

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR ENHANCING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY IN A STATE-OWNED AIRLINE: A CASE OF AIR ZIMBABWE

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN BUSINESS LEADERSHIP, GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

BINDURA, ZIMBABWE

JUNE, 2026

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DEGREE : MASTER OF BUSINESS LEADERSHIP

YEAR DEGREE AWARDED 2026

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DECLARATION

I, **Trust T Magedhe** Student Reg Number …**B243760B**, do hereby declare that this dissertation is a result of my own investigation and research, except to the extent indicated in the acknowledgments, bibliography, references, and comments included in the body of the report, and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree to any other university.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to everyone who contributed towards making this academic journey a success.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my academic supervisor, **Dr. Mandevani**, for his invaluable guidance, constructive feedback and continuous support throughout this research journey. My sincere gratitude also goes to the programme coordinator, **Dr. Matambo**, for his leadership, encouragement and support throughout my studies. I appreciate my classmates for their encouragement, knowledge sharing and the valuable academic discussions that enriched this journey. I am also grateful to my family, friends and colleagues for their unwavering support, patience and motivation. Finally, I acknowledge everyone who contributed directly or indirectly to the completion of this dissertation your support and encouragement are sincerely appreciated.

ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is a decisive factor in driving worker productivity and organisational success, particularly for State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). This study investigated the core drivers of employee engagement at Air Zimbabwe, pinpointed the specific barriers holding workers back, and measured the direct link between engagement and productivity. To achieve this, the study used a mixed-method approach, gathering insights through structured questionnaires distributed across departments at the airline. Quantitative data was processed through SPSS using descriptive statistics, composite scores, Pearson correlation and logistic regression while qualitative insights were put into themes. The results show a clear divide between what drives and what negatively affects employees. On one hand, strong supervisory support, open departmental communication, robust training, wellness programs, fair benefits, and consistent recognition significantly boost engagement. On the other hand, fragmented communication, resource shortages, lack of incentives, and being left out of decision-making negatively impact employee engagement. Interestingly, the logistic regression model highlighted that while training, wellness initiatives, and competitive benefits sharply increase satisfaction with engagement, employees with higher education levels and longer tenures reported lower satisfaction. Driven by these insights, this study introduces a targeted framework built on six pillars: leadership transformation, transparent communication, continuous professional development, wellness support, strategic recognition, and ongoing engagement monitoring. The study concludes that employee engagement is an engine for productivity at Air Zimbabwe. It advocates for integrated organisational changes to reignite motivation, elevate performance, and secure long-term institutional sustainability. Furthermore, these insights align closely with the practical goals of Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 doctrine, offering a valuable blueprint for other SOEs facing similar institutional challenges.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Employee Productivity, State-Owned Enterprises, Air Zimbabwe, Employee Motivation, Organisational Performance.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Antecedent-Behaviour-Consequence
EE	Employee Engagement
HR	Human Resource
JDR	Job Demands Resources Model
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
KRAs	Key Result Areas
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SET	Social Exchange Theory
SOEs	State Owned Enterprises

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

It is worth noting that within the context of service-oriented sectors, in which human capital is a primary determinant of organizational performance and service quality (Saks, 2006) Kahn (1990), employee engagement has been cited as significant. It is even more so within high-risk industries such as aviation. Aviation-related performance is directly linked to both safety and survivability. The aviation industry operates in a highly regulated, risk-laden and demanding environment. There are numerous regulations that govern all aspects of airline operation. These include, but are limited to, safety regulations, environmental regulations, labor laws and consumer protection laws. Airlines operate in an environment characterized by extremely high customer expectations and very few opportunities for price differentiation due to intense competition. As noted by Porter (2008), industries characterized by high fixed costs, standardized services and low rates of growth, i.e., the airline industry, often exhibit extreme levels of competitive rivalry. Airlines must aggressively compete for each route, for every passenger dollar and for the most efficient delivery of service standards simply to maintain their position in the marketplace. Furthermore, according to Rigas (2019), the increased competition stemming from deregulation and liberalization of markets has resulted in the expansion of carriers operating on similar routes thereby reducing fares and placing additional pressure on airlines' operational efficiencies.

In addition to these factors, employees in the airline industry are responsible for delivering consistent performance, demonstrating team work and accepting responsibility for achieving organizational performance. In recent years, many airlines around the world including those based in Asia Pacific have recognized the value of employee engagement as one of several strategies available to them to support organizational performance in terms of service quality (Tangen, 2005; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

According to Tangen (2005); Prichard (1992), employee productivity represents the efficiency and effectiveness with which employees utilize organizational resources to provide quality service, achieve operational objectives and contribute to organizational performance. On a sustained basis employee productivity refers to employees ability to deliver consistently high

levels of performance over time without negatively impacting their own welfare or the service provided to customers nor depleting the organization's resources (Jeffrey Pfeffer, 2010).

Employee engagement provides organizations with tools to improve their resilience and flexibility when faced with adversity. Research clearly demonstrates that organizations with engaged employees will typically experience improved customer satisfaction and smooth running of operations (Harter et al., 2002). For example, within the airline industry where safety, coordination and reliable service provision are paramount, having an engaged crew does not merely result in improved productivity it also ensures that all crew members remain focused on adhering to safety protocols and follow established procedures on a day-to-day basis.

According to Phinaitrup (2026), SOEs experience structural and institutional challenges, these challenges influence employee engagement. The challenges include bureaucratic management systems, lack of incentives, and limited career progression opportunities. Air Zimbabwe is a critical player in facilitating air transportation, tourism, and national development. However, the organisation faces severe operational and financial challenges. These negative conditions threaten employee productivity and organisational effectiveness.

In developing economies, parastatals operate under constrained financial and managerial conditions, this limit their ability to implement better human resource practices. The state which happens to be the major shareholder is also resource constrained but applies pressure for its own enterprises to be profitable while experiencing contradictory terms of reference. These limitations result in reduced employee morale and increased turnover intentions, particularly in specialised roles that include engineering and flight operations (OECD, 2015; World Bank, 2014). In Africa, the challenges are intensified by external pressures from economic instability and competition from privately owned and international airlines, making it difficult for government owned carriers to sustain an engaged workforce. Though employee engagement is considered critical by various scholars and organisations, not so much research has been conducted on specific frameworks for airlines wholly or partially owned by governments in developing countries. This study, aims at establishing a framework for improving employee engagement and productivity at Air Zimbabwe, which improves organizational effectiveness. Developing a context-specific framework is important for addressing the organisational and environmental challenges faced by airlines owned by governments. Such a framework provides

a structured guidance on how to align human resource practices with employee needs and organisational objectives, thereby enhancing both engagement and productivity.

1.2 Background of the Study

Staff engagement is an issue within the field of Human Capital Management due to its impact on organisational performance. Companies are recognizing that workers who have better engagement contribute meaningfully to innovation, operational efficiency leading to improved competitive advantage. Employee involvement is generally defined as the extent of an employee's emotional commitment, involvement, and workers`drive towards organisational goals (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Studies demonstrate that high engagement levels is linked to improved productivity, reduced turnover intentions, and enhanced overall performance (Harter et al., 2002). Keeping employees motivated and connected has become a top priority across almost every industry. Airlines, in particular, provide a perfect backdrop for studying employee engagement. The aviation industry operates in a complex environment, constantly balancing strict safety rules against fast-moving technology and volatile economic shifts. Airlines rely on skilled human capital, including pilots, engineers, and ground personnel whose performance directly influences operational efficiency, safety, and customer satisfaction. Ultimately, fostering staff engagement is a strategic lever for airlines seeking to maintain service quality, operational reliability, and long-term sustainability (Bakker and Albrecht, 2018).

The conditions facing African airlines at regional level are difficult. Many organisations still experience operational and financial constraints. Constraints also include inefficiency, resource constraint and staff turnover. All of these issues are exacerbated by the weakness of human capital management systems and a lack of strategies related to employee engagement. Low levels of engagement negatively impact productivity, result in lower levels of service delivery and increase the likelihood of 'brain-drain' particularly amongst highly skilled personnel (Nzuve & Njeru, 2013). As such there is an urgent requirement for the establishment of effective engagement strategies in order to improve organisational sustainability within the African aviation industry.

The African Airlines Association is the body representing the interests of African airlines that have all suffered financially and operationally. Air Zimbabwe presents a useful example for this study. Once viewed as a strong and competitive player with a well established fleet and extensive route network Air Zimbabwe's continued problems regarding both managerial and

financial challenges have resulted in a decline in overall performance. Performance and service quality have been demonstrated through literature to be associated with higher levels of employee engagement (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006). Therefore this study will explore whether improving employee engagement can assist to promote performance improvements and longer term sustainability for Air Zimbabwe. State-Owned Enterprises (SOE's), in Zimbabwe, play an important role in the process of achieving national economic development. Many SOE's however suffer from inefficiencies, financial instability and governance-related challenges. Air Zimbabwe provides examples of many of these issues, having experienced extended periods of operational disruption, fleet constraints, inconsistency in delivering service and the loss of skilled personnel.

Employee engagement at Air Zimbabwe is constrained by several different forms of organisational constraint including leader style, remuneration and benefits, communication practices and the opportunity for career advancement. Literature suggests that engagement is influenced by employees perceptions of organisational support and job characteristics which influence employees attitudes and behaviour (Saks, 2006). In respect of Air Zimbabwe, inadequate consideration of these elements results in low morale and sub-optimal productive outcomes. Employees who are engaged in organizational processes commit themselves to the organization and provide positive contributions to the organizations performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). A key limitation to date has been the absence of contextual specific frameworks tailored specifically to state owned enterprise operating in developing economies. To date existing theoretical models were developed based upon empirical evidence collected from developed economies and do not reflect or address the unique set of institutional, economic and organizational challenges that exist for Air Zimbabwe.

To bridge this gap, this study designs a framework to boost employee engagement and productivity specifically within Air Zimbabwe. By pinpointing exactly what drives engagement and tracking how it impacts day-to-day performance, this research delivers realistic, evidence-based strategies to help turn the airline around. Ultimately, the study is important to Human Resource Management as it contributes real world insights into employee engagement at air Zimbabwe.

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem

SOEs are drivers of the country's economic development because governments heavily dominate their local markets. In strategic sectors like tourism, trade, and infrastructure development, parastatals are the main players (Banque mondiale 2014). As the state carrier, the main mandate of Air Zimbabwe is to ensure the provision of quality air transport services to the nation. However, the organisation's ability to meet the mandate is threatened by the persistence of operational and human resource challenges. In the highly competitive air transport sector, success depends on the quality of the human capital. In the case of Air Zimbabwe, the gap between the expected levels of employee engagement is wide compared to the existing situation. The existing situation is characterised by the decline of both motivation and productivity levels among the human capital. In most scenarios, the decline is attributed to the lack of tools of trade, financial constraints, and the absence of formal recognition systems. In addition, the lack of career development opportunities is the main reason why the human capital is stagnant and uninspiring. The persistence of the situation is having a ripple effect on the integrated functional areas of the organisation. The inefficiencies arising in any department, for example, in ground handling or engineering, are likely to cause inefficiencies in other departments, which may lead to service failures and hence customer dissatisfaction.

This crisis is made worse by how unpredictable and competitive the aviation industry is. While everyone agrees that airlines need motivated workers to survive, researchers have largely ignored the unique socio-economic realities of Zimbabwean state-owned enterprises. Currently, there is no clear, structured roadmap designed for this specific environment. Without an effective strategy for improving the human resource challenges at hand, Air Zimbabwe cannot hope to move towards a stable state of operation. In an attempt to fill the apparent knowledge gap, this study aims at creating a framework for improving employee engagement while taking into consideration productivity outcomes. In creating a roadmap for reviving the workforce at Air Zimbabwe, this research aims to make the entire airline more effective.

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

Aim

To develop a practical framework that enhances employee engagement and productivity to improve the overall organizational performance of Air Zimbabwe.

Objectives

1. To assess the level of employee engagement at Air Zimbabwe.
2. To identify the key factors influencing employee engagement within the organization.
3. To establish other constraints worsening employee non engagement.
4. To examine the relationship between employee engagement and productivity in the airline given the other constraints such as non-business objectives imposed by the state shareholder.
5. To develop a framework for enhancing employee engagement and productivity in the organization

1.5 Research Questions

1. What is the current level of employee engagement at Air Zimbabwe?
2. What are the key factors influencing employee engagement within the organisation?
3. What constraints are contributing to employee disengagement in the airline?
4. What is the relationship between employee engagement and employee productivity in the airline?
5. What framework can be developed to enhance employee engagement and productivity in the organisation?

