An investigation into the antecedents of employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare

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DECLARATION

Student’s Declaration - I, Hemish Chikaka, do hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigation and research, except to the extent indicated in the acknowledgements, references, and by comments included in the body of the report, and that this dissertation is therefore my original work and has not been presented in part or in full for any other degree in any other University.

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Supervisor Declaration – I, Dr Maxwell Sandada confirm that the work reported in this dissertation was carried out by the candidate under my supervision as the University supervisor. This dissertation has been submitted for review with my approval as University Supervisor.

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I would also like to thank my friends, my wife and my mother for their support during the time I pursued this MBA degree. May God bless you all.

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ABSTRACT

Real estate agents operating in Harare are struggling to survive and grow. They need to perform at a level which will enable them to effectively serve their customers and deal with competition. In this situation, employee engagement is an important issue. Employee engagement is a concept that has received considerable attention in the developed countries but little attention in developing countries such as Zimbabwe. Various studies conducted in the developed world indicate that employee engagement leads to many positive outcomes such as employee productivity, customer satisfaction and loyalty and profitability among others. Given the significance of employee engagement to business success, it is important for owners of real estate firms to understand and know the factors that bring about employee engagement in the real estate sector. The main objective of this study was to investigate the antecedents of employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare.

Literature indicates that there are many antecedents of employee engagement. This study focused on three antecedents, namely leadership, training and development and social support from supervisor and colleagues and investigated their impact on employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare. This study utilized the simple random sampling technique to select the estate agents from whom 130 respondents were selected. A total of 130 questionnaires were distributed and 105 completed questionnaires were returned. The study had three hypotheses. Correlation and regression analyses were carried out to determine the relationships between leadership, training and development and social support and employee engagement. The findings were that all these factors were antecedents of employee engagement with social support from supervisor and colleagues having the strongest impact on employee engagement.

The study suggested that all three factors should be supported to increase employee engagement. It recommended interventions to improve relations with employees, to implement training and career development programs focused on engagement, reward systems for managers based on engagement and to provide meaningful and challenging work to employees.
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CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on investigating the antecedents of employee engagement in real estate agents/ firms operating in Harare. In view of the time allowed for the study, the researcher focused on examining three of the factors identified in employee engagement literature, namely the nature of leadership, training and development and social support from supervisor and colleagues which have been shown to have a significant impact on employee engagement in various sectors in developed countries. The study investigates whether these factors have an impact on employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare. Employee engagement is a concept that has received considerable attention in developed countries in the past twenty-five years but little attention in developing countries such as Zimbabwe. In reviewing the employee engagement concept, Anitha (2014) mentions that engaged employees are willing to put extra effort into their work in order meet employee and organisational goals. The engagement of employees in real estate firms is required for their survival and growth in this harsh operating environment. A major concern worldwide however is that for various reasons less than thirty (30) percent of employees are fully engaged (Towers Perrin, 2007).

Various studies undertaken in the developed countries indicate that employee engagement is closely associated with positive business outcomes such as reduced employee turnover, employee productivity, service quality, customer loyalty and satisfaction, and profitability (Luthans and Peterson, 2002; Hughes and Rog, 2008; Harter, Schmidt and Hayes, 2002), and innovation, and competitiveness (Welch, 2011; Konrad, 2006). In view of the importance of employee engagement to business success, this study aims to study the antecedents of employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare. The following sections will follow after the introduction: background, research problem, research objectives, research questions, hypotheses, justification of research, and scope of research. The chapter will close with an outline of the dissertation and a summary.
1.1 BACKGROUND

The real estate sector is one of the most important sectors of the Zimbabwean economy. Real estate agents provide essentially similar services to their clients namely property management, sales, valuations, and advisory services. Real estate agents perform these functions in the residential and commercial sectors but in Harare they are particularly active in the residential market. They play a very important role in reducing the housing backlog in Harare.

In Zimbabwe, the Estate Agents Council is empowered by the Estate Agents Act to register and regulate the operations of estate agents. The Estate Agents Council determines the scale of fees that all estate agents should charge for their services. The researcher sought information from the Estate Agents Council on the operations of estate agents. The secretary of The Estate Agents Council indicated that in 1980 there were less than fifty (50) registered estate agents/firms in the whole country. The majority of the real estate agents then were white owned. Following the deregulation of the real estate sector over the years, there has been a huge influx of inexperienced real estate agents into the sector.

Thirty five years after independence, the number of real estate agents has grown to about three hundred in the whole country. About two hundred (200) estate agents operate in Harare alone. These are located in the Central Business District (CBD), the Avenues area and suburban areas of Harare. Most of the estate agents are small entrepreneurial firms whose employees range from five to twenty. The majority of the estate agents that operate in Harare are owned by black entrepreneurs. The number of the estate agents operating in Harare is quite significant given the size of the market. It not surprising therefore that there is some intense competition among the various estate agents for a share of that market.
In this environment the majority of the estate agents operating in Harare are finding it difficult to continue operating. The combined effects of political, economic and social changes in the country have also brought in additional difficulties that the estate agents have to contend with if they are to survive and grow. The secretary of The Estate Agents Council stated that about ten to fifteen estate agents close down every year. Even some established estate agents have found it difficult to survive in this harsh operating environment and have exited from the market.

In addition to the above challenges, estate agents experience high staff turnover particularly of key personnel and property sales force. A great number of estate agents believe that their employees do not work hard as they should and that their employees have become less loyal.

Considering that estate agents provide basically similar services to their clients and that the fees that they charge for their services are highly regulated, the contribution of employees to business success becomes a key business issue. Estate agents have no option other than to make the best use of their employees’ skills and capabilities in order to survive and grow. Given the significance of employee engagement to business success, it is important for owners of real estate firms to know the factors that bring about employee engagement in the real estate sector. No research has been undertaken in Zimbabwe to determine the antecedents of employee engagement in the real estate sector in Harare.

This study investigates the impact of leadership, training and development and social support from supervisor and colleagues on employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare. It also important to carry out such a study in view of the fact that the real estate sector contributes significantly to employment in the country, to government taxes, to the living standard of a significant number of people, and to the growth of the industrial, retail and residential sectors.
1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Many real estate agents in Harare are struggling to survive and grow in this harsh operating environment. A large number of estate agents are closing down every year or within five years of their formation due to poor performance.

If real estate firms do not identify and address the factors that drive employee engagement, and improve their performance, many of the real estate agents will continue to struggle and close down. This will compound the unemployment problem in the country. The contribution of the real estate sector in the form of taxes to ZIMRA will also continue to decline. The housing backlog will continue to increase as there will be no significant input from real estate agents.

These challenges have driven the researcher to carry out a study that identifies the factors that drive employee engagement in real estate firms operating in Harare.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 The main objective is: To investigate the impact of leadership, training and development on employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare.

1.3.2 The sub objectives are:

(a) To establish the impact of leadership on employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare.

(b) To find out the influence of training and development on employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare.
To determine the influence of social support from supervisors and colleagues on employee engagement.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study’s main research question is: What are the influences of leadership, training and development and social support on employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare. Specifically, the research questions of the study are:

(a) What is the impact of leadership on employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare?

(b) What influence does training and development have on employee engagement in real estate firms operating in Harare?

(c) How does social support from supervisor and colleagues affect employee engagement in real estate firms operating in Harare?

1.5 HYPOTHESIS

The main hypothesis of the study was that leadership, training and development and social support have a positive influence on employee engagement.

The following were the three hypotheses for the study:

H1: Leadership will have a positive influence on employee engagement in real estate firms operating in Harare.
H2: Training and development will have a positive impact on employee engagement in real estate firms operating in Harare.

H3: Social support from supervisor and colleagues will significantly influence employee engagement in real estate firms operating in Harare.

1.6 JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH

The study of employee engagement has received much attention in the developed countries but little research has been undertaken in developing countries such as Zimbabwe, particularly in the real estate sector. This study intends to fill that gap.

This study intends to provide valuable insights about the determinants of employee engagement to owners of real estate agents operating not only in Harare, but in other parts of the country. The research findings and recommendations will also benefit those new entrepreneurial firms intending to enter the real estate market or other small to medium enterprises in other sectors.

This study intends to develop a conceptual framework or research model that will be useful or add value to the existing body of knowledge in the real estate literature.

1.7 SCOPE OF RESEARCH

The study will focus on antecedents of employee engagement in real estate agents operating only in Harare. Since this is a cross-sectional study in which time and financial resources are major considerations, it will not be feasible to include other real estate agents operating in other towns such as Bulawayo, Mutare, and Gweru.

1.8 DISSERTATION OUTLINE

The dissertation will comprise of five chapters which are follows:
Chapter 1 introduces the study. It puts the study into context and includes various subheadings such as introduction, background to the study, research problem, research objectives, research questions, hypotheses, justification of research, scope of research and dissertation outline.

Chapter 2 focuses on literature review. This chapter starts with the employee engagement theory by Kahn (1990) which underpins this study and reviews literature on the employee engagement concept. The chapter highlights some of the determinants of employee engagement in the literature. It selects and discusses three of the frequently mentioned determinants of employee engagement namely leadership, training and development and social support. It then proceeds to develop the conceptual framework wherein the relationships between employee engagement and three variables of leadership, training and development and social support are reviewed and then develops three hypotheses in respect of the study.

Chapter 3 focuses on the research methodology that the study will follow and will consider the following aspects: research design, research philosophy, research strategy, population and sampling techniques, sources of data, data collection procedure, research limitations, research ethics and data credibility.

Chapter 4 will focus on data analysis and interpretation of the research findings. Both descriptive and inferential statistics will be used to analyse data.

Chapter 5 will give conclusions to the study and offer recommendations.

