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Evaluating the difference in employee engagement before and after business and cultural transformation interventions

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Levels of engagement within an organization can have substantial and measurable impacts upon the outputs of an organization. The objective of this exploratory study was to establish, the difference between employee engagement before and after a business and culture transformation intervention in the workplace. The participants of an IT firm represented all employee levels in the organization. A pre-intervention and post-intervention sample consisted of 427 and 253 individuals respectively. The Gallup q12 method was used to determine if differences exist in employee engagement before and after a two-year pre- and post merger intervention. The main findings of the research indicated that there was a limited impact on employee engagement before and after the business and culture transformation interventions, and are discussed accordingly

Key words: Employee engagement, culture transformation interventions, employee engagement surveys.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations' work practices and the workforce have changed dramatically over the past 25 years, due to technological advances, demographic shifts and continual demands for innovation (Kampschroer and Heerwagen, 2005).

According to Pech and Slade (2006), globalization, speed, and ambiguity in the business landscape demand the highest levels of fitness to facilitate organizational survival. In such volatile environments, competitors with the correct combination of economic output, trust, innovation and leadership have the greatest prospects of survival. Pech and Slade further state that no organization can afford to underutilize its employee energy, and that employee engagement is a critical element of this underlying energy. In support of this, Buckingham and Coffman (1999) are of the opinion that the payoff for an energized work environment is enormous: improved retention, productivity and employee engagement, and therefore reduced turnover.

Traditional approaches to organizational and people development, however, tend to focus more on the law of economics with a view to maximizing financial return on employer investment. These approaches can be traced back to the influential, innovative writings of Taylor (1911) in which strategies for optimizing organizational deliverables focused on matters such as recruitment, job design and motivation based on financial incentive. Researchers in the human resource discipline (McGregor, 1957; Mayo, 1949) was in opposition to the so-called Taylorism, and argued that the mechanistic approach of Taylor and his followers was both flawed and unsustainable – largely because it neglected the importance of group dynamics which contribute both to employees' attitudes to work and to their output. Such views initiated a range of theories in the 1950s and 1960s which focused not only on reducing work to its bare elements, but on enriching it by attending to motivators of individual and team development (Herzberg, 1966).

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These researches lead to the so-called Human Relations Approach which focuses on workers themselves and suggests strong worker relationships, recognition and achievement as motivators for increased productivity (Daft, 1997).

During the 1980s and early 1990s the hard-line economic rationalist view surfaced anew, although more recently this has again given way to rhetoric built around ideas of job satisfaction, employee empowerment, self-determination and the need to harness human, not just economic, capital (Leana and Van Buren, 1999; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998).

Also during the 1980s, the popularity of examining the concept of organizational culture and organizational climate surged as leaders around the world became increasingly aware of the ways in which organizational culture and climate can affect organizations and employees.

Warren Bennis uses the analogy that a good organization can articulate its culture, but an incompetent one is incapable of explaining its culture (Bennis, 1989). Organizational culture helps people better understand the hidden and complex aspects of organizational life (Schein, 1992). According to Harrison and Stokes (1992), an organization's culture is made up of those aspects of the organization that give it a particular climate or feel; culture is to an organization what personality is to an individual; it is that distinctive constellation of beliefs, values, work styles and relationships that distinguish one organization from another.

Many authors, including Schein (1992) have drawn sharp lines of demarcation between the constructs of organizational culture and climate – Rousseau (2004) differentiated between the two constructs on the basis of climate being the descriptive beliefs and perceptions individuals hold of the organization, whereas culture is the shared values, beliefs and expectations that develop from social interactions with the organization. Schneider and Bowen (1995) refer to the climate in an organization as the perceptions that employees share about what is important in the organization, obtained through their experiences on the job and their perceptions of the kinds of behaviors that management expects and supports. Work climate within an organization refers to how organizational environments are perceived and interpreted by its employees (James and James, 1989; James and Jones, 1974).

Despite the fact that the interdependence between the concepts of organizational culture and climate is of vital importance for both theoretical and practical reasons, most researchers have ignored the similarities and differences between organizational climate and organizational culture (Fey, 2002). In this regard, a large part of the studies (Denison and Mishra, 1995; Kotter and Hesket, 1992; Deal and Kennedy, 1982), examined the relationship between overall performance of organizations and organizational culture. Another part of the

the studies focused on examining the association between organizational culture and climate, and between relevant organizational issues such as person-environment fit, creativity, innovation or managerial values (Wallace, Hunts and Richards, 1999; Verbeke, Volgering and Hessels, 1998).

Recent developments in employee opinion research and emerging models of effective leadership have introduced the term "employee engagement" to management literature. Employee engagement has been defined in many different ways and the definitions and measures often sound much like other better known and established constructs like organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (Robinson et al., 2004). Most often it has been defined broadly as emotional and intellectual commitment to the organization or the amount of discretionary effort exhibited by employees in their jobs. Employee engagement can be contributed to employees being involved in their work to such an extent that it has a positive impact on the organization's interest thus aiding in any change-process like cultural-transformation which the company is experiencing (Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006; Shaw, 2005). Through measurement of this engagement before and after the change-process, a clearer distinction can be made on the variance of engagement through-out this transformation.

The Charter Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2006a) discusses the impact that engagement has on the sense of community within an organization. Whilst managerial actions are important, the results of the CIPD survey (CIPD 2006c) suggest that relationships among fellow workers are just as important in contributing towards job satisfaction. On the other hand, the impact of the organizational climate and the extent to which engagement is embedded in the organization (or individual team or department) are vital for employees' willingness to stay on with their employer and for the extent to which they advocate their organization. This "affective engagement" is strongly related to positive discretionary behavior - or "going the extra mile". (CIPD, 2006)

Organizations have traditionally relied on financial measures or hard numbers to evaluate their performance, value and health. According to Pfeffer (1998), although metrics such as profitability, revenue, and cash flow remain important financial indicators of effective performance, the so-called "soft", human-oriented measures such as employee attitudes, traits and perceptions are also now being recognized as important predictors of employee behavior and performance (Pfeffer,1998). For instance, researchers have found a significant positive relationship between employee cognitive attitudes and performance (Petty et al., 1984; Ostroff, 1992), personality traits and job performance (Barrick and Mount, 1991; Tett et al., 1991), and emotions and favorable job outcomes (Staw et al., 1994).

Moreover, a recent meta-analysis conducted by the Gallup Organization concluded that the most profitable work units of companies consist of people doing what they do best, with people they like, and with a strong sense of psychological ownership for the outcomes of their work (GWJ, 2006).

As highlighted by Robinson et al. (2004), it makes sense for organizations to monitor the engagement levels of employees and to increase these levels if necessary. CIPD (2007a) also highlights the importance of monitoring levels of employee engagement as a key element in managing the organization's human capital. These findings imply that levels of engagement within an organization can have substantial and measurable impacts on an organization's outputs, be they profit, productivity, customer satisfaction, achievement of strategies and objectives, successful implementation of change, or transformation initiatives.