1.6 Justification of Study

Employee commitment at an airline is crucial to success for companies operating in labor intensive and customer service driven sectors like aviation. There is an abundance of literature on employee engagement however there remains little empirical support as to how employee engagement can be improved at State Owned Enterprises (SOE) in emerging markets. Therefore, this research seeks to address the void in current literature and provide insights into both theoretical, practical and policy implications. Models of employee engagement have been developed and validated in the context of western nations and the private sector. Although these models provide useful insight; they do not account for the distinct organizational, economic and institutional characteristics of state owned airlines in developing nations. The factors

influencing employee engagement at Air Zimbabwe include resource constraints, governance issues and industrial relations issues which affect employee engagement differently than in other contexts.

The justification for conducting this research is based upon the operational challenges faced by Air Zimbabwe including decreasing levels of productivity, shortage of skilled personnel, the "open skies" policy and high rates of turnover due to loss of experienced personnel. It was found that low levels of employee engagement were related to lower levels of motivation and greater intent to leave amongst employees resulting in negative effects on organizational performance. As a result, this research identifies key factors affecting employee engagement and provides actionable insights and recommendations that management may use to improve the sustainability of their organization. In addition, HR professionals may benefit from this research when creating and implementing employee engagement strategies that meet the particular needs of SOEs. Furthermore, this research has significant policy implications specifically in the context of Zimbabwe where SOEs are critical to economic growth and development. Improved employee engagement and productivity within organizations such as Air Zimbabwe will lead to better service delivery, improved financial outcomes and increased national competitiveness. Additionally, the results from this research will be beneficial to academic researchers, practicing HR professionals and government officials who seek to enhance performance in the aviation industry.

1.7 Significance of study

This research is important because it serves as a catalyst for economic growth in Zimbabwe, and it contributes to the broader goals of Vision 2030. Conceptually, this research will help fill a gap in African Management literature, since Western Corporate Models have traditionally ignored the unique needs of a Zimbabwean Parastatal Organization. By focusing this research on a Parastatal Airline, this research assesses how employee engagement is shaped not only by the internal Human Capital practices of the organization, but also by the macroeconomic instability and cost of living pressures that currently characterize the labor market in Zimbabwe. Thus, this research will add a layer of context-specific analysis to organizational behavior discourse, while providing a framework that recognizes the barriers and constraints inherent in working within a public institution located in a developing country.

In terms of practice, this research can serve as a diagnostic tool for the leadership team at Air Zimbabwe as they navigate the complex process of restructuring and turnaround. Since losing skilled engineers and pilots to competing airlines in the region and internationally represents an ongoing risk to Air Zimbabwe's viability, developing an understanding of the local dynamics of commitment is a matter of survival. While high levels of employee engagement are likely to mitigate the effects of "brain drain," they may not totally prevent it from occurring. However, high levels of engagement are critical to improving organizational commitment, and decreasing employees' intentions to leave. Therefore, this research provides evidence-based insights into the effective utilization of non-monetary incentives, transparency in leadership behaviors, and career-pathing opportunities as possible means to stabilize the workforce despite limited financial resources available to Air Zimbabwe. These suggestions support Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 model (innovation, industrialization), and demonstrate how this research can contribute to the implementation of evidence-based organizational improvements that can positively impact national economic development.

Ultimately, beyond the confines of the Board Room, this research has great significance for both the employees and the national interests. Specifically, for the employees, this research highlights the need for a renewed "psychological contract" between the State as an Employer, and the Individual Professional. Improving employee morale is critical to reviving a sense of national pride and a culture of safety-first that exists in Aviation. Because Air Zimbabwe serves as the primary entry point into Zimbabwe for Tourism and Trade related activities, any success realized through the use of this Framework has a direct positive multiplier effect on National Connectivity. Further, due to the fact that Air Zimbabwe is one example of many struggling State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) throughout the country, these findings provide a scalable Model for Performance Excellence that could be applied by other SOEs facing similar challenges.

1.8 Assumptions

Participants from all areas of Air Zimbabwe, in other words employees of all departments are assumed to be prepared to provide an honest and accurate account of their professional experience without fear of retaliation. The sampling department(s) for this research will represent the total population of the organisation. Methodologically speaking, it can be inferred that the methodological instruments employed in this study will be able to identify with accuracy the variables of engagement and productivity. Finally, it is assumed that the working

conditions or work environment of the organisation will remain relatively stable throughout the time span when data collection occurs.

1.9 Delimitations

This study was deliberately confined to Air Zimbabwe as a single case study to allow for an in-depth examination of employee engagement and productivity within the organisation. Focusing on one organisation enabled the researcher to examine engagement practices, organisational conditions, and employee experiences within their specific institutional context. Although this limits direct generalisation to other organisations, the findings may provide useful lessons for other state-owned enterprises with similar organisational and operational characteristics.The study focused on employees, selected managers, and human resource personnel because these groups are directly involved in the employee engagement and productivity processes under investigation. External stakeholders, including customers, regulators, and suppliers, were excluded because their experiences do not directly represent internal employee engagement and productivity. Their inclusion would also have broadened the study beyond its primary focus on internal organisational factors.

A cross-sectional research design was adopted because the study sought to assess the prevailing state of employee engagement and productivity during the period of the research. This design allowed the researcher to collect information from respondents within a defined period and obtain a contemporaneous assessment of engagement and productivity. However, it does not allow changes in engagement and productivity to be tracked over an extended period. The study was also geographically confined to Zimbabwe, as Air Zimbabwe operates within a specific national economic, labour, and institutional environment. This delimitation was necessary because factors such as economic conditions, employment practices, and the broader operating environment may influence employee engagement and productivity. Restricting the study to Zimbabwe therefore allowed these factors to be considered within the context in which the organisation operates.

Finally, the study focused specifically on employee engagement and productivity and their associated factors, rather than attempting to examine all aspects of organisational performance. Factors such as customer satisfaction, financial performance, market share, and operational competitiveness were considered only where they related to employee engagement and

productivity. This ensured that the study remained manageable and aligned with its stated objectives.

1.10 Limitations

Some employees were hesitant to participate in interviews due to concerns relating to confidentiality and fear of repercussions. This has a negative impact on depth of qualitative insights. Since the study is based on self-reported data, there is a response bias related to issues of job security. Particularly in the short-term, as employees underreport dissatisfaction due to fear of immediate repercussions. Through a cross-sectional design, the study is confined to operational departments. Therefore, it only provides a snapshot of employee engagement at a specific point in time and fails to capture longitudinal effects or other aspects of financial performance. Participants may provide socially desirable answers, particularly on sensitive issues concerning leadership, management practices, and organisational policies, this affect the accuracy of the data. Due to the study being conducted in a short space of time, it limit the depth of data collection and the ability to capture changes in employee engagement and productivity over time. Access to organisational information, such as internal reports or performance data, may be restricted due to confidentiality considerations, limiting the comprehensiveness of the analysis. The study was affected by non-response or incomplete data, as some participants failed to return questionnaires and provided partially completed responses. There is a possibility of researcher bias in the interpretation of qualitative data derived from interviews. Although measures such as systematic coding and thematic analysis are employed to enhance objectivity, the researcher's perspectives may still influence the analysis to some extent.

1.11 Chapter Summary

The chapter provides the foundation for the study on developing a framework to enhance employee engagement and productivity at Air Zimbabwe. It outlines the background of the study from a global, regional, and local perspective. The chapter justifies the study by identifying gaps in theory and practice, particularly in the context of Zimbabwe, emphasising its practicality and policy relevance. Lastly, the delimitations and limitations of the research are outlined, clarifying its scope and potential constraints.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Key concepts such as theoretical frameworks, empirical studies, and identified gaps justifying the current study on Air Zimbabwe are discussed. The chapter adopts a structured approach, beginning with conceptual definitions, followed by theoretical perspectives, empirical evidence, and concluding with a conceptual framework. The review further draws on global, developing, and African studies, with particular focus on government owed firms, to highlight key determinants of engagement and existing research gaps. The gaps form basis for the research, as it seeks to come up with a context-specific framework for enhancing employee engagement and productivity at Air Zimbabwe.

2.2 Conceptual Review

Key concepts that underpin the study, with particular focus on employee engagement and employee productivity shall be reviewed. Conceptual review provides definitions and explanations of these constructs as discussed in existing literature, and examines their relevance within organisational contexts. The section further explores the dimensions of staff involvement and the different approaches used to measure employee productivity. In addition, it highlights how employee engagement and productivity are related, drawing on previous studies to establish how engagement influences employee performance. This provides a foundation for understanding the variables of the study and how they relate within the context of SOESs.

2.2.1 Employee Engagement (EE)

Due to globalisation the modern business environment organisations now operate with adoption of new technologies. Sustainability of organisations in no centered on innovation from within to make the organisation successful. According to Steen (2009), how employees leverage core business resources is what ultimately builds and maintains a company's competitive edge. Because people hold the key to unlocking the value of these resources, driving high engagement has become a top priority for most organisations. While everyone agrees that keeping staff engaged is crucial, there isn’t a single, universally accepted definition of EE.

Employee Engagement (EE) is one of the most important keys to success for organizations today. In fact, according to Patro (2013), EE is an organizational key to success. The connection an employee feels to his/her employer's mission is at the heart of what it means to be engaged. For many industries including aviation, this connection is crucial because an employee's commitment to producing quality products will impact their customers. According to Khan (1990), "Employee Engagement" refers to an employee's emotional, intellectual, and physical investment into their job. Each component of this definition is supported by research. A study of approximately 200 employees conducted by May et al. (2004), found that when all three components were present in a job, the employees felt connected to their jobs. When an employee does not see these components present in their job, he/she is likely to disengage completely from their job and create barriers to mask their real personality, thoughts, and feelings so that they can simply survive another day at work (Rothman & Jordaan, 2006). Engaged employees with safe working environments have confidence to contribute new ideas and take the initiative to improve processes. When both EE and Psychological Safety are on the same page, they enable open dialogue and risk taking, which allows for growth and development through innovation. Organizations benefit greatly when their employees have high EE and PS as it creates an environment that fosters creativity, problem solving and overall better performance (Khan, 1990 and Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Engaging employees positively impacts the organization in many ways while lack of engaging employees negatively impacts employees and the organization. Employees who do not engage in their job typically produce less than those who do engage in their job. They tend to perform their tasks less effectively and make more errors, ultimately affecting performance at the individual level as well as at the organizational level (Saks, 2006; Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002). Lack of engagement may also cause low levels of job satisfaction and morale for employees. This occurs due to the sense of being under-valued or lacking a connection to the organization's goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Furthermore, if an organization has too much disengagement among employees, there tends to be higher levels of intentionality to leave the organization. Many of these individuals who intend to leave are skilled employees seeking greater fulfillment in their employment (Albrecht et al., 2015). Overtime, disengagement among employees can affect the competitive nature of an organization by contributing to poor team dynamics and resisting changes.

2.2.2 Employee Productivity

Employee productivity is how efficiently and effectively employees produce goods or services using organisational assets to achieve operational objectives and improve overall organisation performance (Pritchard, 1992; Tangen, 2005). Productivity in the workforce has become multifaceted. It can be affected by many different variables including employee's level of motivation, their working conditions, how much training they have received and their job satisfaction (Singh & Chaudhary, 2022). Modern approaches to productivity measurement recognise the need to incorporate both individual performance and broader organisational outcomes, particularly in service-based industries where outputs are less tangible (Zuo, 2024). Therefore, employee productivity remains a critical indicator of organisational effectiveness, competitiveness, and sustainability in today's dynamic work environment.

In building a model for improving employee engagement and productivity at Air Zimbabwe, this research defines productivity as being dependent upon the interaction between organizational systems, job resources, and employee engagement. Thus, productivity will depend on a holistic approach that includes HR practices, supportive management and efficient work design. This view links productivity to both the operational efficiency and well-being of employees providing a means to ensure that future performance improvement is sustainable and contributes to long-term organizational success. This research emphasizes that employee engagement and productivity are abstract concepts that cannot be measured directly. For these reasons appropriate surrogates are needed. In this instance, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Key Result Areas (KRAs), etc., are used as measures of performance and engagement. Having objective measurements allows for employee performance to be judged fairly, without prejudice or subjectivity in evaluating performance (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). Without objective criteria for evaluation, judgments about employee performance are subjective and result in low levels of employee satisfaction and high levels of employee disengagement (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). Using KPIs/KRAs enhances transparency, accountability, and fairness by aligning employee effort toward achieving the firm's mission and improves employee engagement and productivity (Aguinis, 2019).

