needs to be done?’
- They asked ‘What is right for the enterprise?’
- They developed action plans.
- They took responsibility for decisions.
- They took responsibility for communicating.
- They were focused on opportunities rather than problems.
- They ran productive meetings.
- They thought and said ‘we’ rather than ‘I’.

According to Indeed (2021), asking about leadership skills in an interview is ‘the most accurate evaluation of a candidate’s ability to succeed in a role’.

Figure 1, also from Indeed (2021), shows common leadership styles. Needless to say, a blend of all the styles of leadership – depending on the context and the task at hand – would produce better results.



Figure 1 - Common Leadership Styles

According to Gallup (2021), only 20% of employees are engaged in the workplace. Managers can use different methods to increase employee engagement, for example by putting in place efficient practices. They can also improve communication, provide feedback, give recognition, encourage interaction, focus on employee wellbeing, and emphasise employee culture.

There are many advantages of employee engagement. Engaged employees love their work, trust their employers, and dedicate time and effort, passionately, to the growth of the business. They feel a great sense of attachment towards their organisation, and feel

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committed to their work. This emotional attachment and commitment to the organisation are revealed in their performance and their higher rate of productivity. Organisations with highly engaged employees are found to experience 26% more productivity, greater levels of attracting top performers, lower rates of turnover, and higher returns to shareholders (Irvine, 2009). In 2006, Gallup conducted a survey, finding that disengaged employees cost US businesses about \$328 billion yearly, owing to their decreased levels of productivity and performance. Disengaged employees, because they are not performing to their full potential, do not provide the desired returns on the investments made in them. On the other hand, the Gallup study found that engaged employees, because of a higher level of emotional attachment to the organisation, contribute to innovations and the growth of the company (Jauhari, Sehgal and Sehgal, 2013). They are not only more stable, productive, and profitable for the organisation; they also tend to stick to the organisation for a longer period of time.

For the purposes of the current research, I will not discuss the specific characteristics of the different leadership styles in detail; rather, I will demonstrate the need for the leaders in each group to use EI as an indispensable soft skill, to enhance the quality of the relationships between teams, thus increasing employee engagement. I will do this by: defining what is meant by employee engagement and disengagement; discussing some of the different ways in which employee engagement can be increased; explaining what EI means; and demonstrating how EI can be used to improve communication between managers and their subordinates, thereby increasing employee engagement.

The current study is also geared toward raising awareness about the need for further research into the use of EI as a tool for managers, to help them better face the challenges in the workplace in these uncertain times.

1.2 RATIONALE

Drucker (2011) stated that management is in charge of and responsible for what happens to a business or an organisation, be those events internal or external. According to Drucker, an organisation's strategies ought to be built on knowledge from older workers who contribute their expertise by working part-time, focusing on customers' disposable income, redefining performance and long-term shareholder interests, competing globally, and making decisions based on global economic competitiveness, and not local or political considerations. Similarly, Managementcentre.co.uk (2022) mentioned successful leadership being effective in three ways – leading self, leading others, and leading the organisation.

Successful leaders know that they are not perfect. They are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and strive for continuous improvement. A Chief Executive who does not acknowledge their own flaws or blind spots, who tries to do everything by themselves, will not learn from their mistakes; and, being unable to delegate, will be easily overwhelmed. Being self-aware as a leader helps in overcoming one's weaknesses, either through personal development and learning new skills, or by empowering others and using their skills. Motivation is equally important here. Having goals to work towards, and setting high standards, means acknowledging that there will be obstacles along the way. As a leader, this means constantly challenging oneself, finding ways around the challenges, and remaining resilient. Self-regulation is needed to manage emotions as a leader. Having the ability to keep calm, deal well with pressure, and stay optimistic, is vital. Mastering leadership of self requires admitting one's imperfections and striving for improvement. Companies look for employees that have different abilities. These abilities include technical ability, cognitive abilities, and EI. EI is the most vital skill that organisations look for.

Leaders know that they cannot work alone; they need others to work with them. Being personally motivated is not enough – leaders need to unlock the potential of others. This means understanding what matters to people, what their motivations are, and how these motivations relate to the purpose of the organisation. Not everyone is the same, which

makes social skills important. Successful leaders understand that they need to be flexible and adaptable, as well as able to read and understand others. You need to spend time with different teams, and not just your direct reports. As a leader, it is very important to listen, to respect the opinions of others, and to take tough decisions as the situation requires. In this time of change, this implies demonstrating real empathy, to undertake the most difficult workplace conversations with tact and sensitivity.

Successful leaders know how to inspire others. Leadership means being visionary, keeping in mind at all times the end goal. Leaders can articulate the goals of the organisation to others – and the best leaders help people to see their role in the global picture. They also hold themselves and their organisation accountable to that goal. The goal is what is important; not personal gain or success. Leaders need to build strong relationships with boards, partners, stakeholders, and even competitors to reach organisational goals. They demonstrate political astuteness, recognising that power and influence in organisations do not work in neat hierarchical lines. They ensure success through influencing and by networking. Mastering leadership of organisations requires inspiration, accountability, and relationship building.

Managers play an important role in creating employee engagement. Since managers and immediate supervisors are the ones with whom employees are directly in communication, their roles are crucial to help employees feel engaged with the organisation. The interaction between the managers and their team members influences employee engagement to a great deal. The manager's attitude, behaviour, and empathy are instrumental in making a positive impact on the employee. Bratton and Gold stated that the relationship shared between line-manager and their employee lies at the core of the learning environment. A line manager stimulates the desire in an employee for positive learning (Jauhari, Sehgal and Sehgal, 2013). In order to help develop a healthy relationship between managers and employees, some companies implement strategies to make them communicate more. Zappos, a US-based online retailer, encourages its managers to spend 10-20% of their working hours interacting with team members, to build a level of trust and understanding. Some companies, such as Accenture, organise 30-

process more informal; employees can interact with the managers on a personal level, and come up with their career aspirations and goals more openly. Such regular interactions among employees and managers can prove effective in building mutual trust and understanding.

Globalisation has led to the increased use of social media platforms, and this includes businesses; they use the concept to enhance their communication with various stakeholders. It is important to appreciate the fact that although innovation has changed the manner in which business is conducted, there are externalities for the workforce, leading to disengagement. For example, most companies have embraced an email culture, which is an aspect of the working environment that contributes to disengagement in most organisations. To counter this problem, most organisations are considering encouraging more face-to-face communication between stakeholders. It is obvious that employees lose human interaction skills, if most of their communication time is spent on emails; therefore, they become less efficient at meeting work-related challenges (Michael, 2014).

Employees are the driving force of any organisation; without them, there would be no need for managers. The primary purpose of the current study is to demonstrate the need for managers to use their EI, in their interactions with their employees, as a means of increasing employee engagement. Engagement is a fulfilling job-related state of mind that makes employees feel connected with their workplace on an emotional level. The key drivers of workplace engagement for employees include career opportunities, communication, brand alignment, recognition and appreciation, compensation, and workplace relationships. Highly engaged employees are beneficial to the growth of businesses, because they add to the innovation levels, and overall profitability, of the organisation. They promote customer loyalty, employee retention, growth of revenues, and higher profitability. However, engaged employees might become disengaged if they are overburdened with mounting work pressure and stress. In the competition to retain and attract the best talents on the market, companies are overhauling their policies and programmes, to develop a higher level of employee engagement by providing employees with training skills, recognition awards, healthcare benefits, and perks; and by improving the relationship between managers and employees.

Engagement refers to a positive, satisfying, job-related state of mind, characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008). Vigour means the high intensity of enthusiasm, energy, and mental flexibility while working. Dedication means strong devotion to work, with higher levels of enthusiasm and challenge. Absorption means being fully immersed in work, with no sense of time passing by and no intention of pulling out from the work soon. Employees engaged in work show high levels of energy, dedication, and mental resilience in their work. Employee engagement involves employees making full utilisation of their physical, cognitive, and emotional resources in their performance. Engaged employees share a deep emotional bond with their work place and strive hard for the growth of their organisation. Higher levels of work engagement by employees provides benefits in the forms of: an increase in employee earnings; sales growth; high performance; and lower rates of absenteeism. The current study highlights how employee engagement can be increased if managers use their EI to improve communications between themselves and their team members.

Employee engagement can be defined in various ways. However, it can be generally referred to as the ability and willingness of employees to help the organisation, in which they are employed, to achieve its objectives. This is achieved by the employees providing their services in a discretionary way, and in sustainable circumstances. Employee engagement entails two main aspects; psychological and HR practice. The psychological aspect involves the kind of job one is doing, the resources at the employee's disposal, and the experience one goes through during the engagement. Furthermore, the ability of the organisation to empower its employees, and their autonomy, determine the psychological influence on employee engagement. The HR aspect entails the following 13 practices: selective recruitment; employment security; incentive pay; high wages; information sharing; employee ownership; promotion from within; empowerment and participation; wage compression; self-managed teams; symbolic egalitarianism, cross-utilisation; and skill and training development. Employees should demonstrate a positive attitude towards their role in the organisation as part of helping the organisation succeed.

Employee engagement has evolved over the years as the rules of HR have changed. The views of HR specialists have changed in the sense that they have now embraced employee

welfare as a way of ensuring employees have the right attitude. Human capital resources play a significant role in contributing to employee workplace engagement. As such, organisations should adopt good HR practices that will increase employee engagement.

Other ways of improving employee relations and increasing engagement are through rewards and recognition. These have proven to be effective in making employees feel valued and appreciated for their efforts. Such feelings of appreciation and recognition help employees feel emotionally attached to their organisation. Many companies these days use this scheme for their employees. For instance, in Caltech, there is a programme called the Spot Award Program, which awards \$100 in the form of an American Express gift cheque, on the spot at a staff meeting, to employees who have made a special contribution to their department. The peer recognition, and the applause, help the recipients feel morally boosted and encouraged to continue in their efforts.

Besides a competitive salary, benefits and perks awarded to employees also help employee engagement. Due to mounting work pressure and the rising cost of health care, employees often look for a comprehensive healthcare package from employers. Studies show that globally, about 80% of employees feel that employers should take responsibility for employee wellbeing, by providing healthcare benefits and incentives. Of all healthcare benefits provided by employers, 64% of employees find health insurance to be the most attractive. Apart from healthcare benefits, some companies provide many other perks for their employees; childcare facilities, continuous professional development (CPD), etc. One of the companies known to be very employee-friendly is Google. Listed as the No.1 Company, out of the 100 best companies in the Annual Fortune List, Google – alongside lots of perks and unlimited sick leave – offers its employees the opportunity to put their imagination and creativity to work. Google is constantly changing and growing its policies and procedures. When the company found that new mothers were leaving the company for 12 weeks' paid time off, it immediately changed its plan to allow new mothers 5 months of paid time off, with all the usual perks and benefits, and with full payment (Bulygo). The result was a 50% decrease in the attrition rate for new mothers.

With increased competition in the global market, there is a significant need to pay employees well, so as to prevent high turnover. Higher wages also attract highly skilled

employees, who will in turn be more engaged in their duties. Additionally, high wages reduce instances of industrial action, which is always attributed to employees' dissatisfaction with wages and salaries.

Workplace engagement can also be enhanced through incentives. Financial incentives have been used from time to time in motivating employees. Motivated employees become more engaged in their duties, since they are generally satisfied with the working conditions, and the incentives increase job loyalty and the desire to work harder.

Employees should be made to feel free within the organisation. This can be enhanced through employee ownership. Whenever there is employee ownership, one feels more responsible. This in turn increases employee workplace engagement, and the desire to achieve the target results.

Communication should be facilitated throughout the organisation. Effective communication and information sharing enhance positive workplace engagement. This is because employees do not feel side-lined in organisational issues. Information sharing also enhances better decision making, as it encourages positive contributions from employees. And this communication can be improved greatly through the use of EI.