Purpose of the study

This study will focus on the analysis of survey data collected from a recent consulting effort in an Information Technology (IT) company in SA - to demonstrate through application the utility and validity of survey-based feedback as a tool for organizational change and development in an effort to justify the importance in assessing worker engagement through use of the Gallup q^{12}.

As aforementioned, the organization examined in this assessment is operating in the IT Sector and the vast majority of changes taking place in the organization were prompted by a two-year process of post-merger business and culture transformation. For the purpose of this study, the feedback from a data-based survey will be assessed. The Gallup q^{12} was selected as the diagnostic tool to explore the progress and success of the change interventions implemented over a period of two years. According to the Gallup Organization (1998), feedback serves fundamentally as a powerful tool for change. Moreover, it is a particularly powerful method for examining the relationship between employee attitudes and perceptions, and actual behaviour in the workplace. Employee engagement is more often the intended outcome of employee surveying. The survey is the first step in building a chain of values that underpins the sort of organizational environment that supports and contributes to organizational success.

The primary goal is to identify and measure the pre- and post-intervention scores of the employee-engagement elements that are most powerfully linked to culture transformation. One particularly important area that was specifically examined during the change initiative is the dispositions and attitudes of organizational members at all levels of the organization – employees, managers and leaders.

Hypothesis

In all employee engagement studies and methodologies, the importance of measuring the impact of change interventions is emphasised. For purposes of this study it is assumed that there are barriers-to-measure levels of employee engagement during business and culture change interventions. From the above-mentioned empirical objectives, a hypothesis for the empirical investigation is formulated as follows:

H_1: There is no statistically significant difference between the mean employee engagement before and after business and culture transformation interventions

Rationale

Based on the fact that no evidence could be found in the relevant literature to support a significant difference between the mean employee engagement before and after business and culture transformation interventions, the hypothesis is stated in a non-directional way.

In order to test the hypothesis, the ANOVA was used to compare the pre- and post- intervention groups. The results of these analyses are reported in Tables 5 and 7. The hypothesis is therefore supported by the empirical evidence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A synthesis and valuation of the literature is done in this section. Aspects that are addressed include; definition of employee engagement; positioning of employee engagement; key drivers of engagement; employee engagement surveys; and business care for employee engagement.

Exploring employee engagement

In recent years, there has been a great deal of interest in employee engagement. Many researchers claimed that employee engagement predicts employee outcomes, organizational success and financial performance, e.g. total shareholder return (Bates, 2004; Baumruk, 2004; Harter et al., 2002; Richman, 2006). At the same time, it was reported that employee engagement was on the decline and that there was a deepening disengagement among employees today (Bates, 2004; Richman, 2006). It has even been reported that today the majority of workers are not fully engaged or are disengaged, leading to a so-called engagement gap, that is costing e.g. US businesses $300 billion a year in lost productivity (Bates, 2004; Johnson, 2004; Kowalski, 2003).

Unfortunately, much of what has been written about employee engagement comes from practitioner literature

and consulting firms. There is a surprising lack of research on employee engagement in the academic literature (Robinson et al., 2004).

According to the Gallup Organization, USA (GWJ 2006), the engaged employee is someone who is 100 percent psychologically committed to their role. They thrill to the challenge of their daily work. They are in roles that utilize their talents, they know the scope of their job, and are always looking for new and different ways of achieving the outcomes of their role.

In academic literature, a number of definitions have been provided. Kahn (1992, p. 694) defines personal engagement as the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances. Thus, according to Kahn (1990, 1992), engagement means to be psychologically present when occupying and performing an organizational role.

Rothbard (2001, p. 656) also defines engagement as psychological presence and, furthermore, states that it involves two critical components: attention and absorption. Attention refers to cognitive availability and the amount of time one spends thinking about a role, while absorption means being engrossed in a role and refers to the intensity of one's focus on a role.

Employee engagement is a multidimensional construct. Employees can be emotionally, cognitively or physically engaged. In their study, Luthans and Peterson (2002) proposed Kahn's (1990, 1992) work on personal engagement, which provides a convergent theory for Gallup's empirically derived employee engagement. Schmidt (2004) defines engagement as bringing satisfaction and commitment together. Whilst satisfaction addresses the more emotional or attitudinal element, commitment has bearing on the motivational and physical elements. Schmidt (2004) contends that although satisfaction and commitment are the two key elements of engagement, either of them on its own is sufficient to guarantee engagement.

Schaufeli et al. (2004, p. 293) define engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption. They further state that engagement is not a momentary and specific state, but rather a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior (p. 293).

Engagement is, however, different from satisfaction. Gubman (2004, p. 13) states that engagement means "a heightened emotional connection to a job and organization that goes beyond satisfaction", that enables people to perform well, and makes them want to stay with their employers and say good things about them. The CIPD Annual Survey report (2006c) defines engagement in terms of three dimensions of employee engagement:

1. Emotional engagement – being very involved emotionally in one's work;
2. Cognitive engagement – focusing very hard whilst at work; and
3. Physical engagement – being willing to 'go the extra mile' for one's employer.

The survey report states that the very engaged will speak out as advocates of their organization, in what they describe as a 'win-win' situation for both the employee and the employer, thus driving productivity.

Some writers discuss the varying degrees of engagement that employees can experience. Meere (2005) describes three levels of engagement:

1. Engaged - employees who work with passion and feel a profound connection with their organization. They drive innovation and move the organization forward;
2. Not engaged – employees who attend and participate at work but are merely time-serving and put no passion or energy into their work; and
3. Disengaged – employees who are unhappy at work and who act out their unhappiness at work. According to Meere (2005), these employees undermine the work of their engaged colleagues on a daily basis.

While the link between employee attitudes, perceptions and job performance has been mixed in past research, it has been demonstrated that engagement, as defined here, has a stronger relationship with important employee and organizational outcomes. The reason being that engagement is a work-specific attitude and therefore likely to impact directly on work-related activities and attitudes.

Having reviewed the literature of Tasker, The Gallup Organization, the CIPD, Buckingham and Coffman, Kahn, Schmidt, Meere and others, the commentary on the evolution of employee engagement is summarized in the following points:

1. Definitions of engagement, or characteristics of an engaged workforce, focus on motivation, satisfaction and commitment, finding meaning at work, taking pride in and advocating the organization. Besides, having some connection with the organization's overall strategy and objectives, and wanting and being able to work to achieve them, are key elements of engagement.
2. There is no 'one size fits all' model of engagement leadership. Effective management, open two-way communication, pay and benefits, fair and equal treatment, employing the 'right' workforce, career development and training, working hours, as well as health and safety are all aspects of the work environment which organizations are able control and influence levels of employee engagement.
3. A notable feature of these definitions is, in fact, their lack of precision or definition. Furthermore the demands

placed upon the organization regarding the quality of its leadership systems, and the structure and design of roles to achieve or maintain the desired engagement are not expressed explicitly.

