

**PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT:
THE CASE OF MULTICHOICE ETHIOPIA LIMITED**

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis entitled is my original work, under the guidance and suggestion of the research advisor and that all source materials used for the study have been duly acknowledged. It is offered for the partial fulfillment of the degree of MA in Human Resource Management. This study has not been submitted for any degree in this university or any other university

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List of Acronyms

CIPD - Certified Institute of Personnel Development

EE – Employee Engagement

EES – Employee Engagement Survey

HR – Human Resources

HRM – Human Resources Management

MCA - MultiChoice Africa

MCE – MultiChoice Ethiopia

SHRM – Strategic Human Resource Management

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Abstract

Employee engagement is a popular term among HR management professionals and academics alike. Research after research is done to establish why engagement should be on top of every executive's agenda. This study aims at shading some light into employee engagement practices and challenges in MultiChoice Ethiopia Limited – a company that is engaged in the service industry whereby the result of having engaged employees is of paramount importance. The study was conducted using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. A census of 35 employees was made through a self-administered questionnaire, followed by focus group discussions in separate groups for employees, supervisor and managers. The major findings of the study are 58.4% of MultiChoice Ethiopia's employees are engaged with a mean of 3.54 overall engagement levels on the Gallup Q12 questionnaire (Gallup, 2014). Among the engagement drivers classified as basic needs, management support, team work and growth, only management support has been found to have a statistically significant impact on employee engagement. The main conclusions of the study are that current engagement level is slightly higher than neutral level and the proportion of employees who are engaged are significantly lower than those who indicated that they were engaged in 2013. It has also been established that management support is the dominant driver for employee engagement.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This part of the study introduces the background of the study in the context of MultiChoice Ethiopia, what the study aims to accomplish i.e. its objectives, the significance and scope of the study. It also describes how the research study is organized.

1.1 Background of the Study

Any organization regardless of its size, nature and scope of operation, needs competent human resource - its talent base - if it aims not only to survive but also thrive in this highly competitive and rapidly changing environment. However, having this talent base on its own will not be sufficient to achieve the objectives an organization sets. Employees have to be engaged to their organization and its objectives.

But what is employee engagement in the first place? Is it the same as employee motivation or commitment? As it might be expected, there is no all- encompassing definition for the term among practitioners or academia. However, one of the earliest mentions of the concept of employee engagement was from the Hay group as quoted by Saks(2006) who defined engaged performance as “a result that is achieved by stimulating employees’ enthusiasm for their work and directing it towards organizational success”. Similarly , Towers Perrin– another firm of management consultants – as quoted by Armstrong(2006) state that engagement is “the extent to which employees put discretionary effort in their work, beyond the minimum to get the job done, in the form of extra time, brainpower and energy” .

From the definitions above, it is possible to see that engagement is wider than motivation and commitment. Once we establish what employee engagement is, the question that often follows is why is it important to study? Numerous articles have stated the engaged employees are the key to competitive advantage. Therefore, it is important for organizations to find out if their employees are engaged. More importantly, if they are not at the required level of engagement, the organization has to take steps to address this issue promptly.

It is with the intention of clarifying what employee engagement consists of, what factors drive it and what benefits employee engagement has to the organization that the student researcher chose to study the practice & challenges of employee engagement in MultiChoice Ethiopia Limited (MCE)

MultiChoice Ethiopia was established as a franchise in February 2000 as a Subscriber Management Service provider and has a rapidly growing subscriber base, driven primarily by high demand for coverage of sports provided by SuperSport channels, up-to-date news coverage, children programs, documentaries and premium movies. The head office is based in Addis Ababa, the diplomatic capital of Africa, where MultiChoice Ethiopia provides premium television services to a cosmopolitan mix of subscribers. The company has 40 employees and is supported by a team of 90 installers who market and sell DStv. With a branch at the center of the biggest open air market in Africa i.e. Merkato and 35 agents who provide additional point of presence across the country, including major towns like Bahir Dar, Gonder, Hawassa, Jimma, Dire Dawa, and Mekele. The company provides subscription management service by collecting periodic fees for receiving access to different packages of TV channels, sells decoders and peripheral equipment, provides technical assistance and marketing support on behalf of the principal company - MultiChoice Africa Limited (MCA), a South African company.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As an elusive and a novel concept as employee engagement is, there has not been much research on this subject in the Ethiopian context. Even though employee engagement is

not the same as running yearly organizational climate surveys , the very existence of organizational climate surveys conducted periodically – on a yearly basis ,to be more exact – is limited to local branches of multi national companies. For example Total & Libya Oil from fuel and lubricants , Coca-Cola and Diageo from beverage and some non governmental organizations such as DFiD (UK's Department for International Development) . In some cases, employee climate surveys are conducted to find out the level of satisfaction as part of assessing overall organizational health as it was the case in the days following the major re-organization of ethio-telecom. Aside from these , the only other local organization that has a dedicated employee engagement initiative is Ethiopian Airlines.

Employee engagement survey tools also have different names ranging from employee attitude survey, satisfaction survey, climate survey, people survey to values survey.

For the first time since its establishment in 2000, MCE conducted an employee engagement survey as part of the group of companies under the MCA umbrella in 2013. The survey is conducted by an independent service provider by administering a web based questionnaire. The analysis and compiling of the final report with the resulting employee engagement score in percentage terms is established by the company and feedback has been sent back to MCE to be shared with employees. The results of the survey indicated engaged employees constituted of 71% of the total population. This indicates that among other peer companies in MultiChoice Africa's(MCA) operations across 14 countries , MCE's score is close to an average one with low score starting at 59% and the highest at 89%. This means that employees who have indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed to engagement questions on a likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree represent from 59% to 89% of the entire population in each of the operating companies in the countries MCA operates in.

Therefore, the company had embarked on a series of activities that were aimed at improving employee engagement levels. However, with so many factors affecting employee engagement, it is important to have a concerted effort on a select few employee engagement improvement initiatives to ensure the organisation gets adequate return on its investment – a bang for its buck , so to say.

The current practices of the company is conducting engagement surveys every other year while implementing action plans from the previous year. The survey is done as a census with all employees participating on a voluntary basis. The main challenge faced, however, is that there are no visible changes in terms of productivity, employee retention and improved engagement scores after implementation of the action plans. This study, therefore, focused on finding what the current level of employee engagement is, what the most important drivers of employee engagement are and explores challenges associated with implementing initiatives for improvement. It also uncovered factors that need to be considered to ensure employee engagement does not deteriorate further in subsequent years.

1.3 Research Questions

This research has answered the following questions

- What is the current level of employee engagement in MCE?
- What drives employee engagement in MCE?
- What practices are carried out in MCE to improve employee engagement?
- What challenges are faced by the company in implementing improvement initiatives?

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this research is to find out the major components of employee engagement and challenges in implementing the employee engagement improvement program.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To assess the current level of employee engagement
- To describe the driving factors of employee engagements in MCE
- To find out which practices are more important in improving employee engagement
- To detect the challenges in implementing interventions

1.4 Significance of the Study

The importance of having an engaged human resource in an organization has been established through extensive research. The benefits of having engaged employees include building passion, commitment and alignment with the organizations goals. Since there are typically a number of competing priorities for an organizations resource, it is important to justify any amount of money, effort and time that is invested in improving employee engagement. The results of the research can be incorporated into the business plan of the company to ensure there is adequate return on investment.

In addition, the student researcher has uncovered that the subject is quite a novel idea among Ethiopian organizations during discussions with HR professionals who belong to Society of Human Resources Management in Ethiopia (SHRME). One of the most often asked question in the HR & Talent Management group on LinkedIn is also what HR professionals provide as interventions for improved employee engagement. The in- depth study of the subject to find out practical solutions to MCE can possibly be used other organizations that may be interested to adopt a similar approach to employee engagement.

For the researcher, the study enables to pinpoint areas of priority for implementation of initiatives with credible findings supported by the data. Moreover, it would broaden understating of the underlying drivers of engagement in the Ethiopian context against

related literature. It can also serve as a basis for other researchers who would want to delve into the subject of employee engagement deeply in the future.

1.5 Scope of the Study

Conceptually, the study covers engagement drivers as identified in the Gallup Model (2014). Although various conceptual models identify drivers of engagement, the Gallup model concentrates on four categories of drivers; namely fulfillment of basic needs, management support, teamwork and growth. Therefore, the studies conceptual scope is limited to these drivers.

Concerning methodological scope, the study uses a mixed research methodology of quantitative and qualitative research design. The logic behind using the mixed approach is the nature of the research problem and the most appropriate method to address employee engagement drivers. By triangulating results of data collected and analyzed, it is believed that the research questions are answered fully by the study.

Considering geographical and temporal scope, this study concentrates on employee engagement practices for the last two years at MCE. Although comparisons are made with other MCA group companies occasionally, it is limited to studying employee engagement for MCE employees only i.e. those based in Addis Ababa.

1.6 Organization of the Report

The research report is organized in five chapters. In the first chapter, a brief background of the study is provided, followed by statement of the problem, basic research questions, and objectives of the study, significance & scope of the study. In chapter two, the researcher presents review of related literature including definitions of the concept, various employee engagement models, and summary of studies conducted on the subject

previously. Relevant literature from books, articles and company reports have been used here. This chapter also includes the conceptual framework adopted from previous studies.

Chapter three presents the type and design of the research; participants of the study; the sources of data; the data collection tools/instruments employed, the procedures of data collection; and the methods of data analysis used in the study.