In conclusion, engaged employees utilise physical, cognitive, and emotional resources in their performance and add to the revenue growth of the organisation. Highly engaged employees prove to be an advantage by adding to the innovation and overall productivity of the organisation. They bring customer loyalty, growth in revenue, and higher profitability. However, engaged employees might turn disengaged if they are overworked and feel stressed out. Most companies these days are implementing strategies to increase employee engagement; it is very important for the success of the company to keep the employees satisfied.

The HR department should be keen while recruiting employees. The recruitment process should be taken seriously in order to identify hard-working employees who can contribute positively to the organisation's performance. This can be achieved through a thorough recruitment process, entailing various stages. This is because a well-developed recruitment process will enhance the selection of good employees.

In order to increase employee engagement, the HR department should come up with a variety of ways through which employees can be empowered. Firstly, employees can be empowered through training and development. Training enables one to gain more skills. This will not only enable an employee to offer better skills, but also boost their self-confidence. Secondly, employees can be empowered by being assigned leadership responsibility from time to time. This boosts an employee's leadership skills and also makes him feel worthy. Thirdly, employees can be empowered by being exposed to challenging situations. This opens them up to think out of the box and think of better ideas.

The HR department can also enhance workplace engagement through the formation of self-managed teams. Teams are formed by individual employees who are then assigned a particular task. Teams should be left to manage their operations on their own. Independent teams are more innovative in comparison to teams that are governed.

Training and skill development are necessary ingredients for employee workplace engagement. This training should extend to EI training for managers and top executives. This is because training and skill development boosts employees' knowledge and motivation to contribute positively towards the organisation's assignments. Additionally, training and skill development enhances an employee's innovativeness and expertise. This in turn enables him to be paid a better salary or wage.

Whenever a position falls vacant, the HR department can decide to recruit a new employee from outside, or to conduct internal recruitment. Promotion from within is necessary since it motivates long-serving employees. This in turn enhances workplace engagement. Employees tend to work hard so as to be promoted in the future. Further, promotion from within enhances continuity; internal recruitment targets employees who have good knowledge of the organisation's activities. As such, employers should promote skilled employees so as to increase employee workplace engagement.

In order to do this, organisations should consider several factors. These factors should be incentives that will help motivate employees, and make them loyal and interested in putting their best efforts forward to help the organisation. These incentives include

creating a competitive environment, helping employees grow and develop, encouraging teamwork and collaborations, empowering employees, provision of support and recognition, and aligning efforts with strategies.

The other demand is the level of competition in the market at large. Each and every employee is expected to do his or her level best, with the aim of confronting increased levels of competition. The level of innovation and creativity, in general, is so high that every employee is expected to meet these high standards. Therefore, HR managers should emphasise innovativeness and the ability to provide quality services.

Any organisation with engaged employees is destined to succeed, because employees add value to business performance; they are productive, spend less time accomplishing tasks, and are more determined – they will ‘go the extra mile’ in their work. However, in the recent past, most organisations have experienced a challenge in employee management; workers are distracted from their daily routine by the non-work-related engagement that utilises most of their time, effort, and resources. This disengagement behaviour is likely to be cultivated in organisations where the conditions for engagement are not well developed (Bersin, 2014). Nevertheless, irrespective of the nature of the business, it is evident that three primary conditions must be met; communication, regular training, and recognition. The failure of companies to address these three issues is closely linked to disengagement at work, which contributes to low performance. One of the factors that may contribute to this outcome is the failure to manage information effectively; particularly in terms of diversity in the workplace.

Training, as a component of HR, contributes to career development among employees; an aspect that is often neglected. Poor performance by employees is partly due to a lack of adequate training. In these circumstances, most workers will be found to be stressed with their jobs. Basic training is essential for individuals, as it leads to the proper optimal performance of the employees; they can actually manage a given task with ease, as compared to untrained workers. Therefore, aspects of employee disengagement are dispelled by enforcing regular training; through such acts businesses become more innovative and more efficient in their operations (Bariso, 2015). Furthermore, through the employment of experts and mentors to assist employees with their tasks, business

activities are performed more efficiently. Employees became de-stressed and enticed into achievement; training builds employee confidence, and hence company profitability.

Career development is an aspect that motivates employees to work hard at their respective organisations, both for individual and business gain. Companies need to have experienced individuals at their work place, and to maintain such standards they need to move people around, so they can be conversant with new skills and attain a higher level of engagement. According to research studies, it is evident that career development and recognition of good performance are among the approaches that encourage more employee engagement in the workplace. Apparently, neglecting recognition among workers can contribute to employee disengagement from the company, and therefore contribute to low levels of company performance (Michael, 2014).

Poor relations between employees and their managers are a principal element of disengagement in the workplace. Organisations ought to protect their staff, as they are precious assets to production. Employee opinions should be valued, and effective communication pursued, to achieve a shared understanding of the enterprise goals and objectives.

It is evident from research studies that one of the reasons people quit jobs is because of their supervisors; and those who remain with those supervisors are usually disengaged with their jobs, hence adding little value to the business. Therefore, to solve such issues related to employee-manager relations, it is important to work on EI. The management should identify potential solutions to employee-manager conflict, to encourage more employee engagement at the workplace (Custom Insight, 2016).

The question is how to increase employee engagement? In the competition to retain the best talent available in the marketplace, companies are trying hard to improve their policies and infrastructures, to make employees develop an emotional connection with the organisation. In order to build a healthy relationship with the employees from the very beginning of their time with an organisation, employers are helping employees establish a broader range of emotional connectivity by taking care of their needs and providing assistance in assimilation into the new work culture. Companies with high levels of

employee engagement provide employees with formal training and resources to improve effectiveness. They allow employees to employ imagination and innovativeness in their work. They actively seek suggestions from employees and act upon the suggestions provided.

In the current study, the literature review (Chapter Two) reflects the topic of my research and provides a comparison with what has previously been written on the topic. The information used was sourced from the Selinus University database, books, journals, magazines, newspapers, scientific reports, organisations' archives, and Google Scholar. This has been placed in the context of the changing nature of work in the 21st century, the workplace now, and the critical skills needed for today's workforce.

1.3 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The population that I surveyed comprised 25 managers from the private and public sectors, and included small business managers as well as private business owners. The qualitative method of study I used addresses my research philosophy, approach, and design and sampling procedures. The type of study I carried out involved sending out questionnaires (comprising 14 open-ended questions) via email to the respondents, with a short introduction about myself and the purpose of my study, inviting them to answer the questionnaire. These questionnaires were then sent back to me via email for analysis and interpretation.

My research methodology showed the broad underpinning of the qualitative method I chose to analyse my data. I believed it worthwhile to focus on my immediate environment, the city of Accra. This is where I come from and reside. I also decided not to focus on a specific group; this was in order to obtain varied impressions, viewpoints, and opinions. The respondents were of different ethnic groups in Ghana, and also included a few Europeans working in Accra. The fact they all manage staff was their common denominator.

The strategies I used were both primary and secondary, given that I was part of the process, and the research is born from my personal experience in conducting the study. I used both strategies because they are useful in developing persuasive arguments. What I know about this topic is based on what I have experienced, and learnt in a workshop I attended this year within the context of professional development. Through my research, I wanted to find out if other managers' experiences related to mine, if there were any biases, and how I might combat them. The content analysis from my qualitative methodology allowed me to analyse the results and look for themes in the data in a more systematic, unbiased way.

EI is the independent variable in this research. The questions selected for each variable were analysed to determine the connections between the groups of variables. The validity of the questionnaire was evaluated, and the statistical methods used to analyse and explain the findings were elaborated.

I foresaw limitations whereby some of my respondents decided not to expose themselves to risk; they decided not to reveal their names or the names of their companies and organisations. That was because they did not want to jeopardise their positions. Others also preferred to answer 'neutral' questions and leave more pertinent questions out. Two of the respondents I contacted did not want to participate in the survey at all. I, therefore, had to find two other managers who were not initially on the list of 25 managers planned for the survey to replace them.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE

According to Bennis and Nanus (2003), a vision, and the mechanism for translating this vision into a reality, is given by leadership. My thesis examined the positive impact that EI has on a manager's style of leadership, and how it can improve communication, thereby increasing employee engagement. Previous research has been conducted to determine if there was a relationship between the leadership styles of managers and the motivation of their team members.

The current research is grounded on the leadership literature and organisational culture. Specifically, the study required answers to the following questions:

Does leadership need EI?

How does EI affect leadership?

How can leadership improve EI?

Does EI help to increase employee engagement?

Managers have to show empathy, be flexible, and be responsive to their employees' needs in order to maintain the motivation of team members in difficult and challenging times.

The five components of EI are: self-awareness; self-regulation; self-motivation; empathy; and social skills.

EI continues to capture the attention of researchers around the world, especially over the past two decades. The EI research conducted to date indicates the contribution of social relations to the success and efficacy of organisational leaders and teams (Ford, 2010; Meisler and Vigoda-Gadot, 2014; Polychroniou, 2009).

Previous research has been conducted to determine if there was a relationship between the leadership styles of managers and the motivation of their team members. The current study was intended to reveal, through the analysis of the questionnaire data, that certain leadership styles using EI obtain a much higher level of motivation from their employees.

The changing world of work has now accentuated the need for and the rise of EI. COVID-19 also changed the narrative. Employees' expectations have changed. Today, the complexities of the work environment have required organisations to employ skilled and competent managers, with a high level of EI. It is strongly believed that organisational development is realised when the organisation employs knowledgeable, creative, and motivated managers, capable of problem-solving and self-management. However, the question is whether EI has a role in empowering these managers.

The significance and relevance of my thesis was to contribute to the debate on the real challenges that are facing managers, and that is not of a quantitative nature. The research

reveals some of the concrete issues that need to be addressed in order to succeed in obtaining full engagement from employees. It also offers a possible explanation for absenteeism and low motivation. At the same time, the study offers new proposals for further research. The findings can be generalised only to organisations and institutions of the same nature as those studied.

The purpose of the study, in short, was to affirm or deny the hypothesis that EI is a statistically significant correlation to employee engagement for leaders.

CHAPTER TWO (LITERATURE REVIEW)

2.1 PROBLEM FORMULATION

The problems managers face are global problems; and they are not specific to the 21st century alone. The changing nature of work and the workplace, plus the economic forces redefining work, is also indirectly redefining the dynamics between the manager and the employee. Disruptive economic forces, advancement in technology, an increased demand for customer service workers, plus the expansion of industry, have all caused an increase in the demands employers make on their employees, for broader and more diverse skills. In today's complex workplace, EI is a topic of concern among managers and employees globally.

Part-time, flexi-time, telecommuting, job-sharing, and a compressed working week are all part of the alternative working patterns that have emerged. These alternative working patterns, even though they are not the same for all industries or organisations, have changed the nature of work. The increase in the levels of job insecurities in private sector organisations has seen a decline in lifetime employment, while the circumstances of the work market have meant that the modern workforce has had to gather more cross-industry work experience.

Organisational culture has shifted. The effects this has on employee motivation, performance, engagement, and wellbeing are huge. Before the pandemic, workers had to adapt their lifestyles to the circumstances of their jobs. Now, workers are seeking companies that can work around their lifestyles. Today's workforce is faced with a change in employment and salary trends. It is no longer enough to provide employees with skills and security.

Gebauer and Lowman (2008) stated that only one-fifth of the global workforce is considered fully engaged. The pandemic has already altered the workplace, and the dependency on employees to move organisations forward is even greater. If employees

are committed and engaged, they are more productive, which positively impacts the profits made by the organisation.

Employee engagement has many definitions; for the purposes of the current study, engagement is defined as ‘a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organisation and its values’. Engagement can also be defined in terms of the employee being positively present during the performance of work, by willingly contributing intellectual effort.