1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter introduced the concept of employee engagement and established the need to carry out a study to investigate the antecedents of employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare. The chapter proceeded to formulate the study objectives, questions and hypotheses and ended with an outline of the dissertation and a chapter summary.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter introduced the concept of employee engagement and established the need to carry out a study to investigate the antecedents of employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare. This chapter reviews the theory underpinning the study and literature on employee engagement, highlighting some important definitions, emerging themes, benefits and concerns about the concept. The chapter reviews some of the determinants of employee engagement mentioned in the literature and based on this literature focuses on three variables namely leadership, training and development and social support from supervisor and colleagues. It then proceeds to the conceptual framework wherein the relationship between employee engagement and the selected variables of leadership, training and development and social support are reviewed and develops three hypotheses in respect of the study. The chapter ends with a summary.

2.2 THEORY UNDERPINNING THE STUDY

The theory informing the study is the engagement theory by Kahn (1990). There is a general consensus among researchers that the concept of employee engagement was developed by Kahn (1990) (Devi, 2009; Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter and Taris, 2008; Salanova, Agut and Peiro, 2005). Kahn (1990) states that engaged employees are completely focused and apply themselves fully at work in a way that increases their
performance. He further explains that engaged employees make full use of their physical, cognitive and emotional dimensions and that there are three conditions that influence people to engage namely the conditions of meaningfulness, safety, availability.

Kahn (1990) argues that employees are bound to feel a sense of meaningfulness when they believe that their performances are worthwhile. With regards to the condition of safety, Khan (1990) mentions that employees are inclined to feel psychologically safe when they are able to perform their work without fear of bad consequences to their reputation or career. He contends that the condition of availability is obtained when employees have adequate resources to enable them to fully perform their work. Kahn’s (1990) theory of engagement informs the study in the sense that it provides valuable information about the main drivers of employee engagement, namely the conditions of meaningfulness, safety, availability. This study will seek to establish whether leadership, training and development and social support from supervisor and colleagues will facilitate the three fundamental determinants of engagement formulated by Kahn (1990). The following section will review literature on employee engagement.

2.3 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Literature review on the employee engagement will start with the development of the employee engagement concept and then highlight some important definitions, features and determinants of employee engagement, benefits and concerns about the concept.

The development of the concept of employee engagement

Welch (2011) notes that scientific work on engagement began in the 1990s with the work of Kahn (1990). She explains that this decade also witnessed the start of practitioner interest in the concept. Guest (2014) mentions that this decade witnessed growth of interest from both practitioners and academics and that practitioners presented the concept together with their own measures and metrics of the concept. Welch (2011) states that Gallup’s Buckingham and Coffman (1999) started using the term employee engagement in their business book. Gallup’s Buckingham and Coffman (1999) posited that an engaged employee is a prerequisite for customer loyalty and described a
completely engaged employee as one who would respond positively to all 12 questions on Gallup’s workplace questionnaire.

Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001), defined engagement as the direct opposite of burnout. These authors argued that whereas engagement is characterized by energy, involvement and efficacy, burnout is manifested through exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy. Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter and Taris (2008) and Saks (2006) noted that Rothbard (2001) who followed the footsteps of Khan (1990) defined the concept as a positive condition that includes attention and absorption. In contrast, Saks (2006) argued that engagement is not an attitude but a psychological state. Macey and Schneider (2008) on the other hand viewed engagement as a broad concept including state, trait and behavioral engagement.

Saks (2006) notes that a significant definition came from Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma and Bakker (2002). Schaufeli et al.'s (2002) defined engagement as a rewarding, positive, work-oriented condition encompassing the components of vigour, dedication and absorption. Rana, Ardichvili and Trachenko (2014) noted that Kahn’s (1990) and Schaufeli et al.’s (2002) definitions of engagement resembled each other in that the cognitive element could be aligned with absorption element; the emotional element with dedication; and the physical element with vigour. During the same period, Luthans and Peterson (2002) in their study of employee engagement utilized Khan’s (1990) definition of personal engagement. Harter, Schmidt and Hayes (2002) also utilized Khan’s (1990) model of engagement in combination with the Gallup Work Audit approach.

Hughes and Rog (2014) and Anitha (2014) mention that another noteworthy definition of engagement came from Hewit and Associates (2004) which indicated that fully engaged employees would readily say favourable things about their organization; remain loyal to it and consistently put maximum effort into their work. May, Gilson and Harter (2004) carried out empirical tests which validated Kahn’s (1990) fundamental dimensions of meaningfulness, availability and safety of engagement. Welch (2011) points out that there was also growth of interest from professional bodies such as The Institute for Employment studies which published a report on employee engagement based on
research in the UK. She noted that Robinson et al. (2004) defined employee engagement as depicting positive feelings and behaviour toward the organization and its values that are focused on improving desired work and organizational results.

Welch explains that the second half of 2000s witnessed a sharp increase in academic interest on employee engagement. The author states that a notable contribution came from Saks (2006). Saks (2006) concurred with Khan’s view of employee engagement comprising cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions and extended the employee engagement concept to include job engagement and organization engagement. Welch (2011) mentions that Gallup Researchers Fleming and Asplund (2007) took a step forward and added a spiritual dimension to Gallup’s prevailing cognitive and emotional aspects of engagement. However, Macey and Schneider (2008) viewed employee engagement as a very broad term comprising trait engagement, state engagement and behavioural engagement. Shuck and Wollard (2010) point out that the definitions by Saks (2006) and Macey and Schneider (2008) are the only two detailed definitions after Kahn’s (1990) definition of engagement which included cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and behavioural engagement while other definitions identified one type of engagement only.

Bakker and Demerouti (2008) provides an overview of the concept of work engagement using the JDR model. They concur with Schaufeli et al’s (2002) definition. They however state that job and personal resources are the main drivers of engagement and that these resources get accentuated when there are high job demands. Guest (2014) and Emmot (2010) point out that in the UK, interest in employee engagement gained momentum in 2008 when the government set up the Macleod Review to examine the possibility of utilizing the employee engagement to improve productivity and competitiveness.

Another comprehensive definition was by Shuck and Wollard (2010). Building on Kahn’s (1990) definition on engagement Shuck and Wollard (2010) defined employee engagement as encompassing an employee’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioral conditions targeted toward selected organizational outcomes. Welch (2011) mentions that
the decade reached the apex with the publication of two engagement handbooks, offering immense contributions on work engagement (Bakker and Leiter, 2010) and on employee engagement (Albrecht, 2010). In the handbook on work engagement Schaufeli and Bakker viewed work engagement as an intervening variable in their job demands and resources framework of engagement. These authors stated that work engagement is the psychological condition that co-exist with the use of personal energy.

In the handbook by Albrecht (2010), Kahn (2010) wrote a chapter on the fundamentals of engagement and reiterated the three determining conditions of engagement: meaningfulness, safety and availability. Some researchers state that the Kahn’s (1990) definition of engagement is used to a very large extent in the engagement literature (Welch, 2011), while some believe that Schaufeli et al’s (2002) definition is the predominant definition in the academic field (Albrecht, 2012; Rana, Arcdchvilli and Tkachenko, 2014). Medlin and Green (2009) argue that the definition by the Gallup organization is well-used in the practitioner field. Albrecht (2012) however states that the JD-R model is the most frequently used theoretical model in the engagement literature.

**Employee Engagement and Related Concepts**

A great concern in the engagement literature is that employee engagement might not be a distinct concept but simply a recycled concept or an older concept such as organizational commitment, renamed as employee engagement. Richman, Civian, Shannon, Hill and Brennan (2008) argue that one of the components of organizational commitment, affective commitment is the foundation of the employee engagement principle. Barnes and Collier (2013) state some researchers are uncertain whether work engagement is a distinguishable from job satisfaction or commitment. In Harter et al’s (2002) definition of engagement elements of involvement and satisfaction are included. Sahoo and Mishra (2012) note that Wash (1999) viewed employee engagement as encompassing organizational concepts such as individual commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour and employee motivation. Robertson, Birch and Cooper (2012) note that Robinson et al’s (2004) definition of engagement contains two psychological constructs of organizational citizenship and commitment. They also note that Harrison et
al. (2006) concentrated on job and work attitudes such as job satisfaction and commitment. They conclude that the two approaches are analogous in the sense that both focus on positive attitudes that business leaders would want their employees to develop.

Saks (2006) concludes that employee engagement is a separate concept comprising of cognitive, emotional and behavioural components and is different from comparable concepts such as organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour and job involvement. Schaufeli (2006) demonstrated that engagement, job involvement and commitment are separate concepts. Christian, Garza and Slaughter (2011) also showed that engagement is separate from job satisfaction, organizational commitment and job involvement. Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) highlight the argument by academics that employee engagement is defined loosely by practitioners and yet in the academic field it clearly defined as a distinct concept.

Some authors have explored the engagement concept further. Saks (2006) builds on Kahn’s (1990) foundation to expand the engagement concept to include organization and job engagement, and stated that employees have two fundamental roles, namely their work role and their role as members of the organisation.

Guest (2014) also makes a distinction between work engagement and organizational engagement. He argued that work engagement seeks to improve employee well-being while organizational engagement concentrates on organizational performance. In a similar manner, Schaufeli and Salanova (2010) and Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) make a clear distinction between work engagement and employee engagement. These authors state that work engagement relates to the relationship that an employee has with his/her work, and that employee engagement is a broader concept that includes employee’s relationship with his or her job, company, and so on.

Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) conclude that this distinction is important in terms of actual usage of these terms and in terms of differentiating the concepts from similar concepts. Farndale, Beijer, Van Veldhoven, Kelliher and Hope-Hailey (2014) also explored the concepts of work and organization engagement. Their findings indicate that work and organization engagement are separate concepts which have different relationships with
organization outcomes such as commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour, and job satisfaction.

Benefits of Employee Engagement

The literature on employee engagement indicates that employee engagement leads to many positive business outcomes. Welch (2011) indicates that business leaders and managers acknowledge that employee engagement is a fundamental component that influences organizational effectiveness, innovation and competitiveness. Saks (2006) indicates that engagement leads to many positive employee outcomes, and financial performance of organizations. Sahoo and Mishra (2012) state that employee engagement is a valuable concept for improving individual and organizational performance.

