A systems approach to work engagement: Igniting work engagement beyond the individual

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Abstract

Work engagement is usually measured on an individual level, measuring dimensions that lies within the individual e.g. vigour, dedication and absorption. It is argued that engagement could be enhanced if a more holistic approach is adopted where factors influencing engagement beyond the individual are also taken into account. The purpose of this paper is two-fold. First, the paper proposes a systems approach to study engagement in organisations and determines the factors that might influence work engagement on the three levels. Thereafter, work engagement was measured on the three levels, namely individual, team and organisation in a support service department at a comprehensive university. A quantitative research design was used. The results of the study indicated that work engagement is driven at three levels at the institution, namely the individual level, team level and organisational level. The individual level portrayed the employees' internal perspective through vigour, dedication and absorption. The average investment made in individual-level work engagement averaged at 71.5% engagement input. Team-level work engagement averaged at 70%. Organisational-level engagement averaged at 72%. The results illustrate the synergy between the various levels of engagement and could contribute to regard engagement as an issue that should be addressed beyond the individual level in the organisation.

Key words: work engagement, employee engagement, systems approach, team engagement, organisational engagement

1. Introduction

Davila and Pina-Ramirez (2014) describe work engagement as the backbone of a business and as dynamic over the employee's employment and overall career. Studies by Deloitte (2015) indicate that 78% of business leaders regard work engagement as important, but 75% of organisations have no engagement strategy. According to a Towers Watson Survey conducted in the United States of America (USA), disengagement costs up to $550 billion per year in lost productivity (Galagan, 2015). Galagan (2015) states that despite great amounts spent on engagement since 2000, the percentage of disengaged employees in the US remains at 66%.

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

South Africa is no exception from the global picture. Work engagement is usually studied from an individual perspective. If one considers the impact of various macro factors on an organisation, one need to consider work engagement beyond the individual by considering factors that might influence work engagement on a team and organisational level. The paper argues that work engagement should be studied on various levels in an organisation.

2. Problem investigated

Studies on work engagement illustrate the magnitude and consequences of having disengaged employees in the organisation. It seems as if interventions are haphazard and do not really contribute to enhance work engagement. The paper attempt to suggest another way to think about work engagement.

Work engagement are usually studied focusing on the individual. The paper proposes that work engagement on an individual level will be influenced by factors in the broader organisation,

namely the dynamics of the team as well as organisational factors. The systems perspective provide a useful conceptualisation to think beyond the individual. The paper propose a systems approach to studying engagement in organisations and identifies the factors that might influence work engagement on the three levels.

3. Research objectives

The research objectives of the paper are:

- to identify the factors that might influence work engagement from a systems approach, namely individual, team and organisational level

- to determine the work engagement on an individual, team and organisational level at a support services department at a comprehensive university.

4. Literature review

4.1 Definition of work engagement

Both Kahn (1990) and Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma and Bakker (2002) in Rothmann and Rothmann (2011) define work engagement as focused on the individual. Kahn regards it as an extension of the self to a role, while Schaufeli et al. sees it as a work-related state of mind vested in the individual. Macey, Schneider, Barbara and Young (2009) describe work engagement as the employee's sense of purpose and focused energy that is evident to others through the display of personal initiative, adaptability, effort and persistence directed toward the organisation's goals. In this definition the impact that the individual has on others and the work environment is illustrated, indicating the effect of work engagement beyond the individual.

4.2 Dimensions of work engagement on an individual level

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

i. Vigour is demonstrated through high energy, mental resilience when duties are performed, persistence to continue despite challenges, and the willingness to exert extra effort.

ii.   Dedication is reflected in enthusiasm about one's work, having a sense of purpose, inspiration and pride in the employee's work.

iii. Absorption is a reflection of concentration, a condition of being immersed in the work role where time goes by quickly, a happiness with the work conditions and finding difficulty detaching from work.

These three dimensions of work engagement reflect engagement from the employee's internal perspective and the impact the employee has on the organisation.

When reviewing work engagement in terms of the definition and dimensions, it is normally viewed as only dependent on the employee and the employer is portrayed as a pure investor in the process. It can be argued that the organisation also impacts the employee's experiences and perspectives. The role and impact of the employer in work engagement will be discussed in the following section.