Results have been extensively discussed and presented in chapter four concentrating on interpretation of findings. An extensive use of the literature review has been done against which the discussion is presented.

Finally, in chapter five, conclusions and recommendations are presented based on results discussed under chapter four and a special note has been made about the limitations that could have affected conclusions. The recommendations presented are believed to be practical and prioritized based on the company's resources in terms of financial capabilities as well as cultural readiness to change, should one be needed.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This part of the study deals with review of literature mainly from contemporary articles on the subject of employee engagement. It also presents results of empirical studies on engagement and summarizes their main findings. While the empirical studies were conducted exclusively in the western world, it is believed that they will shade some light into the relevance of employee engagement in the Ethiopian context.

2.1 Employee Engagement: An Overview

Employee engagement has become a new management mantra. Although there is rarely a single, all-encompassing definition for it, many authors argue that it is “good to have engaged employees in an organization” as those who feel “engaged” in their jobs and the organization – perform better and can promote their organization as “an employer of choice”. (Emmott (2006), Reilly and Brown (2008), as cited in Armstrong, 2010).

The Certified Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD)(2014) acknowledges that there are many definitions offered for “employee engagement” and notes these differences emanate from the emphasis placed upon different aspects of an employee’s engagement. It offers what it terms as the most enduring definition as “being positively present during the performance of work by willingly contributing intellectual effort, experiencing positive emotions and meaningful connections to others”. This definition gives three dimensions to employee engagement; namely

- Intellectual engagement – thinking hard about the job and how to do it better
- Affective engagement – feeling positive about doing a good job
- Social engagement – actively taking opportunities to discuss work-related improvements with others at work.

Similarly, Custom Insight (2015) – an employee engagement survey service providing company - defines employee engagement as “the extent to which employees feel passionate about their jobs, are committed to the organization, and put discretionary effort into their work.”

The Society of HR Management (SHRM) (2014) defines employee engagement as” the actual conditions in the workplace (the environment and the work itself) and workers’ opinions and behaviors “ i.e. how employees perceive their relationship with their work, as well as how they view others around them.

The sources of different definitions can be attributed to the evolution of the concept of employee engagement. The emphasis both by academia and practitioners – corporations, consulting firms and individual HR managers – differ in their view of what is meant by employee engagement. The common feature, however, is that employee engagement is important.

Closer to the Ethiopian context, the Society of HR Management in Ethiopia (SHRME) (2015)in the presentation entitled“ Leadership that engages employees” identifies four main steps in the evolution of employee engagement; from satisfied employees to motivated, then to committed and finally to engaged employees. Typical behaviors at these stages are: satisfied employees are happy to work with the organization, feel content with their assignments while motivated employees have a good understanding of their responsibilities and challenges and are motivated to perform; committed employees understand the organization’s overall objective and are committed to the organization. However, they do not take initiatives on their own. At the highest level, we find engaged employees– these are employees who take initiatives and responsibilities for making the organization’s objectives a reality.

2.2 Theoretical Literature Review

From the numerous definitions above, does it mean that “employee engagement is simply a new wine in an old bottle? Are we simply putting a new label for employee satisfaction? Not according to the articles and books on the subject. For instance, the ADP research institute (2012) states that the most significant difference between employee engagement and satisfaction is that satisfied employees are merely happy or content with their jobs and the status quo. For some, this might involve doing as little work as possible. On the other hand, engaged employees are motivated to do more than the bare minimum needed in order to keep their jobs. In other words, employee satisfaction only deals with how happy or content employees are, covers the basic concerns and needs of employees but does not address employees’ level of motivation or involvement. Employee engagement actually incorporates satisfaction of employees but goes beyond satisfaction to include an element of long term view as well as forming a sense of belongingness to the organization and its objectives.

In addition, Macy and Schneider (2008) stated, after a review of diverse literature both from practitioners and the sparsely available academic research, a series of propositions to the construct of engagement. These propositions and their justifications conclude that engagement is not merely satisfaction. Rather, satisfaction is only one aspect of engagement when assessed as feelings of energy, enthusiasm, and similarly positive affective states. Similarly, commitment refers to both to the task an employee performs and to the organization. It defined as the psychological state of belongingness, pride and effort is considered as another aspect but not entirely identical to engagement. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) which is frequently used as the closest synonym for engagement is one of the behaviors that demonstrate engagement. The other aspect being role expansion i.e. the choice to perform role tasks either “motivated by the norm of reciprocity, paying back for having been treated well, whereas another might simply consider that behavior part of their job. Another differentiator between OCB and engagement is offered by Saks (2005) who stated that organizational commitment differs from engagement in that it refers to a person’s attitude and attachment towards their organization. Engagement is not an attitude; it is the degree to which an individual is

attentive and absorbed in the performance of their roles. And while OCB involves voluntary and informal behaviors that can help co-workers and the organization, the focus of engagement is one's formal role performance rather than extra-role and voluntary behavior.

To conclude, we can adopt the concise definition for engagement by Towers Perrin as cited in Armstrong(2010)", 'the extent to which employees put discretionary effort into their work, beyond the minimum to get the job done, in the form of extra time, brainpower or energy'

2.2.1 Why Employee Engagement?

The Deloitte Director's alert (2014) "Through the eyes of the board: Key governance issues for 2015 " makes a special mention of employee engagement together with retention as one of the top four areas that deserve particular focus from organizations in 2015 . Similarly, Miles and Maxwell (2009) state that engaged employees lead to high levels of quality and improved productivity. Supporting this view is Furham (2008) who states that engagement is not an end by and of itself but leads to other desirable outcomes such as customer satisfaction, employee retention and ultimately profitability. He goes on to further state that the research conducted in this area consistently shows what he terms as a "neither surprising nor counter- intuitive" result. The research he mentions has established a relatively simple link between employee engagement and customer satisfaction.

A study conducted in 2012 by The Dale Carninge Training with MSW research by taking a representative sample of 1500 employees also reached a similar conclusion. Today, employee engagement and loyalty are more vital than ever before to an organization's success and competitive advantage. Gone are the days when a young person starting out in his/ her career joined a company and stayed until retirement – in today's business environment there are no guarantees. With recruiting costs running approximately 1.5 times annual salary, the ability to engage and retain valuable employees has a significant

impact on an organization's bottom line. The benefits of having engaged employees are emphasized especially during economically challenging times as described by the 2013 study that identified trends in global employee engagement. This study specifically mentioned that employee engagement is a leading indicator of company growth. The economic recession of 2009 put significant downward pressure on corporate spending on talent—and engagement took a significant hit in the following year. The global economy has shown signs of growth in the years since, however, and engagement has been on the rise as well. Analysis of employee engagement and company performance data concludes companies that had higher employee engagement relative to their peers throughout the economic turmoil managed to bounce back relatively quickly to their former performance. Thus, from the numerous studies mentioned above, we can conclude that employee engagement is linked to workforce performance, customer satisfaction, and productivity, reduction of absenteeism and turnover, all of which can significantly impact on the bottom line.

Broadening the importance of engagement is the 2014 Gallup's "State of The Global Workforce Report" which concluded 'Low levels of engagement among global workers continue to hinder gains in economic productivity and life quality in much of the world.'

Based on Gallup's report, it is fair to say that it's not just the profitability and success of an organization that hinge on the engagement levels of employees. The way organizations engage employees actually impacts elements as far reaching as the economic productivity of a country, and even the world. Not only that, the ability of HR Professionals, Managers and Leaders to provide great work, great work places and inspiration to employees, has significant impact on the overall quality of life of everyone that has a job.

2.2.2 Components and levels of Employee Engagement

Much has been said about what engagement is and what its opposites as well as components must be termed. Among the proposed opposites we find, un-engaged,

disengaged and the worst sounding one - burnout. All these denote a sense of lack of accomplishment, exhaustion and cynicism while engagement is associated with energy, involvement and efficacy.

Two components of engagement are usually mentioned among academics. These are job engagement and organizational engagement. The survey firm Gallup(2014) defines engagement in the same way as an employee's job engagement to mean 'an individual's involvement and satisfaction with, as well as enthusiasm for, work' while Shuck (2011) identifies the 'multidimensional' approach to engagement, which is associated with the work of Saks (2006), who differentiates between 'job engagement' and 'organizational engagement', thus suggesting that engagement can have multiple foci, similar to commitment.

According to Armstrong(2006), the term 'engagement' can be used in a specific job-related way to describe what takes place when people are interested in and are positive, even excited, about their jobs, exercise discretionary behavior and are motivated to achieve high levels of performance. He further mentions that the major HR practice that promotes job engagement is performance management. Among the many outcomes of performance management, we find financial and non-financial rewards.

Therefore, we can say employees are engaged with their jobs when they have an interest in what they do and a sense of excitement in their work as created by performance management. This happens when performance management results in intrinsic motivating factors such as taking responsibility for job outcomes, job satisfaction, achievement and fulfillment of personal goals and objectives.