In addition to the influence of the employee-supervisor goal congruence, employee engagement is affected by the employee’s feelings, ideas, and views about his or her job. Employee engagement leads to enthusiasm, passion for the work, and a sense of pride (Alvi et al., 2014).

The Engage for Success report stated that employee engagement enables an adult, two-way relationship between managers and employees, where challenges can be met, and goals achieved; whether it be improved patient care, higher quality production or more satisfied customers.

It is believed that sufficient evidence now exists to suggest that employee engagement is a unique psychological state (Albrecht, 2010; Kular et al., 2008; Markos and Sridevi, 2010). The employee-manager relationship plays a significant role in organisational performance, both on the individual level and the department level (Harter, Schmidt and Hayes, 2002). The manager’s role is significant in creating a workplace environment in which the employee determines the degree to which they are personally committed to the daily work and organisational goals (Markos and Sridevi, 2010).

Employers want engaged employees because – as well as being happier, healthier, and more fulfilled – they are more motivated and deliver improved business performance. Positive relationships are evidenced by profit, revenue growth, customer satisfaction, productivity, innovation, staff retention, efficiency, and health and safety performance. Conversely, having a disengaged workforce brings huge risks.

As well as losses in performance, and lack of employee voice, ineffective communication between managers and their employees may lead to employee disengagement. Managers may also face greater difficulties when embedding organisational change if employees are not on board, so wider alignment with strategy, and engagement with the organisation, is also important.

Employee voice is described as a process of continuous dialogue between employees and managers, whereby employees are given regular opportunities to express views, concerns, ideas, and practical suggestions about the organisation to all levels of management in an environment where such communication is genuinely welcomed, taken seriously, considered, and responded to with honesty.

When a large-scale project/programme fails at a time of organisational change, internal communication is often blamed. It is suggested that if internal communication can be a contributor to change failure, it can also play a vital role in delivering successful change programmes. It behoves managers and leaders to use their EI to maintain good communication flow between themselves and their teams, in order to maintain a harmonious working environment that will keep their employees engaged.

There are three major EI theories (Webb, 2009), and they differ in: how they delineate the critical factors that make up EI; how they define EI; how they say EI works inter- and intra-personally; and the instruments they use to measure the concept (Codier, Kooker, and Shoultz, 2008). The first of the three major theories that have emerged from the research is the trait or personality model developed by Reuven Bar-On (1999). The theory focuses on the individual's skill in processing emotional information, and in using it to interact within a social setting. Bar-On initially used the term 'emotional quotient' to describe his model. He later abandoned the name and adopted EI as the descriptor (Codier, Kooker and Shoultz, 2008).

John Mayer, Peter Salovey and David Caruso developed the second theory in 1998. The theory is referred to as the Ability Model (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2000). It recognises that individuals vary in their ability to assess emotion and appropriately

navigate through social environments, and views emotion as an important source of information that helps a leader understand the social aspects present in the workplace. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000) developed the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS). This tool, consisting of 141 questions, assesses an individual's ability to perceive emotions, use emotions, understand emotions, and manage emotions. The MEIS is considered one of the more reliable assessment tools for measuring EI (Olatoye, Akintunde and Yakasai, 2010; Webb, 2009).

Finally, Daniel Goleman developed the third theory, a set of skills and characteristics that drive leadership performance (Codier, Kooker and Shoultz, 2008). His theory is considered a mixed model in that it is a combination of trait and EI ability. The model was developed in an organisational setting and is used to understand and measure the effectiveness of workplace relationships. The skill clusters in this model are divided into personal and social competencies (Goleman, 2005).

Thompson (2010) stated that 'Emotional Intelligence begins by being aware of emotions and then managing and controlling them'. This is important because emotions carry information, social cues, and insights. Improving EI increases one's awareness of emotions, and one's ability to respond appropriately to what one is told.

There is a significant gap in the EI literature, in terms of examining relationships between EI and other factors. One study, the first of its kind, examined the interaction effect of managers' and employees' EI on job satisfaction (Sy, Tram and O'Hara, 2005). Further empirical support, that gives special attention to how managers with high EI offer unique contributions to their organisations, is limited (Carmeli, 2003). More research is needed to further examine the relationships between EI and the work environments that affect job satisfaction and performance (Sy et al., 2005).

Two research studies, however, were found that examined the three interacting components of EI, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment (Carmeli, 2003; Petrides and Furnham, 2006). On the other hand, no study has examined the interaction effect of managers' EI and employees' EI on job satisfaction and communication effectiveness. The combination of these four variables will invariably lead to higher levels

of both success and life satisfaction. Even though EI is crucial for the sustainment of communication effectiveness and job satisfaction, only a very limited number of studies have been done on this subject, resulting in vital aspects like motivation going unnoticed. In order to fill in this gap, the current study was conducted to shed more light on the subject.

According to Matthews (2002), numerous professions showed a dire need for some level of EI. The education system is one of those within which individuals could reap great advantage from the knowledge of EI, owing to the recurrent human communication that exists there. Also, the administrative centres of education sense a need for both the managers and employees to create working associations with others.

Recent research in the area of EI has also led to a link to communication. Andersen and Guerrero (1998) suggested that EI is inherently communicative, and provided six principles that illustrate how communication is necessary to the process of emotional experience. These six principles are: (a) emotions evolve as communicative actions; (b) emotional expression is shaped through socialisation processes; (c) the primary elicitor of most emotion is interpersonal communication; (d) schemata affect how and when emotions are communicated; (e) an inherent feature of emotional experience is emotional expression; and (f) emotion generates other emotions and interaction chains.

Communication is an important hallmark of employee engagement. Internal corporate communication helps employees develop a sense of attachment with the organisation, and contributes to their organisational commitment. One-way communication results in information overload, and does not contribute to the solution of a problem; whereas two-way communication, in which management talks to the employees, and on the basis of responses received from the employees takes necessary action, helps a great deal in forming employee engagement. Employees feel that their voices are heard and that their grievances are given serious consideration.

Several studies have been conducted on the relationship between workers' EI and their satisfaction at their workplace, especially during the 21st century. Some of the significant studies that related these two constructs to job performance were by Sy et al. (2006),

Wong and Law (2002), and Villard (2004). Another study on this relationship was by Patra (2004), who proved that those employees with EI find their place of work satisfying; this influenced their satisfaction and overall productivity, and led to efficient management and organisation development (Patra, 2004). Most studies provided significant evidence that higher EI levels were related to more flexible managers, as they are able to understand the reasons behind stress, and thereby plan ahead to avoid the resultant unconstructive consequences (Cooper and Sawaf, 1997). Furthermore, Shimazu, Shimazu and Odahara (2004) felt that those managers would probably control emotions in others too. Their ability is very useful in group settings, where employees with high EI can use their skills to promote constructive interactions that help increase their own self-esteem, as well as the self-esteem of the group, and add positively to the experience of job satisfaction overall (Shimazu, Shimazu and Odahara, 2004). On the other hand, those with lower EI levels are probably less conscious of their emotions, and quite incapable of managing their emotions in complicated circumstances. These workers ultimately augment their level of stress and thereby reduce their level of job satisfaction.

Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. (Mayer and Salovey, 1997, p. 10)

EI is often cited as the key to effective workplace relationships, and was first popularised in 1995 by Daniel Goleman. The two areas of competence contained in the five key components that make up Goleman's model of EI are personal competence – comprising self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation – and social competence – comprising empathy and social skills.

Goleman and his team derived the following definition of EI, after an analysis of competency models in 188 companies. They said that EI was: being aware of your own feelings and handling them without becoming overwhelmed; self-motivation and creativity; and feeling empathy and handling relationships effectively.

This signifies that EI has to do with controlling the management of one's emotional responses to events and pressures, coupled with a set of non-cognitive skills, capabilities, and competencies. Goleman believes that in senior leadership positions, the difference between a very high performer and an average one resides in their level of EI, as opposed to their cognitive abilities.

Higgs and Dulewicz (at Henley Management Centre) who were sceptical at first, changed their stance after they conducted a study of 100 management and business leaders; their results revealed that 'EI was more highly related to success than IQ alone'.

The Centre for Creative Leadership has stressed the role EI plays in employee engagement. The ability to connect emotionally is an essential skill for leadership effectiveness. IQ and technical skills are important; however, what makes the fundamental difference between an effective manager and the rest is EI. The latter makes a difference in how well a leader performs.

All emotion is functional; therefore, until managers have assessed their current emotions to determine the outcomes they want, it would be difficult to help their various teams. Recognising the efforts of team members and caring about the welfare of the team builds trust. Showing empathy and being person-focused motivates the team to do more. Job satisfaction and retention are improved.

Firstly, it is clear that EI is positively related to employee engagement. Secondly, certain sub-factors of EI are related to employee engagement, such as emotionality and wellbeing, while self-control and sociability are not significantly associated with employee engagement. Emotionally strong employees are more engaged, as compared to employees with lower scores on emotionality and wellbeing. These are the two factors that affect employee engagement the most.

The concept of EI has gained popularity in recent decades; however, the characteristics and concepts associated with EI are rooted in research conducted throughout the 20th century. Earlier works identified competencies, other than general intelligence, that contributed to life success. Thorndike (1937) reported the concept of 'social intelligence'.

Wechsler (1940) fought for the addition of 'non-intellective aspects' as a measure of general intelligence. Likewise, Leeper (1948) contended that 'emotional thought' should be considered when reviewing the concept of 'logical thought'. However, it was not until the 1980s that the current concepts related to EI started to emerge.

Gardner (1983) shared a theory of multiple intelligences that encouraged researchers to step outside the notion that human beings are confined to a singular or plural view of intelligence. Gardner contended that five more intelligences were equally important to collective human intelligence – musical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and intrapersonal intelligence. Within these multiple levels of human development or intelligences, a movement evolved that expanded two particular areas of Gardner's approach – the interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences.

Research by Ruderman et. al (2001) uncovered links between specific elements of EI and specific behaviours associated with leadership effectiveness and ineffectiveness. The study used the Bar-On EQ-i[®] (Emotional Quotient Inventory) approach. This is an assessment based on over 20 years of research by Dr. Reuven Bar-On, and tested on over 110,000 individuals worldwide. Bar-On EQ-i[®] is the first measure of EI to be reviewed in the Buros Mental Measurement Yearbook. Bar-On EQ-i[®] measures emotionally and socially intelligent behaviour as reported by respondents.

The instrument is used to figure out personal development, EI, and emotional and social competencies. This instrument specifically measures a collection of skills – intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, and general mood.

This literature review will draw on research conducted on EI and employee engagement. Findings from the methodology and statistical analysis will be assessed against qualitative data extracted from a survey conducted with 25 managers.

2.2 DATA COLLECTION AND EVALUATION

Many recent studies have focused on the challenges for managers in the 21st century; however, since the focus of the current research is on EI, these challenges will not be reviewed in detail, and will only be referred to when appropriate.

According to McKinsey and Company, the new roles of leaders in the 21st century should move from the 'old normal', where managers were planners and controllers, and focus on co-creating meaningful value with and for all stakeholders, expanding their scope beyond the shareholders to include customers, employees, partners, and our broader society. These leaders must aim to unleash the full potential of their employees in order to deliver impact and value.

Drucker (2011) shared his views on societal, political, and economic changes over the centuries. His book serves as an excellent reference for tracing changes through time. The opinions he gives in this book align with those given by McKinsey and Company. He depicts how the roles of management can change when the external environment shifts. As he says, the main challenges for management in this century are: fundamental paradigm shifts; building sound strategies (based on his 'five certainties'); the requirements of a change leader; addressing the new information challenges; the challenge of knowledge worker productivity; and the challenge of managing oneself.

Kahn (1990) referred to engagement as a situation where people express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during work role performance. Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) described employee engagement as 'a sense of energetic and effective connection of employees with their work activities and they see themselves as able to deal well with the demands of their job'. Measure (2004) defined employee engagement as a level of commitment and involvement of employees towards their organisation and its value.