Hughes and Rog (2008) also note that employee engagement can significantly influence service quality, customer satisfaction, productivity, sales, and profitability. Gonring (2008) also states that there is strong evidence that employee engagement impacts on customer loyalty and satisfaction. Sulea et al. (2012) indicates that when organizations provide resources, employees are likely to be engaged, which then positively influences organizational outcomes such as organizational commitment.

Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti and Schaufeli (2009) noted that variations in engagement during the day impacted on financial outcomes. Ugwu, Onyishi and Rodriguez- Sanchez (2014) mention that employee engagement has been linked to many positive job outcomes such as job satisfaction and performance. Agarwal (2014) notes that engagement significantly influences employees’ innovative capacity at work.

Fearon, McLaughlin and Morris (2014), Konrad (2006), Shuck, Rocco and Albornoz (2011), and Anitha (2014) all emphasize the role that employee engagement plays in securing competitive advantage for organizations. Albrecht (2012) also highlight that employee well-being and engagement are important in achieving competitive advantage for organizations. Luthans and Peterson (2002) stated that in a survey of over 2,500 organizations, Gallup found strong empirical evidence that indicated that employee...
engagement had a significant impact on productivity, safety, customer satisfaction retention and profitability. A study by Harter et al. (2002) found that engagement was positively related to customer satisfaction, loyalty, profitability, employee turnover and productivity. Albrecht and Andreetta (2011) mention that there is solid evidence that shows that employee engagement is closely related to important business outcome variables.

**Concerns about work engagement**

Guest (2014) states that in evaluating the concept of work engagement, a number of concerns arise. Guest argues that there are issues concerning the optimum level of engagement, specifically whether there is a point where excessive engagement may negatively affect the employees’ health and work-life balance. Guest also notes that the maintenance of engagement is a major concern because most of the definitions of employee engagement emphasize the elements of vigour and absorption that demand substantial amounts of energy. Guest mentions that Kahn in Kahn and Heaphy (2014) was critical of the view of that engagement continuously requires high levels of energy. As noted earlier, Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) explored this issue through the use of diary studies which confirmed that the levels of engagement change during the working day.

Guest stated that there is also a general assumption that employees want to be engaged but it is not clear why people want to be engaged. He cited Macey and Schneider (2008) who made a distinction between trait, state and behavioural engagement, and noted that not everyone will have the inclination to be engaged. Macey and Schneider indicate that individual differences in characteristics and differing work orientations will influence the desire to be engaged. Guest however argues that the reluctance to become engaged may be alleviated if employees can see the benefit in being engaged.

Guest concludes that any approach that seeks to promote employee engagement must provide employees with reasons to be engaged. He makes reference to social exchange theory by Saks (2006) which he believes provides a win-win framework within which an engagement policy in an organization might be developed. Shuck and Wollard (2010)
argue that in considering any initiatives for encouraging employee engagement it is important for HRD practitioners to be prepared to maintain a psychologically safe environment for employees and to address any issues concerning inadequate resources if it is evident that existing resources are preventing employees from performing at optimum levels.

2.4 DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

A number of studies in the engagement literature have identified the drivers of employee engagement. Saks (2006) provides some determinants of employee engagement which include job characteristics, organizational support, supervisor support, rewards and recognition. Joshi and Sodhi (2011) identifies relationship with top management, development and career growth opportunities and team work among others as determinants of engagement. Anitha (2014) identified work environment, leadership, social support, training and development, workplace well-being among the drivers of engagement.

Ugwu, Onyishi and Rodriguez – Sanchez (2014) state that job and personal resources have been identified as drivers of employee engagement since most empirical studies on employee engagement utilize the job-demands-resources model by Demerouti et al. (2001) and Xanthopoulou et al. (2007). Albrecht (2012) and Barnes and Collier (2013) concur that the most predominant theoretical model is the job demands-resources (JD-R) by Bakker and Demerouti (2007, 2008), which indicates how job resources such as autonomy, feedback, support and personal resources influence work engagement which in turn influences performance, and financial outcomes. In a similar vein, a study by Sulea, Virga, Schaufeli, Dumitru and Sava (2012) based on the JD-R model investigated the role of work engagement as an intervening variable between job characteristics and positive and negative behavioural outcomes. The results supported the model to some extent.

Robertson, Birch and Cooper (2012) state that some views on engagement mention psychological well-being in clear or unclear manner. Robertson et al. (2012) cite studies by Wright and Cropanzano (2000) which indicate positive relationships between
psychological well-being and job performance and that well-being is a more effective driver of employee engagement or performance than job satisfaction. Robertson et al. (2012) argued that if employers concentrate on job and work attitudes and exclude employee well-being, they would reduce the benefits that can be obtained from employee engagement.

Albrecht (2012) pointed out that Schaufeli et al. (2008) viewed employee engagement as a form of well-being. Schaufeli et al. (2008) argued that the concept of engagement emanated from burnout research in an attempt to encompass the continuum from employee unwell-being to employee well-being. Similarly, Harter et al. (2002) argued that within the continuum of employee well-being, engagement is aligned with positive feelings which lead to improved performance, employee retention and positive business results. Gibbons (2006) cited in Hughes and Rog (2008) reviewed the results of 12 major research studies and identified top drivers of employee engagement. These included the nature of leadership, employee development and career growth opportunities, co-worker orientations and employee’s relationship with one’s manager. In their Global Workforce Study, Towers Perrin (2007) also identified effective leadership, employee development and career growth opportunities and relationship with supervisor among the top ten drivers of engagement. Taking into account the above literature, this study focuses on leadership, training and development and social support from supervisor and colleagues as the determinants of employee engagement.

2.5 DISCUSSION OF DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

This section discusses three variables, namely leadership, training and development and social support from supervisor and colleagues.

2.5.1 Leadership

Sahoo and Mishra (2012) mentions that employee engagement requires strong support
and commitment from top executives in the form of a clear vision, mission and values. They argue that if such support and dedication is not forthcoming from top management, then employee engagement will not be successful.

Emmot (2010) states that the leadership team and line management are fundamental components in bringing about employee engagement in an organization. Sarti (2014) also stresses the importance of leadership in achieving high performance. The author identifies two leadership styles that promote work engagement: participative and instrumental leadership styles. She mentions that participative leadership involves sharing decision making with followers in order to increase their involvement and development. Sarti points out that giving employees the latitude to participate in decision making helps in making the work meaningful to them.

The author states that instrumental leaders communicate responsibilities and expectations, support employees in achieving their objectives and are concerned with the continuity of the work and organization. Sarti however points out that if both styles are implemented at the same time, the effect of the two styles on work engagement may be reduced or even negated. Christian, Garza and Slaughter (2011) state that leaders can impact on how individuals view their work. Macey and Schneider (2008) cited in Christian, Garza and Slaughter (2011) believe that when leaders set clear expectations, are reasonable and acknowledge good performance they will have positive impact on the engagement of employees by boosting their sense of attachment to the job. Macey and Schneider (2008) argue that transformational leadership plays a key role in engagement.

Kahn (1990) states that when employees trust their leaders, they will be more willing to apply themselves because they feel psychological safe. Evans and Redfern (2010), state authentic leaders are genuinely concerned about the well-being of their employees, are alert to their individual differences, and valuable talents and help them to leverage upon their individual strengths. In a similar manner, Alok and Israel (2012) state that authentic leaders demonstrate integrity, are trustworthy and help followers realize their true potential. Schneider et al. (2009) as cited in Anitha (2014), also notes that authentic and supportive leadership will influence employee engagement of followers by increasing their involvement, satisfaction and interest in their work.
In a similar vein, Anitha (2014) argues that good leaders communicate the importance of employees’ work to the success of the organization. She concurs with Khan (1990) that when employees’ work is considered important and meaningful, this will enhance their interest and engagement. Carter and Baghurst (2014) explore the concept of servant leadership. They noted that servant leadership addresses issues such as employee engagement, ethics, and customer experience and creates an outstanding organizational culture where leaders and followers collaborate to achieve organizational goals without the influence of power.

2.5.2 Training and Development

McDowall and Saunders (2012) differentiate between training and development. The authors state that training improves effectiveness in the current role while development improves effectiveness in the longer-term. In addition, the authors further explain that training is concerned with the performance of the task or job role whilst development is concerned with gradual individual advancement.

Sahoo and Mishra (2012) mention that training facilitates the development of employees’ knowledge and skills, which will help them to achieve the organization’s goals and objectives. The authors state that when employees get to know more about their job, this increases their confidence levels, and their ability to work with minimal supervision from their supervisors which ultimately will have a positive impact on their self-efficacy, commitment and job involvement.

Woodruffe (2002) argues that the training and development that employers provide to their employees will increase their knowledge and skills and make them more important to the organization and encourage them to be loyal to their employer.

Rahman and Nas (2013) argue that employee development should be a joint responsibility of both the employee and employer. According to these authors employee development improves the employees work orientation, knowledge, skills and their capacity to produce desired results for the organization. Wayne et al. (1997) cited in Rahman and Nas (2013) concurs with many researchers who believe that employee...
development programs in an organization can signal to employees that the organizations appreciate their contributions and their needs and that this may encourage employees to reciprocate by improving their performance.

Rahman and Nas (2013) argue that companies need to undertake training and development of their employees as there are many benefits in having a quality workforce in the form of decreased costs, increased employee effectiveness and profitability, job satisfaction and reduced intention to leave. Anitha (2014) stresses that training and career development is an important driver of employee engagement as it helps employees to concentrate on their work. Paradise (2008) cited in Anitha (2014) believes that training enhances service delivery and accuracy and employee engagement.

Shuck, Reio and Rocco (2011) mention that formal development plans for leaders, managers, and supervisors can significantly improve the employee engagement of their followers. Shuck, Rocco and Albornoz (2011) also highlight the importance of providing employees with learning and development opportunities in order to influence their engagement. Similarly, Schaufeli and Salanova (2010) mention that training at work can be utilized to improve the engagement of employees and that in order to produce good results training and development must concentrate on the employee growth and development.