On the other hand, organizational engagement is defined by Murlis and Watson (2001) as 'engaged performance' which is 'a result that is achieved by stimulating employees' enthusiasm for their work and directing it towards organizational success. This result can only be achieved when employers offer an implied contract to their employee that elicits specific positive behaviors aligned with the organization's goals. Therefore, we can see organizational engagement focuses on attachment to the organization as a whole. Armstrong (2006) also mentions that the Conference Board in the United States defined

employee engagement as ‘a heightened connection that an employee feels for his or her organization’. The organizational aspect of engagement is emphasized when engagement is defined as ‘a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values’. Thus, organizational engagement is associated with the notion of organizational citizenship behavior, which Katz and Kahn (1966) defined as ‘innovative and spontaneous activity directed toward the achievement of organizational objectives, but which goes beyond role requirements’.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

According to Gallup’s latest findings (2014), 87% of workers are “not engaged” or “actively disengaged” and are emotionally disconnected from their workplaces and less likely to be productive. The proportion of actively disengaged employees has decreased from 27% to 24% in 2014 compared to 2013. However, actively disengaged employees continue to outnumber engaged employees by nearly 2-to-1, implying that at the global level, work is more often a source of frustration than one of fulfillment. It also means countless workplaces worldwide are less productive and less safe than they could be and are less likely to create badly needed new jobs and happy thriving human beings.

According to Reissnera &Pagana (2013), much of the existing research on employee engagement is deficient in examining organizational actors' lived in experiences of organizational engagement activities. However, whatever little research is available contributes to the current understanding of how employee engagement is generated through management activities seeking to promote engagement and employees' responses thereto.

Arrowsmith & Parker (2013) contend that employee engagement has become a dominant part of the vocabulary of human resource management, yet there has been little investigation of the implications of this for HRM. Effective engagement initiatives require political astuteness and commitment on the part of HR. This is because they require a clear business case focused on performance, not merely engagement itself, and

an evidence-based approach to design and implement programs. Therefore, we can glean that employee engagement, though driven by the HR function, needs the entire commitment of the organization's leadership and that it is not an end by and of itself. As such, much attention has to be given to the activities that lead to high levels of engagement.

Not veering too much away from the above, Truss, Shantz, Soane, Alfes & Delbridge (2013), after reviewing various studies, concluded that it was only very recently that interest has been shown in the parallel stream of research on the link between employee engagement and performance, bringing the two together to suggest that engagement may constitute the mechanism through which HRM practices impact individual and organizational performance. They further argued that in parallel with the development of the Strategic HRM field, researchers have been concerned with exploring how employee engagement could help explain individual performance outcomes. Although definitions of engagement have varied considerably, evidence has accumulated on the basis of quantitative studies to suggest that high levels of engagement are associated with high levels of performance, citizenship behavior and individual well-being. These authors also indicate that studies have shown engaged employees express their authentic selves through physical involvement, cognitive awareness and emotional connections. Conversely, disengaged employees 'uncouple' themselves from their roles, suppressing personal involvement in physical, cognitive and emotional aspects of work. Nevertheless, the authors also acknowledge that the concept of engagement is often used as a catch-all that captures a range of work-related attitudes, including job satisfaction, alongside perceptions of various organizational behaviors such as leadership, voice and involvement. This alleged "offence" is typically labeled against consulting firms who now organize their products and services around the development and enhancement of 'employee engagement', suggesting that the term may have been hijacked by those with different agendas i.e. to sell their survey instrument and/or set of "organizational solutions to engagement enhancement".

As employees are a critical component to every organization, their engagement is believed to serve as a barometer of organizational health. By examining employee

engagement, employers can create an engagement strategy to address employee motivation, behavior, productivity and subsequent business results. The key findings from this research can be summarized as follows.(Gallup,2014)

Although a slight increase (of 2%) in engagement levels were observed in 2012 when compared with 2011, globally only 60% of employees are considered engaged while the rest are passive or actively disengaged. On the other hand, this study also found out that the work experience is improving more than deteriorating. Employers across the globe raised the bar and made investments in the top engagement drivers. As a result, improvements are observed in all engagement drivers. These engagement driver increases indicate many employers focused resources in the areas that are most important and have the greatest opportunity for engagement improvement. It is, however, important to note here that engagement drivers are not universal. Operating in the multicultural, multigenerational and cross-geographical world represents new challenges for leaders trying to drive high levels of employee engagement.

In addition to the above, Maylett&Waner(2014) shared results of studies conducted over a period of 14 years in 70 countries and with 14 million employee engagement survey responses. The results showed that highly engaged employees are 87% less likely to leave their organization and companies with low engagement scores earn an operating income 33% lower than companies with more engaged employees. Equally interesting was the finding that engaged companies grow profits as much as 300% faster than their competitors.

The table below shows four categories of employees with the corresponding descriptions of each category.

Table 2.4.1 Employee Engagement Level Descriptions

Employee Category	Description
Fully Engaged	23% of the total employees fall into this category. The employees are enthusiastic and positively contagious. They are champions of engagement and are constantly learning. They take calculated risks while they are stretching beyond their comfort zone. They also take gratification in work quality and find love and fun in work; even in stressful situations.
Key Contributors	49% of the employees, they are the bulk of the work force. These employees are generally engaged, strong and steady. They meet performance expectations as they do what they know well and respond well to leadership. They actively contribute and are involved even when they do not necessarily love their job. However, they do not take many risks and may not feel challenged. Thus, we can conclude they are involved but don't put their all into their work.
Opportunity group	The most "volatile" group, comprising 24% are those who are waiting to be engaged and disengaged. This group of employees feels underutilized so they spend a lot of work time on personal needs, doing just enough to get by and not get in trouble. They rarely speak up and mainly work for the pay. Many are burned out top performers but they are difficult to identify since they suffer in silence, make limited contributions and don't make noise. Since they are the "undecided vote", there is a huge opportunity to sway this group to a higher level of engagement.
Fully disengaged	4% and the most dangerous group as they are the saboteurs. These employees are bored, frustrated, say negative things about work, leadership and the company since they are most vocal and negatively contagious. They tend to blame others for their failures. Surprisingly, these groups of employees don't quit. Rather, they tend to stay and take a lot of leadership time and company resources addressing their demands. Leaders tend to discount this group due to their small numbers but they are the toxic employees who affect even other employees negatively. The authors of the study recommend that it's best to manage them out of the organization as they are "a lost cause".

Source: Maylett, T. and Waner, P. *MAGIC: Five Keys to Unlock the Power of Employee Engagement*.

Another study conducted in a specific industry (Banking in Pakistan) with specific reference to the impact of reward and leadership on engagement concludes that in addition to looking at different drivers, further study would be needed to see the “other side of the coin” i.e. the characteristics of employees themselves beyond demographics. In this study, Iqbal, Javaid, Ahmad and Ateeq, (2013) state that further studies should be conducted to empirically check the effect of personality (e.g. locus of control, objective orientation etc.), psychosomatic (e.g. executive empathy) and situational variables (e.g. managerial impartiality) on employee engagement to accomplish a improved understanding of employee engagement drivers.

From the summary above, we can conclude that the field of employee engagement and its effect on organizational performance is being understood better now than ever before. There are also indications that organizations are looking towards research based solutions to improve their employee engagement.

2.4 Challenges with Employee Engagement

So far, we have established through various studies by academicians and practitioners alike that engagement is an important factor determining an organization’s success and engagement’s importance will continue to increase as organizations are recognizing the need to focus on culture and dramatically improve employee engagement. Unless they do, they will be facing a looming crisis in employee engagement resulting in decreased organizational performance as stated by Maylett & Waner (2014)

On the other hand, Truss et al. (2013) mentioned that several authors have suggested that it is still too early to assert definitively that there is a link between HRM, engagement and performance. The authors of the article highlight how the term “engagement” has been subject to ‘fixing, shrinking, stretching and bending’ in defining the construct. The authors challenge the view that engagement can invariably be a ‘win-win’ scenario for both employees and employers as the micro-level enactment of engagement within the

wider organizational context forefronts the ideological divide, power relationships and contextual constraints experienced in ‘doing’ engagement and ‘being’ engaged. By “fixing”, the authors claim that the term is a perennial constant of management speak while the exact definition of what engagement means is challenged both by academics and practitioners. It has also been susceptible to ‘shrinking’ in that as the field develops, engagement appears to be shedding its roots as a multi-faceted meaningful individual experience embedded within work and wider societal contexts. Equally, we have witnessed the ‘stretching’ of engagement in multiple directions as researchers extend the focus and breadth of engagement into new domains, blurring the boundaries between engagement and other HR practices.

The ‘bending’ of engagement to the policy, professional, consultancy and managerialist agendas of those observing that a link between high levels of engagement and high levels of performance might provide justification for proselytizing engagement as the ‘new best way’ to manage people.

To conclude, we can see from the challenges identified above, that organizations run the risk of depending on consulting companies to define what engagement of their employees require and spend resources in chasing “ engagement score” rather than taking meaningful action to improve engagement levels that would actually drive organizational performance.

2.5 Employee Engagement Models

There are many models developed on employee engagement and most of them are developed or adopted by consulting and survey companies. As such, each provider claims that their model is based on empirical research. As no two organizations are the same and that the prevailing culture makes a great deal of difference in the results no matter what model is used, it is important to see what models are available and adopt one that has a documented and consistent result while being backed up with credible results taking into account an organizations peculiar context.

A summary of employee engagement models is presented below based on Morrison's (2007) study.

2.5.1 Gallup Employee Engagement Model

Gallup began creating a measurement and feedback system for employers that would identify elements of employee engagement closely linked to the bottom line. Factors such as retention, customer loyalty, profitability, productivity and safety are included in this model. After extensive research including hundreds of focus groups and thousands of interviews with employees in a variety of industries Gallup came up with the corresponding Q12, a 12-question survey that identifies strong feelings of employee engagement. Results from the survey appear to show a strong correlation between high scores and superior job performance.