4.3   Models to assess work engagement beyond the individual

The dimensions of work engagement was used to identify and measure work engagement at an individual level. Other models provide more information on drivers influencing team and organisational level work engagement, namely the theoretical model of employee engagement (Imandin, Bisschoff and Botha, 2014) and the Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R model).

The **theoretical model of employee engagement** (Imandin et al., 2014) was developed to measure work engagement among managers in South Africa, based on eleven constructs (depicted in Table 1). Although the theoretical model was found to be a valid research tool to measure work engagement, it has not been widely used.

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

The model is applicable to a variety of professions and can highlight strengths and weaknesses at an individual, team or organisational level (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006). Bakker and Demerouti (2006) present a dual process whereby job demands that lead to stressors can lead to job strain, and job resources are motivational in nature and can lead to high work engagement. The job resources that can lead to high work engagement are depicted on Table 1.

Table 1: Models to assess work engagement

Level	Theoretical model of employee engagement	JD-R model (	Dimensions of work engagement
Individual	• Cognitive drivers (doing meaningful tasks that are safe and with appropriate resources) • Emotional engagement (investing intrapersonal intelligence like self-awareness) • Behavioural engagement (extra effort displayed in pursuit of achieving organisational goals) • Feeling valued and involved • Connection between individual and company • Career growth opportunities (having a clearly defined career path and being satisfied with progress made)	Job demands • Physical costs • Psychological costs such as high work pressure, role uncertainty and emotional demands like optimism, self-efficacy and resilience Job resources • Physical aspects • Psychological aspects • Social aspects (All associated with reducing job demand or stimulating personal growth, learning and development)	• Vigour: exerting high levels of energy and mental toughness while working • Dedication: being highly involved and experiencing pride and enthusiasm for one's work • Absorption: being fully concentrated on work so that time goes by quickly
Team/unit	• Nature of my job (refers to employee participation and autonomy) • Stress-free environment	Job resources and job demands that assist in attaining team goals, e.g. autonomy, supervisory coaching and performance feedback	
Organisation	• Change management • Engaged leadership team • Inspiring trust and integrity (walking the talk)	Job resources and job demands that assist in attaining organisational goals, e.g. culture of innovation, extra-role performance and financial targets	

The dimensions of the UWES were used in the assessment of individual level work engagement. Team level and organisational level constructs were derived from the literature and then comparing common constructs in both the theoretical model of employee engagement and the JD-R model.

4.4 Work engagement through a systems approach

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

Martins and Martins (2002) and Kast and Rosenzweig (1985) describe systems theory as emphasising the interdependence between different subsystems and elements in an organisation. The primary determinants of behaviour in the workplace is dependent on the complex interaction which takes place at different levels, between individuals, teams, other organisations and the external environment (Martins & Martins, 2002). The employee's perceptions and experiences are the most fundamental part or basis of the engagement process. Nienaber (2016) conceptualises work engagement at three different levels in the organisation, namely the individual level, team/unit level and organisational level. This concept is diagrammatically depicted in figure 1.
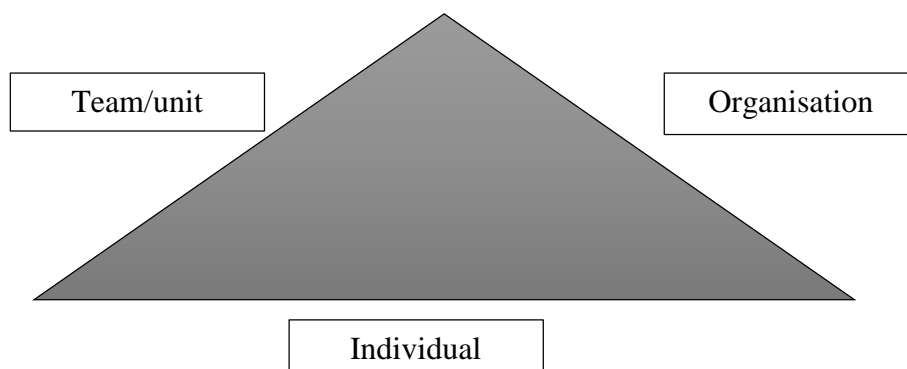

Figure 1: Different levels of an organisation

At an **individual level**, the employee's work role is assessed and together with that, his/her willingness to invest effort and energy and to display mental toughness while duties are executed (Nienaber, 2016). Individual engagement refers to a work role, and it is therefore impossible to separate engagement from the organisation and organisational goals.