Benn and Flinck (2013) explain that a detailed development plan for employees is required and needs to be incorporated into hiring, development and retention strategies in order to ensure success for the business. They state that career development can help to improve employee engagement and satisfaction and enhance employee productivity. In the same vein, Moorer (2013) argue that learning and development can help to enhance productivity and employee engagement through learning that is linked to performance.

### 2.5.3 Social Support

Kahn (1990) states that supportive and trusting interpersonal relationships in conjunction with a supportive team influences employee engagement. Kahn notes that an open and
supportive environment enables employees to feel safe in the workplace and to fully apply themselves at work, and that such an environment will enable employees to be creative and innovative without fear of punishment from their superiors.

Anitha(2014) argues that team and co-worker support systems show the importance of interpersonal relationships to employee engagement. Locke and Taylor (1990) cited in Anitha (2014) highlight that individuals who have good relations with their co-workers are likely to derive greater meaning from their work. Evans and Redfern (2010) also highlight the importance of supportive relationships and good interactions with colleagues, supervisors and customers. They argue that managers can provide feedback that acknowledges the contribution and significance of employees’ work and improve their engagement levels.

In addition, May, Gilson and Harter (2004) found that relationships in the workplace had a major impact on meaningfulness, one of the fundamental requirements for engagement. These authors state that when individuals have beneficial interpersonal interactions with their co-workers they are likely to derive value from their work. They explain further that employee’s relation with his/her immediate manager has a great impact on employee’s view of safety at work. Deci and Ryan, (1987) cited in May et al. (2004), states that supervisors who promote a supportive work environment show a genuine concern for employees’ needs and provide them with an opportunity to develop new skills and problem solving capabilities. May et al. (2004) believe that such credible leaders encourage employees to fully apply themselves at work.

2.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Svinicki (2008) states that a conceptual framework is an inter-related set of ideas on the functioning of a particular phenomenon and depict its components. Taking into account the above literature, the conceptual model proposed in this study for depicting the proposed antecedents of employee engagement in real estate agencies operating in Harare is depicted in Figure 1.
The following section focuses on the relationships between engagement and each of the following variables: leadership, training and development and social support.

2.6.1 Leadership and employee engagement

Schaufeli and Salanova (2010) mention that leaders can make maximum use of emotional dynamics in their team. These authors suggest that a good leader is in a position to increase engagement of employees at individual and collective level depending on the way they manage their work teams.

As stated earlier, Khan (1990) noted that a supportive and trusting environment allows employees to fully apply themselves at work. Xu and Thomas (2011) mention that Khan (1990) established the first theoretical and empirical framework for a link between supportive leadership and employee engagement. Xu and Thomas (2011) explored the
influence of leaders on the engagement of their followers. Their study confirmed the link between leadership behaviours and employee engagement.

Kahn (1990) argued that psychological safety is essential for employee engagement to take place. Christian et al. (2011) pointed out that this offers an avenue for leadership to influence engagement. Christian et al. (2011) noted however that leadership was only slightly related to engagement when factors such as autonomy, task variety, and task significance were taken into account. They suggested, in line with Macey and Schneider (2008) that the presence of other variables such as trust in leadership may moderate the relationship between leadership and engagement.

May et al. (2004) examined the effects of three psychological conditions, namely meaningfulness, safety and availability on employees’ engagement. The results confirmed that all the three conditions were positively linked to employee engagement with meaningfulness having the greatest positive relation. May et al. (2004) suggested that meaningfulness is essential in engaging workers and that managers could enhance meaningfulness through relevant job design.

Harter, Schmidt and Hayes (2002) also suggested that when employees viewed their work as meaningful they were likely to be engaged and less inclined to leave their organization. Avolio et al. (2004) cited in Evans and Redfern (2010) found significant relationships between authentic leadership and employee engagement.

On the basis of the above research studies, the study proposes the first hypothesis:

**H1. Leadership will have a positive influence employee engagement.**

### 2.6.2 Training and development and employee engagement

The study by Salanova et al. (2005) examined the impact of organizational resources and work engagement on service climate. The results showed organizational resources such as organizational training, job autonomy and technology had a positive impact of work engagement which also had a positive influence on service climate. Rothmann and Jordaan (2006) investigated the work engagement of academics in a group of South
African education institutions and the influence of job demands and job resources on their work engagement. Results indicated that factors such as growth and learning opportunities in the job had an influence on the work engagement of the academics.

Shuck et al. (2010) cited in Rana, Ardichvili and Tkachenko (2014) mentioned that there is strong evidence supporting a positive relationship between learning opportunities and development and employee engagement. Saks (2006) stated that human resource practices such as training programs are fundamental for engagement. Albrecht (2012) explored the influence of job, team and organizational level resources on employee well-being, commitment, and performance. Results indicated that the job resources of supervisory coaching and support, career development and autonomy were positively linked with engagement.

In light of the above research, the study proposes the second hypothesis:

**H2. Training and development will have a positive impact on employee engagement.**

### 2.6.3 Social support and engagement

Social support is included as one of the essential conditions in the Maslach et al. (2001) model. According to Maslach et al. (2001) a lack of support from supervisors was found to be linked to burnout, the opposite of employee engagement.

May et al. (2004) found that supportive co-worker and supervisor relations were positively linked to psychological safety and engagement. Kahn (1990) indicated that psychological safety can be enhanced when an employee’s interpersonal relationships with their colleagues and supervisors are supportive and trustworthy and that this would enhance the engagement level of the employee.

In a similar vein, studies by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) as well as Schaufeli et al. (2009a) provided empirical support for the relationships between engagement and social support from co-workers and supervisors. Schaufeli et al. (2001) indicated that employee
engagement would be increased by increasing job resources such as performance feedback, supervisor support and job control.

Rothmann and Jordaan (2006) also indicated that factors such as the relationship with the supervisor, information and communication had an influence on the work engagement of academics in the study. The study by Anitha (2014) indicated that factors such as team and co-worker relationships have a significant influence on employee engagement.

Bakker and Demerouit (2008) reviewed the concept of work engagement and noted that job resources such as social support from colleagues and supervisors, performance feedback and personal resources impacted positively on employee engagement.

In line with the objectives outlined in Chapter 1, the study proposes the third hypothesis:

**H3. Social support will significantly influence employee engagement.**

### 2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter opens with the employee engagement theory by Kahn (1990) which underpins this study and reviews literature on employee engagement, leadership, training and development and social support. Some of the determinants of employee engagement in the literature are highlighted. This is followed by a discussion of the selected variables. The chapter provides a conceptual framework through which the relationships between employee engagement and each of the three variables of leadership, training and development and social support are reviewed. Three hypotheses are then proposed in respect of the study.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter reviewed the literature on employee engagement and developed a conceptual framework to test the impact of leadership, training and development and social support on employee engagement and formulated three hypotheses in respect of the study.

This chapter focuses on the research methodology that the study will follow and will consider the following aspects: research design, research philosophy, research strategy, population and sampling techniques, sources of data, data analysis, data collection procedure, research limitations, research ethics and data credibility.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) state that the research design gives an outline of how you will address research question(s). The authors further explain that the research design will contain clear objectives derived from the research question(s), include details of the sources from which you intend to collect data, and consider the constraints that you will unavoidably encounter during the research process such as access to data, location, money and in addition highlight the ethical issues.

Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2008) also note that the research design describes researcher’s plan and that it contains information relating to activities such as sample selection and size, data-collection methods, instrumentation, procedures and ethical requirements.

The research design chosen for this study is a quantitative, cross-sectional design. A cross-sectional design is used for research that collects quantifiable data on two or more
variables at one point in time which are then assessed in order to discover any relationships between the data (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

A quantitative study makes use of numbers, large samples, hypothesis /theory testing, probability sampling methods, deductive reasoning and gives importance to prediction and explanation (Saunders et al. 2009). In this study, a positivism approach strongly influenced the selection of quantitative design/ methodology.

3.2.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge (Saunders et al. 2009). Blumberg et al. (2008) states that the two most important research philosophies are positivism (quantitative) and interpretivism (qualitative). The authors explain that positivism which is derived from natural sciences, assumes that the social world can be viewed objectively, that the researcher is detached from the data and that he maintains an objective view.

Saunders et al. (2009) mention that positivism normally uses quantitative data, and existing theory to develop hypotheses that will be tested and confirmed or disproved and is thus a deductive approach. Remenyi et al. (1998) as cited in Saunders et al. (2009) states that this kind of research usually culminates in the researcher making some generalizations about the research findings.

Blumberg et al. (2009) states that interpretivism is based on the principles that the social world is not objective but is created and people attach their subjective meanings to social phenomena, the researcher is not separate but part of the research process and research is strongly influenced by human interests. The authors explain that interpretivism assumes that knowledge is developed and that theory is developed from ideas derived from observed and interpreted social phenomena and is thus an inductive approach.

Saunders et al. (2009) mentions that with a deductive (positivism) approach the researcher is able to explain causal relationships, to use controls to facilitate testing of
hypotheses and to use structured methodology to allow theory to be repeated many times, and to make generalizations.

A positivism approach was utilized in this study as the researcher sought to explain or test the relationship between leadership, training and development and social support on the one hand and employee engagement on the other.

3.2.2 Research Strategy

Saunders et al. (2009) points out that the selection of an appropriate research strategy will be strongly influenced by the research question(s), objectives, the amount of time and resources at the researcher’s disposal.

This study employed a survey strategy and utilized a structured questionnaire. Saunders et al. (2009) maintain that the survey strategy is compatible with the deductive approach. The authors explain further that the survey strategy allows the collection of quantitative data which can then be assessed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Blumberg et al. (2009) note that a survey strategy is a very efficient and economical way of collecting large amounts of data from a fairly large sample. The authors also highlight that the survey strategy can use the telephone, mail or internet which can increase geographic coverage and significantly reduce the cost and time of the research.

