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HOSPITALITY AND BUSINESS REVITALIZATION INNOVATIONS

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: AN EXPLORATION OF ITS EVOLUTION, DRIVERS AND MEASURES

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ABSTRACT
Employee engagement has recently become a mechanism to improve organisational performance, yet there has been inadequate understanding of the multidimensional measures adopted to measure engagement (Hester & Martins, 2020). Employee requirements go beyond the traditional perceived basic salary, and that has shifted the focus of employers to strive to understand the true principle of the employee engagement practices. The concept has however remained a difficult notion to understand, thereby generating great interest among Human Resource Management scholars. Yet, though scholars disagree with the criteria used to measure engagement, there is a general consensus that employee engagement is related to organisational performance and has been known to offer firms the most needed competitive advantage (Kang & Busser, 2018). The general objective of this study therefore is to do an in- depth exploration of the concept of employee engagement, tracing its origin and development, explore its drivers and ascertain the various dimensions that inform its measurements. Specifically, the study has three objectives; one, to explore the meaning and evolution of employee engagement, two establish its drivers, and third asses the tools used for measuring it. The methodology involves a structured review of literature including academic journals, books and other relevant publications. Results indicate that the first conceptualization of employee engagement can be traced from the work of Kahn (1990) who built up from the idea of 'embracement' by Goffman (1961) and is still evolving. Five key instruments used to measure employee engagement are unearthed and a discussion of the strengths and weakness of each offered. The main contribution of this study is that it has offered indicators that organisations can use to determine whether or not employees are engaged in their work, knowledge that is necessary to assist in decision making relating to human resource management.
Keywords: Employee engagement, performance, Engagement drivers, instruments, Engagement measures

INTRODUCTION
A well-functioning organization is the product of its healthy, committed and motivated employees, who can be termed as 'engaged employees'. Engagement takes place when employees are committed to their job (Hester & Martins, 2020, & Cook, 2008). They are interested and indeed excited about what they do. Engagement involves loyalty, faith and pride in the organization, a willingness to advocate for their organization and a sense of personal responsibility. Reilly and Brown (2008) noted that in business environment the terms 'job satisfaction', 'motivation' and 'commitment' are generally being replaced by 'engagement' because it appears to have more descriptive force and face validity. This is more so due to the focus of employee engagement as the alignment of the employee with the organizational goals and a further desire of the employee to go beyond what is expected of their job. Employee engagement thus reflects two essential elements, the willingness to contribute to organizational success and a positive and energized employee who is at a motivational state (Eldor & Harpaz, 2015).

Organisations are realizing that employees are a strategic resource and their talent is key to organizational growth and success. The Human Resources (HR) function has transited from traditional 'silent' support position to become a strategic business partner. Every organization knows the importance of engaging and motivating its people to perform and this has gained prominence with time (Mohanty & Arunprasad, 2020). However, what is not widely recognized is that employees want to be engaged in work where they feel that they are contributing in a positive way to something

larger than themselves. Over the years, one of the toughest challenges confronting organisational leaders has been to ensure that when their employees check in everyday, they not only do it physically but also mentally and emotionally. Any leadership would need to ensure that employees are truly engaged (madhura, bedarkar, deepika Pandita, 2014). It is thus important to understand what employee engagement is comprised of and how to measure the intensity of such engagement. The purpose of this study therefore is to explore the topic of employee engagement by discussing the concept, its drivers, measurements scales and reporting guidelines. The methodology to the study involves a review of secondary data in employee engagement and other related areas.

The Concept of Employee engagement
Employee engagement is a relatively new concept. Some organisations still hold the traditional school of thought by Fredrick Taylor's scientific management thoughts that employees are economic beings who work just for money.

However, this type of thinking is obsolete and defective since several non-financial rewards exist that affects employee engagement. Such factors include career advancement, work autonomy, work environment, challenging job, management support, the feeling of working for a reliable organisation, the feeling of working on important assignments and the feeling of respect in work-life balance (Woodruffe, 2006). Most of the major organisations provide tools for assessing the drivers that enhance employee engagement (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008).

According to Sanchez (2007), employee engagement is defined as an outcome of how employees perceive their work, leadership of their organizations, the recognition and rewards they receive, and the communication philosophy of the organization. On the other hand, Cook (2008) defined employee engagement as the term that is personified by the passion and energy employees have to give of their best to the organisation to serve the customer. It is all about the willingness and ability of the employees to give sustained discretionary effort to help their organisation succeed. Shaw (2005) defined employee engagement as intellectual and emotional commitment to an organisation.