4. Each of the definitions listed above apparently indicates that an increase in employee engagement supports improved productivity, continuous improvement, better staff retention and a commitment to the organization's success.

5. It builds upon and goes further than 'commitment' and 'motivation' in the management literature (Woodruffe, 2005, as cited in CIPD, 2006a)

Despite the lack of a definitional consensus on employee engagement, there is a clear indication in the above definitions of employee engagement providing evidence of the connection between increased employee engagement and improved business outcomes. Research done by the Gallup Organization over the past 30 years supports these views (Gallup, 1992-1998).

To summarise: although the definition and meaning of engagement in the practitioner literature often overlaps with other constructs, academic literature has defined it as a distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional and behavioral components associated with individual role performance. Furthermore, engagement can be distinguished from several related constructs, most notably organizational commitment, organizational citizenship, behaviour, and job involvement. As noted in the above literature, employees can be motivated and committed to their jobs without necessarily engaging with the overall strategies and objectives of the organization, or without really feeling the wider impact of their outputs and efforts.

Positioning of employee engagement

The main reason behind the popularity of employee engagement is its predominantly positive consequences for organizations. There is a general belief that there is a connection between employee engagement and business results (Harter et al., 2002). In point of fact, Luthans and Peterson (2002) state that Gallup has empirically determined employee engagement to be a significant predictor of desirable organizational outcomes such as customer satisfaction, retention, productivity and profitability (see Buckingham and Coffman, 1999).

According to Joo and Mclean (2006), engaged employees are strong organizational assets for sustained competitive advantage, as well as a strategic asset. A strategic asset can be defined as a set of difficult-to-trade-and-imitate, scarce, and specialized resources and capabilities that present an organization's competitive advantage (Amit and Shoemaker, 1993).

Engaged employees provide organizations with a competitive advantage, as explained by the resource-based view (RBV) of an organization (Joo and Mclean, 2006), and therefore employees should be engaged on a continuous basis. The resource-based view posits that human and organizational resources, more than physical, technical or financial resources, can provide an organization with sustained competitive advantage because these resources are particularly difficult to emulate (Lado and Wilson, 1994). The RBV points out firms can develop sustained competitive advantage only by creating value in a way that is rare and difficult for competitors to imitate (e.g. Barney, 1991, Grant, 1991; Peteraf, 1993; Foss, 1997). Effective talent-management policies and practices demonstrate commitment to human capital, resulting in more engaged employees and lower turnover. Consequently, employee engagement has a substantial impact on employee productivity and retention of talent. Employee engagement can, in fact, make or break any organization, according to Lockwood (2006).

Martel (2003) is of the opinion that, in order to obtain high performance in post-industrial, intangible work that demands innovation, flexibility and speed, employers need to engage their employees – especially by affording them participation, freedom and trust; this is the most comprehensive response to the ascendant post-industrial values of self- realization and self-actualization.

Key drivers of engagement

According to Gallup (Gallup Journal, 2006), supported by Aon Consulting and Hewitt Consulting, key drivers of employee engagement typically include the following:

1. Encouragement to develop skills – focus on career planning and individual growth and development.
2. Work-life balance – establishment of a culture where leaders are role models of a balanced work-life.
3. Belief in the organization's direction and leadership – awareness and understanding of the strategic direction of the organization.
4. Praise/recognition for good work – reward and recognition mechanisms
5. Being cared about as a person – culture of caring.
6. Competitive compensation and benefits programs – formal mechanisms in place, e.g. incentive programs.
7. Clear job expectations – awareness and understanding of what is expected of them.
8. Resources for effective job performance – availability of sufficient equipment and resources to all employees.
9. Opportunity to use skills – equal opportunities to utilize current skills and develop new ones.

Not all employees have the same sources of motivation or can be influenced to initiate action and change behavior by considering the same factors. Engagement is an individual construct and if it does not lead to business results, it must first impact on individual-level outcomes. Therefore, one of the biggest challenges that leaders face in the 21st century, is how to motivate effectively,

initiate change and sustain improved performance among employees. Factors that contribute to an employee's level of engagement are specific or variable for each individual. It then becomes imperative for leaders to determine which organizational factors contribute to employee engagement and must be able to enhance and maintain these factors, both at individual and group level (Harter et al., 2002).

Employee engagement surveys

Consulting firms like Gallup and Aon agree that one of the best ways to measure employee perceptions of such drivers still remains the time-tested, solid employee opinion survey that takes employee engagement into account. Employee surveys are one of the most common forms of data collection used by researchers and practitioners. Employee engagement surveys are also a good tool for soliciting the ideas, perceptions, and opinions of employees in an organization. The results of these surveys communicate to employees what management deems important. According to a study by Accord Management Systems (AMS, 2004), employee engagement surveys provide data to help employees understand their organization and work group's strengths and opportunities for improvement. It also provides a baseline of historic and normative comparisons enabling employees to know how their organization is doing compared to others. The research done by AMS endorses the fact that employees' surveys of themselves do not, however, create totally engaged or committed employees.

One of the most effective tools for understanding and diagnosing types of perceptual issues such as employee engagement, are the organizational survey. Data-based feedback, either using large-scale surveys or behaviourally-based management rating scales, is one of the most powerful and effective forms of inducing positive change (Goodstein and Burke, 1991; Kanter, 1983).

According to the Corporate Leadership Council (CLC, 2004) and Martel (2003) employee engagement surveys are designed to gauge the employee engagement based on employees' perceptions of the work environment. Furthermore, when done and executed well, practices that support talent management also support employee engagement (e.g. work-life balance programs – flexi-time, shorter work-weeks, programs of reward and recognition, performance management systems).

Among both researchers and practitioners, employee surveys are being used increasingly for simultaneous measuring of a broad range of work outcomes (such as job satisfaction or the now popular construct of employee engagement) as well as a multitude of potential determinants of these outcomes (CLC, 2004). The Gallup organization designed and developed their Employee Engagement Surveys by initiating thousands of focus groups in 2,500 business, healthcare and education units

world wide. The questions were factor-analyzed and subjected to confirmatory factor analyses. Linking the empirical evidence to an established theory in the management research seems desirable. A theoretical framework can be of use in further validation, understanding and testing of Gallup's conceptualization of engagement (Luthans and Peterson, 2002). They further state that by conceptually comparing the Gallup Workplace Audit, Gallup q[12] (Buckingham and Coffman, 1999) with Kahn's (1990) theoretically derived dimensions of engagement, there seems to be a conceptual fit, thus establishing a theoretical grounding for better understanding of employee engagement and a way to measure it through the Gallup q[12] (Luthans and Peterson, 2002).

Employees are one of the most important role players within organizational structures, and it is because of their involvement, commitment and engagement that an organization remains competitive. Today's high-performance organizations recognize the fact that an active process of consultation with employees is essential in implementing strategy successfully, building the employer brand, and raising overall performance levels. The employee survey is a valuable management tool, and it is here to stay.