The primary behaviours of engaged employees are: speaking positively about the organisation, co-workers, potential employees, and customers; having a strong desire to be members of the organisation; and exerting extra effort to contribute to organisation

success. Stairs (2005) stated that employee engagement may be defined as the degree of commitment to a particular job. According to Stairs, commitment is further divided into rational and emotional; rational commitment is driven by self-interest, getting some financial rewards, and emotional commitment by deeper beliefs about the job or organisation. Pritchard (2008) described employee engagement in terms of 'Say, Stay, Strive'; 'Say' denotes how employees talk about their organisation with others, 'Stay' stands for the commitment and loyalty of employees, and 'Strive' means employees are willing to do anything for their organisation. Markos and Sridevi (2010) described employee engagement as a harmonious and positive relationship between employer and employee, where the employee is emotionally committed towards the organisation and works with zeal. Their study concluded that employee engagement is a totally distinct and broader concept than job satisfaction, employee commitment, or organisational citizenship behaviours. Organisations are therefore putting in special efforts to enhance the level of engagement among their employees.

There are many drivers of engagement, drawing employees towards an organisation emotionally and intellectually. The Aon Hewitt Report defines engagement as an emotionally and intellectually involved state of mind, reflective of the extent to which an organisation has succeeded in hooking the hearts and minds of people onto their work (Jauhari, Sehgal and Sehgal, 2013). One of the key drivers of employee engagement is career opportunities. Employees join an organisation not only to make a living, but to build a career. Studies show that employees who have their career aspirations and goals in alignment with the vision statement and mission of a company are more likely to get attached to that organisation. The managers and immediate supervisors play a significant role in assuring employees of their future success in the company; and as more and more opportunities are provided to employees to excel in their careers, they develop emotional connections with the organisation.

One of the indicators in gauging employee engagement is work satisfaction. When an employee's company or organisation makes their staff feel that their job is important, it increases the level of engagement. This is further enhanced when there are opportunities to learn and grow with regular progress checks and feedback. Employee engagement is

the strength of the mental and emotional connections employees feel towards the work they do, their teams, and their organisation. The connections between leadership and teams are important for employee engagement.

Flavell (1979) referred to metacognition as the act of thinking about one's own cognition and making a conscious decision to control it. On the other hand, self-regulation is about how a learner applies metacognition, either naturally or through training. Dierdorff and Ellington (2012) found that the average level of self-regulation across members of a work team is positively related to team efficacy, team cooperation quality and team decision-making.

Winkler, König and Kleinmann (2012) concluded that organisational commitment 'had a more persistent influence on performance at the business unit level than vice versa', leading the researchers to conclude that job attitudes lead to improvements in business unit performance. In short, employee engagement is the foundation of job performance. Lack of employee engagement results in poor work culture, poor communication, lower retention rates, and lower productivity.

Other studies (Maehr and Anderman, 1993; Maehr and Fyans, 1989; Maehr and Midgeley, 1991, 1996) have come up with considerable empirical evidence suggesting that the culture of a school can motivate both the teachers and students to learn, by instilling a positive feeling in the teachers about their work. Using this as a point of comparison, we can then say that the culture of the organisation can help to foster healthy working environments in which employees may thrive.

In the last two decades of the 20th century, and more recently in the 21st century, a significant amount of research and attention has been devoted to identifying relationships between emotional and social intelligence, regarding life satisfaction (Palmer, Donaldson, and Stough, 2002), personality (Higgs and Rowland, 2001; Schulte, Ree and Carretta, 2004), social relationships (Lopes, Salovey and Straus, 2003; Massey, 2002), team performance (Rapisarda, 2002), education (Jaeger, 2003; Zeidner, Roberts and Matthews, 2002), outdoor leadership training (Thompson, 2004), and leadership (Cherniss and Goleman, 2001; Dulewicz and Higgs, 2003; Goleman, 1998, 2001).

EI and EI testing were criticised by Antonakis, Ashkanasy and Dasborough (2009). Bar-On's model is considered to have a broader definition of EI (Fernandez-Berrocal and Extremera, 2006). It includes emotional and social competencies that lead to an adequate understanding and expression of one's self. The competencies are categorised into five main dynamics: intrapersonal skills (being aware of and understanding one's own emotions); interpersonal skills (being aware of and understanding others' emotions); adaptability (being open and willing to changing feelings); stress management (being able to cope with stress); and general mood (being able to feel and express positive feelings) (Bar-On, Tranel, Denburg and Bechara, 2003).

In a series of letters, Antonakis, Ashkanasy and Dasborough (2009) explored various issues surrounding EI and leadership, including: whether EI is theoretically needed for leadership; the types of EI test that may hold the most promise; methodological standards for testing whether EI matters; evidence from the neuroscience literature on emotions and intelligence; and evidence regarding the links between leader EI and follower outcomes. Some scepticism is shown regarding whether EI predicts work success in general, or leadership in particular.

The Salovey-Mayer ability model is further questioned. Its definition asserts that EI is an ability of sorts, that is distinct from personality (though somewhat related to IQ (Ashkanasy and Daus, 2005)). This ability is composed of four branches: emotion perception; emotion facilitation; emotion understanding; and emotion management. Nevertheless, it is this model that is deemed the 'best fit'. According to Antonakis, Ashkanasy and Dasborough (2009), the EI product has been badly designed. In the face of mounting evidence against EI, consumer defenders are filing 'class-action suits', so to say (Conte, 2005; Locke, 2005; Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts, 2002; Zaccaro and Horn, 2003; Zeidner, Matthews and Roberts, 2004). Given the sparse empirical evidence, one of the writers considered it unethical, indeed unconscionable, to use these measures in applied settings (i.e. for hiring, promotion, or retention) (Antonakis, 2003, 2004); 'management practitioners need to take care that they do not overemphasise the predictive value of emotional intelligence in workplace settings' (Jordan et al., p. 205).

After a valid assessment of EI, the writers call for scholars new to the field of EI research to read carefully the recent article by Mayer, Roberts and Barsade (2008) before embarking on empirical investigations. Mayer and his colleagues reviewed the EI literature over the previous 18 years, with particular attention to the conceptualisation and validity of EI measures, and provided an objective overview concerning reliability and validity. The critics call for higher quality empirical research, and specifically research that meets criteria set out in the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (JCS, 1999).

The Social Styles model (Merrill and Reid, 1981) seems to put people into four categories – analytical, driving, amiable, and expressive. There are variants to these styles; a bit more, a bit less, combinations, etc. There are also external influences on these styles, such as emotion, fatigue, and stress. The idea behind this model was to demonstrate why certain dyads in the workplace – especially the manager-employee dyad – do not normally demonstrate healthy working relationships, and what each team member could do to adapt to the other. In this model, no one style is better or worse than the others; each style comes with its strengths and weaknesses, and a combination of the styles gives better results. EI, which is also connected to self-regulation and metacognition, is used to navigate delicate and difficult issues that may arise in the workplace.

Whorton et al. (2017) made reference to cross-cultural competence in the knowledge domain. The need for managers to know where their staff are coming from, in order to know how best to interact with them, is significant. Knowledge of the norms and practices of other cultures is also very important if we are to create more harmonious working environments. Managers need to be aware of the cultural expectations of the team members, and to understand that these expectations may be different from their own. The use of EI helps us to navigate the differences, while remaining willing, flexible, and open to discussion. Being emotionally intelligent helps us to manage the stress of adjusting to people very different from us, and to environments connected to a new culture. Being culturally aware as a manager helps one to consider differences in the motivations of team members of different nationalities.

Many workplaces are diverse in themselves, and emotions are woven into every contact between team members. These emotions influence how we react to challenges and opportunities, determining whether or not we collaborate to resolve conflict. In our daily work our emotions play a role in the amount of effort we show, our mental health, our moods, and the behaviours we display.

In this respect, EI is a skill that is particularly useful for people in managerial and leadership positions. General principles of knowledge, self-awareness, and motivation are indispensable to achieving successful interpersonal reactions, especially in culturally diverse situations. This is particularly true when it comes to the type of language used. Foreknowledge of what actions or reactions might be offensive is very useful. Greater cultural awareness diffuses awkward situations and avoids embarrassment because misinterpretations and disrespectful behaviour are evaded.

Managers are entrusted with their companies' time, resources, and reputation; therefore, it is incumbent on them to use their EI so they adhere to ethical principles of behaviour and do not step out of line. Knowing what is right and wrong are qualities that are paramount for managers.

Emotionally intelligent leaders understand their emotions, which requires confidence and self-awareness (Freshman and Rubino, 2004). These leaders also understand how one's behaviour impacts others. In other words, leaders with high competence in EI are honest about their strengths and weaknesses.

In Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2013), EI is clearly defined as an important leadership skill which is needed to connect leaders – managers – to their staff or employees in order to motivate and resonate with them.

The working environment should be conducive to sharing and communicating with each other. According to Landry (2019), EI is what helps you successfully coach teams, manage stress, deliver feedback, and collaborate with others.

EI is defined as the ability to understand and manage your own emotions, as well as recognise and influence the emotions of those around you. The term was first coined in

1990 by researchers John Mayer and Peter Salovey, but it was later popularised by psychologist Daniel Goleman.

More than a decade ago, Goleman highlighted the importance of EI in leadership, telling the Harvard Business Review, the most effective leaders are all alike in one crucial way: they all have a high degree of what has come to be known as emotional intelligence. It's not that IQ and technical skills are irrelevant. They do matter, but...they are the entry-level requirements for executive positions. (Ovans, 2015)

The Centre for Creative Intelligence breaks EI up into 4 key components – self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. The ability to know one's emotions, control positive and negative emotions and impulses, have empathy for others, and inspire others through persuasive communication comprise this soft skill.

Goodwin (2018) examined the struggles, triumphs, and tactical skills of four American Presidents. Her book is the 'blueprint' for crisis management and transformational leadership. These presidential leaders showed tremendous EI in the decisions they took, bearing in mind the people involved; or better still, the whole country of which they were in charge. Their exemplary use of tact allowed them to turn tragedies into achievements. This is in no way to minimise the struggles they had to face.

Research in this area has been general and sparse; however, the most convincing I found was Rabenu (2021). Rabenu examined current and future challenges to psychological relationships in the workplace due to shifting environmental conditions. Her incisive analysis offered new solutions for employees, workers, managers, and organisations. In her book, she refers to the theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner (the Bioecological Model of Human Development), which she applies to the workplace to demonstrate how people interact and form relationships there.

2.3 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Over the past 15 years, EI has become an acceptable theory for organisations to employ in order to improve daily work processes (O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver and Story, 2011; Webb, 2009). Extensive research has shown that employee engagement influences organisational effectiveness, and that high levels of employee engagement yield improved organisational performance and stakeholder value (Swarnalatha and Prasanna, 2013). Organisations faced with economic and quality outcome demands may find an advantage in serving their communities through the deliberate application of EI in daily operations (Ashkanasy and Daus, 2002).

EI theorists have asserted that managers who are emotionally intelligent communicate well with people (Goleman, 1995; Mayer et al., 2004a; Weisinger, 1988). According to Campbell, communicative effectiveness is deliberate behaviour aimed at increasing the result of an interpersonal meeting (Campbell, 199). In this respect, a high level of effective communication leads to a high level of similarities of understanding between the sender and the receiver (Gudykunst, 1993, 1995, 2005). The communication effectiveness of managers has positive outcomes, and maximises or minimises the understanding of a group of workers with strategic alignment. The latter refers to the degree to which the mission, objectives, and plans of a business are supported by information technology missions and objectives (Reich and Benbasat, 1996).

Other scientists have also argued that EI leads to improved clear and effective communication in messages (Goleman, 1998b; Mayer et al., 2004; Weisinger, 1998). Bar-On had the same viewpoint and said that 'to be emotionally and socially intelligent is to effectively understand and express oneself, to understand and relate with others, and to successfully cope with daily demands, challenges, and pressures' (2002).