A further definition to the concept of employee engagement is that of Robbins and Judge (2009), as an individual's involvement with, satisfaction with, and enthusiasm for the work he or she does. Engagement is all about the right temperament and "can do" attitude to help the organisation succeed. It is something the employee has to provide. Engaged employees feel that they are responsible for customer's well-being and cares about the future of the organisation (Chawla, 2019). Engagement can be classified by employee's perception of how positively they think and feel about the organisation and how actively they work to achieve the organisation's goals (Cook, 2008).

In addition, employee engagement has been viewed as the extent to which the employees thrive at work, are committed to their employer, and are motivated to do their best, for the benefit of themselves and their organisation. It is about creating an environment where employees are motivated to want to connect with their work and care about doing a good job. It is a concept which places flexibility, change and continuous improvement at the heart of what it means to be an employee and an employer in the modern society. Employee engagement is a positive feeling about the job as well as being ready to put more effort to make sure that the given job is accomplished to the best of the employee's ability (Galpin et al, 2008). Karanges, Johnston, Beatson, and Lings (2015) defined engagement as the extent in which employees are willing to commit both emotionally and rationally within their organization, how long they are willing to stay as a result of that commitment, and how dedicated they are to their work.

Employee engagement has emerged as a critical driver of business in the modern economy. It virtually affects the employee morale, productivity and reasons for employee retention. Organizations are using their engaged employees as a tool of strategic competence (Kaur, Malhotra & Sharma, 2020). A highly engaged employee will consistently exceed performance expectations and set new targets. There exists an increasing awareness that employee engagement is pivotal to business performance where engaged employees are the backbone of good working environment with people who are hardworking, ethical and accountable. (Levinson, 2007). With this growing importance in mind it is important to understand evolution and development of concept of employee engagement.

Evolution of Employee engagement
The concept of employee engagement is entrenched in academic research, though it was considered largely as practical consultancy issue till late 1990s. The first scholars in the area of employee engagement can be traced in the work of Goffman (1961) who defined engagement as the spontaneous involvement in the role and a visible investment of attention and muscular effort. Katz and Kahn (1966) acknowledged association with organizational effectiveness and pointed out that as employees feel psychologically safe and their work is meaningful to them, they are psychologically available and draw on their whole selves in an integrated and focused manner to enhance their role performances. However, perhaps the origin of employee engagement can be traced to a seminal paper by Kahn (1990) entitled personal engagement with work which argued that employees choose whether to invest themselves fully and authentically in their role on the basis of their experiences within the working environment. Kahn (1990) reported that employees feel more engaged to the work most of the time if they receive some benefits in the form of external rewards and jobs that are focused more on the core job characteristics which will provide employees to bring themselves more into the work or to become more engaged. Pegg (2009) agreed by emphasizing on the effective delivery of the benefits to the employees to be most important to make a positive effect on an employee.

The social exchange theory has been accepted as the most and widely used theory in the employee engagement research (Kazimoto, 2006). The theory provides a theoretical basis for explaining why employees opt to become more engaged or less engaged in an organisation. The main principles of the theory are that employees make social

decisions based on perceived costs and mutual benefits. Moreover, the theory proposes that there are obligations that are made through interactions between various parties in a state of reciprocal interdependence. According to the theory, employees are motivated to engage in their jobs when they believe there is a fair and balanced system of exchange (Bwire, Ssekabuko, & Lwanga, 2014). The social exchange theory also argues that in the exchange rules, both parties will have a reciprocal relationship that will result in the establishment of trust, loyalty and commitment. According to the theory, the relationship between the parties grows over time, and this may mature into trust, loyalty and mutual understanding (Saks,2006). The concept of employee engagement has continued to attract greater attention from scholars in various disciplines. Employee engagement has been linked to other constructs like organizational commitment, citizenship behavior and job involvement (Bedura Medaka 2014). As a result, a universal and unanimous definition and measurement of employee engagement does not exist. This study reviewed and presents the concept of employee engagement as it has evolved from various studies for better understanding.
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Robinson et al (2004) defined employee engagement as a positive attitude of employees towards their organisation and its values. Engaged employees are aware of business context and work to improve job and organizational effectiveness. They equated employee engagement with job engagement which is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption. Hewitt Associates (2004) defined engagement as the state in which individuals are emotionally and intellectually committed to the organisation or group, as measured by behaviours. This behavior can be measured in three dimensions. First, employees who are engaged speak positively about the organisation both to the internal and external persons. Second, they are likely to demonstrate an intense desire to be members of the organisation, and thirdly, they endeavor to employ additional effort and engage in behaviours that contribute to organisational success.