The model identifies three types of employees

- a. Engaged
- b. Not Engaged
- c. Actively Disengaged

2.5.2 Towers and Perrin Model

This model has four degrees of engagement for employees: actively engaged, engaged, engaged but leaving and disengaged. The model focuses on drivers of engagement that organizations must consider to ensure the majority of their employees are in the actively engaged level. As such, the top 5 drivers of employee engagement are senior management sincerely interested in employee well-being, ability to improve skills and capabilities, organization's reputation for social responsibility, employee input into decision making, organization's ability to quickly resolve customer concerns.

2.5.3 CIPD Research Model

To help identify common factors in employee engagement, the CIPD commissioned Kingston University and Ipsos/MORI to undertake a survey of employee attitudes. From this research, they determined that Engagement can be said to have three dimensions:

- a. Emotional engagement – being very involved emotionally with one’s work
- b. Cognitive engagement – focusing very hard whilst at work
- c. Physical engagement – being willing to ‘go the extra mile’ for your employer.

2.5.4 Kenexa Employee Engagement Index (EEI) model

According to a survey by Kenexa, we can summarize employee engagement with these four primary principles, or drivers, that show that workers are engaged by:

- Leaders who inspire confidence in the future.
- Managers who respect and appreciate their employees.
- Exciting work that employees know how to do.
- Employers who display a genuine responsibility to employees and communities.

Kenexa has also come up with the Kenexa Employee Engagement Index, which comprises four key components namely pride, satisfaction, advocacy and retention.

2.5.5 Burke Employee Engagement Index model

Burke took a different approach and looked at populations and target audiences and how they answer key questions in areas like

- Company
- Work Group
- Career/ Profession
- Customer/ Client

- Job
- Manager

They believe that there is a significant link between employee engagement, customer loyalty, and profitability.

2.5.6 BCWI Employee Engagement Index model

This data is collected from BCWI's 15 item scale of employee engagement including items assessing employees' sense of their own growth in and fit with an organization as well as their beliefs about how much impact employees have on the organization and its leaders. This organization uses a simple three scale approach: Engaged, Neutral and unengaged

2.5.7 Mercer's Employee Engagement Model

Mercer's research "What's Working?" model considers data gathered from a cross-section of industries. These surveys had questions grouped into 13 dimensions:

1. Work processes
2. Quality and customer focus
3. Benefits
4. Communication
5. Work/life balance
6. Job security and career growth
7. Teamwork and cooperation
8. Ethics and integrity
9. Immediate manager
10. Performance management
11. Compensation
12. Leadership and direction

13. Training and development

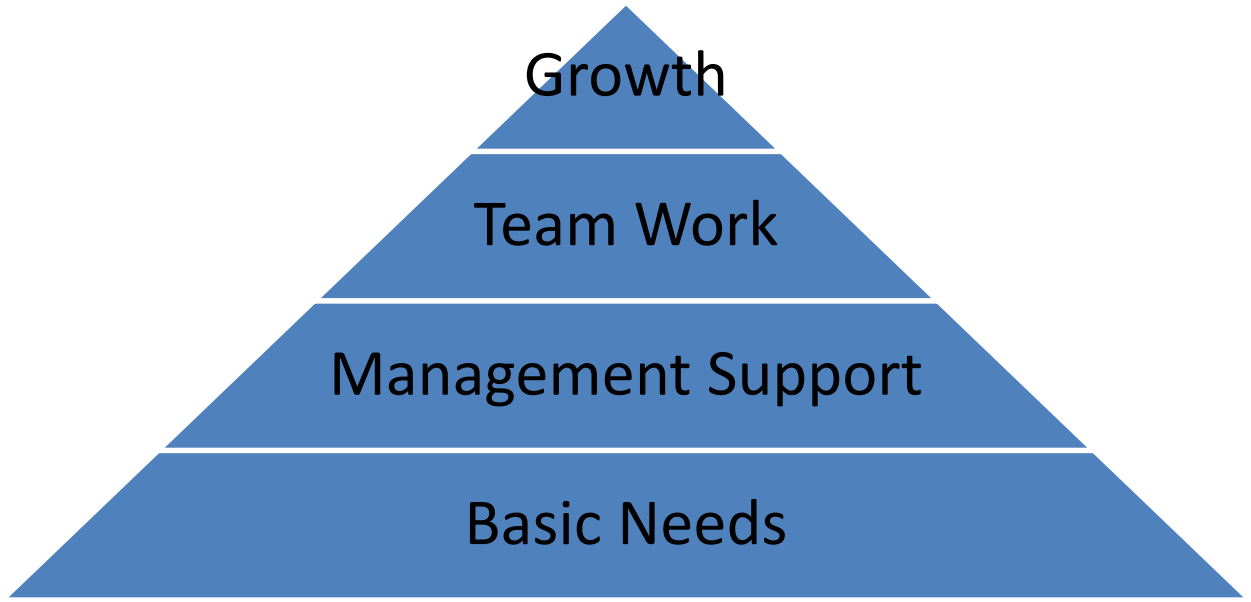
From these dimensions Mercer identified four global drivers:

- The work itself, including opportunities for development
- Confidence and trust in leadership engagement
- Recognition and rewards
- Organizational communication

2.6 Conceptual Framework of the Study

It is important to note that, no matter what kind of model is adopted, the key driver in measuring employee engagement is not necessarily a particular set of factors, but the fact that the same factors are measured repeatedly over time, and interpreted in conjunction with the current and future required culture in the organization, along with business performance measures.

This study is based on the Gallup Employee Engagement Hierarchy model. The model is selected because it is backed by extensive research, adopted by MCA and MCE as a preferred model and vetted as the most applicable in the context of the organization.



Source: Gallup Engagement Hierarchy Model(2014)

As it can be seen in the figure, the major drivers of engagement are

1. Fulfillment of basic needs – this refers to what the employee knows about expected performance standards and provision of materials needed to perform – what is commonly termed as the “tools of trade” .
2. Management Support – this is recognition and support for the work done by the employee. It spans from day-to-day recognition to availability of development options for the employee.
3. Teamwork – The third level in the hierarchy has to do with a sense of belongingness in the team, living of a certain set of commonly held values and whether or not there is a sense of involvement.
4. Growth – finally, this level deals with having opportunities to learn and grow and having a sense of progress.

Based on the review of related literature summarized above, and the conceptual framework, the following hypotheses are formulated.

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between fulfillment of basic needs and employee engagement

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between management support and employee engagement.

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between team work and employee engagement.

Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between growth and employee engagement

The study of employee engagement practices and challenges at MultiChoice Ethiopia will use the framework developed by Gallup to establish current engagement levels, tests the above mentioned hypotheses and identifies areas of improvement based on the theories and previous studies made in this area.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study has been conducted to establish the current level of engagement at MCE, identify what drives employee engagement and challenges faced in improving employee engagement. To achieve this objective and answer the research questions mentioned above, the following research design and methods were used.

3.1. Research Design

Creswell (2009) defines research design as the plan and procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. A particular type of research design is selected by a researcher based on his/her worldview assumptions, the nature of the research problem, personal experience and audience of the study. Based on the above considerations, a research may be conducted using a qualitative, quantitative or mixed design. Typically, a mixed method design is selected to benefit from the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative designs in addressing the research questions.

Accordingly, the student researcher has selected a mixed research design incorporating elements of quantitative and qualitative nature. This is based on the assumption that collecting diverse type of data provides for a better understanding of the research problem. Thus, the study began with a broad survey and then focused on qualitative, focus group discussions to collect detailed views from participants. A one-to-one structured interview has also been conducted with the General Manager to incorporate the view point of the company. It is fully noted that this design called for extensive collection and analysis of both numerical and text data. However, to fully address the research

problem, adopting this design was preferred with an explanatory sequential approach of first using quantitative data collection followed by a secondary qualitative data collection.

Based on the Gallup engagement model, the independent variables studied are the engagement drivers (basic needs, management support, teamwork and growth) and the dependent variable is employee engagement.

3.2. Population

The total number of the population of the study is 35 employees of MCE out of the total of 40 employees. The General Manager, Human resources manager and three new employees who have been with the organization for less than a quarter are excluded from the study to ensure that responses obtained were valid. The organization is selected because of the ease of data collection. MCE – through its principal company MCA - has conducted a survey based on the Gallup Q12 in October 2013. Employees are aware of the concept of engagement; so are managers. In addition, managers were fully cognizant of the importance of employee engagement to the company's performance due to the extensive training provided beforehand by the principal company – MCA. The General Manager is willing and interested to find out current engagement levels as well as plans for further improvement in employee engagement.

Since the number of employees in the company is small, a census is the preferred way of collecting data. However, employees who have not been with the company for at least one quarter (3 months) are excluded from the study since they are likely not to have adequate information to enable them provide credible feedback.

3.3. Sources of Data

To obtain data for this study, both primary and secondary data collection was done. In addition to the primary data collected through a self-administered structured questionnaire based on the Gallup model, secondary data has been collected from company records, reference materials in the form of books and journal articles as well as the internet are collected and incorporated in the study.

Sources of data used for this study are responses to questionnaire, summary of focus group discussions and structured interview. The company records referred to include an annual human resources report presented to the General Manager, summary of exit interviews conducted with employees who have terminated their employment contract voluntarily and a remuneration survey report.