Organisational goals are created to achieve synergy, where the sum is greater than the individual parts, and this also applies to the levels of engagement. The sum of the individual work role contributions is less significant when compared to the team's/unit's performance. The same concept applies to the team's/unit's contribution when compared to the organisation as a whole, but engagement for each employee will be enhanced when they understand how their work role contribute, firstly, to their team/unit's goals and, ultimately, to the organisational goals (Shantz & Alfes, 2015).

To enhance work engagement from a **team/unit perspective**, the following drivers were identified through the literature:

- Performance management (Mone, Christina, Guggenheim, Price & Stine, 2011; Conway, Fu, Monks, Alfes & Bailey, 2015)

- Teamwork (Nienaber, 2016; Shantz & Alfes, 2015)

- Supervisory coaching (Davila & Pina-Ramirez, 2014; Milner & MacCarthy, 2016)

- Working autonomously (Cardus, 2013; Breevaart, Bakker, & Demerouti, 2013)

These drivers will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Performance management serves as a platform for the organisation to align the employees' actions and behaviours to the organisational strategy. Mone et al. (2011) have constructed a conceptual framework that displays manager behaviours associated with both performance management and driving work engagement. Performance management activities include setting goals for both performance and development, providing regular feedback and appreciation, managing career development, conducting appraisals bi-annually as a minimum and creating a trusting environment where employees feel empowered (Mone et al., 2011).

Conway et al. (2015) suggest that the performance management system should link the organisational strategy, human resources processes and work engagement drivers into an interrelated process. During the performance management process, managers and employees jointly set objectives, measure and monitor results, identify further development needs and incentivise performance to attain organisational goals (Conway et al., 2015). In order to maximise the value from the performance management system, organisational members should make a mind shift from utilising performance management as a stick with which to hit to a

process to enable. This will require managers to include as an objective, for example, coaching as a way to enable employees. The performance management system should steer the behaviour that will establish the desired teams and ultimately the desired organisational culture.

Shantz and Alfes (2015) describe **teamwork** as the sum of individual work role contributions where the sum is greater than the individual parts. Understanding the link between individual work roles and team/unit and organisational goals add meaning and significance to employees' perceptions and experiences at work. The interaction and influence between team members are constantly changing. Influencing perceptions and experiences induces positive behaviours and attitudes. Nienaber (2016) further highlights that the managers are the golden thread that links the individual-level goals to the team and the organisational goals.

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

Given the importance of the manager and the impact he/she has on the work engagement process, Milner and MacCarthy (2016) suggest that a **managerial coaching approach**, where managers provide coaching to their direct reports or teams, can turn transformational leadership into practice and furthermore enhance engagement. Coaching focuses on partnering and enhancing the capabilities of the coachee (employee being coached) and not the extraordinary skills of the coach (Milner & MacCarthy, 2016). Trust is a critical element in the coaching relationship. Trust and respect are initially established in the coaching relationship but have to be reaffirmed throughout (Cardus, 2013; Milner & MacCarthy, 2016). High ethical standards should always be upheld, whether the coaching is formal or informal (Milner & MacCarthy, 2016).

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

Cardus (2013) suggests that when employees are left to **work autonomously**, to a certain extent, they will display self-directed behaviour and feel responsible for the choices made. This instils trust and steers work engagement positively. A study conducted by Breevaart et al. (2013) concludes that daily self-management is positively related to employees being more engaged, thus applying more skill, dedication and resilience to their work. Based on a theoretical framework of self-management by Manz (1986), Stewart, Courtright and Manz (2011) describe the process of self-management as consisting of the following steps: Firstly, the individual or team assesses the current situation and compares him/her/itself to the norms and standards expected. Secondly, the individual or team engages in behaviour that will bridge the gap between the desired outcome and the current state. Lastly, the impact of new behaviour is assessed and acts as input in the assessment of the new current state, which will again trigger the process of bridging the gap. As self-management is a skill that can by trained, organisations could not only rely on recruiting people with this competency but could also expand this skill from within the organisation itself (Politis, 2015; Mantz, 1992).