2.2.3 Relationship between Employee Engagement and Productivity

The relationship between Employee Engagement (EE), and organizational Productivity has been demonstrated by research. Most of the work to date has focused primarily upon Developed Countries, with Developing Economies focusing upon the Private Sector. The majority of this

work does not include State Owned Enterprises. According to Bakker and Demerouti (2008) employee engagement will improve an employees' Job Performance through increased Energy, Focus, and Resilience. Therefore, in the Aviation Industry, where Skilled Labour is relied upon, and Service Standards are High; Employee Engagement is crucial. As low EE levels have been shown to negatively affect Efficiency, Customer Service, and Employee Turnover.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by an amalgamation of theoretical frameworks that elucidate EE (Employee Engagement) and productivity at work, which will be used to understand how personal capabilities, environmental workplace elements, and reward/penalty mechanisms affect employees' attitudes towards their job and their behavior/performance. The models; Personal Resources Model, Job Resource Model, Social Exchange Theory, Operant Conditioning Theory and Human Capital Theory will offer a platform for identifying the organizational structures and motivation aspects that are significant for achieving better results in organizations with complex structures similar to Air Zimbabwe. In addition they will guide the exploration of how practices at the workplace have an effect on EE and help create a model for improving employee productivity.

2.3.1 Job Demands Resources (JDR) Model

The Job Demands Resources model developed by Arnold B. Bakker is the most directly relevant theory to this study as it explains EE as a function of workplace conditions. The model puts forward that job related resources play a role in fostering engagement by enhancing motivation and enabling employees to achieve work goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). As Air Zimbabwe has many operational and financial challenges that may impact the organization's resources, the availability and quality of these job-related resources will be key predictors of engagement and productivity. The JDR Model is an acceptable choice to use due to providing a solid structural base from which to develop interventions to increase employee engagement using organizational support mechanisms. However, limitations exist with respect to the JDR model's reliance primarily upon external factors that do not emphasize individual psychological differences or relational dynamics (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). These shortcomings are mitigated by the inclusion of personal resources and social exchange theory within this model. Therefore, the JDR model serves as the central model, however, all of these theories enhance the JDR model's predictive capacity.

2.3.2 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social exchange theory, developed by Saks (2006), has a direct relationship to this study because social exchange theory describes the psychological and relational processes that lead to an employee's engagement with his/her organization. Specifically, social exchange theory proposes that when organizations treat their employees fairly, and provide them with recognition and support; those employees will reciprocate positively to their organization through greater organizational commitment, and by making extra efforts above what is expected (i.e., discretionary effort). Therefore, in the case of Air Zimbabwe where financial rewards are limited due to its economic situation, social exchanges have a much larger role to play in maintaining the level of employee engagement. Moreover, one of the major limitations of social exchange theory is that it relies upon rational and consistent behavior from employees. While many studies show evidence of this type of behavior occurring at least some of the time, there is also a growing body of literature showing that employees do not behave rationally and consistently all of the time especially in today's complex business environment. Furthermore, another major limitation of social exchange theory is that it does not offer any specific guidance regarding how to measure or operationalize employee engagement. These two gaps were filled by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and Operant Conditioning Theory. The JD-R model provided structural components of job demands and resources that can influence employee engagement. Additionally, operant conditioning theory provided behavioral mechanisms for how engagement could be reinforced. Finally, social exchange theory supports the JD-R model by providing reasons as to why employees will choose to become engaged if they perceive that their employer is treating them fairly, and providing them with appropriate levels of support.

2.3.3 Personal Resources Model

The Personal Resources Model incorporated into the Job Demand-Resources (JDR) Framework introduces an important psychological perspective to this research by concentrating on employee's internal resources; including self efficacy, optimism, resilience and organization based self esteem. Employee's internal resource can be used to explain what employees perceive as job demands and the capacity they have to stay engaged at work during periods of stress. As suggested by empirical evidence; there has been substantial support for the concept that employee's internal resources significantly contribute to the maintenance of work engagement and the mitigation of job strain (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Consequently, in

environments that present high levels of risk and technical complexity, such as Air Zimbabwe, employees' internal resources are required to sustain motivation and performance. Therefore, the theory provides a justification for how employees will utilize their own capabilities to engage with their jobs despite limitations associated with available external resources. It could be argued however, that one potential weakness of the model is that it may place too much emphasis upon employee's internal abilities and responsibilities to achieve engagement, thus potentially neglecting organizational or structural barriers to achieving engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). This is countered by other theoretical models presented in this paper (the JDR framework and Social Exchange Theory), which focus on job resources and relationship factors respectively. The Personal Resource model will complement these frameworks to ensure that the overall framework incorporates both internal and external factors driving employee engagement.

2.3.4 Operant Conditioning Theory

B.F. Skinner was a pioneer in developing Operant Conditioning Theory. He created a behavioral approach to understanding employees' behavior using reinforcement. As described by Skinner (1953), people primarily act based upon their results. Reinforcing an employee positively reinforces future desirable behavior. An important part of operant conditioning is the ABC model (Antecedents – Behavior – Consequences) that describes how Antecedents (clear expectations, leader/management practices, defined organizational structure/work processes) stimulate an employee's behavior while Consequences (rewards/recognition/corrective feedback) determines if the employee's past behavior continues or is changed. In terms of designing a performance management system at Air Zimbabwe, using Antecedents (defined KPI/KRA expectations) and reinforcing Consequences (consistent feedback/reward) can lead to increased performance and employee engagement. The value of the theory is that it offers a practical method to convert abstract concepts (employee engagement) into specific observable and quantifiable employee behaviors contributing to overall productivity.

Although operant conditioning is valuable because it offers a very useful method for creating desired behaviors through reinforcement, there are limitations to its application. One major limitation of operant conditioning is that it tends to focus on observable employee behaviors and does not provide adequate consideration to internal employee cognitions/emotions (motivation/perception/trust). These limitations have been acknowledged and addressed by other theoretical approaches (Social Exchange Theory – Saks, 2006; Cropanzano & Mitchell,

2005) that incorporate reciprocal relational dynamics (e.g. fairness); and the Personal Resources Model (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007) that describe internal psychological drives influencing employee engagement. Therefore, operant conditioning is complementary to other models addressing the internal psychology of employees; the ABC model provides the structural behavioral pathway to operationalize and sustain engagement in practice.

2.3.5 Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory is an overarching theoretical framework providing an economic viewpoint for examining the value of employees' skills, knowledge and competences as important determinants of organizational success (Becker, 1964). In the case of Air Zimbabwe, where technical competence is paramount, the theory supports investment in employee training, development and retention programmes to improve the organization's overall productivity. As such, the theory has relevance to this research study because it frames employee engagement as a process by which human capital is effectively utilized so that investments made in employee skills result in enhanced performance and productivity outcomes. However, there are limitations associated with the application of the Human Capital Theory. One limitation of the theory is that it assumes that investing in employees will ultimately lead to improvements in performance and does not consider other motivational, behavioral or firm-related contextual factors (Becker, 1964). Furthermore, the theory does not account for how employee engagement is generated and maintained at work. These areas of omission are addressed by the Job Demand-Resource Model (JDR Model) which identifies environmental influences on engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007); Social Exchange Theory which identifies relational dynamics such as trust and reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Saks, 2006); and Operant Conditioning Theory which identifies behavioral reinforcement mechanisms (Skinner, 1953). The Human Capital Theory provides the "why" investment rationale while the additional theoretical frameworks provide information regarding "how" such investments can be activated and sustained through employee engagement.

2.4 The level of engagement amongst employees

Saul-Schroeder (2010) also reported an alarming trend; declining levels of Employee Engagement within organisations. In fact, their study found that among organisations employing over 50 employees, only a very small percentage of employees reported being "fully" engaged in their roles, whereas a large portion of employees exhibited limited

Emotional & Professional investment in their organisation(s). The findings indicate that many employees may be continuing to be employed by the same organisations for extended periods without feeling connected to their work or demonstrating commitment to organisational success. Additionally, Saul-Schroeder (2010) categorised employees based on various levels of organisational/Job Engagement. Some employees reported Organisational Engagement which indicated that they have a sense of identity with the organisation; however they are typically involved in roles which lack challenge/stimulation. Other employees reported Job Engagement indicating that they derive satisfaction from their role, yet do not identify emotionally with the organisation. Saul-Schroeder (2010) asserts that employees who report only Job Engagement may provide some level of organisational support as long as it occurs from afar; therefore may not be contributing to the achievement of organisational goals. Employees reporting only Job Engagement may potentially leave the organisation if they experience dissatisfaction with their role; since their commitment is primarily to their role vs. the organisation. Overall, the findings indicate that there exists a significant proportion of employees who are not performing at their full capacity and/or contributing at their best capability due to lower than desired levels of engagement. While these employees continue to receive organisational rewards including salary/benefits etc., lower than desired levels of employee engagement may result in decreased productivity/performance throughout the organisation. This point supports Okpa et al. (2014), who conducted research to determine why UK employees did not utilise their knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA's) to its fullest extent.

According to Hay Group (2012) and Gallup, global employee engagement levels showed some improvement with the Employee Engagement Index (EEI) increasing from 55% in 2010 to 60% in 2011. Although this increase suggests a positive movement in employee engagement the findings 40% of employees remained disengaged which continues to present a challenge for organisations seeking to improve productivity and performance. Further reports by Hewitt (2012), Gallup (2012) and Hay Group (2013) showed that global engagement levels remained relatively constant at approximately 60% between 2012 and 2013, suggesting that progress in improving employee engagement has been slow. The stagnation in global engagement levels indicates that many organisations continue to experience challenges in creating work environments that encourage commitment, motivation and active employee participation. Previous studies suggested that compensation had a limited influence on employee engagement. Results from Hewitt (2013) indicate that the importance of pay as an engagement driver increased moving from the sixth most influential factor in 2011 to the third most

influential factor in 2012. This suggests that inadequate reward and compensation practices may contribute to declining engagement levels. Employee engagement cannot be improved through financial rewards alone. Luthans and Peterson (2002) argue that organisations are experiencing a growing challenge in the relationship between managers and employees where poor leadership practices contribute to employee dissatisfaction and disengagement. They suggest that employees often leave organisations not only because of the organisation itself but because of negative experiences with their immediate supervisors and the quality of leadership they receive.

Spencer (2013) found that 49% of employees expressed concerns regarding their managers. A detailed analysis identified several categories of disengagement. One group representing 11% of disengaged employees reported positive perceptions of senior leadership and the organisation overall but had negative views of their direct managers. Employees may differentiate between their relationship with senior leadership and their immediate supervisors continued exposure to poor manager employee relationships can gradually reduce engagement levels. Since managers and employees interact frequently in the workplace dysfunctional relationships can significantly affect employee morale and willingness to contribute.

The researchers found that ineffectiveness by management and/or staff in communicating effectively and providing adequate managerial support, are two primary causes of work disengagement. Of the participants questioned approximately 15% felt dissatisfied about the fact that their manager had failed to link their role within the business to the overall organizational goals, communicate effectively, or be accountable to them. A further 12% stated that their managers did not provide the necessary support for their emotional/interpersonal needs as a result of; little recognition, poor team collaboration and insufficient opportunity for self-expression. When an employee perceives they are treated unfairly or have no control over what they do at work, it can cause a decrease in commitment to the organization. Conditions within an organization also play a significant part in contributing to employee disengagement. Many employees identified several reasons for being unhappy such as; poor work environment, perceived unfairness in pay and benefits, inadequate tools/resources available and ineffectual reward/recognition programs. Some employees experience disengagement from work when their job does not allow for autonomy, has too much repetition and lacks challenge/momentum, leading to less motivation and involvement.

2.5 To identify the key factors influencing employee engagement within the organization.

2.5.1 Leadership Style

The manner in which employees are directed, encouraged, and supported can be influenced significantly by their leader's leadership style. This is supported empirically by empirical research that has shown that employee motivation and empowerment through their leader fosters greater emotional connection with their role and workplace. Furthermore, research has demonstrated that supportive and collaborative leadership leads to increased trust and employee engagement among other outcomes in complex service-oriented settings such as the airline industry. Additionally, Peter Senge views organisations as learning systems. He advocates for the use of a "holistic" approach to developing organisational capability and improving performance. This perspective advocates for a systems view to develop a culture of shared vision, team learning, mental models and systems thinking in order to impact the way people behave and perform at work. As such, leadership is not simply about providing direction to employees; rather, it involves creating an environment in which employees continually learn from one another, collaborate, and take collective responsibility. Therefore, Air Zimbabwe would benefit from Senge's holistic systems-based approach to support its goal of developing a cohesive, adaptable, and responsive workforce in response to both internal operational challenges and external challenges that may lead to continued high levels of engagement and productivity.

2.5.2 Rewards and Compensation

Rewards and compensation are significant determinants of employee engagement, as they influence motivation, satisfaction and perceived organisational support. Financial and fringe benefits contribute to engagement by reinforcing desired behaviours. Vroom (1964) highlights that workers more engaged when they perceive a clear link between effort, performance and rewards. In resource constrained organisations, benefits such as recognition and appreciation become equally important in sustaining engagement.