Fleming and Asplund (2007) of Gallup, in their book, titled 'Human Sigma: Managing Employee-Customer Encounter' define employee engagement as the ability to capture the heads, hearts, and souls of employees to instill an intrinsic desire and passion for excellence. They further point out that engaged employees want their organization to succeed because they feel connected emotionally, socially, and even spiritually to its mission, vision, and purpose. Newman and Harrison (2008) defined engagement as the simultaneous presence of three behaviours in employees, namely, their performance in job, citizenship behaviour and involvement. Cook (2012) define engagement as how positively the employee thinks about the organisation, feels about the organisation and is proactive in relation to achieving organizational goals for customers, colleagues and other stakeholders. Farndale and Murrer (2015) defined employee engagement as when employees harness themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally while completing daily tasks.

Macey and Schneider (2008) argued employee engagement is a multidimensional construct that has three distinct facets: trait engagement, state engagement and behavioral engagement. Trait engagement refers to the inclination or orientation to experience the world from a particular point, where some individuals poses certain characteristics that enable them to be highly engaged. State engagement encompasses attitudinal constructs of involvement, satisfaction, empowerment and organisational commitment. Behavioral engagement is an adaptive behaviour intended to serve individual and organisational purposes whether to defend and protect the status quo in response to actual or anticipated threats or to change and promote change in response to actual or anticipated events

Importance of Employee Engagement
Engaged employees are builders, when an employee is engaged within their organization, everyone benefits. Employees use their talents, develop productive relationships, and multiply their effectiveness through those relationships. They perform at consistently high levels. They drive innovation and move their organization forward (Van Allen, 2013). Gallup report in the Harvard Business Review found that at any point in time about 30 percent of any company's employees are actively engaged while 20 percent are actively disengaged (Sanford, 2002). Other studies by Bersin (2014) established that only 13% of worldwide employees are fully engaged at work. In addition, twice as many are so disengaged that this negative behavior is spread to other employees (Bersin, 2014). Yet, organizational productivity is determined by employees' efforts and engagement (Hester & Martins, 2020). Negative effects on productivity could be caused by negative interpersonal behaviors that lower employee engagement.

Moreland (2013) estimated a cost of $370 billion per year to the US economy due to disengaged employees. There are many other examples of the benefits of employee engagement. For examples, in a study of almost 50,000 businesses that included roughly one and a half million employees in 34 countries globally, results indicated that work organizations scoring in the top half of employee engagement have doubled success compared to those in the

bottom half (Van Allen, 2013). Furthermore, the study showed that organisations with engaged employees have the following benefits as opposed to those where employee engagement is down: 37% lower absenteeism, 25% lower turnover, 28% less shrinkage, 48% fewer safety incidents, 41% fewer patient safety incidents, 41% fewer quality incidents (defects), 10% higher customer metrics, 21% higher productivity, and 22% higher profitability (Van Allen 2013). Similarly, at Standard Chartered Bank it was found that branches with highly engaged employees produced 20% higher returns than branches with lower engagement scores. Further, Molson Coors Brewing Company reported multi-million-dollar safety savings through strengthening employee engagement (Singh, 2013).
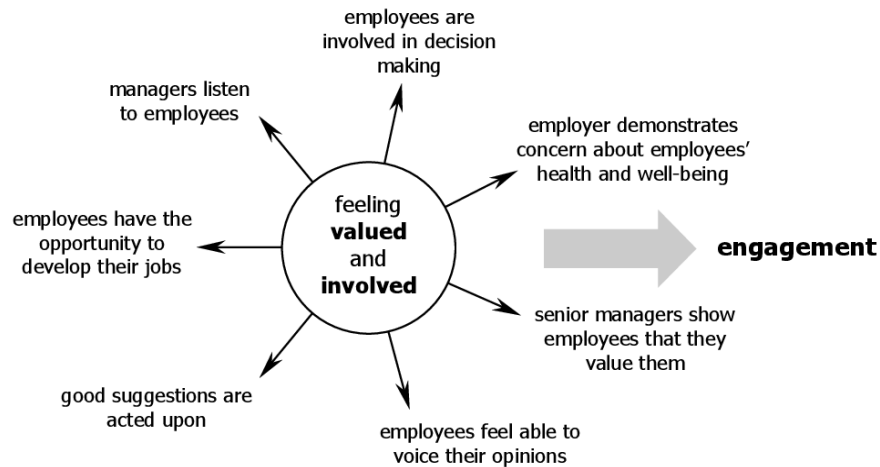
Engagement is very important by considering the fact that disengagement of any employee leads to employees' lack of commitment to work and lack of motivation. It has been highlighted by the Corporate Leadership Council (2004) that highly engaged employees perform 20% more than those employees with average engagement levels. In addition to this, ISR (2003) also show that companies having higher levels of engagement noticed an increase of 3.74 percent in operating margin and 2.06 percent of increase in profits for one year period, whereas, companies with lower levels of engagement noticed a fall of 2 percent and 1.38 percent in the respective groups. On the other hand, Towers Perrin (2005) found that there is a 5 percent increase in operating margin with 7 percent increase in employee engagement. Further, the Society for Human Resource Management (2014) reported that organizations with highly engaged employees experience increased customer satisfaction, profits, and employee