According to Pfeiffer (2001), Mayer and Salovey have been credited with coining the phrase 'emotional intelligence'. Mayer and Salovey (1993) stated that EI is a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own emotions as well as those of others, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking

and actions. EI involves abilities that may be categorised into five main domains: self-awareness, which includes observing yourself and recognising a feeling as it happens; managing emotions (handling feelings so they are appropriate); motivating oneself (channelling emotions in the service of a goal and emotional self-control); empathy (sensitivity to the feelings of others); and handling relationships (managing emotions in others, social competence, and social skills).

Goleman (1995) also popularised the concept of EI. He suggested that there are two components of EI – personal competence and social competence. Personal competence consists of self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation. Social competence consists of empathy and social skills. Further, Goleman et al. (2002) stated that the four main domains of EI are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Self-awareness includes an accurate self-assessment and self-confidence. Self-management pertains to emotional self-control, adaptability achievement, and optimism. Social awareness refers to empathy and service, meeting subordinates' or customers' needs. Relationship management covers inspirational leadership, influence, teamwork, conflict management, being a change catalyst, and building bonds.

Cooper and Sawaf (1997) stated that EI is a concept that has its roots in the theory of social intelligence, which is the ability to sense, understand, and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, information and influence. They added that EI emerges 'not from the musings of rarefied intellect, but from the workings of the human heart'. EI requires that people learn to acknowledge and value feelings in themselves and others, and appropriately respond to those feelings. In this manner they effectively apply the information and energy of emotions to their daily lives and work. Humphrey (2006) demonstrated that EI is a key in coping with conflict. The key EI elements of empathy and the ability to recognise and express one's emotions enable one to deal more effectively with the emotionally arousing process of conflict.

Contemporary organisations are faced with demands and pressures of ever-expanding magnitude, and the quest for effective leadership continues to intrigue educators, researchers, and practitioners. Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2013) explained that,

‘leaders everywhere confront a set of irrevocable imperatives, changing realities driven by profound social, political, economic, and technological changes.’ During these changing times, it is most important for organisational leaders to stay attuned to their own emotional reactions to pressures, as well as how those environmental pressures affect their constituents. Hence, today’s organisations need a transformational change, calling for new leadership. In this context, the current study focuses on the importance of EI in relation to leadership effectiveness.

According to Bar-On (2002), several researchers expanded Gardner’s interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence into the six primary components of EI – emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, empathy, interpersonal relationship, stress tolerance, and impulse control.

Researchers generally agree that EI addresses one’s ability to identify, interpret, and control his or her own emotions, as well as stay in tune with, understand, and relate to the emotions of groups and individuals (Goleman et al., 2002; Bar-On, 2002; Mayer and Salovey, 1993). Additionally, EI stems from one’s ability to utilise emotional information to appropriately solve problems and make environmentally healthy decisions.

EI skills provide developing leaders with an increased understanding of the impacts of emotions within a team or organisation. Caruso and Salovey (2004) demonstrated the advantages EI has with respect to six common challenges in leadership: (a) building effective teams; (b) planning and deciding effectively; (c) motivating people; (d) communicating a vision; (e) promoting change; and (f) creating effective interpersonal relationships.

Throughout Caruso and Salovey’s descriptions of the six challenges, they cited a connection with Kouzes and Posner’s Effective Leadership Practices Model.

The first challenge was building an effective team. Caruso and Salovey discussed the need for clarifying personal values before attempting to formulate team values. As with Kouzes and Posner’s model, Caruso and Salovey explained that leaders must identify their own

values before clarifying team values. A significant level of trust is important for leading teams, and a leader must generate positive opportunities for meaningful team communication and interaction. Additionally, a leader must have significant self-confidence to give team members credit for accomplishments and not blame them when shortfalls occur.

Caruso and Salovey went on to explain that even though planning and decision-making can seem cognitive and practical, emotions contribute significantly to these activities. Emotionally intelligent leaders possess the ability to remain flexible and open to other alternatives. Additionally, EI leaders consider how their team members may react to a decision, and then attempt to make decisions that will fit in with the shared values of the team. In the end, this type of flexible decision-making will contribute to the successful implementation of the decision.

Every leader at one point or another is faced with the question of how to motivate a team. Caruso and Salovey cited Kouzes and Posner's (2002) 'encouraging the heart' model as a significant contribution to motivating a team. When a leader expresses appreciation for the accomplishments of team members, they are in many ways providing that added incentive for future successes. Caruso and Salovey also explained that it is important for a leader to celebrate team members' successes without promoting or encouraging envy throughout the team.

Furthermore, communication is among the most difficult leadership challenges. EI leaders base their communication efforts 'on delivering a message [they] want to deliver and delivering it in such a way that is heard and understood by others'. Communication also entails a leader's vision for the future. Caruso and Salovey emphasised that because an EI leader has the ability to understand and empathise with group feelings, he or she will be successful in encouraging team members to buy into their vision of the future.

In the light of rapid global changes, a leader's ability to facilitate and encourage change has been a 'hot topic' recently (Higgs and Rowland, 2001; Kotter, 1995). Caruso and Salovey (2004) explained that EI leaders challenge the status quo through innovation,

experimentation, and risk-taking. They further explained that most people are resistant to change; however, EI leaders identify, empathise with, and acknowledge resistance and then communicate the need for change and clarify a road map toward successful implementation.

Building effective interpersonal relationships is the foundation of an emotionally intelligent leader. Caruso and Salovey (2004) explained that effective interpersonal relationships include both 'positive feedback and sincere criticism' (p. 209). EI leaders are able to generate relationships that are healthy and mature enough for members to express honest and tactful reactions with other members. Caruso and Salovey explained that 'emotions contain data and [those] data are primarily communicating information about people and relationships. Being accurately aware of emotions and their meaning provides the emotionally intelligent manager with a solid base of understanding of themselves and of others'. Along with understanding and interpreting emotions, it is equally important for leaders to understand the impact of emotions on individual and organisational performance.

Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2013) described two leadership styles that relate both positively and negatively to EI, and that contribute significantly to productivity and work satisfaction – dissonance and resonance. The authors explained that a dissonant leadership style demonstrated characteristics that are not emotionally effective or supportive within an organisation. A dissonant leader is one who offends constituents and creates an unhealthy and unproductive emotional environment within the organisation. The authors described dissonant leaders as leaders who are so out of touch with the feelings of their constituents that they create a negative environment, which in turn moves the organisation's attitude to that leader onto a 'downward spiral from frustration to resentment, rancour to rage'. Dissonant leaders were also described as authoritarian, untrustworthy, uncooperative with constituents, inharmonious with the group, abusive, and humiliating.

Resonant leaders, on the other hand, project an emotional atmosphere that is comfortable, cooperative, supportive, and enthusiastic. They inspire shared values and 'rally people

around a worthy goal'. Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2013) described four leadership styles that build resonance within the organisation: (a) visionary (moves people towards a shared dream); (b) coaching (connects personal desires with organisational goals); (c) affiliative (creates harmony by connecting people to each other); and (d) democratic (values input and builds commitment through participation).

The concept of 'mirroring', in relationship to resonance and dissonance within the organisation, is very important when a leader reacts, to both positive and negative situations. When a leader reacts to a negative situation in a concerned but positive fashion, his or her behaviour becomes a model which the rest of the organisation can follow. Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2013) explained that leaders within organisations are observed for acceptance or rejection of thoughts, projects, or ideas. If a leader shows any nonverbal or verbal gestures, constituents quickly notice and react to those gestures. Emotionally intelligent leaders realise and understand how their emotional reactions can guide and steer the emotions of the entire organisation. This concept of resonant and dissonant leadership styles is one example of the power of the emotional climate within an organisation. EI has been linked to a number of additional factors associated with effective leadership (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2003; Goleman, 1998; Kouzes and Posner, 2002).

Researchers like Darwin, Thorndike, Wechsler, Sifneo, and Applebaum influenced the development of the concept of emotional-social intelligence (Bar-On, 2005). The central constituents of this concept were founded on the works of these researchers. Recognising the various abilities in EI, Bar-On divided them into five sets: (a) ability to distinguish, recognise and communicate emotions and feelings; (b) ability to recognise how others sense and relate to emotions and feelings; (c) ability to deal with and manage emotions; (d) ability to transform, adjust, and unravel problems of an individual and interpersonal nature; and (e) ability to create positive influences and be self-motivated (Bar-On, 2005, p. 3). Thus, emotional-social intelligence is a cross-section of interconnected emotional and social capabilities and skills, and it establishes how successfully we comprehend and articulate ourselves, recognise others, and communicate with them while managing our daily demands (Bar-On, 2005, p. 3).

Consequently, the theoretical framework for the Bar-On model and its measurement (known as EQ-i®) is based on this set of abilities. Bar-On (2000) asserted that EQ-i® was framed to gauge a person's emotional and social intelligence, and not personality traits or cognitive capacity. However, research has shown that EQ-i® has a somewhat reasonable relationship with other personality trait measures (Conte, 2005). Other research stated that Bar-On's model of EI focused on non-cognitive personality traits (Newsome et al., 2000). Meanwhile, Bar On reiterated that his construct had sufficient empirical evidence to prove its validity, as he had based the concept of his model on the results of various researches conducted around the world during a period of 17 years (Bar-On, 2000).

The current study used a prescribed deductive method to critically evaluate the theoretical perspectives found in the literature, and applied them practically to the research, while at the same time highlighting the literature's strengths and limitations. To eliminate irrelevant sources, the prescribed method and process was used, to provide structure.

The literature review for the current study consisted of the analysis of academic research on EI, at a time of change in employee engagement; data were gathered by searching the databases of the Selinus University Library, by using Google Scholar, and by reading books, magazines, and scientific reports.

CHAPTER THREE (RESEARCH METHODOLOGY)

3.1 AIMS

This study explored the impact that emotional intelligence had on improving communication between employers and their employees in increasing employee engagement. In this chapter, research methodology is discussed, including the research paradigm, sample and population. Following a discussion of the instrumentation that was used in the study is an explanation of the data analysis procedures that were undertaken. Finally, the limitations of the study are identified and explained.

To answer the proposed research question, I used the qualitative method of study to carry out my research. Materials and equipment used during the research consisted of a questionnaire for 25 managers (see appendix II). The latter had to respond to 14 open-ended questions. I used questionnaires because they have easy to follow designs and can be shorter than interviews so can reduce respondent fatigue. They are also quick to administer, have the absence of the researcher having influence over the respondent, thus reducing bias.

The topic was selected to provide evidence of their attribution to enhancing employee outcomes. It is apparent that organisational leaders are the main models of the organisation in terms of values and related positive behaviours. However, it is also necessary to identify the interrelating factors that command's the potential mediating effects of the interrelation to actually improving staff's engagement. The study comes in a timely manner when organisational leaders are in need of the best possible approach in improving the productivity of their employees and its positive outcomes.

Given the objectives of the research and its purpose, its tenets and theoretical perspectives are driven by the need to understand the concept of leadership and E.I. and how it relates to other areas of managing staff with the aim of increasing employee engagement. The study uses an effective design and methodological approach by means of conducting a survey and obtaining data from the samples. In order to frame the theoretical foundations of the study, a literature review was presented, which is indispensable to all scientific researches as a basis of defining the theoretical definition of the topic.

The purpose of this applied study in this research is to assess the connection between the variables and making predictions about the effect EI has on good leadership communication effectiveness and team engagement.

3.2 RESEARCH METHOD

Every researcher has a set of beliefs or a view of the world that guides his/her research questions and methodology. This set of beliefs is known as a research paradigm. A pragmatic paradigm does not commit to any one system of philosophy; rather it focuses on solutions to problems and gathering data through all available methods to understand the problem (Creswell, 2009). Rescher (2005) discussed pragmatic research as a way of rationally substantiating knowledge; not an attempt to define an objective truth, but rather a discussion of the meaning of things within a situational reality.