3.4. Development of Instruments of Data collection

The primary data collection had been done through the self-administered questionnaire which allowed for collection of respondents' demographic properties (such as age, gender, and years of employment in the company as well as level in the organization) as well as the extent of agreement or disagreement to statements on the drivers of engagement on a 5 point likert scale. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents rank the hierarchy of engagement drivers from least important to most important to identify which factor is the most important, of average importance and least importance for them. On the questionnaire, levels of engagement are calculated by assigning a score of 1 to 5 to the likert scale of "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree" as indicated in the appendix. Respondents had the choice of responding to each statement of the questionnaire either as strongly disagrees, disagree, neutral, agree or strongly agree. Each choice was coded as having from 1 point to 5 points from "strongly disagree" to "strong agree" respectively.

Once engagement levels are established, the results were compiled as an input for the focus group discussion. Since there were no questions which allowed respondents to write in free text in the questionnaire, open ended questions to express employees' views about the efforts of the company to improve employee engagement and challenges associated with it have been included in the focus group discussion guideline. To select participants of the focus group discussion, employees' names were sorted by department and names were selected randomly from each department to participate in the discussion.

To obtain data from supervisors and managers, a focus group discussion has been held separately with them in two groups. Since the number of supervisors and managers were few (5 supervisors and 7 managers), there was no need to select among them further. Finally, a structured interview has been conducted with the General Manager of the company to identify what has been done so far in terms of improving employee engagement and challenges associated with them.

3.5. Procedures of Data collection

A review of secondary document from company sources was the first step of this research. This was followed up by reviewing related literature regarding employee engagement and the recent attention towards the subject. A standard questionnaire from Gallup (called the Gallup Q12) has been used to collect primary data. This questionnaire was selected because it is backed by extensive research conducted over a number of years (Gallup, 2014). These studies have been conducted based on 30 years of accumulated quantitative and qualitative research. Its reliability and validity have been extensively studied through more than 1.3 million independent employee responses to surveys and 49,928 independent business/work units in 192 organizations, with an average of 28 employees per business unit and 260 business/work units per organization across 192 organizations.

3.6. Method of Data Analysis

After the completed questionnaires are collected and coded, the researcher used SPSS 20 to analyze the data to

- Establish current Employee Engagement Levels and
- Determine the extent of relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables through correlation and regression.

The study, therefore, used descriptive (mainly for respondent profiles) and inferential statistics to analyze the data collected through the tools discussed above. The data analysis and interpretation is done, therefore, using measures of central tendency, dispersion and correlation. Data from the focus group discussions and interview have been summarized and used as an input in identifying emerging trends especially with regard to challenges in implementing actions for improvement of employee engagement.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

The researcher has already obtained consent of the organization for the study. Employees who completed the questionnaire have been informed about the purpose of data collection, analysis and the covenant to maintain anonymity of their responses.

Regarding published and unpublished material used in the literature review and throughout the study, all citations from copy right holders have been made properly.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents results of data collected based on the research questions in the introduction. The first section presents demographic characteristics of respondents followed by a discussion of companywide engagement scores. This is followed by a discussion of the results of the most important drivers of engagement. Finally, results of focus group discussions and an interview are presented in the thematic area combined with the results of the quantitative data collection and analysis.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Since the population for the study was small, the student researcher conducted a census for the study. Accordingly, 35 questionnaires were distributed out of which 32 were completed and returned.

The first part of the self-administered questionnaire contains five items about demographic characteristics of respondents such as age, sex, educational level, years of experience and status in the organization; i.e. whether managerial/supervisory or non-managerial/non-supervisory level. Summary of results from this part of the questionnaire are presented in the tables below.

Sex	Frequency	Percent	Education Levels	Frequency	Percent	Position	Frequency	Percent
			Diploma	8	25			
Male	12	37.5	BA/ BSc	21	65.6	Supervisory/ Managerial	11	34.4
Female	20	62.5	Masters	3	9.4	Non- supervisory/N on managerial	21	65.6
Total	32	100	Total	32	100	Total	32	100

Source: own survey

From table 4.1.1, we see that the majority of the company’s employees are women (62.5%) while the men make up the balance of the population. While MCE describes itself as an equal opportunity employer, the employment decision in the Operations department – which is the largest department and dedicated to customer service – is visibly skewed towards hiring females.

Regarding the educational level of respondents, the major share goes to BA/B.Sc. holders at almost 66% while 25% hold diploma with the rest 9% having acquired a master’s degree.

Supervisory/ managerial employees make up 34% of total employees while 66% of the employees are non-supervisory/managerial level employees as it can be seen in Table.

Table 4.1.2. Age of respondents

Age Ranges	Frequency	Percent
20-25	15	46.9
26-30	9	28.1
31-40	7	21.9
>=41	1	3.1
Total	32	100

Source: own survey

Looking at the age of respondents, we can see that 47% of employees are between the ages of 20 to 25, followed by 28% in the 26 to 30 range while 22% of the employees are

aged between 31 and 40; with only 3% in the above 41 category. From this, we can conclude that the majority of respondents can be described as “young “employees.

Table 4.1.3 Experience in the company

Experience in the Company	Frequency	Percent
<1year	11	34.4
1-2 years	8	25
3-5 years	9	28.1
6-10 years	2	6.3
above 11 years	2	6.3
Total	32	100

Source: own survey

We can see from Table 4.1.3 that 34% of employees have been with the company less than one year while 28% have an experience of 3-5 years. Those who have served the company for more than one year but less than two years account for 25% of the employees. 6% of employees have been with the company for 6 to 10 years. Similarly, another 6% of the employees have served for more than 11 years.

From the above results, we can see that the population under study is quite diverse in terms of its characteristics. This diversity in terms of gender, age, educational level, position within the company, number of years of experience in the company has contributed to responses being varied widely as it can be observed in the standard deviations on the engagement drivers.

4.2 Data Analysis on Engagement Levels

Using descriptive statistics, levels of engagement are calculated by assigning a score of 1 to 5 to the likert scale of “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree” as indicated in the

appendix. As such, respondents had the choice of responding to each statement of the questionnaire either as strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree or strongly agree. Each choice was coded as having from 1 point to 5 points from “strongly disagree” to “strong agree” respectively. Thus, the minimum & maximum score for each question were 1 and 5. For a total of 12 questions, the minimum and maximum possible score for each questionnaire is, therefore, 12& 60 respectively.

Table 4.2.1 Employee Engagement Drivers on Basic Needs and Management Support					
Engagement Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I know what is expected of me at work	32	2	5	4.34	1.004
I have the materials and equipment i need to do my work right	32	1	5	3.47	1.077
At work, I have the opportunity to do what i do best every day	32	2	5	3.34	1.035
In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work	32	1	5	2.63	1.362
My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person	32	1	5	3.59	1.043
There is someone at work who encourages my development	32	1	5	3.47	0.983

Source: own survey

Engagement Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
At work, my opinion seem to count	32	1	5	3.34	0.902
The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important	32	1	5	3.56	0.801
My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work	32	2	5	3.72	0.851
I have a best friend at work	32	2	5	3.81	1.061
In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress	32	1	5	3.44	1.294
This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.	32	1	5	3.75	0.95

From table 4.2.1 and 4.2.2, it can be seen that the highest mean score of $M=4.34$; $SD = 1.00$ goes to knowledge of what one is expected to do, followed by having a best friend at work with $M=3.81$, $SD = 1.06$. The mean responses to both items in the questionnaire show that, although both items score above the average score, the standard deviations show there are wide gaps in responses.

At the other end of the spectrum we find $M= 2.63$; $SD = 1.36$ for receiving praise or recognition for a job well done in the last 7 days and doing what one does best at work on a daily basis with $M= 3.34$; $SD 1.03$ and the same $M=3.34$; $SD =.90$ for opinions seemingly counting at work. This indicates that the lowest average engagement scores come from lack of recognition, feelings of working on one's passion and feelings of being listened to. Similar to the above, the standard deviations in all the three items of the questionnaire above indicate wide gaps in responses. This indicates that respondents have very different views on the engagement statements as they have each experienced the dimensions of differently. It can also be attributed to lack of consensus that has been a result of lack of consistent and complete communication on the part of management.

Table 4.2.3 Descriptive Statistics of Company Wide Engagement					
Company Wide Engagement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employee Engagement	32	2.33	4.33	3.5391	0.4991

Source: own survey

In terms of overall means and standard deviations, table 4.2.3 above shows that the engagement mean average score for each employee was $M = 3.54$; $SD=0.5$. This summary of companywide engagement level of 3.54 indicates that the engagement level is merely above the average of 3. Based on review of related literature, a company with engagement levels close to the “neutral zone” typically has a group of employees who present the greatest opportunity to be engaged as they are the “undecided vote”. These are employees who do just enough to get by just to earn a living. However, if the company takes remedial action to fully engage them, it is easy to convert them to fully engaged employees. (Maylett & Warner, 2014)

In addition to data collected from the questionnaire, three different sessions of focus group discussions were held with non-supervisory/ non –managerial employees(commonly referred to us” employees”) and supervisory and managerial level employees separately. Open ended questions were used to gather information during the focus group discussions. A summary of the main results are captured in the relevant sections below.