The survey strategy was in line with the cross-sectional nature of the study. The time allowed for the study and costs were also fundamental considerations in this study.

3.3 Population and Sampling Techniques

Blumberg et al. (2008) mentions that a population is the total list of elements (for instance firms) on which we can make inferences, while a sample is only a representative part of the population. The authors provide some reasons for utilizing a sample as
opposed to conducting a census of the population which include lower costs, improved accuracy of results and speed of data collection, and availability of population elements.

3.3.1 Population

The population for this study was all real estate agencies operating in Harare. Blumberg et al. (2008) and Fisher (2010) state that the magnitude of the required sample depends on the margin of error that you are willing to accept and the size of the population from which the sample is drawn. With regards to this study, the researcher was prepared to accept a margin of error of ± 5%.

This study utilized Yamane’s (1967) formula for calculating sample size. The formula incorporates the population size and level of precision. The formula is depicted as follows:

\[ n = \frac{N}{1 + N (e)^2} \]

Where

- \( n \) = sample size
- \( N \) = Population size
- \( e \) = Level of precision

In respect of this study, the researcher obtained a list of registered real estate agents operating in Harare from The Estate Agents Council. The total number of the estate agents was 194. Utilizing the level of precision of 5%, the relevant sample size was calculated to be 130.

3.3.2 Sampling

Two types of sampling methods are available, namely probability and non-probability sampling. Saunders et al. (2009) maintain that probability sampling ensures all elements in the population have an equal chance of being included in the sample and therefore
reduces the likelihood of an unrepresentative sample. The authors state that with this sampling method, it is possible to address research questions and to attain objectives that require the estimation of population characteristics from the sample. They explain further that the probability sampling method is compatible with the survey approach.

Saunders et al. (2009) outlines the most frequently used probability sampling techniques which include simple random, systematic, stratified and cluster sampling techniques. The authors mention that for non-probability sampling each population element does not have a known chance of being included in the sample and hence it is not possible to answer each research question or address research objectives that require statistical inferences about the population characteristics.

For this study, the researcher used a simple random sampling technique to select 33 real estate agents who each provided 4 employees to complete the questionnaire. The researcher used simple random sampling technique because it is easier to implement than other random sampling techniques. The researcher obtained a list of estate agents operating in Harare from The Estate Agents Council of Zimbabwe. The total number of the estate agents was 194. This constituted the sampling frame. As stated above the study sample had been calculated to be 130. In order to arrive at this sample, the researcher undertook two steps. In the first instance, the researcher applied the simple random sampling technique in order to get 33 real estate agents from whom four respondents would be selected. Each of the real estate agents operating in Harare was assigned a different number. The numbers were put into a plastic bowl and mixed thoroughly. The researcher asked an assistant to pick 33 numbers one by one. The researcher then approached the 33 real estate agents and requested permission from the directors to have access to four respondents in each real estate firm for the purpose of the study. The researcher was referred to the Human Resources Manager in each firm who provided the researcher with a list of employees on their payroll. The researcher applied the simple random sampling technique to arrive at the names of the employees to participate in the research. Each employee was assigned a unique number. Again, the numbers were put in a bowl and an assistant was requested to pick four numbers one by one. This process was
conducted at each of the 33 real estate agents who were selected in the first stage. The researcher then administered the structured questionnaire to four employees at each real estate firm.

3.4 SOURCES OF DATA

Primary data pertaining to leadership, training and development, social support and employee engagement were collected from a sample comprising of full- and part-time employees working in diverse departments in real estate agencies operating in Harare.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

A structured questionnaire was used for this study. The questionnaire was prepared in English; the researcher noted that all the surveyed real estate agencies used English as business language.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections, namely Section A, Section B, and C. Section A focused on the respondents’ background which related to age, gender, education, position, and tenure in the organization. The main sections were Section B and C. Section B included questions on respondents’ perceptions of leadership, training and development, and social support from supervisors and colleagues. Section C covered aspects on employee engagement. Most of the questions and measures were derived from previous studies in the literature.

Three experts in the real estate industry evaluated the questionnaire, which was subsequently pretested with 16 respondents. The three experts were selected in view of their vast expertise and knowledge in the real estate industry.

As a result of the comments and assessments of both the experts and the 16 respondents, some of the questions were re-worded in order to make the questionnaire more understandable to the respondents.
The researcher distributed the questionnaire personally to 130 employees working in various capacities in different departments in the selected real estate agencies. The participants responded to the questions which contained a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

**Variable measures**

The measures for the research were derived from the literature on employee engagement. Employee engagement was measured using eleven items which were derived mainly from May et al. (2004). Leadership was measured using thirteen items based mainly on Xu and Thomas (2011). The seven items measuring training and development were derived mainly from Salanova et al. (2005) and Bakker, Demerouti and Verbeke (2004). Social support was evaluated using measures based mainly on May et al. (2004).

### 3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher used the statistical package, SPSS (Version 21) to process the data.

### 3.7 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The researcher initially encountered problems in that some people were not willing to complete the questionnaires, and had to seek in some instances the assistance of the (HRD) departments of the real estate agents to influence them to complete the questionnaires.

### 3.8 RESEARCH ETHICS AND DATA CREDIBILITY

#### 3.8.1 Research Ethics

Blumberg et al. (2008) states that ethics in research design entail protecting the rights of the participant or respondent. The authors elaborate that the research must be designed in such a way that it does not cause harm, discomfort, pain, embarrassment or encroach on the privacy of the respondents.
Saunders *et al.* (2009) also provides a list of important issues that arise during a research project. These include the need to protect the privacy of potential or actual participants, the need to ensure that participation is voluntary and that participants have the right to withdraw anytime from the process, the need to obtain full informed consent of participants and the need to maintain confidentiality of data provided by participants and their anonymity.

In this study, the researcher initially approached directors of all the real estate agencies that were included in the sample, explained the objectives and benefits of the research and sought their permission to access employees within their organizations. Thereafter the researcher was introduced to the HR departments in the various real estate agencies who then provided the researcher with a list of potential participants in the research projects. The researcher then approached the actual participants with a cover letter that also informed the participants that their responses would be kept strictly confidential and used for the purpose of the research only. The researcher explained to participants that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw anytime from the research process whenever they felt their rights were not being protected.

### 3.8.2 Data Credibility

Saunders *et al.* (2009) mention that reliability and validity are two aspects that can be used to ensure that research findings are credible. The authors state that reliability pertains to the degree to which the data collection techniques or analysis procedures produce consistent findings. Bryman and Bell (2011) maintain that reliability is mainly concerned with internal consistency of measures. These authors mention that Cronbach’s alpha is usually used to test reliability and that a coefficient of 0.80 is considered an acceptable level of reliability, although some researchers are willing to accept a lower figure such as 0.6.
In this study, Cronbach Alpha was used at pilot stage and in the full scale study to check the reliability of the measures and ensure their consistency.

Bryman and Bell (2011) maintain that validity refers to the level to which the designed instrument genuinely measures what it is supposed to measure. In order to ensure validity, the questionnaire was designed using measures that were derived from the literature. Nevertheless, as indicated above, three experts in the real estate industry were engaged to evaluate the questionnaire, which was subsequently pretested with sixteen (16) respondents. The comments and evaluations by both the experts and sixteen respondents resulted in some questions being revised such that the respondents could fully comprehend the questionnaire and answer the questions without the help from the researcher.

3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This study utilized a cross-sectional, quantitative design, a positivism (quantitative) philosophy, a survey strategy, and a structured questionnaire to collect data from 130 full- and part-time employees on leadership, training and development, social support and employee engagement. The study took some measures to control research ethics and improve the credibility of the research findings.

The next chapter will focus on data presentation and analysis.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the research methodology used to carry out the study and included aspects such as research design, research philosophy, research strategy, population and sampling techniques, sources of data, data analysis, data collection procedure, research limitations, research ethics and data credibility.

This chapter presented the results of the study and discusses the findings of the study. It focuses on the specific findings relating to the impact of leadership, training and development and social support on employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare. The researcher utilised descriptive statistics, tests of normality, reliability test, test of independence, followed by correlation, regression analysis and hypothesis testing to establish the relationships between the variables being studied. The chapter provides the basis upon which conclusions and recommendations of the study were drawn.

4.2 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The analyses included the response rate, gender, age, qualifications, working experience and employment status.

4.2.1 Response rate

Questionnaires were distributed to all the 130 respondents personally by the researcher and a total of 105 responses were obtained. This resulted in a response rate of 81%. 
The response rate is in line with Trochim (2004) who stated that the response rate would be high where the researcher distributes questionnaires personally to respondents.

4.2.2 Gender

Table 4.1 shows that out of the one hundred and five respondents, 65.7% of the employees who responded were male and 34.3% were female. The study findings are a true reflection of the gender composition of employees in the real estate agents operating in Harare in which male employees still dominate.

Table 4.1: Gender of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>65.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.3 Age

Table 4.2 reflects the age composition of the respondents. As can be seen from the table, the predominant age group of the respondents was 30-39 years. This can be explained by the fact that the greater part of the working class in Zimbabwe is in the 30-39 years age group.

Table 4.2: Age of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (Years)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Cumulative (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>65.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>92.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 and over</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.4 Highest qualification

Table 4.3 shows the qualifications of the respondents. In terms of highest educational qualification, 21.9% of respondents had a certificate, the majority (48.6%) had a diploma, 21.9% had a degree and 7.6% had a master degree. Again, this is reflective of the general level of education of the majority of employees in real estate agents, who are mainly property sales negotiators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>92.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.5 Working experience

Table 4.4 shows the years of working experience of the respondents. The table indicates that 14.3% of the respondents had less than 5 years working experience, 30.5% had 6-9 years, 26.7% had 10-14 years, and 28.6% had 15 years and greater than 15 years working experience. Again, the majority (30.5%) of the employees had 6-9 years working experience which indicates that a greater part of the employees in the real estate sector are relatively young with few years of working experience.
Table 4.4: Years of Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 5 years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9 years</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 years and over</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.6 Employment status

The employment status of the respondents was shown in Table 4.5 which indicated that 86.7% of the respondents were employed on a full-time basis while 13.3% were on a part-time basis. This reflects the nature of employment in the real estate sector where the majority of employees are employed on a full-time basis and specialising on one job. The part timers are relatively few and are normally people who have retired or who were employed in other sectors such as the insurance industry and have joined / rejoined the real estate sector on a part time basis.