Looking at engagement at an **organisational level**, Covey (1999) suggests that organisational goals can only be achieved if the reward system and the value system are aligned systematically. Employees are thus systematically steered to make choices aligned with the organisational goals. The following drivers are identified in die literature as influencing engagement on an organisational level:

- Extra-role customer satisfaction (Karatepe, 2013)

- Inspiring trust and integrity (Van der Ohe, 2016)

- Organisational culture (Deloitte, 2015)

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

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

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

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

Miller (2015) further suggests that it is commonly accepted that culture can be changed through planned mediations. Deloitte (2015) highlights three critical principles to bring about culture transformation. Firstly, the culture tone is set at the top, meaning leaders should be held accountable for the culture that they display. Secondly, the organisational policies and processes should be aligned with the strategy/purpose as well as with the values supporting the

strategy. Thirdly, the results of the culture transformation should be measurable and reported organisation wide. A positive organisational culture fosters higher work engagement, which entails not only drawing the best talent but also retaining it, as well as increased profitability in the long run (Deloitte, 2015).

Arguments put forward by Maxey (2014), Cardus (2013) and Leeds and Nierle (2014) suggest that work engagement can be improved through a systems approach. When systems theory is taken into consideration, it is evident that work engagement can be steered and influenced at every level, i.e. individual, team/unit and organisational. This literature review has shown how the landscape has changed, from viewing engagement as only dependent on the employee and the employer as a pure investor in the process, to a set of interrelated processes that can systematically be steered to result in positive employee behaviour. Models to assess work engagement at the individual level, team level and organisational level are discussed below.

5. Research methodology

A small scale study was undertaken at a service department at comprehensive university to determine the influence of the factors identified in the literature on the various levels of work engagement. The study was quantitative in nature. The research was done in the natural environment where events proceed normally using a survey (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

Non-probability comprehensive sampling was applied. A sample of 100 was targeted. Employees were part of different divisions within finance and were appointed at different job levels, with different functions.

To measure work engagement on the individual level, the standardised Utrecht Work Engagement Survey (UWES) was used that is based on the work of Schaufeli and Bakker (2003). A self-developed questionnaire tested engagement at a team and an organisational level. Participation involved completing a 5-part questionnaire on a 7-point frequency rating scale and took approximately 20 minutes to complete. The reliability of questionnaires was considered in terms of Cronbach's alpha coefficients to ensure that the research questions were answered.

Ethical clearance to conduct the study was obtained from the Ethics Committee and the Senior Director heading the support service department at the comprehensive university. The conclusions were drawn from the actual facts of the findings, and researcher involvement was

limited to prevent bias (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Participation in this research was on a voluntary basis, that is, of the respondent's own free will. All respondents were fully informed about the purpose, rights and benefits of the research and were required to sign a consent form to demonstrate acceptance and understanding (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The confidentiality of the respondents and their responses was protected and the researcher protected the respondents' autonomy (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). During and beyond the data collection phase of the research project, information about respondents was protected through the implementation of a data collection system (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

6. Research findings

6.1 Response rate

Of the 100 targeted employees, 76 responded to the questionnaires, hence a response rate of 76%. Descriptive and inferential statistics were computed and analysed from the data and substantive conclusions construed.

6.2 Reliability

A Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to determine the reliability of the scale used as well as to test whether or not the items used for a construct/variable actually measure that particular construct. The work engagement variables that were constructed are vigour, dedication, absorption, autonomy, supervisory coaching, performance feedback, teamwork, inspiring trust and integrity, an organisational culture of innovation as well as extra-role performance.

Table 2: Cronbach's alpha of work engagement constructs

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

Only the variables with a Cronbach's alpha that is greater than 0.6 were constructed and used in the analysis of variance to follow. From the constructed variables, all the values of Cronbach's alpha were greater than 0.6 except for autonomy, teamwork and organisational culture of innovation. Where Cronbach's alpha was less than 0.6, the individual statements were used separately and a chi-square test was used. . The results of variables tested through the Chi-square test is displayed in Table 3. For the variables autonomy, teamwork and culture of innovation, which could not form a summated scale, separate descriptive statistics were calculated on the individual items. This was done using the factor values (FV), where a mean value of each of the statements was estimated, ranging from 0 to 6 with 3 being the middle value (lower than 3 indicates that respondents are fundamentally less engaged, and the closer the mean is to 6, the more engaged the respondents are regarding the specific issue). The mean for each question had to be changed into an FV or an average score (AS). The FV was then calculated. This ranges between 0 and 1, or can be converted into a percentage. A mean of 3 is therefore equal to an FV of 0.5 (or 50%). This is included in table 3.