4.2.4 Overall Engagement Levels

Employee Engagement Statements		Responses	
		N	Percent
Strongly Disagree	21	5.5%	
Disagree	47	12.2%	
Neutral	92	24.0%	
Agree	152	39.6%	
Strongly Agree	72	18.8%	
Total	384	100.0%	

Source: own survey

Table 4.2.4 shows categories of employees in each category of engagement level. Accordingly, based on the Gallup model, 58.4% of employees responded either strongly agree or agree to the engagement questionnaire indicating that they are engaged while 24% are neutral which will fall in the not engaged category of employees. The rest - 17.7% of employees responded strongly disagree or disagree; which indicates the actively disengaged category. Comparing this with engagement levels studied by Gallup (2014), wherein less than 31.5% employees are reported to be engaged, MCE's 58.4% of employees engaged can be accepted as a fair result. The same study indicated 51% were not engaged and 17.5 were actively disengaged. Even though this comparison is done against organizations in the United States of America, employees who were unengaged in MCE (24%) are lower than Gallup's (51%). The actively disengaged group of employees of 17.7%, however, is close to Gallup's result of 17.5%. Compared with engagement results for the survey done in 2013, there has been a decline from 71% of engaged

employees and is slightly lower than the 59% minimum level among MCA peer companies.

4.3. Drivers of Engagement

Having established the current level of engagement among employees, the second research question of the study was to identify what drives employee engagement, based on the Gallup Q12 model, the four drivers that are typically associated with driving employee engagement were classified from “least important” to “most important” and the results are presented in the tables below.

Table 4.3

Engagement Drivers	Responses		
	Very important	Average	Least Important
Basic Needs	78%	16%	6%
Management Support	47%	27%	27%
Team work	33%	37%	30%
Growth	75%	19%	6%

Source: own survey

Basic needs, in the context of the Gallup Employee engagement model, refer to setting of goals that not only define the job but also what it means to succeed at the job. It also looks at measures of performance as they fit with the rest of the organization is saying and doing. Another aspect of fulfillment of basic needs refers to ensuring that employees have the requisite materials and equipment to perform their assignments. From the table above , we can see that knowing what one is expected to do and having the materials and equipment needed (collectively known as” Basic needs”) is considered as very important by 78% of the employees while almost 16% attach an average importance to basic needs. Finally, 6% of respondents stated that this driver has the least importance to them.

Triangulating the findings above with the qualitative data collected, the following findings are made.

All focus group discussion participants were aware of the results of EES shared in December 2013 and the subsequent discussions with managers, supervisors and employees regarding what the result means to the organization and how it compares with MCA. All participants also indicated they were aware of planned course of action in terms of implementing improvement plans. A review of a report prepared by MCE (2015) indicates that actions were taken as a result of the 2014 Employee Engagement Survey. These include implementation of a revised performance management system, training on Supervisory Skills for front line supervisors, salary increase based on results of the remuneration survey and purchase of new office equipment.

Participants indicated that they have nominated either themselves or their colleague to be part of the Action Plan Committee which was tasked with brainstorming possible solutions to improve employee engagement levels as the result of the 2013 survey. Only 50% were aware of any feedback from the action plan committee.

Focus Group discussion results further indicate the following

All employees know what is expected of them but do not receive consistent feedback on their performance – whether it is good or not. On the other hand, both employees and supervisors reported not being aware of company - wide goals and performance against specific targets.

The second driver of engagement that is collectively termed management support includes having the opportunity to do what one does on a daily basis, receiving praise & recognition for doing good work, receiving care as a person from someone at work and the existence of someone who encourages one's development. For this driver, 47% of the employees stated that it is very important to them while 27% responded it is of an

average importance to them with another 27% stating that management support is of least importance to them with regard to driving engagement.

Similarly, both categories of employees appreciated receiving extensive training before and during an assignment, the existence of team building activities and a positive/pleasant environment in the company.

Non - Supervisory/ non managerial employees indicate that they see their supervisors/managers as having absolute power with regard to the performance appraisal score of an employee; thus affecting their salary increases

Supervisory level employees stated that promotion to supervisory levels is based on only knowledge; rather than interest and ability to lead a team. In addition, they acknowledged that they are very pre-occupied with day to day work that they do not think about employee engagement.

Non- supervisory/ non- managerial employees stated that good work is not acknowledged while mistakes receive attention and hamper their work environment in the future.

The next driver of engagement are categorized under team work include the feeling of importance attached with the job as the result of the mission and purpose the organization, the commitment displayed to quality by team mates, having a best friend at work and the extent to which opinions seem to count at work. 37% of employees attach an average importance to team work while 33% think it is a very important factor with the rest 30% stating it is least important to them. During the focus group discussion, all participants expressed concern over the increasing trend of employees resigning from the company. They have indicated the absence of any communication from management on why this trend occurred and what is being done to curb the problem has resulted in discomfort on their side.

Regarding growth, which refers to the availability of opportunities to learn and grow, 75% of responses indicate it is a very important factor while 19% attach an average importance to it. Only 6% indicate that growth is of least importance to them. Both

supervisory and managerial level employees and non-supervisory/non managerial employees emphasized during the focus group discussion that current salary levels are perceived to be low compared to what the market is offering candidates with comparable qualifications(in terms of education and experience) . After conducting the focus group discussion, a review of company records was made to gather more data with regard to a specific reference which has been emphasized regarding salary levels. A remuneration survey conducted by Mercer (2014) indicates that the company is at 66.5 % of the market with regard to basic salaries; further corroborating the opinions expressed in the focus group discussion.

Supervisory level employees and non-supervisory employees expressed concern over the availability of growth options as the company has adopted a very flat structure. Thus, making them look “outwards” once they feel they have the requisite experience. Summary of exit interviews which were also presented in the report mentioned above indicate that 80% of employees who have voluntarily separated (resigned) from the company and agreed to an exit interview mention career development as their first reason for their decision.

An interview held with the General Manager of the company revealed the following major findings. The points raised in the survey output report mentioned above were reiterated. In addition, it was reported that the company is committed to improve engagement levels of employees by taking action on all dimensions. However, implementing all actions suggested by the action plan committee has proved to be a daunting task as some of the action plans are beyond the financial capacity of the company. An ambitious action plan presented by the committee had to be selectively considered as a result.

4.4. Correlation between Employee Engagement and Engagement Drivers

The Pearson Product moment correlation coefficient (commonly called Pearson Correlation Coefficient) measures the strength and direction of relationship between variables. According to Field (2005), a coefficient(r) of +1 indicates a perfect positive relationship while -1 indicates a negative relationship. Breaking down the strength of the relationship, values of $r=\pm 0.1$ to $\pm .29$ represent a weak relationship while $r=\pm 0.3$ to $\pm .49$ represent a medium relationship while $r=\pm 0.5$ to ± 1.0 indicate a strong relationship.

Table 4.4. Correlation between EE & Engagement Drivers

Correlation between EE & EE Drivers		Employee Engagement	Basic Needs	Management Support	Team Work	Growth
Employee Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	0.024	.756**	-0.065	0.113
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.895	0	0.722	0.539
	N	32	32	32	32	32
Basic Needs	Pearson Correlation	0.024	1	0.284	0.138	.540**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.895		0.115	0.451	0.001
	N	32	32	32	32	32
Management Support	Pearson Correlation	0.756	0.284	1	0.191	.376*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.115		0.295	0.034
	N	32	32	32	32	32

Correlation between EE & EE Drivers		Employee Engagement	Basic Needs	Management Support	Team Work	Growth
Team Work	Pearson Correlation	-0.065	0.138	0.191	1	0.323
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.722	0.451	0.295		0.071
	N	32	32	32	32	32
Growth	Pearson Correlation	0.113	.540**	.376*	0.323	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.539	0.001	0.034	0.071	
	N	32	32	32	32	32

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Testing the hypothesis formulated at the discussion of the selected engagement model using the correlation table above we can conclude the following about the engagement drivers classified as basic needs, management support, team work and growth.

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between fulfillment of basic needs and employee engagement

This hypothesis is not supported with a correlation coefficient of .024, at an observed sig. = .895 which is greater than generally accepted .05 rejection level. Therefore, fulfillment of basic needs does not have a statistically significant positive correlation with employee engagement.

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between management support and employee engagement.

On the other hand, management support has a correlation coefficient of .756. With a significance level which is less than .05, this hypothesis is supported by the correlation analysis.

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between team work and employee engagement.

The correlation coefficient of - 0.065 for team works relationship with employee engagement at sig =.722 actually indicates that there is a negative relationship between the variables although it is a very weak relation. Further investigation as to each aspect of team work is believed to shade more light on specific cause of this negative but weak relationship.

Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between growth and employee engagement

The above hypothesis that growth has a relationship with employee engagement is supported with correlation coefficient of .113 although we can only see a weak relationship.

Graphical depiction of management support against employee engagement also supports the correlation explained above.