Business case for employee engagement

For more than 20 years, researchers and organizations have been looking at the organizational factors which engage (or disengage) employees. The idea of creating a more engaged workforce is no new idea. Research studies have been conducted to determine the connection between an engaged workforce and organizational performance. Although some research remains inconclusive, there is a growing body of work that suggests the existence of a connection between employee engagement and organizational performance. Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman (1999) found that employees who responded favourably to survey questions regarding engagement, worked in business units with higher levels of productivity, profit, retention and customer satisfaction. These researchers also found that the leader or manager, and not the pay, benefits, perks, etc., was the key to building and sustaining a strong workplace and an engaged workforce.

Companies with engaged employees have better productivity, improved customer satisfaction, greater profitability and lower turnover than companies whose employees are not engaged in their work (Buckingham and Coffman, 1999). They further state that today we can't merely employ people's hands and tell them to leave their hearts, minds and spirit at home; and that today's workers are looking for various things in an employment relationship, amongst others a meaningful partnership with their workplace. They are of the opinion that workplaces which provide meaning and purpose and

are fun, engaging, and energising will enjoy greater retention, higher productivity and lower turnover; and that leadership performance plays an integral role in creating this work environment.

An analysis by Harter et al., 2002, of business-unit-level relationships among employee satisfaction, engagement and business results, also found that employee engagement was linked directly to profitability, customer satisfaction/loyalty/sales, employee retention, productivity, and safety.

The Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) (2004) completed a study of engagement levels of over 50,000 employees across the globe and found that those employees who are most committed:

1. Perform 20% better, which CLC (2004) claims infers that moving from low to high engagement levels will induce an increase in employee performance of 20 percentage points; and
2. Are 87% less likely to leave the organization, which CLC (2004) states indicate the significance of engagement to organizational performance.

In the CLC's report on Engaging the Workforce (2004), the Council's research findings on the business impact of engagement are clear – high levels of engagement can generate a performance improvement of up to 20 percentage points. The business impact of engagement creates a clear need for engagement strategies to focus on business outcomes. However, organizations' current use of engagement data – preferring it as a broad metric rather than a focused strategic tool – may not support this objective.

On the other hand, in reporting on the costs of employee disengagement, Meere (2005) discusses a survey carried out by ISR on 360,000 employees from 41 companies in the world's 10 largest economies, and found that in companies with low engagement, both operating margin and net profit margins had reduced over a three year period, whilst in companies with high levels of engagement both these measures had increased over the same time period. An organization can only realize large revenues through the optimal engagement of its employees' knowledge, skills, abilities and motivation.

In DDI's Leadership Forecast 2003 Study, results show the connection between leadership and productivity and engagement. Employees with strong leaders are more engaged, satisfied and loyal than those with weak leaders. In another study by the Institute on Employment Studies on the service-profit chain, Entitled *From People to Profits* indicated that an increase in employee commitment has a significant influence on sales, both directly and, through increasing customers' satisfaction with service, indirectly. The January 2003 issue of the Harvard Business Review highlighted substantial research done on workforce motivation throughout the years and revealed consistent findings emphasizing the

need to let employees become fully engaged in their work in order to gain employee commitment. Giving employees more responsibility for their work and the way to do it, along with clear measures for accountability, reinforces employee productivity and inspires employees to be more committed to their work. (HBR, Jan 2003).

A recent SHRM Conference (2006) reported the result of a new global employee engagement study showing a dramatic difference in bottom-line results in organizations with highly engaged employees, when compared to organizations whose employees had low engagement scores. The study, gathered from surveys of over 664,000 employees from around the world, analyzed three traditional financial performance measures - operating income, net income and earnings per share (EPS) - over a 12-month period. Most dramatic among its findings was the almost 52% difference in the one-year performance improvement in operating income, between organizations with highly engaged employees and organizations whose employees have low engagement scores. Furthermore, when done well, practices that support talent management also support employee engagement (e.g. work-life balance programs – flexi-time, telecommuting, compressed workweeks, reward programs, performance management systems) according to the Corporate Leadership Council (2004) and Martel (2003). Employee engagement begins with an on-boarding program and is essentially a part of the human capital pipeline or talent pipeline, as some researchers have determined (e.g. Romans and Lardner, 2005).

Companies with highly engaged employees articulate their values and attributes through signature experiences – visible, distinctive elements of the work environment that send out powerful messages about the organization's aspirations, and the skills, stamina and commitment employees will need in order to succeed in these organizations (Erickson and Gratton, 2007).

Harter et al. (2002), states clearly that, over the past two decades, a properly executed employee survey which can measure employee engagement, has emerged as a strategic tool for top management. Organizations need to implement the survey with care, developing a valid and reliable methodology tailored to meet the needs of the organization and its employees. One size does not fit all, and the time, effort and expense to implement a survey project properly, should not be underestimated. Data analysis, reporting, action planning and follow-up are where the real return on the investment will be realized.

Measuring employee engagement

The organizational leaders could benefit from an assessment providing them with a comprehensive overview of the attitudes and perceptions of staff in the midst of all of these changes. A further benefit would be to analyze how these events impacted on organizational

outcomes such as turnover, absenteeism, stress and individual performance. The comprehensive nature of this information could also be used as a guide by organizational leaders for planning corrective action to address any weaknesses in the change implementation process. Thus, plans for future changes could be adjusted to reduce any undesirable impact these changes had had on employee attitudes, perceptions, and related organizational outcomes. In the event that organizational leaders implemented specific intervention(s) to improve employee attitudes or perceptions, the information obtained through these assessments could also serve as a useful benchmark to determine if the interventions achieved the desired effects.

The measurable impact of employee engagement depends, in part, on how it is defined. For example, the Corporate Leadership Council (2004) reports outcomes ranging from shareholder return to absenteeism to sales. Other researchers describe engagement as "involvement and satisfaction, as well as enthusiasm for work (Harter, Schmidt and Hayes, 2002).

Employee perceptions are difficult to track and respond to, so leading organizations throughout the world invest large amounts of time, energy, and financial resources in conducting employee surveys. According to Mercer Human Resource Consulting What's Working™ research (Mercer website), upwards of 50 percent of employers in Sweden, Japan, Singapore, the USA, Brazil, Australia, Canada, the UK and Ireland regularly conduct employee surveys. It is also becoming a more regular aspect of change interventions in South Africa (Verwey, 2007).

Over the course of the past 30 years, researchers with The Gallup Organization have held thousands of qualitative focus groups across a wide variety of industries. During the mid '80's, The Gallup Organization decided to create a better feedback process for employers large and small: an opinion-based tool that would both release and direct the powers of feedback. The primary goal was to identify and measure the elements of worker engagement that are most powerfully linked to improved business outcomes - be they sales growth, productivity, customer loyalty, and so forth - and the generating of value (GWJ, 2006).