Table 3: Factor values of variables which could not form a summated scale

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

A high FV (> 0.5) indicates that the majority are engaged with the specific issue in the statement. The FV for autonomy which are 83.6% and 82.7% respectively are inline which the work environment as segregation of duties and a process flow of information is prevalent. Employees seem less engaged with the construct of teamwork than autonomy, scoring 69.1% and 59% in their opinion towards the commitment of fellow employees and if their opinion seem to count, respectively. When an organisational culture of innovation is assessed, engagement is averaged at 65.1% where employees were asked if they are encouraged to share new ideas/ways to perform their jobs.All factor values for variables tested in the Chi-square are above 0.5 indicating that the majority of employees are engaged with the specific issue in the statement i.e. autonomy, teamwork and organisational culture of innovation.

6.3   Analysis of drivers on individual, team and organisational level

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

Table 4: Mean, mean percentage and standard deviation

		Drivers	Mean	Mean %	Median	Std Deviation
Individual level		Vigour	26.29	73.0%	27.0	6.12
		Dedication	21.57	71.9%	22.5	6.93
		Absorption	25.09	69.7%	27.0	7.32
		Individual work engagement	72.95	71.5%	77.0	18.7
Team level		Supervisory coaching	16.17	67.4%	17.0	6.08
		Performance	7.37	61.4%	7.0	2.97
		Team level work engagement	23.54	64.4%	24.0	9.04
Organisational level		Inspiring trust and integrity	15.27	63.6%	16.0	5.69
		Extra-role performance	10.57	88.0%	11.0	1.84
		Organisational level work engagement	25.83	75.8%	27.0	7.53

From Table 4, the mean percentages of all the constructs were above 50% but below 76%, except for extra-role performance which was 88%, indicating respondents to be on average engaged. On individual level vigour as indicated in the literature through perseverance to continue despite challenges, mental resilience and a willingness to exert extra effort has the highest engagement score at 73%.

At team level, performance management was the lowest at 61.4%. Employees indicated that they wanted more regular feedback on their performance from their supervisor and want to be able to measure their own performance against a set target.

On organisational level, the engagement scores for inspiring trust and integrity and extra-role performance were indicating 63.6 % and 88% respectively. For the driver extra-role performance, employees seem committed to ensure that they go the extra mile to satisfy customers and portray a professional image of the organisation. The uncertainty with regards to student unrest and management's strategy to subsidise the endless demands of students are visible in the outcome of the engagement score for inspiring trust and integrity.

7. Managerial applications

The results indicate that work engagement at the comprehensive university is driven at three levels, i.e. the individual level, the team level and the organisational level. The individual level, portrayed in Table 4 and which included the employees' internal perspective, vigour, dedication and absorption, invested as average engagement input of 71.5%. When work engagement at team level was considered, taking into account autonomy, supervisory coaching, performance management and teamwork, the level of work engagement averaged at 70%. Organisational-level engagement measured the drivers, namely inspiring trust and integrity, extra-role performance and a culture of innovation, to average at 72%. This average score of engagement contradicts worldwide trends measured by Galagan (2015) that only 44% of employees are engaged. This can be explained by the systemic approach followed where various factors related to a team and organisational level work engagement is supported.

The emphasis when measuring work engagement should therefore no longer only be placed on the employee but a team and organisational level as well. This provides a more comprehensive and holistic view of work engagement levels in an organisation.

Key drivers, which were found to be reliable in terms of a Cronbach alpha coefficient, were vigour, dedication and absorption for individual level work engagement, supervisory coaching and performance management for team level work engagement and inspiring trust and integrity and extra-role performance on organisational level work engagement. It is suggested that these drivers must be included when measuring and monitoring work engagement on all three levels. Further research are also needed with bigger populations to further test the influence of these factors as contributors on a team and organisational level.

Pinpointing efforts needed in a specific driver could ensure resources are allocated to the problem instead of taking a blanket approach. This could make employees feel that their needs are attended to, whereby work engagement could increase.

The role and influence of the manager is vital in linking the individual goals to the team and organisational goals. It is important that managers are skilled on creating effective teams and held accountable for the teams that they create.

The human resource system should align the rewards and values by steering acceptable behaviour, whilst targets are driven, to create the culture the organisation is striving for.

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

8. Conclusions

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

Following a systems approach to work engagement unveil new opportunities to ignite work engagement beyond the individual.

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