2.5.3 Training and Development

Career development programmes improve employee's skills and confidence, thereby increasing their engagement levels. According to Gary Becker (1964), investment in human capital improves productivity and success of the organisation. Studies have shown that

employees who sees opportunities for learning and growth are committed and engaged as such opportunities signal organisational investment in their future.

2.5.4 Communication

Effective communication is an essential component of employee engagement – it facilitates transparency, clarity, and alignment to organisational objectives which enables employees to feel valued, included, and connected to the organisation's goals. Two-way, open communication develops trust and reduces uncertainty. Trust and reduced uncertainty both are key factors that support active participation and collaboration. According to Kahn (1990) communication can support psychological safety. Psychological safety is one of the conditions that supports employee engagement; the condition allows employees to express ideas, share concerns, and invest themselves fully in their roles without fear of negative consequences. From a different perspective the Johari Window provides an important awareness framework that enhances understanding of interpersonal communication within organisations. The model was developed by Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham. The model emphasizes self-disclosure and feedback to expand the "open area," which improves mutual understanding, trust, and teamwork between employees and management (Luft & Ingham, 1955). The use of the Johari Window model in combination with effective communication practices at Air Zimbabwe will provide the organization with transparent relationships, reduce misunderstandings and improve collaboration. All three items are important elements for developing better EE levels and ultimately increasing productivity. These align with literature on organizational communication. Literature indicates that openness and feedback increases employee engagement and performance (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

2.5.5 Work Environment

An organizations work environment will influence Employee Engagement (EE) by developing employees' physical and psychological well-being, which in turn influences how engaged an employee will be and their ability to operate effectively. A work environment that supports its employees through a favorable organizational culture, access to necessary resources, and a comprehensive system of safety will enable employees to complete their tasks efficiently, while creating or sustaining positive morale and commitment. Research has indicated that working conditions that support employee engagement also promote productivity since these conditions decrease job strain, and increase employee motivation (William A. Kahn, 1990; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In particular this is important in the aviation industry, as operational safety,

efficiency, and reliability are paramount, and therefore any negative factors of the work environment have direct implications on the organization's overall success from the employee level. Therefore it is vital for Air Zimbabwe to create and maintain an optimal working condition at the workplace to foster and sustain the engagement of employees.

2.5.6 Recruitment

Effective recruitment practices ensure that the organisation attracts individuals whose values, skills, and attitudes align with organisational objectives thereby strengthening employee engagement from the outset. The concept of person organisation fit has been widely identified as a key predictor of staff attitudes and behaviours as workers whose personal values align with those of the organisation are exhibit higher levels of commitment, satisfaction, and motivation (Amy L. Kristof, 1996; Benjamin Schneider et al., 1995). This alignment enhances engagement through instilling a sense of belonging and purpose which encourages employees to invest their cognitive, emotional and physical energies into their roles. In connection to Air Zimbabwe, strategic recruitment is therefore essential in building a workforce that is not only technically competent but also aligned with organisational values and culture, ultimately laying a strong foundation for sustained employee engagement and improved organisational performance.

2.5.7 Equal and fair opportunities

Fairness and equity in the organisation significantly influence employee engagement. Adams (1965) argues that staff members assess fairness based on the balance between their inputs and outcomes relative to others. When staff members feel they are being treated fairly, promoted and rewarded they will be engaged and committed. Perceived inequities can lead to dissatisfaction and disengagement.

2.5.8 Performance management

Performance Appraisal Mechanisms are vital to connecting what employees do with the organisational objectives through establishing clearly defined expectations, providing regular feedback and supporting personal and professional development. A well-structured system will increase employee engagement as employees will have clarity around their role and responsibilities, performance expectations and be aware of how they contribute to the organisation's overall success. According to research conducted by Aguinis (2013) continuous performance feedback is one of the drivers of Employee Engagement as it provides clarity around the employee's role, reinforces positive behaviour and provides the opportunity for

employee development. In addition, according to London (2003), Feedback mechanisms provide self awareness and motivation to employees to enable them to modify their work habits and improve their performance to meet the organisations' expectations. Through an on going process of evaluating and discussing performance, Management and Employees can hold each other accountable for performance which increases motivation and productivity. Referring specifically to Air Zimbabwe, a key requirement is to establish structured and measurable Performance Systems such as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Key Results Areas (KRAs) to support objectivity and reduce subjective elements during the appraisal process to maintain High Levels of Employee Engagement (EE) and Organisational Productivity.

2.6 To establish other constraints worsening employee non engagement.

2.6.1 Bureaucracy

Another very important cause of employee disengagement is a lack of incentives, which include financial and non-financial. Both types of incentives help motivate employees and reinforce appropriate behaviors. As noted by Herzberg in his 1959 study "The Motivation To Work" salaries and rewards were identified as two of the most significant tools employers can use to encourage motivation among their employees and create a positive environment for engagement. Employees who believe that they do not receive adequate recognition or compensation for their work will generally be less satisfied and have lower levels of commitment than those who feel their contributions are recognized and valued. Therefore, it would be reasonable to conclude that, with respect to Air Zimbabwe's resource constraints, a lack of competitive compensation and recognition systems could negatively impact employee morale and engagement.

2.6.2 Lack of incentives

The absence of adequate incentives is another critical factor contributing to employee disengagement. Incentives both financial and nonfinancial are key motivating employees and reinforcing desired behaviours. Herzberg (1959) identifies salary and rewards as an essential tool for motivating employee satisfaction and engagement. When employees perceive that their efforts are not adequately recognised or rewarded they are likely to experience dissatisfaction and reduced commitment. In resource constrained organisations like Air Zimbabwe, the lack of competitive remuneration and recognition systems may significantly undermine employee morale and engagement.

2.6.3 Poor management practices

Ineffective management practices, such as poor leadership and inadequate communication can significantly hinder employee engagement. Leadership plays a central role in shaping the work environment and influencing employee attitudes. Research by Yukl (2013) indicates that poor leadership behaviours such as lack of direction, unfair treatment and limited employee involvement contribute to disengagement and low performance. In organisational contexts where management fails to provide clear guidance, feedback and support, employees are less likely to feel valued and motivated to contribute meaningfully.

2.6.4 Resource constraints

The resource constraints in this area such as the lack of appropriate tools/equipment or adequate funds can also severely limit an employee's ability to complete his/her tasks efficiently. A lack of resources within the Job Demands Resources model increases both job demand and stress which can negatively impact employee engagement. Evangelia Demerouti et al. (2001), found that when employees are deprived of sufficient job resources it reduces motivation and results in employee burn out and reduced levels of engagement. State owned airlines may experience similar operational limitations/financial issues with respect to providing necessary resources for employees which will also have a negative effect on both employee performance and engagement.

2.6.5 Job insecurity

Job insecurity is a significant obstacle to increasing employee engagement for the same reason — it generates anxiety and/or fear within the minds of employees; i.e., when an employee has no certainty regarding his/her employment status this will generally lead to a reduction in that employee's emotional attachment to the employer. Kalleberg (2009) found that job insecurity is negatively related to job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement. Therefore, in companies going through changes (e.g., restructuring) due to economic difficulties (e.g., Air Zimbabwe), employee morale and an employee's desire to make an extra effort at work may be significantly impacted by job insecurity.

2.7 Empirical Review the relationship between employee engagement and productivity in the airline industry.

2.7.1 Global Studies on Employee Engagement

Patro (2013), states that Employee Engagement (EE), in today's business world, has evolved into a critical component of successful Management due to its ability to influence individual behavior and organizational outcomes. Employees who are truly engaged with their jobs have a greater understanding of the overall objectives of the organization and take responsibility for improving their personal performance and helping the organization achieve its objectives. Therefore, there exists a direct correlation between Employee Engagement and organizational productivity since employees who are motivated and committed will produce greater levels of effort, innovation and performance than disengaged employees. As such, organizations strive to develop the optimal working environment in order to foster an atmosphere that encourages employees to be committed to their job roles and focused on achieving the organization's intended goals. According to Patro (2013), employee engagement also impacts upon customer satisfaction which ultimately leads to increased competitiveness and enhanced financial performance. To foster EE employees need to believe in their organization; they need to be satisfied with their organization and be aligned with their organization's mission. A positive attitude by employees develops from the belief that their organization values their input, provides support for their needs and creates a positive workplace culture. In order for organizations to build and maintain EE they must develop and implement effective Human Resource practices including supporting leaders, providing regular recognition to employees and creating a career path within the organization.

Alshammari (2015) conducted a comprehensive review of existing research studies on Employee Engagement across multiple types of organizations, specifically focusing on workforce dynamics. Through an assessment of foundational engagement theories and measurement frameworks, Alshammari (2015) analyzed overall engagement levels among employees. The findings show that higher levels of engagement result in a deeper level of emotional commitment to one's job, which results in better service quality and ultimately higher customer satisfaction. Overall, Alshammari (2015) provided several practical suggestions for organizations seeking ways to enhance key workplace factors and help to sustain employee engagement.

2.7.2 Employee Engagement in State-Owned Enterprises

Employee engagement in state-owned enterprises (SOEs) is being scrutinized increasingly closely from leadership as they become aware of the significant relationship it will have to enterprise performance and public service provision. While SOEs operate similarly to private companies in terms of their operational objectives, they differ greatly from private companies due to operating in rigid bureaucratic systems, having access to limited resources and continually adapting to changes in government policy. As such, all three of these elements will significantly affect the way employees view their role and the amount of effort they put into their work (World Bank, 2014; OECD, 2015). If left unmanaged then all three of these can create low levels of motivation among employees, lower job satisfaction and decrease engagement among employees. Research has shown that higher levels of employee engagement in SOEs have been correlated to improvements in employee performance, employee commitment and service quality (Albrecht et al., 2015; Saks, 2006). Therefore, increasing engagement is one of the most important priorities for improving the efficiency and competitiveness of public sector organizations.

Global research supports the business case for encouraging employee engagement in public sector enterprises. For example, Ohemeng et al. (2020) conducted a quantitative survey and regression analysis to investigate how employee engagement affects individual task performance in Ghana's power sector. Their research showed that higher levels of employee engagement positively affect employees' ability to complete individual tasks effectively. This demonstrates that SOEs must be proactive in developing ways to motivate their employees in order to achieve long-term strategy goals. Aman (2019) completed a qualitative survey to examine the effects of employee engagement and a flexible adhocracy type organization on innovative capabilities of 178 respondents who worked in SOEs in Indonesia. The results showed that a flexible adhocracy type organization does help facilitate creativity however employee engagement is the main factor determining whether or not an employee is able to generate new ideas. Saputra et al. (2022) analyzed how employee engagement changed during the Covid-19 pandemic using PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling) and a sample size of 360 employees. They supported the 5 C model based on four core component areas including conciliation, cultivation, confidence and communication. Overall, there research demonstrated that maintaining the base level of engagement pillar components protected and enhanced employee performance despite extremely stressful environmental factors.

In addition to the previously mentioned research Basyir, Anwar & Armia (2017) examined the factors affecting Job Involvement at PT. Jasa Raharja utilizing all 98 employees. Structured questionnaires were utilized for data collection purposes and SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) was employed for analysis. Results show that while organizational identity, professionalism and training affect job involvement, perceived organizational support and motivation do not. However, although both sets of variables affected job involvement differently than each other, results indicated that each variable had strong linear correlations with each other. Ileen et al. (2024) reviewed literature relating to both theoretical and empirical literature and found a positive relationship between employee engagement and overall performance in SOEs. Notably also, an evident trend existed where employees remained moderately engaged throughout their organizations. Based on this gap various critical intervention areas were established. These included basic structural practices such as leadership, performance management and open communication as well as developmental and personal factors such as training, work life balance and organizational branding. Additionally, the study highlighted the significance of ensuring employees experience meaningfulness, safety and availability in their jobs according to Kahn's psychological pillars.

Overall, research indicates that EE has a positive effect on organizational performance, task performance and innovative capacity in SOEs. Furthermore, EE levels tend to exist at moderate levels however are typically suboptimal thus requiring improvement. Variables that positively affect EE include leadership, communication, training and development and work environment. Further evidence exists that EE can be shaped by organizational culture and internal practices that determine employee participation/commitment. Strategies can be implemented to improve EE therefore creating opportunities to enhance overall organizational performance/efficiency/productivity.