Over a decade ago, the Gallup Organization reviewed its database of more than one million employee and manager interviews to 'identify the elements most important in sustaining workplace excellence'. Twelve key elements were identified in the Gallup q^{12} employee climate survey, which was first published in the Gallup Organization's book titled *First, Break all the Rules,* in 1999. The Gallup q^{12} explores a number of questions about the quality of systems and leadership, especially team leadership, as experienced by team members at every level in the business.

The Gallup research revealed a link between teams in the top quartile of engagement scores based on the Gallup q^{12} survey, and better employee performance; this in turn resulted in significantly better business outcomes than for teams in the lowest quartile. The most recent 2006 Meta Analysis study by the Gallup Organization involved 681,000 employees of 23,910 business units in 125 organizations across 37 industries. The study identified that teams within a business unit with a high level of engagement performed better than those with a low level of engagement: 12 percent more for customer satisfaction, 62 percent more for safety and 12 percent more for profitability (Verwey, 2007).

The approach underlying this research has been founded on what might be called "positive psychology" (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) - specifically the study of the characteristics of successful employees and managers, as well as productive work groups. In developing measures of employee perceptions, Gallup researchers have focused on the ever important human resource issues for which managers can develop specific action plans.

Throughout the workplace research conducted by Gallup researchers, both qualitative and quantitative data have indicated the importance of the supervisor or the manager and his or her influence over the engagement level of employees and their satisfaction with their company. In Gallup's research, items that measure environmental aspects which can be directly influenced by supervisors, explain most of the variance in lengthier job-satisfaction surveys and lengthier employee-opinion surveys. This finding has been mirrored in individual-level meta-analyses (e.g. Judge et al., 2001), in which the specific facet of satisfaction most highly related to performance was satisfaction with the supervisor/manager/leader.

The instrument, the Gallup Workplace Audit - The Gallup q^{12} (GWA; The Gallup Organization, 1992 to 1999), is composed of an overall satisfaction item plus 12 items that measure employee perceptions of work characteristics. These 13 items were developed to measure employee perceptions of the quality of people-related management practices in business units. The criteria for selection of these questions came from focus groups, research, and management and scientific studies of the aspects of employee satisfaction and engagement that are important and can be influenced by managers at the business-unit or work-group level.

The Gallup q^{12} was designed to reflect two broad categories of employee survey items: those measuring attitudinal outcomes (satisfaction, loyalty, pride, customer service intent, and intent to stay with the company) and those measuring or identifying issues within a manager's control that are antecedents to attitudinal outcomes. The Gallup q^{12} includes one outcome item referring to overall satisfaction with one's company that can be seen as a generalised summary of specific affect-based reactions to work (GWJ 1998). These questions were derived from thousands of focus groups in over 2,500 business, healthcare and education units. The questions were

factor analyzed and subjected to confirmatory factor-analyses.

Gallup has overwhelming empirical evidence of their measured employee engagement and desirable organizational outcomes (e.g. profit, productivity, safety, and retention and customer satisfaction) over the years (Buckingham and Coffman, 1999). However, linking the engagement construct to an established theory in the management literature also seems desirable for two reasons: firstly, such a theoretical framework can aid further validation, understanding and testing of Gallup's conceptualization of engagement. Secondly, there may be other, perhaps overlooked, theoretically-based mechanisms or mediators which could help explain and add value to the relationship between employee engagement and the effectiveness of managers in today's organizations.

To identify the elements of worker engagement, Gallup conducted hundreds of focus groups and many thousands of worker interviews in all kinds of organizations, at all levels, in most industries and in many countries. From these inquiries researchers pinpointed, out of hundreds of variables, 12 key employee expectations which, when satisfied, form the foundation of strong feelings of engagement. The result was a 12-question survey asking employees to rate their response to each question on a scale of one to five.

One of the best ways to measure employee perceptions of such drivers remains a time-tested, solid employee-opinion survey which takes employee engagement into account. Analysis of the employee-attitude responses across companies and cultures demonstrates that 12 key areas consistently relate to Retention of Employees, Business Unit Productivity, Profitability, Customer Loyalty and in fact, boiling down to Employee Engagement.

The following 12 areas have been distilled into statements through which employees can understand their existence within their own company. The Gallup q^{12} Workplace Audit (GWA) Statements:

I. I know what is expected of me at work
II. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work correctly
III. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day
IV. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work
V. My supervisor or someone at work seems to care about me as a person
VI. There is someone at work who encourages my development
VII. At work, my opinions seem to count
VIII. The mission/purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important
IX. My associates (fellow employees) are committed to delivering quality work
X. I have a best friend at work
XI. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress
XII. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow
(All statements ©1997-1999 The Gallup Organization)

Engaged employees are better equipped to handle workplace relationships, stress and change, according to the latest national Gallup Management Journal (2006) survey. Companies that understand this, and assist employees to improve their well-being, can boost their productivity. The Gallup Organization found that employee responses to these crucial 12 items tend to fall into three distinct categories: The success of your organization doesn't depend on your understanding of economics, or organizational development, or marketing. It depends, quite simply, on your understanding of psychology: how each individual employee connects with your company; how each individual employee connects with your customers". The Gallup Organization * (Gallup Website, 2008).

Possible reasons for survey failure

Despite good intentions, employee surveys often fail in their strategic aims. Through Mercer's work (Mercer website) on more than 1,000 survey projects, they identified ten key areas within the survey process that consistently stand out as potential stumbling blocks to survey success. By being aware of these potential blocks and adopting best practices to avoid them, organizations can significantly improve the odds of conducting a survey that produces meaningful, actionable results, builds employee engagement and enhances organizational performance. The ten key areas are: (i) proper project planning; (ii) engaging senior management; (iii) communication; (iv) data delivery; (v) questionnaire design; (vi) follow-up support; (vii) timing; (viii) monitoring and accountability; (ix) prioritising issues; and (x) linking survey results to business outcomes.

According to Sanchez (1993) survey projects can be complex, with any number of risks which are difficult to anticipate. In the absence of proper planning, problems can be experienced in all aspects of the process, including the survey field work, survey return rates, and the timely delivery of results. When things go wrong early in the process, the survey loses credibility in the eyes of management and employees, and the follow-up process fails to secure the time and resources required for success.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative approach was followed in this exploratory study. The primary data is based on the pre- and post application of the Gallup q^{12} Descriptive statistics of the sample group will be provided and thereafter differences between the pre- and post-intervention scores will be studied.

Table 1. Sample size.

	Frequency	Percent valid	Percent cumulative	Percent
Pre	427	62.8	62.8	100.0
Post	253	37.2	37.2	37.2
Total	680	100.0	100.0	

Participants and sampling strategy

This study formed part of a larger project. The CEO of the IT Company gave his approval to use his organization as a participant in the research study. The data used for the study is based on a sample from an information technology organization in South Africa. The company used the Gallup q^{12} during a two-year process of post-merger business and culture transformation. The data is based on the pre- and post-intervention application of the Gallup q^{12}. The respondents represent all levels of the organization, ranging from ground-level employees to top management.