Table 4.5: Employment status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Cumulative (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent full-time</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY TESTS

A reliability test was conducted to find out whether the statements contained in the questionnaire consistently measured the concepts. SPSS tests were carried out to calculate Cronbach’s Alpha values in order to estimate reliability of each of the research variables. Table 4.6 shows the Cronbach’s Alpha values for each variable. From Table 4.6 it can be concluded that all the statements consistently measured the concept as the Cronbach’s Alpha values were 0.60 and above. The overall Cronbach Alpha obtained from all the variables was 0.70 thus indicating that the scales used for all variables were reliable.

Table 4.6: Measurement of Reliability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employee Engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>45</td>
<td><strong>0.70</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Chapter 3, in order to ensure content validity, the questionnaire was designed using measures that were derived from the employee engagement literature and in addition three experts in the real estate industry were consulted in order to confirm content validity of the questionnaire.

4.4 NORMALITY TESTS

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and the Shapiro-Wilk tests were conducted on all variables in order to determine the normality of data. If p-values are greater than 0.05, data is
normally distributed. The results indicated that data was normally distributed as seen in Table 4.7. Consequently parametric tests were conducted on the data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All variables</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov(^a)</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>.215</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>.237</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>.139</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>.169</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>.208</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Lilliefors Significance Correction
\(^*\) This is a lower bound of the true significance.

### 4.5 RESPONSES SECTION

This section discusses the responses on the leadership, training and development, social support and employee engagement aspects of the questionnaire.

#### 4.5.1 Leadership

The questionnaire contained statements on leadership. Respondents responded with their views on leadership in their organisations. The results are presented in Table 4.8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement No</th>
<th>Agreeing</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagreeing</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Our leaders regularly communicates the importance of delivering superior levels of customer services.</td>
<td>96(91%)</td>
<td>4(4%)</td>
<td>5(5%)</td>
<td>4.1619</td>
<td>0.70879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Management provides resources to enhance our ability to provide excellent customer service.</td>
<td>89(85%)</td>
<td>5(5%)</td>
<td>11(10%)</td>
<td>3.90612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Our leadership supports team decisions even if they differ from their own point of view.</td>
<td>76(73%)</td>
<td>14(13%)</td>
<td>15(14%)</td>
<td>3.9238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Our leadership in the organization willingly share own knowledge and ideas with others.</td>
<td>87(83%)</td>
<td>10(10%)</td>
<td>8(7%)</td>
<td>4.4667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Our leadership makes timely decisions, without unnecessarily delay and haste.</td>
<td>66(63%)</td>
<td>16(15%)</td>
<td>23(22%)</td>
<td>3.4952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Our leaders provide timely responses to requests, phone calls and problem situations.</td>
<td>75(72%)</td>
<td>12(11%)</td>
<td>18(17%)</td>
<td>3.6476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Our leadership keeps promises made.</td>
<td>64(61%)</td>
<td>20(19%)</td>
<td>21(20%)</td>
<td>3.4476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Our leadership keeps all employees well informed.</td>
<td>65(62%)</td>
<td>14(13%)</td>
<td>26(25%)</td>
<td>3.4571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Our leaders</td>
<td>92(88%)</td>
<td>9(8%)</td>
<td>4(4%)</td>
<td>4.0381</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is evident from the above table that more than 60% of the respondents agreed to all the statements on leadership. Table 4.8 indicates that 96% of the respondents agreed to the statement that the leadership consistently communicates the importance of delivering superior service to customers and also 92% agreed to the statement that leadership communicates clear performance expectations to their followers. This is consistent with Macey and Schneider (2008) who argued that when leaders set clear expectations and acknowledge good performance this would have an influence of engagement of their followers. It is noted that 64% of the respondents agreed that leadership keeps promises while 21% disagreed. Also, 65% agreed to the statement that leadership keeps well informed and 26% disagreed.

4.5.2 Training and development
The questionnaire contained statements on training and development. The views of the respondents on training and development in their organisations are presented in Table 4.9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement No.</th>
<th>Agreeing</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagreeing</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. Managers request our opinion on training activities.</td>
<td>70(67%)</td>
<td>13(12%)</td>
<td>22(21%)</td>
<td>3.8762</td>
<td>4.06130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Training helps to overcome work obstacles.</td>
<td>100(95%)</td>
<td>3(3%)</td>
<td>2(2%)</td>
<td>4.2952</td>
<td>0.66396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Training is practical.</td>
<td>90(86%)</td>
<td>6(6%)</td>
<td>9(8%)</td>
<td>4.0952</td>
<td>0.84948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Sufficient training is provided.</td>
<td>52(50%)</td>
<td>22(21%)</td>
<td>31(29%)</td>
<td>3.4857</td>
<td>2.11730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. My work offers me the opportunity to develop myself at work.</td>
<td>91(87%)</td>
<td>7(7%)</td>
<td>7(6%)</td>
<td>4.1238</td>
<td>0.87371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I have sufficient possibilities to develop myself at work.</td>
<td>87(79%)</td>
<td>13(12%)</td>
<td>9(9%)</td>
<td>3.9429</td>
<td>0.87518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. I have opportunity to grow in this company.</td>
<td>77(83%)</td>
<td>14(13%)</td>
<td>14(14%)</td>
<td>3.7905</td>
<td>0.99707</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Training and development statements were derived from Salanova et al. (2005) and Bakker, Demerouti and Verbeke (2004). From the above table, it can be seen that a high majority of the respondents agreed on most aspects of training and development except
on the adequacy of training in the real estate agents where 52% felt that sufficient training was provided and 31% disagreed.

4.5.3 Social support

The respondents’ views on social support are presented in Table 4:10 below.

Table 4.10: Responses to statements on Social Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement No.</th>
<th>Agreeing</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagreeing</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. I can count on my co-workers when I encounter difficulties at work.</td>
<td>86 (82%)</td>
<td>13 (12%)</td>
<td>6 (6%)</td>
<td>3.8667</td>
<td>0.82119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. My interactions with my co-workers are rewarding.</td>
<td>90 (86%)</td>
<td>11 (10%)</td>
<td>4 (4%)</td>
<td>4.4952</td>
<td>5.02709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. My co-workers value my input.</td>
<td>90 (85%)</td>
<td>11 (11%)</td>
<td>4 (4%)</td>
<td>3.9903</td>
<td>0.60220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. My co-workers listen to what I have to say.</td>
<td>85 (84%)</td>
<td>16 (15%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>3.8857</td>
<td>0.64023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. I feel a real connection with my co-workers.</td>
<td>85 (81%)</td>
<td>14 (14%)</td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
<td>3.8667</td>
<td>0.68031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. My co-workers and I have mutual respect.</td>
<td>94 (90%)</td>
<td>7 (6%)</td>
<td>4 (4%)</td>
<td>4.0095</td>
<td>0.61230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. I trust my co-workers.</td>
<td>76 (72%)</td>
<td>21 (20%)</td>
<td>8 (8%)</td>
<td>3.7143</td>
<td>0.74310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. My supervisor helps solve work-related problems.</td>
<td>94 (90%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>6 (6%)</td>
<td>4.0286</td>
<td>0.76532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. My</td>
<td>78 (74%)</td>
<td>15 (14%)</td>
<td>12 (12%)</td>
<td>3.7500</td>
<td>0.85616</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
supervisor encourages employees to participate in important decisions.

35. My supervisor encourages employees to speak up when they disagree with a decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement No.</th>
<th>Agreeing</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagreeing</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35. My supervisor encourages employees to speak up when they disagree with a decision.</td>
<td>80 (76%)</td>
<td>12 (11%)</td>
<td>13 (13%)</td>
<td>3.8476</td>
<td>0.92799</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36. Employees are treated fairly by my supervisor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement No.</th>
<th>Agreeing</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagreeing</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36. Employees are treated fairly by my supervisor.</td>
<td>79 (75%)</td>
<td>14 (13%)</td>
<td>12 (12%)</td>
<td>4.1333</td>
<td>4.02413</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37. My supervisor is committed to protecting my interests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement No.</th>
<th>Agreeing</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagreeing</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37. My supervisor is committed to protecting my interests.</td>
<td>61 (58%)</td>
<td>28 (28%)</td>
<td>15 (14%)</td>
<td>3.5333</td>
<td>0.88868</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

38. I trust my supervisor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement No.</th>
<th>Agreeing</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagreeing</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38. I trust my supervisor.</td>
<td>83 (79%)</td>
<td>17 (16%)</td>
<td>5 (5%)</td>
<td>3.9048</td>
<td>0.71419</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

39. In the last 6 months, I have received praise or recognition for my work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement No.</th>
<th>Agreeing</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagreeing</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39. In the last 6 months, I have received praise or recognition for my work.</td>
<td>63 (60%)</td>
<td>15 (14%)</td>
<td>27 (26%)</td>
<td>3.4476</td>
<td>1.07400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.5.4 Employee Engagement
The measures of employee engagement were based mainly on May et al. (2004).

**Cognitive**

The views of the respondents on the cognitive are indicated in Table 4.11 below.

**Table 4.11: Responses to statements on Cognitive Dimension**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement No.</th>
<th>Agreeing</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagreeing</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40. Performing my job is so absorbing that I often forget about other</td>
<td>55 (54%)</td>
<td>8 (8%)</td>
<td>39 (38%)</td>
<td>3.2157</td>
<td>1.13998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
41. I rarely get distracted when I perform well on my job.