2.7.3 Studies in the Aviation Industry

The African Airlines Association Open Skies policy, aligned with the Yamoussoukro Decision, seeks to liberalise air transport across Africa by promoting competition, improving market access, and enhancing connectivity among African states. The framework is intends to stimulate growth in the aviation sector, reduce operational restrictions and encourage efficiency among airlines (AFRAA, 2020; ICAO, 2019). While market liberalization opens doors for

regional integration and expansion, at the same time it forces SOEs into the competition with highly efficient, well-funded regional and international carriers (Button, 2017). The competition leads to improvements in internal management practices, particularly in human resource management where EE becomes a critical factor in enhancing productivity, service quality and organisational performance. Myo (2025), assessed the influence of motivational factors on performance at Myanmar Airways International. Data from 150 employees was collected through questionnaires. The results from Descriptive statistics and Pearsons correlation analysis showed that leadership support and clear goals had a stronger impact on employee performance than extrinsic factors such as salary and monetary rewards.

A study by Alola et al. (2020) applied Social Exchange Theory to investigate the impact of HR practices on organizational success within private airlines in Jordan. Using a sample of 277 employees, the research utilized SEM. The results indicate a direct line between effective recruitment, selection, and training and enhanced organizational performance. The data showed that EE acts as a key bridge that helps explain the relationship between HR inputs and company outcomes. Siddiqui & Srivastava (2025) conducted a study to examine how motivation drivers influence employee satisfaction, turnover and company outcomes in Jet Airways and Indigo Airlines. The study assessed key motivation factors such as empowerment of workers, training and development, and organisational image. Findings reveal that Indigo Airlines demonstrated stronger implementation of empowerment and training initiatives compared to Jet Airways. Both airlines showed similar perceptions regarding organisational image. The study concluded that effective EE in the aviation sector requires a comprehensive approach that integrates empowerment, continuous training and a strong organisational image to enhance employee motivation and performance.

2.8 Research Gap

Although there has been an increasing number of studies examining the relationships between employee engagement, productivity, and other related concepts, researchers have identified some significant gaps. More importantly, these gaps are most pronounced when evaluating employee engagement and productivity among employees at state-owned airlines in developing countries. The existing body of knowledge related to employee engagement and productivity was largely developed using data collected from private sector companies. Therefore, due to differences in their operational structures, resources available, and potential performance-based incentives, the findings from previous studies cannot be directly applied to

state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in developing countries. Bureaucratic systems, limited funding, and policy-driven decision-making are common features found in many public sector organizations including Air Zimbabwe. Such aspects may affect how employee engagement develops in the public sector versus the private sector. Many government-owned airlines across the continent experience structural issues similar to those experienced by Air Zimbabwe, including losing skilled workers through brain drain; having limited opportunities for employee training; and facing intense competition from rival airlines. This further emphasizes the need for research focused on the specific operational and socio-economic conditions present in African nations. An additional complicating factor contributing to this issue is the continued contentious debate about whether or not the best way for government-owned airlines to achieve successful turnarounds and restructuring involves privatization. On one side of this debate, proponents argue that privatizing government-owned airlines will provide much-needed capital to allow for increased efficiency and improved competitiveness. On the opposite side of the debate, critics assert that the high level of uncertainty created by privatization along with the broad range of organizational changes will create significant job insecurity among airline employees leading to low morale and high levels of disengagement.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

In terms of the content covered in Sections I-VI, it is proposed that this study will propose an Integrated Conceptual Framework of ten (10) key Institutional Dimensions that are critical for the success of the organization. These dimensions include; Leadership Style, Rewards and Compensation, Training and Development, Communication, Work Environment, Career Progression, Employee Empowerment, Recruitment, Fairness, and Performance Management. As part of this Model, Employee Engagement (EE), acts as the primary Mediator Bridge that influences performance within the Air Zimbabwe Organization. Therefore, with regards to this Model's premise, by strategically optimizing each of the workplace factors listed within the Model, higher Engagement Levels should be achieved which would ultimately result in increased Individual Output and therefore enhanced Airline Performance. Thus, the Proposed Model provides a structured approach necessary for developing a Practical and Context-Specific Roadmap for Organizational Turnaround.

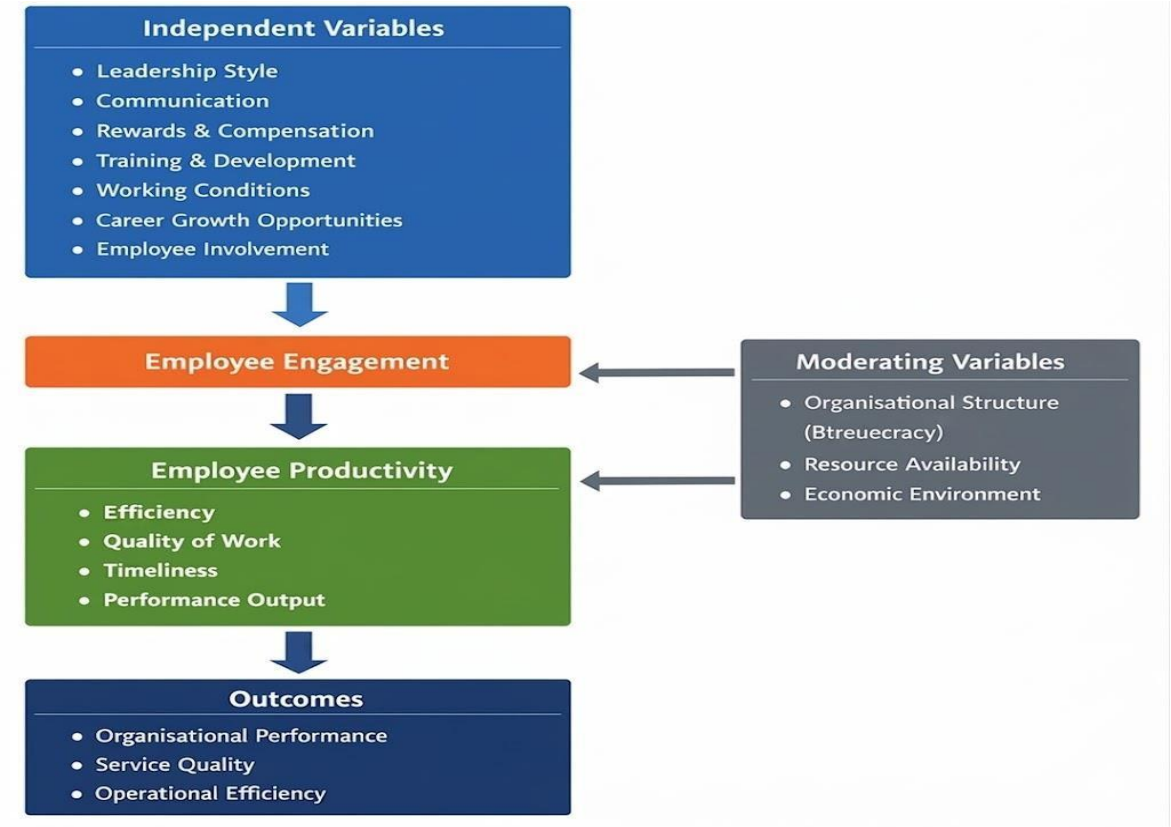


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework

(source, author´s own conception based on literature)

2.10 Chapter summary

The chapter reviewed the literature relevant to employee engagement and productivity at Air Zimbabwe. It first examined the concepts of employee engagement and employee productivity and considered the relationship between the two variables. It then reviewed the theoretical perspectives underpinning the study, namely the Job Demands-Resources model, Social Exchange Theory, Personal Resources Model, and Operant Conditioning Theory. The chapter further examined the level of employee engagement and the factors that influence engagement, including leadership, rewards and compensation, training and development, communication, work environment, recruitment, equal opportunities, and performance management. The main constraints to engagement, including bureaucracy, poor management practices, resource constraints, and job insecurity, were also reviewed. Empirical studies from global contexts, state-owned enterprises, and the aviation industry were reviewed to establish existing evidence on employee engagement and productivity. The review provided a basis for identifying gaps

in the existing literature, particularly the need for context-specific evidence on employee engagement and productivity within Air Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter focuses on the methodological aspects of the research and describes the research design. Air Zimbabwe is selected as the study area. The sampling procedure adopted is explained, this includes sample size calculation and sampling strategy. Description on data collection methods is done. The analytical framework that best suits the research objectives stated in Chapter 1 is presented.

3.2 Study Type and Justification

The research utilised a mixed method approach within a case study design, with Air Zimbabwe serving as the case study organisation. Mixed methods involve the utilisation of both quantitative and qualitative data to enhance the validity and depth analysis. By combining quantitative analysis with context analysis, mixed methods make it possible to understand complicated situations that cannot be understood with just one method (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). This means that one will be able to fully understand how engaged employees are and how that affects productivity. Qualitative methods helps the researcher look more closely at how employees feel about their jobs and how the organisation works. The case study methodology is suitable for this research as it facilitates a comprehensive examination of the organisation in its authentic context. This is particularly important because Air Zimbabwe is a SOEe with its own rules and ways of doing things.

3.3 Target Population

The target population for the research encompasses all employees for Air Zimbabwe, this includes management, supervisory personnel and general staff from diverse departments. The research takes into account employees stationed at other operational sites, i.e. Harare, Victoria Falls, Bulawayo and Mutare. In order to obtain a better picture of how employees feel about the company's operational structure, data from these outstations will be collected. The target population consists of Air Zimbabwe employees from several departments, that includes engineering (85), sales and marketing (27), ground operations (9), internal audit (5), procurement (5), human resources (19), flight operations (36), finance (27), public relations (5), corporate quality, safety and security (34) and legal (2) giving a total population of 254.

These figures incorporates workers at the company's main office and in outstations, making sure that all parts of the company's operations are represented. Five employees are stationed in Victoria falls whilst four are in Bulawayo. Mutare only has one employee and the rest of the employees work in Harare. To get a full picture of engagement and productivity among employees in the company, it is important to include workers from different groups.

3.4 Sample Selection

To make sure that employees from different departments at Air Zimbabwe are fairly represented and bias reduction, the study utilised stratified random sampling method. Stratified sampling allows the sample to have representatives from different departments, lowers the chance of error, makes the results more accurate and enables comparison among different groups. This makes sure all parts of the population are fairly represented, which allows the results to be more accurate and reliable (Cochran, 1977; Kish, 1965). As mentioned above, the population was split into different strata based on departments (for example, Flight Operations, HR, and Finance etc.). Respondents were randomly (each respondent has the same opportunity to be selected) chosen from each stratum to take part in the survey. For the qualitative part, purposive sampling was used to select key informants, like managers who know a lot about employee engagement and company policies.

3.5 Size of Sample Determination

The sample size was determined using the Yamane (1967) formula to ensure a fair statistical representativeness of the population. Yamane's formula, developed by Taro Yamane (1967), is advantageous due to its simplicity, accuracy, and ability to determine a representative sample size while minimising sampling error, thereby enhancing the reliability and generalisability of research findings (Uma Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The formula is as depicted below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where: n= Sample size

N= Total population size

e= Margin of error

Based on the total number of employees at Air Zimbabwe, a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5% was applied. Based on the figures in section 3.2 (target population), the total number of employees at Air Zimbabwe is 254. Fourteen managers were removed from this number for the purpose of using some of them as key informants. From the remaining 240, the sample to be used for questionnaire interviews was obtained.

Sample calculation: $\frac{240}{1+240(0.05)^2}=150$

Therefore, from the calculation above 150 employees were interviewed. A proportional sample was drawn from each group within the total sample of 150 respondents. This ensures that each department is fairly represented according to its size. The formula below was be used.

$sample\ for\ department = \frac{department\ size}{total\ population} x150.$ However, from the collected 150 respondents not all were used for data analysis. Only 135 were used, 15 questionnaires were removed due to some critical information missing and others being ineligible.

To ensure adequate coverage of shift workers, data was collected within a period of one week. The study adopted a flexible and structured approach. Questionnaires were be distributed across different shifts (morning and night) to ensure all employees have an opportunity to participate (only drivers and security work in shifts). Coordination with supervisors assisted in identifying shift schedules and appropriate times for distribution.

3.6 Measurement of productivity

This study used perceptual (self-reported) indicators from a structured questionnaire to measure employee productivity. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure important aspects of productivity, such as how well tasks are completed, how well they are done, how well they meet deadlines, how accurate they are, how well they manage their workload, how well they show up on time and how well they respond to their duties. These indicators show how well and how efficiently employees are doing their jobs. The study recognises that the primary source of data on EE and productivity are the employees themselves, as the measures are based on self-reported perceptions captured through the questionnaire. However, self-assessments may differ from managerial evaluations due to subjective bias or differences in perspective.