Data collection and recording

All the staff members completed and submitted the questionnaires electronically to the researcher. Communication regarding the purpose of the study, problems experienced was done in the same manner.

For the purpose of this study, one survey form was used, the Gallup q^{12} that measures employee engagement. This instrument is based on 25 years of management research through thousands of focus groups (Buckingham and Coffman 1999). It consists of an overall organizational satisfaction item and 12 employee engagement items that measure the respondent's perceptions of his/her workplace characteristics. In an unpublished study by Brand (2008), the scale reliability of the Gallup q^{12} for the sample was calculated using only the 12 items measuring employee-engagement. In this study the reliability based on Cronbach alpha is highly satisfactory at 0,922. This result is very similar to those reported in other studies. A meta-analysis of 4 172 business units(Harter, 1999) obtained a Cronbach alpha of 0,91. In an unpublished study by Janse van Rensburg (2004) on the relationship between leadership styles and work-related attitudes, a Cronbach alpha of 0.90 (based on aggregate data set N = 36) was reported.

Data analysis

Data description

As can be seen from Table 1, the pre-intervention sample consisted of all employees. The post-intervention sample consisted of 253 individuals. For purposes of this research, the sample size was reduced since only questionnaires completed by individuals who (1) had completed the pre-intervention survey and (2) had participated in one or more of the change interventions were used.

Table 2 shows that the sample composition over the two measurement periods is very similar, and that the sample in both cases can be described as being predominantly Technical and Customer Site staff who have been in their current positions with the organization for 2 to 10 years. No further analyses were done on the variables of job type, job tenure and company tenure due to the fact that there were no statistically significant differences in the results of these three groups.

Sample consistency

To assess the degree to which the pre- and post-intervention samples are statistically similar, Chi squared analyses was performed for each of the three variables in Table 3.

RESULTS

The research results supported the hypothesis which stated that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean employee engagement before and after business and culture transformation interventions. Given that the pre- and post-intervention samples were shown to be statistically similar, the next step was to test for differences between the means for each item and the dimension of the Gallup q^{12} for the pre- and post-intervention sample groups.

As can be seen from Figure 1, the pre and post measures show a very similar pattern. As can be seen from Table 4, the pre- and post intervention groups showed a statistically significant difference on only one of the twelve Gallup q^{12} items, this being "Over the past six months I have made progress at work". A number of items (I know what is expected of me at work; At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day; I share a sense of commitment to the work we do with my colleagues; At work, my opinions seem to count; and I have opportunities to learn and grow at work) also showed a similarity of variance.

As can be seen from Table 5, the pre- and post-intervention groups showed a statistically significant difference on only one of the twelve Gallup q^{12} items, this being "Over the past six months I have made progress at work".

As can be seen from Figure 2, the pre and post measures show a very similar pattern. As can be seen from Table 6, the pre- and post-intervention groups showed a statistically significant difference on only one of the twelve Gallup q^{12} dimensions, this being "How we Grow", whilst the dimension "What I Give" also showed a similarity of variance.

As can be seen from Table 7, the pre- and post- intervention groups showed a statistically significant difference on only one of the Gallup q^{12} dimensions, this being "How we Grow". The effect size was however insignificantly small, meaning in practice no real difference occurred.

Table 2. Sample composition.

		Pre		Post	
		Count	Col%	Count	Col%
	Senior and Executive Management	14	3.3	7	2.8
	Management	39	9.1	26	10.3
	Professional Staff	36	8.4	16	6.3
Job Type	Supervisory Staff	26	6.1	16	6.3
	Technical Staff	158	37.0	112	44.3
	Customer Site Staff	141	33.0	66	26.1
	Support Staff	13	3.0	10	4.0
	< 6 months	68	15.9	26	10.3
	6-12 months	63	14.8	40	15.8
	1-2 years	48	11.2	18	7.1
Job Tenure	2-5 years	107	25.1	76	30.0
	5-10 years	107	25.1	75	29.6
	10-20 years	15	3.5	7	2.8
	20+ years	19	4.4	11	4.3
	< 6 months	60	14.1	24	9.5
	6-12 months	50	11.7	22	8.7
	1-2 years	38	8.9	14	5.5
Company Tenure	2-5 years	87	20.4	69	27.3
	5-10 years	113	26.5	81	32.0
	10-20 years	48	11.2	27	10.7
	20+ years	31	7.3	16	6.3

DISCUSSION

As stated earlier, the research objective of this study was to determine the difference in employee engagement before and after a business and culture transformation intervention in the workplace. The research was con-ducted in one organization in the Information Technology industry in South Africa with the significant advantage that variances due to differences in organizational culture, leadership style and other factors that may impact on employee engagement were eliminated.

The research results supported the hypothesis which stated that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean employee engagement before and after business and culture transformation interventions.

The pre- and post-intervention results show that there was a limited impact of the interventions described on the Gallup q^{12} items and dimensions. This clearly has a number of possible explanations, such as:

1. The interventions did not succeed in impacting significantly on employee engagement as measured through the research instrument; or
2. The Gallup q^{12} s not a sufficiently sensitive instrument to assess the impact of the interventions used; or
3. The time period between the pre and post measures was not sufficient to allow for the impact of the inter-ventions to be assessed adequately through the research instrument; or
4. A combination of the above.

However, there are sufficient indications in the literature to draw some broad conclusions even if these are not necessarily strongly underpinned by objective evidence. The key conclusions drawn from the literature are as follows:

1. Employee engagement does matter, but the extent to which it can lead to a step-change in organizational performance is not conclusive. Even where there is a clear vision and understanding of what needs to be done, there can be significant barriers to effecting 'change on the ground', for example if staff are generally opposed to change or if the capacity to implement change is limited by resource constraints. Harter et al., (2002) states that factors that contribute to an employee's level of engagement are specific or variable for each individual. It then becomes imperative for leaders to determine which organizational factors contribute to employee engage-ment and must be able to enhance and maintain these factors, both at individual and group level; 2. Some of the approaches aimed at improving employee engage-ment can significantly increase employee engagement (as measured by staff surveys) and, in turn, this can have

Table 3. Sample consistency chi-square tests.