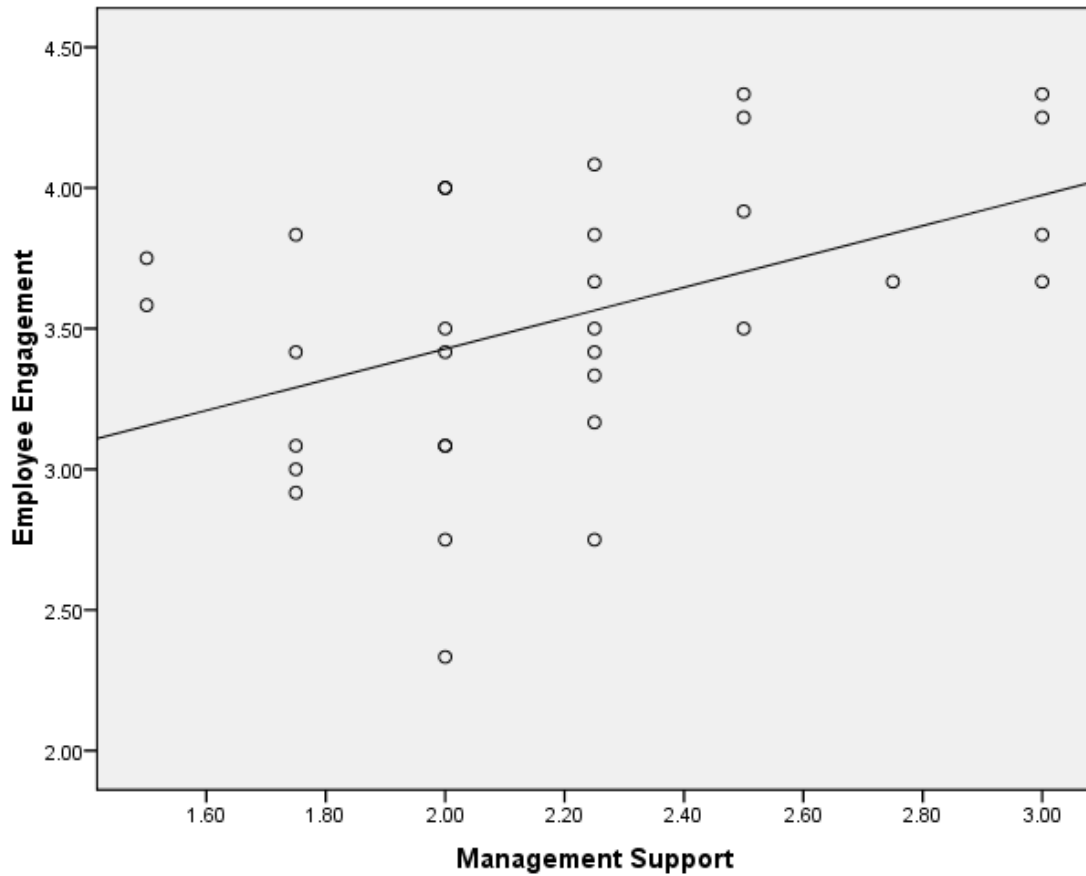


Figure 2 Correlation – Management support with Employee Engagement

4.5. Regression Analysis - Employee Engagement Drivers

From the correlation analysis, we saw that management support is strongly and positively related to employee engagement. To find out by how much it affects engagement, however, correlation does not provide an adequate answer. A multiple regression analysis, therefore, is conducted to predict the impact of engagement drivers on employee engagement.

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Management Support	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

Overall fit o the model

The Model Summary in Table 4.5.1 reveals that management support has a statistically significant correlation to employee engagement ($R=.756$) with $R^2= .572$ which shows that management support can account for 57.2% of the variation in employee engagement. This also indicates that the other drivers of engagement, while not significant on their own, can explain the rest of the variance in employee engagement.

Table 4.5.1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.756 ^a	.572	.551	.44947

a. Predictors: (Constant), Management Support

According to Field (2005) The ANOVA tells us whether the model under consideration results in a significantly good degree of prediction of the outcome variable. Accordingly, at $P<.05$, the model below shows that we can expect a good degree of prediction.

Table 4.5.2 ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.661	1	1.661	8.223	.000 ^a
	Residual	6.061	30	.202		
	Total	7.722	31			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Management Support

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

Looking at how much of a difference management support makes to engagement levels, we can see from table 4.5.3. that a one unit increase/decrease in the level of management support will bring about .747 increase in engagement levels.

4.5.3 Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.334	.428		5.459	.000
	Management Support	.747	.191	.464	2.868	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

In summary, taking the above into consideration, only management support has been identified as the driver with a positive correlation coefficient of .756 among the four drivers, as presented in the table above. Basic needs, team work and growth correlation coefficients are .024, -.065 and .113 respectively.

Findings from this chapter are summarized in the conclusions in the next chapter. Recommendations based on the above are also made for further consideration by the management of the company after limitations of the study are also discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents conclusions based on the findings of the study from the analysis and discussion of collected data, limitations that have been identified and recommendations to address the problems identified by the study.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The main intent of this study was to establish current levels of employee engagement at MCE. It also aimed at find out what drives employee engagement and identify which drivers the company must concentrate on. In addition, the major challenges faced by the company were uncovered. Accordingly, the following major findings were made from the results that have been discussed in the previous chapter.

Results of data analysis shows that overall engagement level is at $M=3.54$, 58% of employees are engaged and the major driver of employee engagement is management support at $r^2 = .572$. Results of the hypotheses formulated from the conceptual model adopted for the study support the positive correlation of management support to employee engagement but not that of fulfillment of basic needs, existence of team work and availability of growth. Nevertheless, it is important to note that although statistically not significant, the other drivers were mentioned as area of concern in one way or another

during focus group discussions and therefore merit being attended to by the organizations' management.

Of particular interest with one aspect of the findings of the study, though it is not statistically significant, is the negative relation between team work and employee engagement. This can possibly explained by this aspect being taken for granted by respondents and it is, therefore, not considered as an important driver for their engagement.

The major challenge for the company in improving employee engagement is the amount of resources needed to implement action plans prepared and submitted for the company by representatives of the employees. On the other hand, the lack of consistent communication to employees on what has been done so far by the company is discovered to be another challenge.

5.2 Conclusions

From the summary of findings above, the following conclusions are drawn in light of the literature review and conceptual framework of the study.

Engagement Levels

The overall engagement level of MCE employees has a mean of 3.54. In addition, the results of the study shows a 58.4% of employees are engaged. Both quantitative and qualitative data support that employee engagement levels are causes for concern as employee engagement has an implication for business performance. This result shows that compared to the survey conducted in 2013 by MCA , there has been a significant decrease in the proportion of employees who reported to be engaged. When the first Employee Engagement Survey was conducted in 2013, the results indicated 71% of employees were engaged. In 2014, no survey had been conducted. In 2015, the level dipped to 58.4 % which indicates a significant cause for concern.

Engagement Drivers

Among the drivers identified in the model, only management support has been found to have a statistically significant impact on engagement levels. In addition, from the qualitative data obtained through the focus group discussions, it has been found to be consistent with the finding of the quantitative data i.e. Opportunity of receiving recognition from supervisors/managers and the appreciation for having training and development activities which are part of management support.

On the individual engagement driver questions, it has been noted that the existence of a strong performance management system enabled employees to know specifically what is expected of them. On the other hand, receiving recognition or praise for a job well done had the least score which was corroborated from the qualitative data about the prevalence of negative feedback for mistakes while a good job does not attract commensurate recognition.

Implementation of Action Plans

It has been noted that action plans were drawn by an employee nominated Action Plan Committee. However, the absence of feedback from the committee or management for that matter has resulted in a gap as employees do not know the results of their action plans in a complete and consistent manner.

Challenges with Engagement Improvement

Supervisors and managers – who are at the core of the main engagement driver – were not fully aware of their impact on their teams' engagement levels. This is indicated by their comment that they rarely pay attention to employee engagement due to pressure with their day-to-day responsibilities.

Even though the main driver of employee engagement in MCE is management support, there has to be concerted effort in improving all engagement drivers with focus on

management support. This is important so that engagement levels do not deteriorate further and result in lethargic employees. These employees would only feel apathy to all initiatives that may be taken by the company after most of the damage to employee and company performance is done; should the trend continue unabated.

In summary, from the above, the student researcher concludes that, if engagement drivers backed by this study are left unattended, engagement levels would deteriorate even further. This would entail a toxic environment which is not conducive to superior performance. Business result would inevitably be negatively affected as the cost of absenteeism; turnover and poor customer service combine to create a perfect recipe for a fully disengaged employee base.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are drawn from the conclusions of the study and after discussing efforts made so far with regard to improvement initiatives by the company.

From the literature reviewed in the area of employee engagement, we have established that among the many variables that differentiate highly productive organizations from those that are unproductive, the level of their employee engagement is a very important one. From this study, we have found out that management support is a most important factor in affecting the ability of the organization to meet conditions for engagement at MCE. Therefore, MCE would improve its employee engagement by considering these recommendations.

Implementation of an Employee Engagement Strategy – For a meaningful improvement in engagement levels of an organization; it has to have an employee engagement strategy. The Deloitte Human Capital Trends report (2015) identifies that engagement is the most important issue organizations face around the world with 87 percent of organizations studies citing engagement as one of their top challenges, and 50 percent call declining engagement levels as a problem that attracts a significant part of any leader. The same study also shows that 18% of the organizations who participated in

the study do not have a strategy in place for employee engagement while 66% have either currently updated their existing strategy in the last 18 months or are currently updating it.

At MCE, although there are individual policies and practices that are meant to drive employee engagement positively, there has not been a comprehensive employee engagement strategy. This strategy, once adopted by the company is believed to make engagement a corporate priority, and standardize the process of measuring and evaluating engagement throughout the company. The strategy should consider engagement drives not as a stand - alone factors but it should be woven in to the very fabric of the culture of the organization.

More specifically, the method of drawing up an employee engagement strategy should include companywide discussion of the current status with the entire employee base, followed up by both” top down” and “bottom up” approach of coming up with specific and implementable strategies to improve employee engagement.

Management Training & Development Program with specific focus on people management capability – since the result of the study shows management support to be the most important driver of employee engagement, MCE should implement a structured management training and development program. This ensures subject –matter experts who are promoted to managerial roles or externally recruited because of their technical excellence are also excellent managers to their teams. This can be achieved when managers provide consistent and meaningful communication to their team, manage their team using the already available performance management system beyond relying on annual reviews and create a culture of focus on strength while at the same time working on improving their weaknesses.