3.7 Data Collection Methods and Justification

The research utilized both primary data collection methods. Structured questionnaires were utilised to gather primary data from employees. The questionnaires included closed ended questions assessed on a Likert scale to measure employee engagement levels, factors influencing engagement and perceived productivity. This method works well because it makes it easy to get useful data from a large number of people. Some managers were chosen to take part in semi structured interviews. These interviews will help us learn more about the rules, styles of leadership and problems that are making employees less engaged and productive. Researchers can ask follow up questions and get to the bottom of what people say during interviews because they are flexible. This approach to questioning adds depth, richness, and essential context to qualitative insights, ultimately elevating overall data quality and streamlining the analysis process (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Rubin, 2012). Furthermore, because this study recognizes that official organizational records within a SOEs can occasionally be outdated or unavailable, the research relies primarily on primary data gathered via questionnaires. To build a more complete picture, these survey is supplemented with strategic insights from management where possible. Using triangulation to validate findings across these distinct sources, the study actively mitigates data limitations, ensuring that any institutional constraints are transparently acknowledged without compromising the research's credibility.

3.8 Coding of Data

Once gathered, the quantitative data from the questionnaires was coded and logged into SPSS for statistical processing, with Likert-scale responses assigned numerical values to facilitate smooth analysis. Qualitative insights from interviews were transcribed and coded to uncover recurring themes and patterns tied to EE and productivity. This dual coding approach enables a systematic analysis, allowing for a seamless integration of qualitative depth with quantitative rigor.

3.9 Processing of Data

After data collection, the data was checked to verify it completeness, consistency and correctness. Questionnaires with missing or inconsistent answers were left out from the analysis. SPSS and Excel were used to enter, clean and organise quantitative data into table for analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used for analysis. Interviews were

transcribed word for word, organised, and put into groups based on themes. This process make it possible to make sense of and combine results from both quantitative and qualitative sources. The study incorporates measures tailored to the organisational context to minimise data loss or misrepresentation. Questionnaires were coded by department and station, e.g., Harare and outstations to preserve context during analysis. In addition, careful cross checking was done during data entry to avoid errors, and responses were reviewed in relation to operational roles to maintain accuracy.

3.10 Analytical Frameork

Objective 1

To assess the level of EE at Air Zimbabwe, the study employed descriptive statistical analysis. Employee engagement was treated as the main variable, measured using Likert-scale, items capturing dimensions such as commitment, motivation, and involvement were undertaken. The collected data was analysed using measures such as means, frequencies, and percentages to determine the overall level of engagement among employees. The study employed descriptive statistical analysis because the objective was to establish the overall level of employee engagement among employees at Air Zimbabwe. Likert-scale items measuring dimensions such as commitment, motivation, and involvement were summarised using frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. These measures were appropriate for showing the distribution of responses and determining whether the overall level of engagement could be considered low, moderate, or high.

Objective 2

To identify the key factors influencing EE within the organisation, the study used the binary logistics regression. Employee engagement was used as the dependent variable, while independent variables include factors such as leadership, training and development, rewards, and communication. Coefficients will be computed to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between each factor and EE. This method allows the researcher to determine which factors are most strongly associated with engagement, thereby identifying the key drivers within the organisation. Binary logistic regression was employed because the study measured employee engagement as a binary outcome, with respondents classified according to their engagement status. The analysis allowed the study to assess how factors such as leadership, training and development, rewards, communication, and other employee characteristics were

associated with the likelihood of being satisfied with current engagement levels. The regression coefficients and odds ratios provided an indication of the direction and magnitude of these associations, making the method suitable for identifying factors that significantly influence the likelihood of higher engagement satisfaction.

Objective 3

The study utilized frequency analysis and fundamental descriptive statistics to investigate the factors contributing to low employee engagement. The variables in this objective encompass identified constraints including inadequate remuneration, substandard working conditions, bureaucratic procedures and external interference. Mean scores were used to determine the most pressing constraints as they were ranked on a Linkert scale. Where there are open ended answers thematic grouping were used to put similar answers into key constraint areas. Frequency analysis and descriptive statistics were used because the objective was to establish the extent to which employees experienced different constraints to engagement. Variables such as inadequate remuneration, working conditions, bureaucratic procedures, and external interference were measured using Likert-scale items. Mean scores, frequencies, and percentages enabled the researcher to compare the responses and identify the constraints that employees considered most significant. Responses to open-ended questions were analysed thematically to group similar views into broader constraint areas.

Objective 4

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between employee engagement and employee productivity among employees at Air Zimbabwe. Composite scores for both EE and employee productivity were created by combining responses from several related Likert scale variables measured on a five-point scale. The engagement composite score included variables such as supervisory support, communication, recognition, training, and involvement in decision-making, while the productivity composite score included variables related to task completion, efficiency, quality of work, punctuality, and workload management. The composite scores were computed using the mean values of the respective variables in SPSS. Pearson's correlation coefficient was then used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the two composite variables. To assess for reliability, the Cronbach alpha was used. Pearson correlation analysis was used because the objective was to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between employee engagement and productivity.

Composite scores were created from related five-point Likert-scale items measuring the two concepts. The engagement composite score incorporated aspects such as supervisory support, communication, recognition, training, and involvement in decision-making, while the productivity composite score captured task completion, efficiency, quality of work, punctuality, and workload management. The mean of the relevant items was used to create each composite score in SPSS. Pearson's correlation coefficient was then used to determine whether higher engagement scores were associated with higher productivity scores. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the items contributing to the composite measures.

Objective 5

The study utilised a conceptual and consolidative analysis approach to come up with a framework that aims to improve employee engagement and productivity. This objective will not require statistical testing; however, it combines results from previous objectives. To come up with a useful framework, the main variables employee engagement, productivity, influencing factors and constraints will be put together. The framework will show how improving key factors and addressing constraints can boost engagement, which will then boost productivity in the organisation.

3.11 Validity and Reliability

Ensuring validity and reliability is key for the study's credibility. To improve content validity, the questionnaire relates to well-known research on employee engagement and productivity. Important concepts such as leadership, communication, rewards and working conditions are carefully defined in a way that fits with the study objectives. Furthermore, the research instrument went through evaluation by academic supervisors and experts in human resource management to guarantee comprehensive coverage of all important aspects. These validation activities were accommodated within the study timeline, and since leadership within the Human Resources function will assist in the review process, no additional financial costs are expected to be incurred. In order to make sure the appropriateness of the questionnaire is valid, the study's conceptual framework was used. More than one indicator was used to measure each variable so that we can see all of its different sides. This reduces the chances of making mistakes in measurements and makes the results more accurate. A pilot survey was conducted.

Using more than one way to collect data i.e., questionnaires and interviews helps to triangulate, making the results more valid and reliable.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the relevant authorities within the organisation. Participation was voluntary and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study before taking part. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they understand their rights, including the right to withdraw at any stage without any negative consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity was maintained by not collecting personally identifiable information. From the results data as reported in aggregate form making it not possible to identify individuals. During data entry, thorough consistency checks were performed to safeguard data integrity. Whenever discrepancies were identified, the affected entries were reviewed and, where necessary, unreliable responses were excluded from the final dataset. This rigorous approach ensures that the study's findings do not rely on the assumed accuracy of raw responses, but are actively validated to reflect a highly reliable representation of reality.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to investigate EE and productivity at Air Zimbabwe. To gain a full understanding of the issue, the study adopted a mixed-methods approach within a case study design, allowing for integration of quantitative data and qualitative insights. The research was cross-sectional. It gathered data from a diverse target population across several departments. To guarantee proportional representation, a stratified random sampling procedure was used for the general workforce, while purposive sampling was deliberately chosen to select key informants for deeper inquiry. Data integrity was maintained through structured survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, with quantitative data analyzed via descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, and qualitative data structured into thematic clusters.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the findings of the study on employee engagement and productivity at Air Zimbabwe. The analysis is guided by the study objectives, which focused on assessing the level of employee engagement, identifying the factors influencing employee engagement, examining the constraints affecting engagement, and determining the relationship between employee engagement and productivity. Quantitative data collected through the structured questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics, binary logistic regression, and Pearson correlation analysis. Where applicable, qualitative responses were also analysed thematically to provide further explanation of the quantitative findings. The results are presented using tables and appropriate statistical measures and are subsequently interpreted in relation to the study objectives.

4.2 Objective 1: To assess the level of employee engagement at Air Zimbabwe.

To evaluate the perceived levels of EE within the organization, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted for the eight individual drivers of engagement. All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Measurements ranged from 1 to 5 i.e., strongly disagree to strongly agree respectively. The variables are analyzed sequentially below in the order of their appearance in the dataset.

Table 4. 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Min	**Max**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
My supervisor provides adequate support in my work.	1	5	4.07	1.045
Communication within my department is clear and effective.	1	5	3.80	1.057
I receive recognition for good performance.	1	5	3.38	1.501
I am satisfied with the training and development opportunities available.	1	5	3.36	1.278
I have opportunities for career growth within the organisation.	1	5	3.54	1.131
My work environment enables me to perform effectively.	1	5	3.51	1.184
I am involved in decisions that affect my work.	1	5	3.01	1.374
I feel motivated to go beyond what is expected in my job.	1	5	3.38	1.298

Descriptive Summary of Employee Engagement Drivers

The respondents generally agreed that supervisors provide adequate support. This is evident from the mean score of 4.07 and standard deviation of 1.045. This shows that the responses were consistent across the employees. In support of this one respondent said, “My supervisor is supportive and understands the challenges we face during operations.” Communication within the departments was rated positively (mean 3.80, SD 1.057) indicating that employees generally experience clear and effective communication. Recognition for good performance scored a moderate mean of 3.38 with the highest standard deviation of 1.501 indicating that employee experiences with recognition vary widely across the organisation. An employee noted that, “employees work hard but sometimes performance goes unnoticed, which reduces morale.” Respondents were somewhat satisfied with training opportunities (Mean=3.36, SD=1.278) thus showing different experiences among employees. Employees showed moderate confidence in career growth opportunities with mean score of 3.54 (SD=1.131). The work environment was evaluated rather positively with a mean of 3.51 and a SD of 1.184. Some employees however, reported less favorable conditions. This variable had the lowest mean of 3.01 and a high SD of 1.374. This indicates that many employees feel excluded from the decision making processes, in support of this result one employee said, “most decisions are made without consulting employees, even on decisions that directly affect our work.” The employees also indicated moderate willingness to go beyond the call of duty with a mean of 3.38 (SD=1.298) indicating that there was variation in the motivation levels of the employees.

Table 4. 2: Engagement level by department

Department	**Employee Engagement Score**	**Respondents**
Audit	3.69	2
Corporate Quality & Security	4.02	18
Engineering	3.38	48
Finance	2.83	16
Flight Operations	3.66	16
Ground Operations	3.97	4
Human resources	3.68	11
Legal	3.88	1
Marketing	3.62	15
Public Relation	2.07	2
Procurement	4.50	2
Grand Total	**3.51**	**135**

The employee engagement score was derived using composite scores created from multiple Likert scale variables measuring different dimensions of employee engagement. Respondents rated statements related to supervisory support, communication, recognition, training and development, career growth opportunities, involvement in decision-making, work environment, and motivation on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The scores for these variables were then combined using the mean function in SPSS to generate a single EE composite score for each respondent. Higher composite scores represented higher levels of EE within the organisation. The results show variation in EE across departments. Procurement recorded the highest engagement score of 4.50, while PR had the lowest score 2.07. The organisation's overall mean engagement score was 3.51, indicating moderate engagement across departments.

Table 4. 3: Mean employee engagement score by education level

Education level	**Employee engagement score**	**Respondents**
O level	3.72	27
certificate	3.71	26
diploma	3.47	29
degree	3.32	53
Grand Total	**3.50**	**135**

Employees with O-Level and certificate qualifications recorded higher engagement scores than degree holders. Degree holders had the lowest engagement score (3.32), suggesting that employees with higher educational qualifications may be less satisfied with current engagement practices.

Table 4. 4: Mean employee engagement score by years of service at air Zimbabwe

Years of service	**Employee engagement score**	**Respondents**
1-5	3.65	56
6-10	2.77	11
11-15	3.73	8
16-20	3.18	18
21-25	3.51	25
26-30	3.93	4
31-35	3.86	10
36-40	3.17	3
Grand Total	**3.51**	**135**

Employees with 26–30 years of service recorded the highest engagement score of 3.94, whereas those with 6–10 years recorded the lowest 2.77. Overall, engagement levels varied across service periods within the organisation.

Table 4. 5: Mean employee engagement score by age group

Age	**Employee engagement score**	**Respondents**
19-28	3.87	33
29-38	2.87	32
39-48	3.58	33
49-58	3.59	28
59 and above	3.93	9
Grand Total	**3.51**	**135**

Employees aged 59 years had a score of 3.93 which as the highest engagement score, whereas those aged 29–38 years recorded the lowest (2.87). Results suggest that employee engagement varies across age groups within Air Zimbabwe.