	Job type			Job tenure			Company tenure		
	df	Value	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	df	Value	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	df	Value	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6	6.298(a)	0.391	6	9.561(a)	0.144	6	11.657(a)	0.07
Likelihood ratio	6	6.342	0.386	6	9.822	0.132	6	11.822	0.066
Number of Valid Cases		680			680				

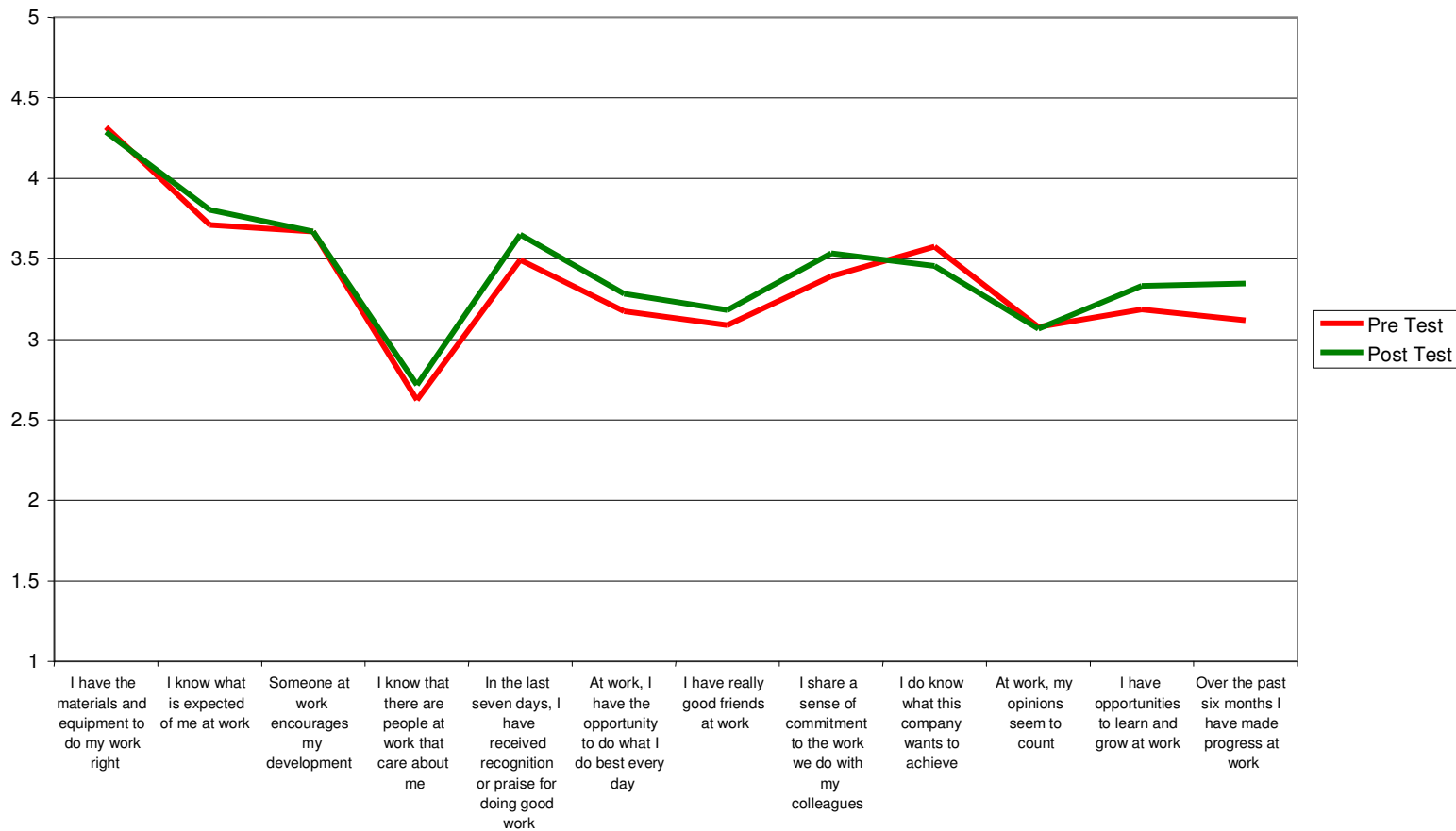* a 0 cells?? (.0%) have an expected count of less than 5.   The minimum expected count is 7.81.

Figure 1. Mean per Group per Item.

Table 4. Levene's test for equality of variances on Gallup q^{12} Items.

Question	F	Sig.	t	DF	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
1	0.013	0.908	0.512	678	0.609	0.03	0.058	-0.085	0.145
2	13.82	0.000**	-1.196	678	0.232	-0.09	0.076	-0.239	0.058
3	1.606	0.205	0.023	678	0.981	0.002	0.078	-0.151	0.154
4	4.634	0.032	-0.915	678	0.36	-0.092	0.101	-0.291	0.106
5	0.458	0.499	-1.876	678	0.061	-0.158	0.084	-0.323	0.007
6	5.22	0.023*	-1.135	678	0.257	-0.105	0.092	-0.287	0.077
7	0.177	0.674	-1.132	678	0.258	-0.095	0.084	-0.26	0.07
08	4.184	0.041*	-1.769	678	0.077	-0.142	0.081	-0.301	0.016
09	1.48	0.224	1.601	678	0.11	0.122	0.076	-0.028	0.271
10	5.848	0.016**	0.106	678	0.916	0.01	0.095	-0.177	0.197
11	9.503	0.002**	-1.558	678	0.12	-0.147	0.094	-0.332	0.038
12	1.48	0.224	-2.306	678	0.021*	-0.228	0.099	-0.423	-0.034

*, **Significant at 5 and 1% levels respectively.
Equal variances assumed.

Table 5. ANOVA for Gallup q^{12} Items.

Question	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Effect Size
01	368.763	1.678	0.143	0.262	0.609	0.01
02	616.987	1.678	1.299	1.431	0.232	0.046
03	650.551	1.678	0.001	0.001	0.981	0.01
04	1101.163	1.678	1.358	0.837	0.36	0.36
05	768.094	1.678	3.967	3.52	0.061	0.061
06	922.653	1.678	1.751	1.289	0.257	0.257
07	762.869	1.678	1.439	1.281	0.258	0.258
08	701.876	1.678	3.226	3.131	0.077	0.077
09	623.351	1.678	2.348	2.563	0.11	0.11
10	980.324	1.678	0.016	0.011	0.916	0.011
11	961.928	1.678	3.433	2.429	0.12	0.12
12	1064.587	1.678	8.287	5.319	0.021*	5.319

*, **Significant at 5 and 1% levels respectively.

a measurable impact on Human Resource variables such as retention and staff illness. Wider impacts in areas such as client service, satisfaction levels and, for private sector business, turnover and profitability, tend to be more insubstantial. Pech and Slade (2006) state that no organization can afford to underutilize its employee energy, and that employee engagement is a critical element of this underlying energy. In support of this, Buckingham and Coffman (1999) are of the opinion that the payoff for an energised work environment is enormous: improved retention, productivity and employee engagement, and therefore reduced turnover;
3. Increasing employee engagement is highly dependent on leadership and establishment of two-way communication where people's work and views are valued and respected. There are many ways in which an organization can work towards better employee engagement without incurring high costs - as long as there is the organizational determination to focus on this issue. According to the Gallup Organization (Gallup Journal, 2006), belief in the organization's direction and leadership – awareness and understanding of the strategic direction of the organization is a critical driver of employee engagement. Even in the absence of robust impact data, the principle of employee engagement is to be endorsed in terms of good practice regarding people

Figure 2. Mean per group per dimension.

Table 6. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances on Gallup q^{12} Dimensions.