Researchers have contended that organisations are unable to engage their employees and reap the related benefits (Shuck, Adelson & Reio 2016, AON Hewitt 2015). On the other hand, employee engagement has a positive significant correlation with individual and organisation performance. Yet studies show an alarming global low level of employee engagement. Arguments have been put that the tools that are used to measure engagement are actually the problem but not necessarily that engagement has been declining. (Mann & Harter, 2016, Kurmar & Dhanda, 2020). These scholars have blamed this to unreliable conceptualization of employee engagement. Scholars and practitioners have developed numerous tools but some have not been subjected to academic peer review (Shrotryia & Dhanda, 2019). Accordingly, this study has tried to exonerate tools that have been empirically tested and passed the validity test for measuring employee engagement.

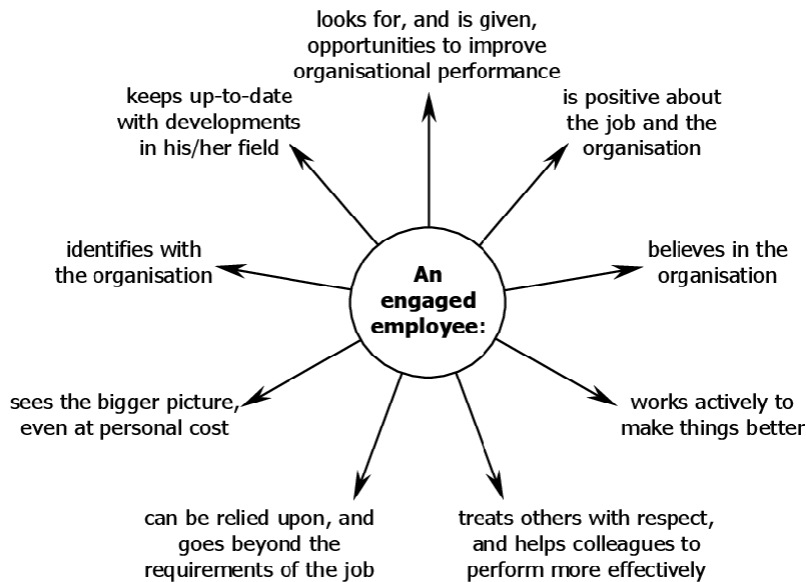### Drivers of Employee Engagement
Literature in the area of employee engagement has linked engagement with concepts such as job satisfaction, motivation, commitment and organisational citizenship. For example, Reilly and Brown (2008) noted that in business environment the terms 'job satisfaction', 'motivation' and 'commitment' are generally being replaced by 'engagement' because it appears to have more descriptive force and face validity. This is more so due to the focus of employee engagement as the alignment of the employee with the organizational goals and a further desire of the employee to go beyond what is expected of their job. In particular, employee engagement is two-way; organisations must work to engage the employee, who in turn has a choice about the level of engagement to offer the employer. According to an IES Report by Robinson, Perryman, and Hayday (2004) the strongest driver of engagement is a sense of feeling valued and involved. commitment and organisational citizenship. This makes intuitive sense, given that the components of the 'feeling valued and involved' indicator relate to several aspects already identified as relevant to engagement, - involvement in decision-making, the extent to which employees feel able to voice their ideas, and managers listen to these views, and value employees' contributions; the opportunities employees have to develop their jobs and the extent to which the organisation is concerned for employees' health and well-being. (Robinson, D, Perryman, S & Hayday, S. (2004). The IES Report (2003) demonstrated the drivers of employee engagement and the characteristics of an engaged employee as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 respectively:

Ketter (2008) provided some of the drivers of employee engagement as career growth, learning and development opportunities; challenging work; receiving pay and benefits; being recognized; supportive management; respected and valued. On the other hand, Vazirani (2007) identified drivers of employee engagement as career development, opportunities for personal development, effective talent management, clarity of organisational values, respectful treatment of employees, image, empowerment, equal opportunities, pay and benefits, performance appraisal, job satisfaction, health and safety, proper communication, cooperation and family friendliness. Engagement literature has outlined a close link between satisfied employees and engaged employees. Tuna, Ghazzawi, Yesiltas, Tuna and Arsian (2016) concluded that unsatisfied employees show deviant workplace behavior and exit planning, which in turn decrease service quality and job performance. Moreover, employee job satisfaction has long been considered as one of the key determinants of an organization's success and growth (Prajogo & Cooper, 2017).

employees are
involved in decision
making

managers listen
to employees

employer demonstrates
concern about employees'
health and well-being

employees have the
opportunity to
develop their jobs

feeling
valued
and
involved

engagement

senior managers show
employees that they
value them

good suggestions are
acted upon

employees feel able to
voice their opinions

Source: IES, 2003

Figure 1: Drivers of Employee Engagement

looks for, and is given,
opportunities to improve
organisational performance

keeps up-to-date
with developments
in his/her field

is positive about
the job and the
organisation

identifies with
the organisation

**An
engaged
employee:**

believes in the
organisation

sees the bigger picture,
even at personal cost

works actively to
make things better

can be relied upon, and
goes beyond the
requirements of the job

treats others with respect,
and helps colleagues to
perform more effectively

Source: IES, 2003

Figure 2: Characteristics of an engaged employee

Based on the studies by Clampitt (2005) employees well understand their role if they are better communicated to, thus contributing to the success of an organisation. Employees should therefore be communicated to effectively about the changes that are to be made in the organisation well in advance to avoid confusion. Employees feel that their work needs to be recognised in the form of day to day informal recognition (Wellins et al., 2006). Besides, appropriate recognition helps to build psychological contract where employer values their employees and employees feel being valued. This increases commitment which in turn leads to enhanced work performance and reduced employee turnover. Having career progression and being well informed are critical drivers of employee engagement.

Instruments for Measuring Employee Engagement
Kahn (1990), the first scholar to apply the concept of engagement to work, argued that employee engagement is contingent on three psychological conditions in the workplace: Meaningfulness, psychological safety and availability. Meaningfulness refers to the intrinsic employees attach to performance in the work role. It is influenced by the tasks employees perform and the roles they fill. Safety pertains to the sense of whether one perceives freedom

to be authentic in the work role. Its primary determinant is the perceived quality of interpersonal interaction employees experience at work. Finally, availability involves employee's beliefs regarding whether they possess the physical, cognitive and emotional resources needed to invest themselves fully in their work roles. It is determined by individuals' perceptions of the quantity and quality of available resources and the extent of involvement in activities outside the work. These three conditions determine whether employees are engaged or not (Khan, 1990).

One of the most comprehensive instrument to measure employee engagement was the tool developed by Martins and Nienaber (2015) which offered an employee engagement scale reflecting the broader level of engagement and consisting of 6 dimensions. This measure was based on Khan (1990) definition of employee engagement. This instrument is accompanied by a range of contextual validation studies (Gallant & Martins, 2018; Martins, 2016; Martins & Nienaber, 2018). According to Purcell (2014), this instrument is superior to the previous ones as it is more reliable and valid due to the its validated methodology in its development process. The 6 dimensions of Martins and Nienaber (2015) instruments one; team orientation which views engagement at individual level reflecting team members willingness to render support, be well organized and to take personal ownership of their job responsibilities. Secondly, organisational satisfaction where engagement is occurs at individual level and includes aspects such as a meaningful, enjoyable, inspiring job and general feeling of job satisfaction.