- Agreeing: 80 (78%)
- Not sure: 13 (13%)
- Disagreeing: 9 (9%)
- Mean: 3.8137
- Std. Deviation: 0.79267

42. Time passes quickly when I perform my job.

- Agreeing: 96 (94%)
- Not sure: 2 (2%)
- Disagreeing: 4 (4%)
- Mean: 4.5098
- Std. Deviation: 3.99689

On this aspect of employee engagement, a high majority of respondents agreed to two of the three statements. However, on the absorption aspect of job performance, 55% agreed, and 39% disagreed.

4.5.5 Emotional

Respondents were requested their views on their emotional aspects and their responses are indicated in Table 4.12 below.

Table 4.12: Responses to statements on Emotional Dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement No.</th>
<th>Agreeing</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagreeing</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43. I really put my heart into my job</td>
<td>100 (98%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4.3529</td>
<td>0.51984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. I get excited when I perform well on my job</td>
<td>94 (94%)</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>4.3529</td>
<td>0.68429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. My feeling are affected by how well I perform my job.</td>
<td>83 (81%)</td>
<td>13 (13%)</td>
<td>6 (6%)</td>
<td>3.9706</td>
<td>0.76373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. I am happy to work extra hours without being told to.</td>
<td>91 (89%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>7 (5%)</td>
<td>4.0098</td>
<td>0.75117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. I enjoy coming to work.</td>
<td>92 (90%)</td>
<td>7 (5%)</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>4.1765</td>
<td>0.68088</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Above 80% of the respondents agreed with all statements on the emotional dimension of employee engagement.

4.5.6 Behavioral

Respondents’ views on their behavioural aspects are indicated in Table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13: Responses to statements on Behavioural Dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement No.</th>
<th>Agreeing</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Disagreeing</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48. I put a lot of effort when performing my job</td>
<td>97 (95%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>4.7157</td>
<td>3.98357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. I stay until the job is completed</td>
<td>90 (88)</td>
<td>7 (7%)</td>
<td>5 (5%)</td>
<td>4.0784</td>
<td>0.71319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. I work extra hours without being told to</td>
<td>96 (94%)</td>
<td>5 (5%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>4.2353</td>
<td>0.6309</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 4.13, the majority of the respondents agreed with the statements on the behavioural aspect of employee engagement.

4.6 CORRELATION AND REGRESSION ANALYSES

One of the main objectives of the study was to establish relationships between variables and the relationships were established by correlation and regression analyses. The following section presents the correlation and regression results.

4.6.1 CORRELATION ANALYSIS

In order to test establish how correlated variables were and also to ascertain the existence of multicollinearity, Pearson Correlation was utilised. Saunders et al. (2009) state that Pearson correlation gives a measure of the strength, direction, and statistical significance of the relationship between the dependent variable (employee engagement) and independent variables (leadership, training and development and social support). These
authors indicate that if p-value is smaller than 0.05, then the relationship is statistically significant. Saunders et al. (2009) further states that a correlation coefficient of 0 is considered to denote perfect independence, correlation coefficients in the range 0 to 2.99 are considered weak, while correlation coefficients from 3.0 to 0.7 are considered moderate. Above 0.7 the correlation coefficient is considered to be strong. Table 4.14 summaries the correlation coefficients and statistical significance of the relationship between each of the independent variables and dependent variable.

### Table 4.14 Pearson Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Training and Development</th>
<th>Social Support</th>
<th>Employee Engagement</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Development</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Engagement</td>
<td>0.767</td>
<td>0.609</td>
<td>0.760</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the results depicted in Table 4.15, it was observed that the relationship between leadership and employee engagement ($r = 0.767$), training and development and employee engagement ($r = 0.609$) and social support and employee engagement ($r = 0.760$) were positive and statistically significant at p-value $< 0.05$. This indicates that all the three independent variables are significantly correlated to employee engagement.

Table 4.8 also indicates that the variables are not highlycorrelated to each other and hence they are independent of one another. According to Saunders et al. (2009), high correlations of 0.9 and above indicate significant collinearity between the variables. There was therefore no problem of collinearity because all the correlation coefficients were less than 0.9.
The study went further to carry out a regression analysis because correlation analysis does not help us to establish cause-and-effect relationships between the variables.

4.6.2 REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The multiple linear regression analysis was conducted between employee engagement as the dependent variable and leadership, training and development and social support as the independent variables. The purpose of this analysis was to determine the impact of each independent variable (leadership, training and development and social support) on the dependent variable (employee engagement). Tables 4.15, 4.16, and 4.17 highlight the results of the regression analysis.

Table 4.15 ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>899.515</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>224.879</td>
<td>14.960</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>1413.031</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>15.032</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2312.545</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Training and Development, Leadership, and Social support
b. Dependent Variable: Employee engagement

The above output table shows that the F ratio of 14,960 with 4 and 98 degrees of freedom (df) and significance of 0.000 indicates the model is statistically fit to predict employee engagement since the F-value 14.960 is significant at $p<0.001$.

Table 4.16: Model Summary

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<td>Model</td>
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</table>
Table 4.16 indicates that R Square is 0.389, which implies that 38.9% of the variation or change in employee engagement could be explained by the variables in the model (leadership, training and development and social support) and this is statistically significant as p-value is less than 0.05. The implication is that 39% of the variation in employee engagement is explained by the variables in the model which are leadership, training and development and social support, the remaining 61% of the model is accounted for by factors outside the model.

Table 4.17: Regression Coefficients of the model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1(Constant)</td>
<td>6.995</td>
<td>3.828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and development</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
<td>.243</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable: Employee engagement
Predictors: leadership, social support and training and development

The regression coefficients indicate the amount of change in employee engagement given a one unit change in the value of the independent variable, assuming that all other variables in the model are held constant. Table 4.17, indicated that a one unit improvement in leadership would impact on employee engagement by 0.110 and that the relationship was statistically significant because p-value<0.05 (β=0.110; p-value 0.046).
In terms of Table 4.17, a one unit improvement in training and development will increase employee engagement by 0.215 and the relationship was statistically significant because p-value<0.05 (β=0.215; p-value 0.002).

Table 4.17 also indicated that a one unit improvement in social support will increase employee engagement by 0.456 and the relationship was also statistically significant because p-value<0.05 (β=0.546; p-value 0.000).

4.7 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Chapter 2 formulated a conceptual framework to assess the impact of the independent variables (leadership, training and development and social support) and the dependent variable (employee engagement) and three hypotheses.

Regression analysis demonstrated that leadership had an impact on employee engagement. Leadership accounted for an increase of 0.110 units in employee engagement and the relationship was statistically significant because p-value<0.05 (β=0.110; p-value 0.046). These findings were congruent with Schaufeli and Salanova (2010), Xu and Thomas (2011) and May et al. (2004) who all agreed that leadership had an influence on employee engagement.

Therefore H1: Leadership will have a positive influence on employee engagement in real estate firms operating in Harare is supported and accepted.

With regards to the impact of training and development, the regression analysis indicated that training and development had an impact on employee engagement. The analysis indicated that training and development would increase employee engagement by 0.215 units and that the relationship was statistically significant because p-value<0.05 (β=0.215; p-value 0.002). This result was consistent with literature obtained from Salanova et al. (2005), Shuck et al. (2010) and Saks (2006).
Therefore **H2**: Training and development will have a positive impact on employee engagement in real estate firms operating in Harare is supported and accepted.

The third and last independent factor was social support. Regression analysis indicated that social support had an influence on employee engagement. Social support had a contribution factor of 0.456 to employee engagement and the relationship is statistically significant because p-value<0.05 (β=0.456; p-value 0.000). This was consistent with Rothmann and Jordaan (2006) and Bakker and Demerouti (2008) who all stated that socially supporting employees results in them being engaged to their jobs and organisations. Therefore **H3**: Social support from supervisor and colleagues will significantly influence employee engagement in real estate firms operating in Harare is accepted.

It is interesting to note from these findings that of the three factors, social support had a greatest impact on employee engagement (β=0.456). This is a demonstration that employees value the support that they get from both management and workmates. It shows that employees need moral support from managers and other employees for them to feel attached to their jobs and employers. The second contributing factor to employee engagement was training and development. This also highlights the importance of training and developing employees. When employees are provided with training and development they improve their performance levels. They also become motivated because they know that they have opportunities to further develop their careers. This explains why employees become engaged to their jobs and organisations. The last contributing factor was leadership and this also indicates that proper leadership styles are necessary to ensure employee engagement.

### 4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the presentation and analysis of the research findings. The researcher utilized tables and figures to illustrate the findings and show the impact of leadership, training and development and social support on employee engagement. The
major findings were that all the independent variables had a positive and significant impact on employee engagement. Leadership and social support were strongly positively related to employee engagement while training and development were moderately positively related to employee engagement. In terms of impact, the findings indicated leadership, training and development and social support had an impact on employee engagement. Leadership had the least impact on employee engagement while social support had the greatest impact on employee engagement. Finally, the findings in respect each variable were compared to the results in the reviewed literature in order to accept or reject each of the three hypotheses. The next chapter focuses on the conclusions and recommendations of the study.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided the results and discussed the empirical findings of the study. Correlation and regression analyses were conducted out in order to establish the relationships among the variables.

This chapter evaluated the research objectives and hypotheses of the study. The conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study are provided. The chapter ends with suggestions for areas for further study.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

5.2.1 HYPOTHESES VALIDATION

The study found adequate empirical evidence to validate and support all the three hypotheses, namely:
H1: Leadership will have a positive influence on employee engagement in real estate firms operating in Harare.

H2: Training and development will have a positive impact on employee engagement in real estate firms operating in Harare.

H3: Social support from supervisor and colleagues will significantly influence employee engagement in real estate firms operating in Harare.

5.2.2 CONCLUSIONS TO RESEARCH OBJECTIVES / RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study arrived at the following conclusions based on the objectives and research questions in Chapter 1.