Unlike other paradigms, pragmatism focuses on the best methods of data collection to solve a problem instead of an overarching set of beliefs regarding reality. Pragmatists tend to focus on applied or action research, with mixed methodology in a natural setting (Van De Ven, 2007). Using the survey of existing literature, it was found that there have been very few studies which demonstrate the linkage and connect of employee engagement with EI.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the role E.I. played in increasing employee engagement. My research adopted an iterative and qualitative approach. I provided 25 managers with a questionnaire and asked them to answer 14 open-ended questions and send the responses back to me via email.

An interpretive approach allows for the respondent's voice to be heard in this study. The qualitative data was enhanced and enriched through post-survey discussions with the respondents. Most found it easier to voice their thoughts than write it down or 'have it documented.'

I used thematic narrative analysis to interpret the responses given. I faced very few difficulties in this area, since I knew most of the respondents. We already had a relationship built on trust.

The present study thus aimed to determine the relationship between employee engagement and EI and was designed to address the following research questions:

Does E.I. contribute to better communication between managers and their employees?

How does this translate into increasing employee engagement?

To accomplish the objective of the study, following hypotheses were framed and tested:

H1: There exists significant relationship between wellbeing and employee engagement.

H2: There exists significant relationship between emotionality and employee engagement.

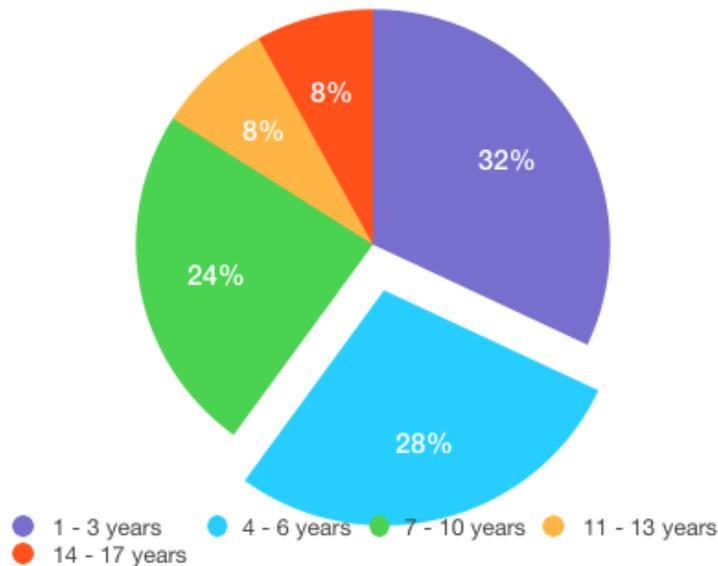
3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

The findings presented here are based on 25 qualitative questionnaires completed by a broad range of managers who had agreed to participate in this research. Six of the 25 participants did not complete the final four questions of the questionnaire. It is assumed that this happened as these questions were located on the second page of the questionnaire and the participants may have overlooked them. This is unfortunate and will be returned to in the limitations of the study, not least as these four questions included a question on social styles and the importance, as perceived by the participants, of managers having a degree of familiarity with the cultural background of their team members.

The managers originated from a wider variety of sectors and organisations, including the public sector (educational) and private sector. They varied in seniority and experience, as well as the organisations they represented. The first question aimed to find out how long they had worked in their organisation. The following chart shows that the largest contingent was in the bracket relating to a length of belonging to the company of between one and three years (32 per cent). Unsurprisingly, the numbers of these being linked to the same

company for the longest (11 to 13 years and 14 - 17 years) were the smallest, each having two individuals in them.

The qualitative data elicited from questions two to 14 is presented in the following



paragraphs. The identity of the managers is protected, not least as a number of them chose to answer the questionnaire anonymously. As a consequence, any data relating to individuals is ascribed to them as respondent 1, respondent 2 (R1, R2, R3) and so forth.

When it came to ascertaining what the managers enjoyed most about their roles, the answers were varied. Some of them chose to orientate their answer to relate to external factors, such as R14 who noted that they enjoyed ‘interactions with various customers and being able to provide banking solutions to meet their needs’. Others were more focused on the organisation and improving it, albeit with a view to improving the customer experience, such as R17 who said that they ‘love the fact that I get to find innovative ways to create systems/services which help people and overall improve their quality of life’.

The following question was aimed at identifying what the managers did not like about their job. Similarly, the answers were both externally and internally facing. Some were concerned about limitations in terms of resources, the stressful nature of the job at times or difficult

customers. R15 mentioned that they disliked the ‘lack of staff commitment. Clients that don’t pay on time. Sexism in the industry.’ This is not dissimilar from R11 who noted they disliked ‘Mainly lateness by both clients & staff’.

When asked to rate the effectiveness of their current team, most managers thought it to be between 70 and 75 per cent, with only a few expressing complete satisfaction, such as R7 who said ‘we have an amazing team, multitaskers who are so passionate about what they do’.

Given the diversity in the industries, sectors and job roles the managers fulfil, it cannot surprise to find that their responses to the question of what could be done differently varied considerably. However, there were greater similarities between the respondents’ answers when it came to identifying their motivations for getting the job done. It seems that there was a relatively high degree of reflection among the respondents about their motivations. R6 commented that their ‘motivation is based on the fact that I always want to do better than I did previously. I am intrinsically motivated’ and R4 referenced ‘customer satisfaction’.

Detailing the biggest challenges, four out of the 25 respondents referenced skills and the need to upskill members of the respective teams, others recounted industry-specific challenges, such as utility costs or particular pieces of software as representing the biggest challenge.

When asked about their understanding of EI, one manager did not provide an answer and two said they were not sure of the concept. The overwhelming majority of respondents, however, 22 managers, had a clear understanding. R22, for example, stated that ‘Emotional intelligence is a much-needed skill and when applied consistently and correctly can increase productivity even more than a person’s IQ’. Similarly, R21 noted that ‘You need to know who you are, own and understand your own emotions and how that impacts the people around you. You need to know the people you work with and work out how to balance all the different personalities. Knowing when you need to be sensitive, tough, human, listen and setting boundaries are all skills excellent managers balance’. Moreover, those managers who had a view on EI all thought of it as a highly important competence among managers.

The question of whether it was important for managers to know the cultural backgrounds of their team appeared to split opinions. R3 thought, for example, that organisational and internationally agreed professional standards should be more important. Other managers thought this was more important than many factors, with R13 saying that ‘this is pretty much our success story!!’. Further responses on the question related to E.I. are as follows:

R3 ‘EI is one's ability to understand and manage people's emotions. This is extremely important for all staff and not just managers. A manager's ability to effectively understand and perceive their team's emotions improves their ability to direct their team and develop them individually. No two people will ever be the same emotionally and therefore need to be managed in different ways.’

R7 ‘This is the number one skill every manager should have in his tool kit.’

R8 ‘It is all about managing one’s emotions and knowing how to manage others. I think it takes a certain level of maturity though. EI skills should be integrated into any training for staff especially those at the managerial level.’

R11 ‘100% sure that intellectual intelligence without emotional intelligence has vast limitations in what can be achieved. EI in my view is the ability to understand that human beings are the vector of work and achievements, and therefore act accordingly by placing relationships and feelings at a logical high status of importance in the work environment. Any manager in charge of a team and willing to achieve any set goals must be able to “read” situations and team members personalities/qualities/flaws and adjust/act accordingly.’

R 19 ‘Knowledge of this helps you to identify and deal with your own emotions and understand that of others as well. This will enable you to limit team stress, improve team relationships and reduce conflict to the barest minimum. We had training on this. Yes, both managers and their teams need the training for maximum collaboration, efficiency and develop a warm relationship with one another.’

It is evident from the opinions of some of the managers above that those who had a view on emotional intelligence all thought of it as a highly important competence that managers need to have.

In contrast to the question relating to EI, there was a much less common understanding of social styles expressed by the managers. 16 managers either did not complete the question (see introductory remarks) or explicitly admitted that they did not know the term. Five managers had some understanding of what they thought social styles referred to and their role in managers' ability to organise work tasks. Three managers offered educated guesses as to the meaning of social styles.

The final two questions were aimed at identifying information about the demographic make-up of the teams and about the managers themselves. The diversity and different roles the team members are able to contribute were valued by the managers.

The study creates a positive appeal to its intended audience, in that it provides a fundamental understanding of the issue, and offers an alternative to the conventional knowledge about leadership. Managers and industry leaders would benefit greatly from the findings of the study, because it shows that the improvement of their employee engagement can be attained if EI is used to improve effective communication.

To avoid coming to biased conclusions, I used the data presented to summarise the project. To mitigate the risks associated with the amount of literature available, I tried to use research focused on small organisations, to ensure it was relevant.

3.4 POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND ETHICS

Qualitative data analysis required certain procedures be conducted in order to increase the trustworthiness of the data. There were several methods used for establishing trustworthiness in this study, including methods that lend support for credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility speaks to the truthfulness of the data. When collecting qualitative data it is difficult to determine whether or not participants are being truthful.

The issues and challenges to which the project may have been vulnerable were: a) the possibility of coming to biased conclusions, as the researcher is also impacted by the

relevant changes; and b) the restricted amount of literature available, on the subject of the importance of effective communication at a time of change in employee engagement.

A second problem was that three of the respondents refused to write down their names or the names of their workplaces. They made it plain that if I insisted, they were not going to fill out the questionnaire. The third problem concerned problems with the research design itself.

The diversity of the respondents and their responses also made it difficult to generalise the answers. However, there are some commonalities in the answers that are worth highlighting. One such commonality is the managers' views in relation to the importance of EI. Similarly, it can be concluded that far fewer managers had a firm understanding of social styles and their importance, even though they instinctively attached a degree of importance to them.

The current qualitative analysis was effective in presenting its arguments and in proving the point of the study. However, the main limitations concerned the questionnaire used for the survey itself.

Six of the 25 participants did not complete the final four questions of the questionnaire. It is assumed that this happened because these questions were located on the second page of the questionnaire, and the participants may have overlooked them.

I had underestimated how difficult some managers were going to find this task. One revelation was that no one was ready to have their views recorded. I, therefore, had to abandon the plan to analyse interaction through this method. In this respect, I had no evidence to show even a partial picture of what the reality was. This was a great disappointment, because it eliminated the possibility of live recordings of feelings expressed by certain managers.

The limitation of using questionnaires is that there is no room to ask probing questions, should something interesting be revealed; there is a risk of missing data, and often the questionnaires are not appropriate for all types of respondents.

Despite the identified limitations of the study, the research design, the validity and reliability of the assessment tools, the sample size, and the rigour of the statistical

analysis, provided confidence in the results of the study. Therefore, the research contributes to the literature on EI, and extends the body of knowledge on the relationship between a) frontline managers and supervisors, and b) the employee engagement of their direct reports.

The sample size of the study was a limitation experienced early on, during the data collection phase. Due to the inability to freely sort the archival database, the study was unable to obtain the number of eligible management participants that was originally designed.

In summary, the suggestions for future research include:

- a larger sample size to determine the impact EI has on communication between teams;
- a larger sample size to investigate differences in EI growth based on age, gender, race/ethnicity, and other demographic characteristics;
- an in-depth exploration of training components, focused on impacted growth of one or two EI skills;
- a deeper exploration of cohort experiences
- the influence of team pressure on EI skill development.

3.5 HOW DOES THIS RESEARCH FURTHER EXISTING KNOWLEDGE?

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the impact of EI on improving communication to render it more effective thereby developing better relations between managers and their teams which ultimately, helps to increase employee engagement. By understanding which experiences encourage behavioural, emotional, and personal growth, administrators can make better decisions regarding the allocation of resources and the development of programming. This research added to the previous literature on the area of managers EI development and leadership training.