	F	Sig.	t	DF	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
	2.209	0.138	-0.534	678	0.594	-0.01512	0.02831	-0.07071	0.04048
GET			-0.553	586.724	0.581	-0.01512	0.02735	-0.06882	0.03859
GIVE	4.313	**.038***	-1.251	678	0.211	-0.08842	0.07067	-0.22717	0.05033
BELONG	2.154	0.143	-0.455	678	0.649	-0.0265	0.05822	-0.14082	0.08782
GROW	7.831	**.005****	-2.235	678	**.026***	-0.1877	0.08399	-0.35261	-0.02278

*, **Significant at 5 and 1% levels respectively.
***Only Equal variances in table.

management, and the softer benefits this confers on organizations; and.
4. As stated by Harter et al. (2002), a properly executed employee survey which can measure employee engagement, has emerged as a strategic tool for top management and organizations need to implement the survey with care, developing a valid and reliable metho-dology tailored to meet the needs of the organization and its employees. Data analysis, reporting, action planning and follow-up are where the real return on the investment will be realized.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study provides insights into employee engagement, as well as the possibility of employee engagement improving through business and culture transformation interventions. In this study we have attempted to make a contribution by providing a diagnostic framework for enhancing the quality of work-life of organizational members, which can also be used in other organizations; and by demonstrating, through application, the useful-ness of survey-based feedback as a tool for improving

Table 7. ANOVA for Gallup q^{12} dimensions.

	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Effect Size
GET	86.381	1.678	0.036	0.285	0.594	0.020
GIVE	539.124	1.678	1.242	1.566	0.211	0.048
BELONG	365.263	1.678	0.112	0.207	0.649	0.017
GROW	765.469	1.678	5.597	4.994	**0.026***	0.086

*, **Significant at 5 and 1% levels respectively.

organizational transformation interventions.

For organizations wishing to embark on a process of using the Gallup q^{12} as a means of measuring the impact of business and culture transformation interventions, it is important to ensure, right from the design phase of the entire process, that the Gallup q^{12} and the interventions are in fact aligned in terms of their theoretical foundation. The expectation that significant change should normally be experienced within one year is perhaps not a realistic one.

The research reported on in this study shows that the transformation interventions described, have limited impact on employee engagement as measured through the Gallup q^{12}. This finding raises a number of related questions to be researched.

The fact that the results do not show a significant impact of the transformation initiatives creates further research opportunities, specifically in terms of the construct validity of the Gallup q^{12}. From a practitioner perspective, it also implies that the use of the Gallup q^{12} requires careful consideration to ensure that the definition and measurement are applicable to the specific organization and the interventions launched.

It should be clear from this study that organizational surveys are a highly effective tool and/or catalyst for organizational change efforts. As a tool, surveys provide the means for assessing the current state of an organization as regards employees' understanding of such areas as: mission and strategy; degree of change being achieved; leadership and management practices; organizational culture; reward systems; communication flow; motivation; and individual needs and values. Surveys can also serve as catalysts for change by communicating desired messages (what the core values of the company should be; how managers are expected to act) and by involving people in the development, interpretation and action-planning stages of the effort. Finally, surveys are a powerful means for identifying - through statistical methods - specific levers for changing the conditions of people's lives in organizations. Surveys should always be seen as the starting-point of a process, however, not the end result.

In conclusion, it can be stated that relatively few studies have been done to evaluate the difference in employee engagement before and after business and culture transformation interventions. While some research remains inconclusive, there is a growing body of research suggesting that a link between employee engagement and organizational performance does exist. Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman (1999) found that employees who responded favorably to survey questions on engagement, also worked in business units with higher levels of productivity, profit, retention, and customer satisfaction and that the leader or manager, and not the pay, benefits, perks, etc., was the key in building and sustaining a strong workplace and an engaged workforce.

It is believed that this study, although exploratory in nature, indicates the value of measuring employee engagement. In terms of future research, it would be worthwhile to extend this study over a longer period so that the difference in employee engagement before and after specific culture transformation interventions can be explored more fully.

Limitations

From the discussion of the limitations directions are also given with regard to future research projects. Although this particular study is not robust as far as sample size and statistical analyses are concerned, it can be used as comparison with other engagement surveys. This could have assisted in determining whether the lack of demonstrated impact is due to the Gallup q^{12} or some of the other potential reasons listed. Moreover, repeated measures in future years will also be useful in evaluating the rate at which transformation initiatives have a significant impact on organizations. Employee engagement has become a key corporate priority and employee-opinion surveys are the accepted means of measuring, monitoring and managing it. Seven of the pitfalls that could impair the effectiveness of employee surveys, are:

1. Bad timing; 2. Surveying the entire organization, 3. Surveying too frequently, 4. Over-simplifying surveys, 5. Too small sample, 6. Tying results to performance bonuses, and 7. Setting arbitrary survey goals.

In view of the comments made in the introduction to this chapter, there are a number of shortcomings in the

literature, as well as gaps not currently covered. These are indicated below:

1. There is an inherent positive bias in the literature - as noted above;
2. The literature tends to emphasise that improvements to employee engagement are always positive. There is no consideration that a certain level of employee engagement might already be optimal and may also vary in different organizations;
3. In this respect, further study is required to determine where the focus of the intervention should be. Current literature seems to steer us towards addressing the disenfranchised majority, but says little about the seriously 'disaffected' minority.
If, for example, significant parts of the workforce were disengaged, it would impact negatively on the organization as a whole. Employers would then need to think carefully about how to identify this portion of the workforce and how to address the problem (e.g. through further engagement measures or letting this section of the workforce go);
4. There is also the related issue of how organizations go about recruiting staff who are likely to have a higher engagement propensity.
Although several articles were identified in which this issue was discussed, this area would undoubtedly benefit from more specific research on employee engagement;
5. The importance of the different factors underpinning employee engagement has not really been tested. For example, even though pay and working conditions are not emphasised, a number of empirical studies in this field show that pay and conditions are critical to job satisfaction for some individuals and organizational types. More detailed desegregation of employee surveys by organizational and employee types as drivers of engagement would be really useful in assessing whether employee engagement is dependent on the factors stipulated in the literature;
6. The degree to which effective implementation of any new initiative depends on the readiness of staff to engage with the change. This is especially critical within the public sector as surveys show more resistance to change;
7. There is no real consideration of the cost of achieving higher levels of employee engagement;
8. The small number of studies attempting to quantify impact relies on identifying relationships between factors (e.g. current employee engagement and future profitability). This correlation data cannot determine cause and effect issues (e.g. the extent to which employment engagement can directly influence future profitability); and
9. There is no evidence that the models for employee engagement are equally applicable to all types of work across the board.

In jobs which are quite unpleasant or very money-focused (stock market dealing), monetary rewards are more successfully used as incentives. Besides, it is likely that individuals will be motivated differently by different factors, a fact that is not reflected in the current models for employee engagement.

Future research can aim to explore the managerial findings and lessons on business and cultural transformation interventions as well as aim to provide recommendations to the suggested measures for the current problem.

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