This can be done through a blended learning and development program where by supervisory level employees receive coaching from management level employees, attend leadership skills development classes as well as e-learning by taking advantage of the ample technological resources at the disposal of MCE’s principal company, MultiChoice Africa.

Career Development - to address issues related with development opportunities in a flat structured company, MCE can adopt a formal career development policy. This would allow employees and their managers' make career development discussions on a periodic basis. In addition to vertical growth (i.e promotional assignments), career development can consider job enrichment and enlargement where by employees can learn and use varied skills with more responsibility.

The typical tool to implement a career development program is the Personal Development Plan; a tool that captures employees' knowledge, skills, experience, and results of competency based assessment as well as interest and future career aspirations. Combining this with the company's succession plan, a structured career path can be drawn up, discussed and reviewed periodically to ensure actions are taken as per the plan.

Reward and Recognition - one of the conclusions of the study was that employees reported feeling negative pressure for mistakes but absence of praise for a job well done. To remedy this, a strong culture of reward and recognition that can start at the most basic level by saying "thank you" by the immediate supervisor to the more elaborate financial and non-financial recognition from the General Manager for worthy achievements is recommended.

Specifically, introducing a clear and criteria based recognition program either monthly or quarterly with the full involvement of employees in terms of nominating themselves or their fellow employees for recognition can go a long way in enticing employees to aim higher. In addition to monthly and quarterly recognition, an annual tradition where by the management shares results of the past fiscal year can help to create a sense of recognition and fulfillment. Depending on how well objectives are met in the fiscal year, this occasion can also be used to reward all employees who have contributed to the achievement.

Communication - It has been noticed that not all employees were aware of business goals and results. Therefore, a regularly conducted employee briefing sessions are recommended. This can accomplish multiple objectives. It can be used by the General Manager to share business targets, current challenges, results and news from the

corporate office/MCA. It can also serve as a reward and recognition occasion whereby employees are praised in front of their peers. Employees can ask questions, make comments or address their apprehensions. At the departmental level, it can be done at a team building event that is currently underway to improve team cohesion.

Employees - Although the recommendation above focuses only on management support and what MCE must do, improving employee engagement levels is not the sole responsibility of MCE's Management. Research by CIPD (2014) shows that employees' own involvement is crucial to engagement. Involvement is defined as a range of processes designed to engage the support understanding and optimum contribution of all employees in an organization and their commitment to its objectives. This study found employee involvement to be strongly associated with high levels of employee engagement and categorized it as one of its most important drivers. Further research reinforced this view and concluded that employee involvement is a main driver of employee engagement. Having an input into decisions made in the organization indicates responsibility sharing that in turn strengthens employees' engagement. Therefore, employees should be in a position to contribute their share to the improvement of their own as well as their colleagues' engagement levels.

Finally, continuous measurement of engagement levels and taking timely action on issues identified is recommended. The student researcher believes that with the efforts made so far to improve engagement levels in MCE, the right track is identified. Now, it is required to implement pending action items and communicate to all employees accordingly.

This is because it is important to conduct continuous benchmarking of the company against other comparator companies within MCA and strive for external recognition as validation of efforts. For management, inclusion of an engagement target for their teams in addition to the existing people management targets will ensure accountability of all managers for the engagement of their team members. This will also reinforce to them that engagement of their people is among one of their top priorities. It is only then that managers can ensure the achievement of their individual, departmental and overall company goals.

5.4 Limitation of the Study

The company has not conducted a survey in 2014; nor have there been any studies conducted to find if other significant changes affected engagement levels. This study has uncovered that, though salary was not specifically studied as an engagement driver, the concern of all participants of the focus group discussion has been pointed at this factor. This has, therefore, been identified as a limitation of the study and further study with specific focus on not only salary but the entire compensation and benefits practice of the company as a driver of engagement would be valuable. Moreover, due to the limited scope to further investigate team work as a driver to employee engagement, a more detailed review of this particular driver is not made. This can be a particularly interesting study on its own since almost all of the literature reviewed indicates that not only is team work positively related to employee engagement, it has a strong correlation with it.

In addition, due to the scope of the study, this research concentrated on what the organization can do to improve employee engagement. If time and financial capability was not an object, a study aimed at researching the employee's contribution to improved employee engagement is believed to yield an all rounded study.

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Appendix 1

Addis Ababa University

School of Commerce

Department of Business Administration and Information Systems

Dear participant,

This questionnaire is intended to collect data that will be used for thesis entitled “Practice and Challenges of Employee Engagement: The Case of MultiChoice Ethiopia Limited” in partial fulfillment for a Master of Arts degree in Human Resources Management. Results of the study will be used to establish the current level of employee engagement and address various aspects of improving employee engagement by the company. Your participation in providing reliable input to the study will be greatly appreciated. The estimated time to complete the questionnaire is 10 - 15 minutes.

Instructions: Please complete the following questions to reflect your opinions as accurately as possible and to answer questions to the best of your knowledge. Your information will be kept **strictly confidential. No attempt will be made to identify respondents. Data from the “personal information” part will be used to present summary of respondent profile.**

If you have questions, please contact me on 0911 60 48 50 or nebatabbas@yahoo.com

Part 1. Personal Information

Please tick the applicable box

1. Sex

Male Female

2. Age

20-25 26-30 31 -40 41 and above

3.Educational level

Elementary Education Secondary Education Diploma B.A/B. Sc. Degree Masters

4. Experience in the company

Less than one year 1-2 years 3-5 years 6-10 years above 11years

5. Employment Status

Supervisory /Managerial Non –Supervisory/non -managerial

Part 2. Employee Engagement Questions

For the questions in this part, please indicate how far you agree or disagree with the statement by putting “X” mark in the corresponding box

No.	Employee Engagement Drivers	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	I know what is expected of me at work.					
7	I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right					
8	At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.					
9	In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.					
10	My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.					
11	There is someone at work who encourages my development.					
12	At work, my opinions seem to count.					
13	The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.					
14	My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.					
15	I have a best friend at work.					
16	In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.					
17	This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.					

Part 3. Importance of Engagement Drivers

Please indicate the importance of the following aspects of your employment with MultiChoice Ethiopia (1 being least important while 3 is very important)

No	Engagement Aspect	1	2	3
		Least Important	Average	Very Important
18	Clarity of Expectations from management			
19	Availability of tools, equipment, materials for work			
20	Recognition from management for what you do best on a daily basis			
21	Management concern for your well being			
22	Clarity of purpose and mission of the organization			
23	Availability of development Opportunities			
24	Extent to which your opinions count			
25	Commitment to quality by team members			
26	Having a best friend at work			
27	Availability of opportunities for learning, growth and Progress			

Thank you for your valuable input.

Appendix 2

Supervisor& Managers' Focus Group Discussion Guidelines Document

Introduction

Purpose of Focus Group Discussion

This discussion is intended to collect supplementary data that will be used for thesis entitled “Practice and Challenges of Employee Engagement: The Case of MultiChoice Ethiopia Limited” in partial fulfillment for a Master of Arts degree in Human Resources Management. Summary of this discussion will be used as an input to identify what has been done so far as the result of action plan from survey conducted in October 2013 as well as challenges faced by supervisors and managers. The estimated time to complete the questionnaire is 60 minutes.

Roles clarified: Facilitator, scribe, participants

Employee Engagement Score for 2015, according to survey is 58.4%.

1. What effort of the company/management to improve employee engagement are you aware of?
2. Were you involved in coming up with action plans to improve employee engagement? How?
3. What must be
 - a. Started to improve EE?
 - b. Stopped to improve EE?
 - c. Continued to improve EE?
4. What potential and actual challenges have you faced in improving EE in your section/department?
5. What can MCE do to mitigate the challenges with EE?

Thank you

Conclusion of the focus group discussion with communication onway forward.

Appendix 3

Employees Focus Group Discussion Guidelines Document

Introduction

Purpose of Focus Group Discussion

This discussion is intended to collect supplementary data that will be used for thesis entitled “Practice and Challenges of Employee Engagement: The Case of MultiChoice Ethiopia Limited” in partial fulfillment for a Master of Arts degree in Human Resources Management. Summary of this discussion will be used as an input to identify what has been done so far as the result of action plan from survey conducted in October 2013 as well as challenges faced by supervisors and managers. The estimated time to complete the questionnaire is 60 minutes.

Roles clarified: Facilitator, scribe, participants

Employee Engagement Score for 2015, according to survey is 58.4%.

1. Were you involved in coming up with action plans to improve employee engagement?
How?
2. What effort of the company/management to improve employee engagement are you aware of?
3. What must be
 - a. Started to improve EE?
 - b. Stopped to improve EE?
 - c. Continued to improve EE?
4. As employees, how would you prefer to be involved in improving employee engagement?

Thank you

Conclusion of the focus group discussion with communication on way forward.

Appendix 4

Structured Interview Questions for the General Manager of MultiChoice Ethiopia Limited

Introduction

Purpose of Interview: to gather information about the challenges faced during implementation of Employee Engagement Improvement Action Plan.

Employee Engagement Score for 2015, according to survey is 58.4 %

1. What are the most important actions taken as a result of the survey in 2013?
2. From the score of 71% in 2013, the current score is 58.4%. What actions are pending that can possibly explain this decrease?
3. What challenges have you faced in improving EE in the company?

Thank you.