The findings indicate that managers must learn to meet the needs of employees, in order to positively address employee engagement. This research also contributes to positive social change by adding insights for managers seeking to increase productivity.

The ethics of internal communication are rarely discussed in the literature and codes of ethical considerations or practices specific to internal communication are very limited.

An ethical internal communicator: ensures that employees receive important organisational information at the right time for them; ensures that employees have a say about what goes on in the organisation, and that what is said is treated seriously; ensures that senior managers communicate regularly with employees, providing them with important organisational information, listening to their opinions and suggestions, and responding to them; challenges senior managers when important information is not forthcoming; and challenges senior managers when employee voice is not in place across the organisation.

In terms of the research, I took into consideration the following ethical implications: a) by using valid sources, I ensured that the quality of the research was not compromised; and b) I made sure to reference all material/literature accurately, to ensure the integrity of the project was not compromised. This gives the research a solid foundation to be taken seriously.

This study has direct, practical implications for the development of leadership programming and other personal professional development experiences. By discovering the importance of EI, administrators can develop more impactful and inspiring leadership training programmes to further develop this soft skill. Using this research as a foundation to build upon, companies and organisations can determine the experiences that most impact employee growth and focus on allocating more resources, time, and programming towards these elements.

CHAPTER FOUR (CONCLUSION)

4.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This research has helped me to answer the main research question, and has equally enabled me to reflect upon my own learning. From the beginning of my research, I clearly established for myself a normative position around EI; and in the course of the research, at no time have I questioned this position. I remain convinced that EI plays a significant role in improving communication between managers, and directly impacts and increases employee engagement. In addition, undertaking this research has been an invaluable learning experience because I have gained some understanding of the nature of the research process.

Reflecting on the methodology that emerged, I think that what eventuated provided a very useful foundation for the research. The participatory action research that formed the overarching framework for the methodology engaged the managers, grounded the research in the reality of practice, and produced tangible outcomes. The focus on the action research group process, rather than the outcome, was very insightful, and has produced interesting discussions on the organisational change process. Participatory action research allowed for a variety of research methods to be incorporated into the study.

From my perspective, in terms of research efficacy in this particular setting, the participatory action research, coupled with the research methods employed, worked well. The emphasis placed upon emancipation and participation, coupled with a methodology that was allowed to unfold over time, were key elements of that efficacy. It would be these elements that I would recommend to others looking to engage in participatory action research in an education setting.

The current study has also reaffirmed my belief in ‘going beyond the job description’ and finding out more about who is behind the job description. How can a manager help their team to move forward? How can the manager verbalise his thoughts in a way that does not

undermine the staff, but rather empowers them to give the best they can, irrespective of external factors? What image does the manager project about himself that can positively influence his/her team members? Are the working environment and systems built on trust, and can they, therefore, function in his/her absence? Do all the team members feel valued?

I have also re-examined my own professional values and guidelines for my future practice. What legacy will I leave after I have left my job? These are questions that I constantly asked myself during my research. I have begun to share my experience, and what works for my team, with other managers. Managers need to figure out how much attention is paid to team members' opinions and suggestions. How much value is placed on what they bring to the table?

The research process has also encouraged me to view my own position within the wider context, and has provided me with a wealth of resources from my literature review. From these, I can learn in order to improve the quality of the relationships I have with my team members.

As a concluding statement, I can think of none better than the words of the Roman playwright Titus Maccius Plautus; you must 'practice yourself what you preach' if the expectation or desire is total engagement from our employees then, managers need to be true to themselves and know their staff. It is not only about a job description, but about the person who is going to perform the job. Managers should have open communication lines, show empathy and understanding and, admit that doing something differently is not always wrong. My study offers suggestive evidence for a change in managerial attitude. If the tentative conclusions are confirmed then there will be a case for further research in the field.

This is because transformational leadership enables the leader to transform the values, needs, aspirations, and preferences of followers, to make them more committed to their tasks. It also enables leaders to convince followers to make significant sacrifices for the interest of the mission, and to go the extra mile (Shamir et al., 1993, p. 577, as cited in Lam and O'Higgins, 2011).

My recommendation is that to make a lasting and positive impact in their workplaces, managers start by developing their EI skills. They should start with a scientifically-validated and well-known EI assessment, like EQ-i[®] 2.0. Certification on EQ-i[®] will prepare leaders and introduce EI concepts into their companies or organisations. EI training will improve vital skills like decision-making, the ability to cope with stress, and the ability to relate to others. This leads to more employee engagement and better performance all-round, creating an EI awareness and providing skills development opportunities to increase the organisation's capacity for success.

EI is one of the most widely discussed topics in current industrial, work, and organisational psychology. The concept of EI was first introduced by Salovey and Mayer as a type of social intelligence, separable from general intelligence, which involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among those emotions, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions. In a later effort, Salovey and Mayer (1990) expanded their model and defined EI as: the ability of an individual to perceive accurately, evaluate, and express emotion; the ability to access and generate feelings and emotions when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional, rational, and intellectual growth. Research has shown that EI is the common factor that influences the different ways in which people develop in their social skills, in their lives in general, and also in their jobs. It allows them to control their emotions, get along with other people, and handle frustration. It has been discovered that the difference between a simply brilliant person and a brilliant manager is due to a person's EI. Finally, it is EI that dictates the way people deal with each other and understand emotions. Thus, EI is considered very important for business leaders, because if business leaders are insensitive to the mood of their staff or team, it may cause frustration, and the manager will therefore not get the best out of their people. Turner (2004) has stated that EI is the softer component of total intelligence, and that it contributes to people's professional and personal lives. Traditional IQ is the capacity for learning, understanding, and reasoning. It is now thought to contribute only 20% to one's success, whereas emotional quotient (EQ), which is the ability to understand oneself and interacting with people, contributes 80%.

EQ is critical for effective leadership. IQ has been linked to job performance, and is a key factor and element in recruitment. However, EQ is obvious in the ability of managers and leaders to retain their positions and be successful in their roles. In fact, most firms hire for IQ and sack because of EQ.

To be effective, it is vital for leaders to connect emotionally with their employees. Emotions are an intrinsic part of everyday work situations and experiences. If current leaders have to lead by example, and be role models for the use of EI, then more research into the ways managers can increase employee engagement is imperative. They can navigate the challenges that face them if they embrace, co-operate, share, and show more empathy, more willingness to listen, and more co-operation. EI and social engagement should be part of the interpersonal skills used by leaders to manage employee engagement when dealing with real situations. Ethical thinking, connected to EI, is relevant in jobs that demand a lot of decision-making, problem-solving, teamwork, communication, and customer service. HR managers can use EI as a valuable tool in their respective organisations, in the ways described below.

4.1.1 SELF-AWARENESS

Self-awareness (or self-assignment) is having complete knowledge of your emotions, feelings, behaviours, morals, strengths, and weaknesses, and then understanding how these will affect people around you.

To bring out the best in your team, you first need to bring out the best in yourself, which is only possible through self-awareness. If you are self-aware, you will know how you feel and you will then manage your emotions and actions positively to lead the organisation effectively. In addition to that, a self-aware leader is more generous towards the team.

To become more self-aware:

- Evaluate yourself by comparing your performance with your team's feedback. Cherniss (2000) stated that 'It's good for all leaders to get some honest feedback',

noting that some companies are requiring executives to focus on EI as part of their leadership development programmes.

- Be mindful of your responses and reactions. This means thinking logically about every small situation and then reacting.

Once you've determined which areas to work on, focus on achieving one or two goals. 'Self-management is getting your emotions to produce the behaviour you want', Bradberry says; 'sometimes that's keeping yourself from doing something. Other times it's magnifying a productive behaviour'.

Experts have said that in order to manage oneself, it is important to set narrow, measurable goals, to keep a journal, and to question yourself.

4.1.2 SELF-REGULATION

Once you become self-aware and understand your emotions, the next step is to regulate yourself and these emotions.

Self-regulation means taking control of your emotions and managing these emotions according to the situation. A good leader needs to have self-regulation to manage arising conflicts and difficult situations.

In simple words, self-regulation is turning the negatives into the positives. If a team comes across an issue, EI leaders maintain a positive outlook and solve the problem constructively, without losing their patience.

Team members are free to seek help under self-regulated team leaders. They do not hesitate to deliver their ideas, ask questions, or even inform about any arising issue. Hence, a healthy and comfortable workplace is established.

To improve the ability to self-regulate:

- Keep in mind your moral values while leading a team.
- Do not hesitate in taking responsibility for your actions.
- Avoid panicking, and manage stressful situations with a cool mind.

4.1.3 SELF-MOTIVATION

One of the most important components of EI for great leaders is self-motivation (or internal motivation).

Self-motivation basically means that the leader is passionate, dedicated, optimistic, and interested to work without any external drivers like fame, money, or promotion. Leaders who are internally motivated are more focused on achieving their goals. They put in their best to yield excellent results as a leader.

When the leader of a team is motivated, it boosts employee morale; thus, the team also becomes motivated to accomplish the task.

To enhance self-motivation:

- Remind yourself of all the reasons you wanted to join this job.
- Take the obstacles positively and turn them into opportunities by reacting smartly.
- Know the importance of your position and its effects on the team. The team will only be positive when the leader is positive.

4.1.4 EMPATHY

Empathy is walking in someone else's shoes and understanding them, keeping in mind their circumstances.

Empathy is a key component of effective leadership. Great leaders are empathetic towards their team. Empathetic leaders listen to their team, understand them, and help them as a member and not as a leader. A team with an understanding leader is engaging,

comfortable, and free. People will fearlessly bring all their problems to the team leader and the leader will assist them accordingly.

To improve empathy:

- Listen carefully to the team member's query and respond like a friend.
- Understand their feelings and do not overburden them.
- Appreciate your team members to boost their morale.
- Determine how they truly feel by understanding their body language.

4.1.5 SOCIAL SKILLS

Social skills are the last component of EI for good leaders. Great leaders need to have good social skills to build and manage relationships.

Emotionally intelligent people interact with others and keep building a network. These people have amazing communication skills, which help in translating their ideas to their team effectively. Leaders with great social skills know how to take both appreciation and criticism. They make the best team leaders, as they listen and solve all the issues within their team. Team members look up to them for assistance and guidance.

To build social skills:

- Enhance your verbal and non-verbal communication skills.
- Know how to solve problems within your team and outside it.

People without this skillset don't understand that in social interactions, they need to focus more on the other person than on themselves. They miss important cues because they are always thinking about what they will say next.

Those prompts can be particularly subtle with subordinates, who often defer to authority and may be reluctant to share directly what is on their mind. Learning to read nonverbal signals can provide clues about what they are feeling.

4.2 CONSEQUENCES

EI enables leaders to work with members of the organisation without conflict. It helps leaders to motivate their team members, and help them transform into the states they desire. Managers with high EI perform better in comparison to leaders that have low EI. The employees that possess high EI are creative and empathetic. This leads to high productivity and effectiveness in organisations. Organisations, therefore, need to incorporate EI tests in their procedures for selecting employees to join the organisation (Sadri, 2012).

The workplace is changing, and nowadays people do not leave the organisation, they leave their managers. This makes it difficult to retain employees. People with strong emotional abilities enable people to develop in their skills. Organisations need to change their way of training employees and top executives. The training should not centre on academic aspects, but instead train the neocortex part of the brain (Goleman, 2015). A person's EI improves over time if that person wishes it to. It builds as one continues practising, and taking new and more challenging roles. Leadership requires emotional skills to help manage and lead people in the organisation. The leader sets the tone for the whole organisation. Companies and organisations need to have a culture that encourages EI, to ensure that they attain their objectives.