Table 4. 6: Formal training and employee engagement

		Satisfaction with current level of engagement		**Total**
		No	yes	
Have you received any formal training in the past 12 months	no	20	10	30
	yes	31	74	105
Total		51	84	135

Table 4. 7: Motivation through Benefits and Employee Engagement

		Satisfaction with current level of engagement		**Total**
		No	yes	
Do they motivate you to perform better	no	29	16	45
	yes	22	68	90
Total		51	84	135

Formal training and employee engagement

The results show that employees receiving formal training in the last 12 months are satisfied with their level of engagement. Out of the 105 employees who were trained 74 said they were satisfied with their engagement levels. By contrast just 10 out of the 30 untrained employees said they were satisfied. This indicates that training opportunities may have a positive influence on EE.

Motivation through Benefits and Employee Engagement

Research outcomes indicate that employees who were motivated by organisational benefits were generally more satisfied with their level of engagement. Among the 90 employees who said benefits motivate them to perform better 68 said they were satisfied with engagement. However, only 16 of the 45 employees who did not feel motivated by benefits were satisfied. This therefore, implies that benefits and incentives may have a big role to play in improving employee engagement.

4.3 Objective 2: To identify the key factors influencing employee engagement within the organization.

Table 4. 8: Satisfied with your current level of engagement

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	51	37.8	37.8
	yes	84	62.2	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	

The dependent variable used was satisfaction with current engagement levels. As depicted in the above table 84 responents (62.2%) were satisfied with the current engagement whilst 51 respondents (37.8%) were not satisfied.

Table 4. 9: Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Nagelkerke R Square
	99.698	0.605

Model Summary

The model summary table shows the overall performance of the binomial logistic regression model used to determine factors influencing employee satisfaction with current engagement levels at Air Zimbabwe. The model produced a -2 Log Likelihood value of 99.698, indicating the degree to which the model fits the observed data, with lower values representing better model fit. The Nagelkerke R Square value of 0.605 indicates that 60.5% of the variability in

employee satisfaction. This suggests that the variables included in the model have strong explanatory power in predicting employee satisfaction with engagement levels at Air Zimbabwe. The estimation process successfully converged after six iterations, showing that the model was stable and statistically reliable.

Table 4. 10: Significant variables

Variable	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Years of service	-0.114	0.050	0.892
Level of education	-1.128	0.000	0.324
Number of trainings	0.547	0.002	1.728
Wellness programs	3.683	0.017	39.754
Number of wellness programs	0.824	0.003	2.280
Number of benefits	2.014	0.000	7.493
Constant	-5.453	0.006	0.004

The binomial regression model results are presented below. The study showed that years of service had a significant impact on employees' satisfaction with current levels of engagement at Air Zimbabwe (B= -0.114, p=0.050). The negative coefficient and odds ratio of 0.892 indicate that the longer the years of service the less likely the employee was to be satisfied with current levels of engagement. Specifically, an increase in years of service reduced the probability of employee satisfaction by 10.8%. This finding suggests that the employees who have served longer in the organisation may be less satisfied with the current engagement practices than the new entrants. Similarly, Saks (2006), found that long term exposure to negative organisational conditions can lead to a decrease in employee engagement and satisfaction over time.

Employee satisfaction with engagement levels was significantly predicted by education (B=-1.128, $p<0.001$). The odds ratio of 0.324 means employees with higher levels of education were less likely to be satisfied with current engagement practices. In particular the odds of being satisfied declined by approximately 67.6% at each step up in education level. This may imply that employees with higher education levels have higher expectations for organizational engagement initiatives. This is supported by the research of Kahn (1990), who found that employees look for meaningfulness, growth opportunities and psychological fulfilment at work which is often more strongly expected by highly educated employees.

The number of training opportunities that employees attended had a positive effect on satisfaction with engagement levels (B= 0.547, p = 0.002). An odds ratio of 1.728 means that employees who have attended more training program were 72.8% likely to be satisfied with current engagement levels. This implies that the training opportunities plays a positive role towards employee satisfaction on engagement within Air Zimbabwe. Similar results were reported by Bakker & Demerouti (2008), who identified training and development as important job resources that improve motivation, engagement and employee wellbeing.

Participation in wellness programs significantly influenced employee satisfaction with engagement levels (B = 3.683, p = 0.017). The odds ratio of 39.754 indicates that employees participating in wellness programs were substantially more likely to be satisfied with engagement levels compared to employees who did not participate. A recurring theme among the employees was that, "wellness activities make employees feel valued and cared for by the organisation". This demonstrates the major role of wellness initiatives in improving employee engagement within the organisation. This finding is consistent with research by Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes (2002), who found that employee well-being and supportive workplace practices positively influence engagement.

The number of wellness initiatives attended by employees significantly influenced employee satisfaction with engagement levels (B = 0.824, p = 0.003). The odds ratio of 2.280 indicates that employees exposed to more wellness activities were approximately 128% more likely to be satisfied with engagement levels. This finding further supports the importance of wellness-related programs in enhancing employee engagement and satisfaction. Similar findings were highlighted by Saks (2006). , who argued that organisational support initiatives strengthen employees' emotional attachment and engagement within the workplace.

The benefits list variable significantly influenced employee satisfaction with engagement levels (B = 2.014, p < 0.001). The odds ratio of 7.493 indicates that employees who reported access to more benefits were approximately 7.5 times likely to be satisfied with current engagement levels. This suggests that the availability and variety of employee benefits strongly contribute to employee satisfaction and engagement at Air Zimbabwe. This finding is supported by Abraham Maslow's motivation theory, which emphasises that the fulfilment of employee needs through rewards and benefits contributes positively to motivation and workplace satisfaction (Maslow, 1943).

4.4 Objective 3: To establish other constraints worsening employee non engagement.

Table 4. 11: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Poor leadership practices reduce my motivation at work.	135	1	5	3.79	1.282
Lack of incentives reduces my motivation at work.	135	1	5	3.78	1.274
Limited career advancement opportunities affect my commitment.	135	1	5	3.68	1.097
Poor communication reduces my engagement at work.	135	1	5	3.99	1.175
Resource constraints limit my ability to perform well.	135	1	5	3.88	1.344
Job insecurity affects my level of engagement.	135	1	5	3.90	1.275

Descriptive Summary of Constraints Affecting Employee Engagement

The results indicated that employees agreed that poor leadership practices reduce motivation at the workplace with a mean of 3.79 and a SD of 1.282 indicating moderate variation in responses. Similarly, recent studies have shown that the leadership behavior has a significant impact on employee engagement and motivation. For example, research by Greta Mazzetti and Wilmar B. Schaufeli found that engaging leadership positively affects employee engagement and team effectiveness (Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022). The statement that lack of incentives reduces motivation recorded a mean of 3.78 and a SD of 1.274, showing that many employees view incentives as important for engagement. This is supported by recent findings that effective human capital management practices, including rewards and incentives, positively influence employee engagement and performance (Leontes & Hoole, 2024). Employees moderately agreed that limited career growth opportunities affect their commitment, as shown by a mean score of 3.68 and a SD of 1.097. Recent HRM studies have shown that employees are more likely to remain committed and engaged when organisations provide development and career advancement opportunities (Ali, Li, & Qiu, 2024). Poor communication recorded a high mean of 3.99 with a SD of 1.175, suggesting that communication challenges strongly affect employee engagement. One employee noted, “important information is sometimes delayed or not communicated clearly making work

difficult." Recent research has shown that transparent leadership communication and effective communication channels significantly improve trust and employee engagement within organisations (Qin, 2024). Respondents agreed that resource limitations affect their ability to perform effectively, with a mean of 3.88 and a SD of 1.344, indicating some differences in experiences across employees. In relation to resource availability, an employee noted that, "At times we fail to perform our duties effectively because some equipment's are not available." Contemporary studies on employee engagement have shown that organisational resources and supportive work environments are essential for maintaining employee performance and engagement (Leontes & Hoole, 2024). Employees generally agreed that job insecurity affects their engagement levels, reflected by a mean of 3.90 and a SD of 1.275. A key theme recurring amongst employee's response was, "uncertainty about the future of the organisation affects employee motivation." Recent research by Isaac Okyere and colleagues found that job insecurity contributes to employee disengagement and reduced workplace commitment (Okyere et al., 2024).

4.5 Objective 4: To examine the relationship between employee engagement and productivity in the airline given the other constraints such as non-business objectives imposed by the state shareholder.

Table 4. 12: Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha	N of variables
0.772	2

Reliability Analysis

A reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to assess the internal consistency of the variables used on this objective. The results showed a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.772 for the two variables included in the scale. This value indicates acceptable internal consistency, suggesting that the items reliably measured the underlying construct and were therefore suitable for further statistical analysis. According to Hair et al. (2019), a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.70 is generally considered acceptable for exploratory and social science research, suggesting that the variables reliably measure the same underlying construct.

Table 4. 13: Correlation Analysis

		Employee Engagement	**Employee productivity**
Employee Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	0.705**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	135	135
Employee productivity	Pearson Correlation	0.705**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	135	135

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between employee engagement and employee productivity among employees at Air Zimbabwe. The results revealed a strong positive relationship between engagement composite scores and productivity scores ($r = 0.705$, $p < 0.001$, $N = 135$). The correlation was statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), indicating that the relationship observed was unlikely to have occurred by chance. The indicate that high levels engagement are associated with higher levels of employee productivity. Therefore, improving employee engagement is likely to contribute positively to productivity within the organisation. Similar findings have been reported in recent studies which found that engaged employees demonstrate high levels of commitment, efficiency, performance, and organisational effectiveness. For instance, Schaufeli (2021), highlighted that engagement enhances employee energy, dedication, and performance outcomes. Likewise, Mazzetti & Schaufeli (2022), found that higher engagement significantly improves team effectiveness and work performance. Recent research by Leontes & Hoole (2024) also confirmed that EE positively mediates the relationship between organisational practices and performance outcomes.

4.6 Objective 5: To develop a framework for enhancing employee engagement and productivity in the organization

The formulation of this framework is directly informed by the statistical findings from the preceding four objectives, which established the baseline drivers of engagement, key predictive determinants of employee satisfaction, critical operational constraints, and the significant positive correlation between engagement and organizational productivity.

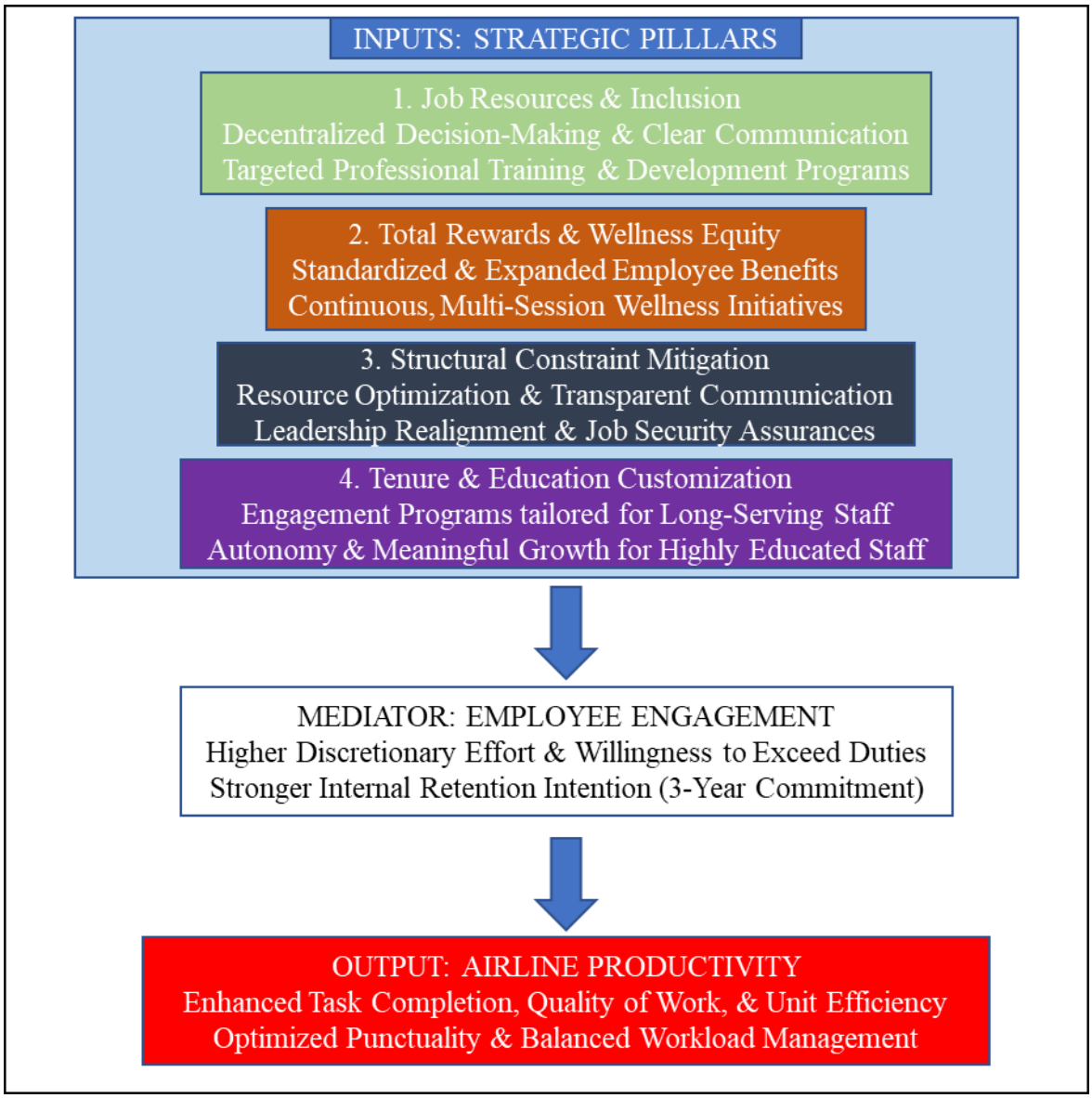


Figure 4.1: Framework for enhancing employee engagement and productivity in the organisation

Empirical Justification and Pillars of the Framework

Pillar 1: Strategic Job Resources and Employee Inclusion

This pillar is about transforming the everyday workday experience. Descriptive data indicated that involvement in decision making had the lowest mean (Mean= 3.01, SD=1.374), which means that there is a major gap in employee inclusion. Moreover, cross tabulation and logistic regression indicated that formal training is a strong driver. Employees who attended multiple training were more likely to report satisfaction for their engagement.