5.2.2.1 To establish the impact of leadership on employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare.

The findings from the study indicated that leadership had a positive and moderate impact on employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare.

5.2.2.2 To find out the influence of training and development on employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare.

The research concluded that training and development had a positive and significant influence on employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare.

5.2.2.3 To determine the influence of social support from supervisors and colleagues on employee engagement.

The study concluded that social support from supervisor and colleagues had the greatest impact on employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare.

The overall result indicated that 38.9% of the variation or change in employee engagement could be explained by leadership, training and development and social support from the supervisor and colleagues. This means that there were also other factors.
that impacted on employee engagement in real estate firms operating in Harare that were outside of the model. This presents an area for further studies to determine what other factors influence employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare apart from those that were investigated in this study. Consequently, an employee engagement function was developed as follows:

\[
\text{Employee Engagement} = f \left( 6.995 + 0.110 \times \text{Leadership} + 0.215 \times \text{Training and development} + 0.456 \times \text{Social Support} \right)
\]

5.3 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION

The findings of this research have contributed to the existing literature and body of knowledge on the influence of leadership, training and development and social support from supervisor and colleagues on employee engagement in real estate agents. There was sufficient empirical evidence to support and accept all three hypotheses on leadership, training and development and social support having a positive influence on employee engagement and hence the conceptual framework contained in Chapter 2 has been proved to be applicable to the real estate sector in Zimbabwe.

This is one of the few pioneering research studies that has been conducted on the influence of leadership, training and development on employee engagement focused on real estate agents operating in Harare.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 Recommendations based on regression analysis

Regression analysis indicated all the independent variables (leadership, training and development) had an impact on employee engagement but social support had the greatest impact on employee engagement. It is recommended that real estate agents focus their efforts on improving the nature of leadership, training and development and social support in their organizations with particular emphasis being placed on social support.
5.4.2 Improve relations with staff

It is recommended that interventions should be implemented to ensure good relationships with employees. Top management in the real estate agents should provide resources to enable their employees to perform their work roles effectively. Supervisors could improve their relations with their subordinates by being trustworthy, by giving fair treatment and behaving in a consistent manner towards their subordinates. An environment which supports teamwork and autonomy of employees in their jobs is essential. A combination of the above factors will assist in creating an exchange relationship where employees will feel obliged to give back to the organisation by improving their engagement levels.

5.4.3 Implement training and development programs that are focused on engagement.

Real estate agents should implement a range of training and development programmes that focus on supporting employee’s capabilities and growth or development. Managers would have to spend more time to find out their subordinates training and development needs and provide appropriate support. Regular audits of the training and development programs and engagement levels would provide useful information on the interventions that would need to be undertaken to bring these training and development programs in line with the required engagement levels.

5.4.4 Adopt an appropriate leadership style for boosting employee engagement.

As the study indicates, there are different leadership styles that can be utilised to increase employee engagement in an organisation. It is important that the leaders in real estate organisations be aware of these different leadership styles and adopt the appropriate leadership for boosting employee engagement. Managers should be aware of the influence of the leaders’ behaviours on employee performance and adopt the appropriate leadership style as well.

5.4.5 Reward and promote managers based on their ability to engage employees.

A major task in real estate organisations is to ensure that line managers play an active role in bringing about high performance of employees in the organisation. One way of
ensuring this would be to put in place a reward and promotion system that rewards and promotes managers based on evidence of their support for engagement.

5.4.6 Design jobs so that they become meaningful and challenging to employees.
Another major task for managers is to deeply understand the needs of their employees. Managers would need to work closely with their subordinates and design jobs so that work becomes interesting, challenging and meaningful to employees and thus bring about higher levels of engagement.

5.5 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS
The results of this study should be treated with caution. This study utilized self-report and cross-sectional data.

5.5.1 Self-Report Method
The study utilized a subjective approach which relied on respondents’ views of leadership, training and development, social support and engagement in their organizations. This method could have impacted on the correlations between three independent variables (leadership, training and development and social support) and the dependent variable (employee engagement).

5.5.2 Cross-Sectional Design
With respect to cross-sectional data, we cannot be definite that the antecedents (leadership, training and development and social support caused) caused engagement. While the relationships between the variables were in line with the reviewed literature on engagement, there is likelihood that other factors could also have impacted on engagement. Longitudinal studies would be required to provide more certain conclusions about the antecedents of employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare.

5.7 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
This study focused on the determinants of employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare. Future research could repeat the same study in other towns in Zimbabwe such as Bulawayo, Gweru, Masvingo and Mutare in order to improve external validity.

In addition, the results of the regression analysis indicated that 39% of employee engagement was influenced by leadership, training and development. It is evident that employee engagement is also influenced by other factors not considered in this study. It is suggested that future research could investigate other variables that influence employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare.

Future research should explore a more comprehensive model that includes working conditions and employee well-being as antecedents to employee engagement. A comparable study could also be undertaken using customers’ perceptions as opposed to employee perceptions on the variables in this study. Arising out of the importance of social support to employee engagement, there is also an avenue for studies on the impact of internal communication on employee engagement.
REFERENCES


**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNARE**

27 January 2015

Dear Respondent

**MBA RESEARCH QUESTIONNARE**

I am in my final year of the Master of Business Administration degree with the University of Zimbabwe. For my dissertation, I am examining the effect of leadership, training and development and social support from the supervisor and colleagues on employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare.

I am kindly inviting you to participate in this research study. The attached survey questionnaire will require approximately 5-10 minutes of your time to complete. I commit myself to uphold all research ethics which include among others, assuring
confidentiality in handling your responses. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and used only for the purpose of this research and nowhere else.

If you require additional information or have questions please do not hesitate to contact me via my email address hchikaka@gmail.com or on 0774 049 941.

Yours faithfully

Hemish Chikaka

This questionnaire is designed to seek information about the antecedents of employee engagement in real estate agents operating in Harare. The statements or questions in this questionnaire are concerned with your views about employee engagement, leadership, training and development and social support from colleagues and supervisor. If you have any queries please contact hchikaka@gmail.com or 0774 049 941

SECTION A

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

(Circle the appropriate response)

1. Gender a) male b) female
2. Your age a) under 30 b) 30-39 c) 40-49 d) 50 and over
3. Your highest qualification. a) certificate b) diploma c) degree d) masters degree
4. Working experience
   a) Less than 5 years b) 6-9 years c) 10-14 years d) 15 years and over
5. Your employment status
   a) Permanent full-time b) Part-time
SECTION B

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Below are statements about strategic planning practices. You can indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement by ticking the corresponding number in the 5 point scale below:

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<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
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Leadership

6. Our leadership regularly communicates importance of delivering superior levels of customer service.

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7. Management provides resources to enhance our ability to provide excellent customer service.

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8. Our leadership supports team decisions, even if they differ from their own point of view.

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9. Our leaders in the organisation willingly share own knowledge and ideas with others.
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10. Our leadership makes timely decisions, without unnecessary delay or haste.

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11. Our leaders provide timely responses to requests, phone calls or problem situations.

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12. Our leadership keeps promises made.

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13. Our leadership keeps all employees well informed.

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14. Our leaders communicate clear performance expectations.

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15. There are high ethical standards in leadership of this organisation.

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16. Leadership is honest in dealing with others.

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17. Leadership communicates openly and honestly without any hidden agendas.

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18. There is good communication between senior leadership and employees

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**Training and development**

**Training**

19. Managers request our opinion on training activities.

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20. Training helps me to overcome work obstacles.

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21. Training is practical.
22. Sufficient training is provided.

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**Development**

23. My work offers me the opportunity to develop myself at work.

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24. I have sufficient possibilities to develop myself at work.

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25. I have opportunity to grow in this company

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**Social Support**
26. I can count on my co-workers when I encounter difficulties at work.

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27. My interactions with my co-workers are rewarding.

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28. My co-workers value my input.

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29. My co-workers listen to what I have to say.

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30. I feel a real connection with my co-workers.

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31. My co-workers and I have mutual respect.

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32. I trust my co-workers.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>Options</td>
<td></td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>33. My supervisor helps me solve work-related problems.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>strongly disagree  disagree Not sure agree strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>34. My supervisor encourages employees to participate in important decisions.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>strongly disagree  disagree Not sure agree strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. My supervisor encourages employees to speak up when they disagree with a decision.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>strongly disagree  disagree Not sure agree strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36. Employees are treated fairly by my supervisor.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>strongly disagree  disagree Not sure agree strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>37. My supervisor is committed to protecting my interests.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>strongly disagree  disagree Not sure agree strongly agree</td>
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<td>38. I trust my supervisor.</td>
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39. In the last 6 months, I have received praise or recognition for my work.

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**SECTION C**

**JOB PERFORMANCE**

Below are statements about the effect of the leadership, training and development, social support on employee engagement where you are required to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement by ticking the appropriate number where:

1=strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= moderately agree 4= agree 5= strongly disagree

*Tick only one number for each statement.*

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**Employee Engagement**

**Cognitive Dimension**

40. Performing my job is so absorbing that I often forget about other things.
1             2             3             4             5
 strongly disagree  Disagree  Not sure  agree  strongly agree

41. I rarely get distracted when I perform well on my job

1             2             3             4             5
 strongly disagree  Disagree  Not sure  agree  strongly agree

42. Time passes quickly when I perform my job

1             2             3             4             5
 strongly disagree  Disagree  Not sure  agree  strongly agree

**Emotional Dimension**

43. I really put my heart into my job.

1             2             3             4             5
 strongly disagree  Disagree  Not sure  agree  strongly agree

44. I get excited when I perform well on my job.

1             2             3             4             5
 strongly disagree  Disagree  Not sure  agree  strongly agree

45. My own feelings are affected by how well I perform my job.

1             2             3             4             5
46. I am happy to work extra hours without being told to.

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47. I enjoy coming to work.

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**Behavioural Dimension**

48. I put a lot of effort when performing my job

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49. I stay until the job is completed.

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50. I work extra hours without being told to.

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