Frontline managers and supervisors are present in the midst of daily operations. In other words, they are in the thick of things. As a result, they are in an ideal position to influence employees. Using transformational leadership's 114 attributes, supported with EI, they positively influence daily operations. These leaders nurture a more positive work environment, leading to improved employee satisfaction and employee engagement. These achievements affect customer outcomes such as quality, safety, experience, and loyalty.

In a nutshell, transformational leadership and EI have to work together in practice to be able to allow employee satisfaction and development to occur. Regardless of the culture, the transformational leadership approach was proven to work towards a greater advantage that either the organisation or the staff could achieve alone. The correlation between the

two is fundamental to the growth of both the employees and the staff, as it alleviates the common problems that most employees face within the work environment. Lam and O'Higgins's (2011) article was able to articulate a fundamental understanding of the importance of the effects of applying both transactional leadership and EI in the leadership approach.

In order to increase employee engagement, HR departments should come up with a variety of ways through which employees can be empowered. Firstly, employees can be empowered through training and development. Training enables one to gain more skills. This will not only enable an employee to offer better skills, but also boost an employee's self-confidence. Secondly, employees can be empowered by being assigned leadership responsibility from time to time. This boosts an employee's leadership skills and also makes him feel worthy. Thirdly, employees can be empowered by being exposed to challenging situations. This opens them up to think 'out of the box' and come up with better ideas. Targeting managerial candidates possessing high EI for possible employment can have a positive impact on organisational performance (Nikolaou and Tsaousis, 2002). As with the current study, frontline managers and supervisors with higher EI scores tend to create greater employee engagement.

4.3 CONCLUSION

Everyone requires support in order to produce better results. Additionally, most people are motivated through recognition and support. Recognition refers to the act of rewarding one's hard work through increased wages, bonuses or gifts. On the other hand, employees need mentors who can coach and help them whenever necessary during any assignment. Support in the form of advice is a necessary requirement in any organisation. Therefore, there is a significant need to encourage consultation in order to minimise mistakes and produce the best results in any assignment.

Teamwork, in most cases, leads to efficiency and better results. As such, employees should be encouraged to embrace teamwork and collaborate during the course of their assignments. This is because different individuals possess different skills. Through

teamwork, better and more timely results can be achieved, because team members consult each other. Teamwork also encourages specialisation and division of labour. Specialised personnel are capable of performing an assignment perfectly and within a short duration.

Employee engagement can also be enhanced by assisting them to grow and develop. People are highly motivated by programmes that enable them to grow and develop career-wise. Therefore, it is essential for all organisations to put employees through programmes such as seminars and higher educational workshops. Employers should enable employees to gain more knowledge and skills by pursuing short-term courses. As such, employees should be entitled to study leave in order to be able to pursue further studies. This will not only enhance employee engagement, but will also lead to increased profits due to increased expertise among employees. To enhance employee engagement, it is essential to align efforts with the strategies developed by managers. This will increase the chances of realising better results, and in turn, improve employees' morale and general attitude.

There are various advantages of workplace engagement. These include reduced turnover, high levels of individual productivity, and organisational citizenship behaviour. Wu (2022) noted that motivating a workforce to innovate, while ensuring productivity and collaboration, is not that easy; however, creating an environment and culture that encourages employees to do well in their role is the first step to a loyal, purpose-driven, and satisfied organisation. Giving meaning to work and allowing for autonomy also creates a valuable sense of ownership, and helps employees, leaders, and teams grow with the organisation. The added benefits of retaining top talents are countless; from reduced turnover costs, to employee wellbeing. If an organisation is planning for growth, employee engagement is the investment needed to achieve it.

With regard to remote working, Wu suggested 10 emotionally intelligent ways to keep employees engaged and motivated. They were: setting clear expectations; staying connected; trusting your team; managing accomplishments, not activity; encouraging growth and learning; giving and receiving feedback; taking breaks; emphasising workplace culture; encouraging volunteering; and celebrating people.

Showing empathy to one another, working together as a team, and understanding that there are bound to be circumstances beyond our personal locus of control, are the keys to having an emotionally intelligent organisation.

The current study will further enhance the research on the interaction between managers and their employees in different sectors. It will encourage the development of programmes to address issues raised by the lack of EI in leaders, as well as workshops on social styles that will help both managers and their staff be aware of their strengths and limitations, in order to help them to interact with each other in better ways. Inasmuch as employers seek out individuals who are consistent and possess integrity, employees also look up to managers who can be trusted in their values and actions. More surveys should be conducted on the knowledge of social styles and cultural diversity, because without these investigations it will not be possible to ascertain if self-awareness, and awareness of 'the other', is indeed the foundation for getting the best out of our employees.

With the identified benefits of EI related to creating and developing positive relationships, combined with the understanding that positive relationships are the core of effective leadership, the idea of EI and effective leadership is one that has been well established in the literature. Researchers have started to develop and assess developmental programmes for EI that coincide with leadership development programmes and initiatives. The question most pertinent to those involved in research and practice in the area of leadership development is the nature of the process by which leaders learn about emotions, and the power of emotion in the area of leadership success.

'Effective leaders tend to be smart in the traditional way, but there's also this emotional component that's probably equally important, if not more so', says Cary Cherniss. Giving work responsibilities to employees and involving them in the decision-making process strengthens the morale of the employees, boosts their self-confidence and gives them a sense of empowerment. Employees feel accountable for the jobs they do, and feel emotionally involved with the organisation, which directly impacts their productivity.

Highly engaged employees also increase the profitability and revenue growth of an organisation. A global engagement study conducted on 664,000 employees in 2005

showed that companies with high employee engagement achieved greater profits, with 19% increase in operating income, 13% increase in net income growth, and 27% increase in earnings per share. This was as compared to companies with low employee engagement, which showed 4% reduction in net income growth, 11% decline in earnings per share, and a 33% decline in operating income (Navisys). Engaged employees, because of their love for their job and the position they are in, are willing to give that extra effort required for the success of an organisation. Disengaged employees only work as much as they deem fit to receive a pay-cheque, but engaged employees don't work solely for direct compensation. Their passion for their job, and their attachment to the organisation, gives them an impetus to improve their skill and performance, to contribute to the growth of the company.

Engaged employees show higher levels of retention and lower rates of absenteeism. Studies have found that disengaged employees are 80% more likely than their engaged counterparts to leave their organisations. Since engaged employees are more productive and dedicated to their work, they are less likely to miss a day's work. Reduced absenteeism leads to higher productivity, increasing the overall effectiveness of the organisation.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

EI needs a lot of research, as it directly influences the behaviour of any employee working in any organisation, as well as enhancing the decision-making power and the abilities required to handle contingency situations, which may arise unexpectedly. There is also a need to carry out research regarding intrinsic and extrinsic factors that impact employee behaviour and the EI of employees. Sector-wide research might also be carried out to reveal the EI levels of employees in different sectors.

It is assumed that by recognising the manager and employee levels of EI, a difference in corporations and organisations could be achieved, in terms of a company's attempt to develop the quality of the executives' and co-workers' lives. This is said to affect their output level, which in turn amplifies profits (Brophy, 1996).

Further studies are also needed to ascertain the impact of EI on organisational performance. Future research to complement the current study, using wider samples in companies and organisations in the whole of Ghana, is to be encouraged. It would be equally important to investigate if factors such as age and gender play the role of control variables in the context of the current study.

It is important for managers to understand that being self-aware helps them to recognise their emotions, and the effects these emotions have on the members of their team. Embracing each other's strengths and weaknesses, and taking into consideration social styles and the cultural diversity of the people that make up the company's blueprint, while exercising EI, may help them to better face the challenges ahead, in this century and beyond.

EI has the potential for managers to establish more effective relationships with their subordinates. Cooper and Sawaf (1998) noted that EI may bring about different levels of career success. It also acts as a source of motivation, information, feedback, innovation, and effectiveness. It can improve decision making, leadership, strategic and operational processes, appropriate and free communications, teamwork, and healthy work relations.

The current study has helped determine that EI competencies and employee engagement can be essential in addressing change, managing daily operations, and improving organisational effectiveness. The results will help other organisations as they pursue organisational change and performance excellence. The study provides insight into organisational strategies and leadership interventions to improve the effectiveness of recruitment and retention of high-performing staff, pursue leadership development excellence, and enhance organisational learning and teamwork.

Understanding the potential importance of EI, and its influence on employee engagement, may be a critical HR strategy for recruitment of future leaders, as they face the challenges and lead their organisations through significant and constant change.

“In teamwork, emotional intelligence is the crucial social lubricant, providing the capacity to settle disputes well, brainstorm creatively, and work harmoniously. This is all the more true for great team leaders. It turns out that team members who scored higher on the ECI, a test of emotional and social competencies, were most likely to emerge as the natural leaders.” **Daniel Goleman (Jan 2007)**

Leader Emotional Intelligence ► Employee Engagement ► Organisational Performance

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APPENDIX A

Key words used during the research:

1. **Emotional Intelligence Quotient;** Emotional intelligence (or EQ) is the ability to understand, use, and manage your own emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathise with others, overcome challenges and defuse conflict.
2. **Empathic;** seeing and understanding the feelings of another.
3. **Active listening;** making a conscious effort to hear, understand, and retain information that's being relayed to you.
4. **Interpersonal;** the entire process and practice of exchanging ideas, information, and even emotional experiences that can be shared between people.
5. **Tolerance;** the ability or willingness to tolerate the existence of opinions or behaviour that one dislikes or disagrees with.
6. **Transformation;** a dramatic change in form or appearance; an extreme, radical change.
7. **Well-being;** how people feel and how they function on a personal and social level and how they evaluate their lives.
8. **Sociability;** the tendency and accompanying skills to seek out companionship, engage in interpersonal relations, and participate in social activities.
9. **Self-control;** Self-control is the ability to regulate and alter your responses in order to avoid undesirable behaviours, increase desirable ones, and achieve long-term goals.
10. **Employee engagement;** Employee engagement is a human resources (HR) concept that describes the level of enthusiasm and dedication a worker feels toward their job.
11. **Motivation;** the level of desire one has to do something.
12. **Self-awareness;** the ability to recognise and understand your emotions and needs and, understanding their effect on others.
13. **Self-regulation;** the ability to control disruptive impulses and moods.
14. **Social skill;** skills and proficiency in starting, managing and building on relationships with individuals and groups.
15. **Perspective;** a particular attitude towards or way of regarding something; a point of view.
16. **Hard Skills;** hard skills are those talents and abilities that can be measured.
17. **Soft Skills;** soft skills are less defined skills that often apply not only to one specific job but are universal.
18. **Diversity;** the condition of having many different elements.

19. **Manager:** a business manager is a supervisor who leads and oversees an organisation or a department's employees and operations. They work to ensure the company remains productive, efficient and organised at all times by implementing operational strategies, conducting performance reviews and overseeing all day-to-day activities.
20. **Employee;** an employee is an individual who was hired by an employer to do a specific job. The employee is hired by the employer after an application and interview process results in his or her selection as an employee. This selection occurs after the applicant is found by the employer to be the most qualified of their applicants to do the job for which they are hiring.

APPENDIX B

Survey for Managers	
Name:	Name of Company/Organisation:
Functional Title:	Date Survey was Completed:

1. How long have you been in this position?
2. What do you love the most about your job?
3. Is there anything you dislike about your job?
4. How do you think your team is doing as a whole?
5. What could be done differently?
6. What motivates you to get the job done?
7. What is your biggest challenge at work right now?

8. Have these challenges always existed? If not, please elaborate.

9. What do you know about E.I. (emotional intelligence)? Do you think a manager needs this skill to better interact with his/her team members?

10. What currently works and doesn't work with your team?

11. Do you think it is relevant to know about your team members cultural background? Do you think it helps is knowing how to manage actions and reactions?

12. Have you heard of social styles? If yes, to what extent do you think it helps to know which category your team members fall into? How does this help the dynamics of the group?

13. What else do you think is important for me to know about your team (demographics)?

14. What else do you think is important for me to know about you?