Thirdly, is effectiveness of managerial aspects, representing engagement at team level including dimensions such as trust, support, feedback and performance evaluation. The fourth dimension of Martins and Nienaber (2015) instrument is team commitment and places engagement at team or unit level and refers to cooperativeness in solving of problems, the ability to adapt to change and doing more than is expected especially in terms of the quality of service they render to customers. The fifth dimension is organisational commitment representing engagement at organisational level and involves commitment to the organisation, taking pride in the work that is being done for the organisation, congruence between personal and organisational values and positivity about the organisation's future. Finally, the instrument focuses on organisational strategy and implementation representing engagement at organisational level, with a focus of whether employees are encouraged to develop new ideas and if initiative is stimulated as well as whether employees are involved in implementing strategy

Secondly, the Gallup organisation, called the Gallup Workplace Audit (GWA) has been credited as one of the key contributors in development of measures of employee engagement. GWA instrument items were developed from studies of work motivation, satisfaction, groups' effectiveness, and supervisory practices (Gallup, 2013). According to Gallup, there are three types of employees in an organization; the engaged, not engaged and actively disengaged. Engaged employees are the builders. They are eager to know the expectations from their role so that they can meet and exceed them. Not engaged employees tend to concentrate on tasks rather than the goals and outcomes, thus need others to drive them. The actively disengaged employees are consistently against virtually everything. They are not just unhappy at work; they show their unhappiness openly.

The GWA defines engagement in terms of satisfaction and involvement and was designed to measure two categories of survey items: those identifying issues under the control of the manager/supervisor and those measuring employee attitudinal outcomes. Employees are required to rate their agreement with 12 statements addressing physical resources, clear expectations, opportunity to use talent, caring colleagues, feedback and recognition, meaningful tasks, opportunity to know new skills, commitment to quality, request for input, growth and development, friendship, and progress discussions. The measure has been used within the academic literature (Bhatnagar, 2007).

Another measure that is popular in measuring engagement is the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) which was designed and validated by from Holland and Spain (comprises of three subdivisions: vigor, absorption and dedication (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003; UWES; Schaufeli et al., 2002). According to UWES, there are 17 items with three dimensions of employee engagement namely vigor (6 items), dedication (5 items) and absorption (6 six items). The UWES is certified in several countries like China, Netherlands, Spain and South Africa. Saks (2006) argued that employees vary in their level of engagement according to the resources they receive in the organisation. Job engagement (individuals are psychologically present at their work roles and (organisational engagement individuals are psychologically present by performing in a way that positively contributes to the organisational growth and goal achievement. Saks (2016) developed an instrument which included 5 items to measure job engagement (individual's cognitive presence as they perform their job) and 6 items to measure organisational engagements (how the organisation makes the employees dedicated and energized).

Other instruments to measure employee engagement include Price Waterhouse coppers (PWC) and Development Dimensions International (DDI) tools. PWC introduced a 6 item survey to measure employee engagement informed by their definition of the concept as the desire employees have towards acting and applying discretionary efforts to achieve business efforts. Six characteristics of employee engagements namely; - advocacy, discretionary effort, pride, commitment, achievement, and alignment are assessed. DDI developed a 20 item engagement survey focusing on employee perception of alignment effort with strategy, empowerment, teamwork and collaboration, plan development, support and recognition, satisfaction and loyalty (Wellins, Bernthal & Phelps, 2005).

The 16 item tool of Oldenburg Burnout Inventory by Demerouti, E., Mostert, K., Bakker, A.B. (2010) originally in German but translated into English has been widely used to assess the level of engagement among employees. The instrument includes two elements: ranging from tiredness to vigor and the other from pessimism to dedication. (d=disengagement item, exhaustion item). These dimensions are related work of May et al (2004), who discovered the determinants of three psychological employee engagement conditions as safety, meaningfulness and availability and therefore developing an own measure which to include cognitive, emotional and physical engagement.

CONCLUSION
As has emerged from this study employee engagement is a concept that is defined differently by different authors and new definitions are still emerging. There is enough evidence that higher levels of engagement are associated with positive outcomes for employers and individuals, thus there is some merit in considering strategies and approaches that would raise engagement levels. It is also evident from the study that employee engagement measures are a mixture of items that represents among others, one of these four different areas: organisational commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement and psychological empowerment. It can be noticed from the above findings that some measures depend on how employee engagement is defined, some have similar measuring items and some have totally complete measuring items. From the reviewed literature UWES and GWA have emerged as the most widely used measuring tools in most of the research in the area of employee engagement.

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