Pillar 2: Total Rewards and Wellness events

The binomial logistic regression identified that wellness events and benefits are the strongest statistical predictors of engagement satisfaction within the airline. Offering a broader range of employee benefits increased satisfaction by an incredible 7.5 times.

Pillar 3: Structural Constraint Mitigation

The framework contains a defensive layer that actively mitigates the operational bottlenecks that hold back employee commitment. Objective 3 identified poor communication, job insecurity and resource constraints as the most negative systemic barriers to workplace motivation.

Pillar 4: Targeted Tenure and Education Customised

The logistic regression identified key demographic variables that require specialised attention in contrast to the traditional "one size fits all" HR strategies. In particular, both years of service and level of education had negative coefficients. The higher the level of education the less likely they are to be satisfied

The Engagement-Productivity Pathway (The Bottom-Line Output)

The ultimate objective of this framework is to leverage engagement as an explicit tool for operational turnaround. The validity of this pathway is firmly established by the Pearson correlation analysis, which observed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between the employee engagement composite score and the overall employee productivity score .When the four strategic pillars are executed successfully, they directly drive higher employee engagement satisfaction. The cross-tabulation results confirm that this satisfaction translates to immediate behavioral benefits, notably a major increase in an employee's intention to remain with the airline for the next 3 years (with 75 out of 113 intending stayers reporting high engagement). By successfully channelling these heightened states of engagement through our framework, Air Zimbabwe can expect predictable, measurable improvements in its core productivity indicators: task completion rates, overall operational efficiency, quality of service, workplace punctuality, and optimised workload management.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary for research findings, conclusion and recommendation for the study. The conclusion follows the analysis and interpretation of data collected from Air Zimbabwe employees. Recommendations are provided to assist management and policymakers in formulating strategies to strengthen employee engagement and improve productivity. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future research.

5.2 Summary of study findings

Findings from the study shows that several factors influence employee engagement at Air Zimbabwe. Supervisory and effective departmental communication was established as strong drivers towards employee engagement. Employees reported moderate satisfaction with career growth opportunities, training and development, and performance recognition. The binary logistic regression model analysis indicated, attending more training programmes, participating in wellness activities and employee benefits significantly increased the likelihood of satisfaction with engagement levels. In contrast, higher educational attainment and more years of service at the organisation were associated with lower engagement satisfaction.

Several constraints affecting employee engagement were identified. Poor communication was the most significant challenge, followed by job insecurity and unavailability of resources. Employees also reported that poor leadership practices and limited career advancement opportunities reduced motivation and commitment. Involvement in decision-making received the lowest engagement rating, suggesting that many employees feel excluded from decisions that impact their work meaning most of the decisions are determined by a top-down approach. Findings from the study established a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between EE and productivity. Pearson correlation analysis indicated that higher engagement is associated with greater productivity ($r = 0.705$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates the importance of EE as a driver of organisational performance at Air Zimbabwe.

A framework to enhance EE and productivity was developed. The framework emphasises strengthening supervisory support, improving communication systems, expanding training and development, increasing participation in decision-making, strengthening wellness programmes, improving employee benefits and addressing resource constraints and job insecurity. It further suggest that improvements in the identified areas increase engagement

leading to enhanced productivity and contributing to greater organisational effectiveness, competitiveness and sustainability.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concludes that EE at Air Zimbabwe is shaped by both organisational practices and employee characteristics. Supervisory support, effective communication, training and development, wellness programmes and employee benefits positively influence engagement. Employees who receive more training, participate in wellness activities, and access a broader range of benefits report higher engagement satisfaction. The results align with the Job Resources Theory, which states that resources in an organisation promote engagement and motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Poor communication, job insecurity, resource constraints, lack of incentives, poor leadership, and limited career advancement opportunities are major impediments employee engagement. These findings support SET, which indicates that human resources mirrors positive with constructive workplace attitudes and actions, while negative conditions may lead to disengagement (Blau, 1964). Addressing the highlighted constraints is essential for improving EE and organisational commitment. The correlation between EE and employee productivity indicates that employees who are engaged perform better, show commitment and contribute to organisational objectives. This finding aligns with literature, suggesting engaged employees demonstrate higher effort, efficiency, and job performance (Saks, 2006; Schaufeli, 2021). EE is therefore a critical determinant of productivity at Air Zimbabwe.

The study concludes that an integrated approach is necessary to promote EE and productivity at Air Zimbabwe. The proposed framework emphasises strengthening leadership support, improving communication, increasing employee participation in decision-making, expanding training and wellness programmes, improving employee benefits and addressing organisational constraints such as resource shortages and job insecurity. This framework is informed by empirical findings and theoretical perspectives, particularly the Job Resources Theory and Social Exchange Theory, which highlight the importance of organisational resources and supportive environments. Successful implementation of the framework has the potential to improve engagement and increase productivity, contributing to the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of Air Zimbabwe.

5.4 Recommendations

This research reveals that the level of engagement among workers at Air Zimbabwe is influenced by such factors as supervision, communication, training and development, employee wellness initiatives, compensation, career growth prospects and participatory decision-making. However, there are certain barriers to engagement, such as a lack of communication, job insecurity, inadequate resources, low motivation, and limited involvement of employees. This result should not be viewed separately, as these are related organizational dynamics.

5.4.1 Strengthening Leadership and Communication Systems

In the context of communication barriers and good leadership practices, the research finds out that both are important in determining the level of EE. It would be suggested that Air Zimbabwe management, focusing specifically on the Human Resource Department as well as other departmental heads, set up a framework for communication with employees. The process would include monthly staff meetings and communication procedures which will be used across all departments over a period of 6-12 months. Similarly, according to Chong (2007), Singapore Airlines adopted such a strategy in which frequent communication and feedback from employees facilitated high levels of commitment and service among employees. Resistance to the process might come from managers due to their traditional communication approach. In line with the ADKAR model, successful implementation of employee engagement interventions at Air Zimbabwe requires the creation of awareness among both management and employees regarding the need for change. Management training programmes should be used to strengthen leaders' ability to communicate the rationale for change, address employee concerns and encourage participation in organisational initiatives. According to Hiatt (2006), awareness represents the first stage of successful change and forms the foundation upon which employee desire, knowledge, ability and reinforcement are built.

5.4.2 Expanding Training and Development Opportunities

It is clear that training contribute significantly towards improving employee engagement levels. In view of the findings, it would be advisable for the HR department to introduce an annual program aimed at developing the skills of employees in the areas of operations, technology and management. The program must focus on those departments that register lower engagement levels. Training will involve technical skills development, customer care, leadership skills, and

digital transformation competencies. Collaboration with colleges and aviation training schools may be considered to offer tailor-made programs. Implementation is recommended to take place gradually within a three-year period. Possible sources of resistance can be expected due to budgetary issues and work pressure; thus, top management should convince management of the organizational benefits.

5.4.3 Institutionalising Employee Wellness Programmes

It was found that wellness programs play one of the most powerful roles in promoting engagement among employees. In this regard, it is advised that Air Zimbabwe make use of wellness programs, through annual wellness calendars featuring awareness programs for health issues, mental wellness support programs, seminars on financial wellness and Employee Assistance Programs. This would be implemented by the Human Resources Department with the assistance of occupational health specialists. The possible challenge faced would be that these programs appear secondary compared to the other functions within the organisation. Southwest Airlines is widely recognised for its employee-centred culture, which promotes high levels of EE, morale and organisational commitment. The airline's emphasis on employee recognition, participative management, and leadership support and employee development is associated with increased job satisfaction, motivation, loyalty and retention among employees. Research indicates that organisations that invest in EE initiatives experience improved organisational performance and employee commitment (Joseph, 2023). Furthermore, Southwest Airlines' culture of involving employees in organisational decisions and recognising employee contributions has been cited as a key factor behind its sustained employee satisfaction and organisational success.

5.4.4 Enhancing Recognition, Rewards, and Employee Benefits

The results clearly show a significant influence of incentives and employee benefits on employee motivation. Therefore, Air Zimbabwe needs to evaluate its employee recognition and incentive systems in order to ensure that these systems are consistent and fair. Some of the methods that can be used include recognising employee of the month, other non-financial methods of recognition, performance linked incentives and increased employee benefits where possible. All these steps would be taken within one year by the Human Resources and Finance Departments. Due to the fact that there might be a lack of funds for such purposes because of being a public company, first nonfinancial methods should be introduced before incentives are introduced.

5.4.5 Increasing Employee Participation in Decision-Making

Employee involvement in decision making received the lowest engagement rating in this study, indicating that many employees feel excluded from decisions that directly affect their work and working environment. To address this challenge, Air Zimbabwe should establish departmental consultative committees and employee engagement forums where employees can regularly share ideas, provide feedback and participate in discussions on operational and workplace matters. The initiative should initially be implemented in departments that recorded the lowest engagement levels before being expanded organisation-wide.

This recommendation is consistent with the Systems Thinking Approach, which recognises that EE is influenced by interconnected organisational factors such as leadership, communication and participation (Senge, 1990). Increased employee involvement is likely to improve employee ownership, trust and organisational commitment while enhancing the quality of decisions through the incorporation of employee knowledge and experience (Cotton et al., 1988; Kim, 2002). Similar participatory management practices have been successfully implemented in public sector organisations and state-owned enterprises in Asia and Europe, contributing to improved employee morale, commitment and organisational performance (Kim, 2002).

However, resistance may arise from some managers who perceive participatory decision-making as a threat to managerial authority and control. Using the ADKAR model, management should create awareness of the benefits of employee participation and provide training to develop the knowledge and skills required to support the initiative (Hiatt, 2006). The programme should be implemented over a 6-12 month period and monitored through employee engagement surveys, participation rates and productivity indicators.

5.4.6 Addressing Resource Constraints and Job Insecurity

Resource scarcity and job insecurity are key barriers to EE. While some variables might have an impact due to economic circumstances, the company must increase openness regarding performance results, restructuring activities, and future plans. There must be information communicated to the employees about the organisational progress being made to avoid uncertainties. Furthermore, resource distribution must favour those departments that are directly responsible for the performance of services. In the event that resources cannot be

increased immediately, then through openness and gradual improvements in performance, there will be reduced employee disengagement.

5.4.7 Development of an Employee Engagement Monitoring System

The research suggests the development of an Employee Engagement Monitoring System under the management of the Human Resources Department. Such a system will involve yearly employee engagement surveys, KPIs, dashboards of engagement levels, and departmental action plans. Furthermore, research indicates that organisations that regularly measure and act on employee engagement data experience higher productivity, lower turnover and improved employee performance (Harter et al., 2020). The proposed monitoring system will therefore enable Air Zimbabwe to identify engagement challenges early, implement targeted interventions and evaluate the effectiveness of engagement strategies over time.

5.5 Area for further research

- This study focused on employee engagement and productivity at Air Zimbabwe. Future research should expand the same theme across multiple SOEs in Zimbabwe, enabling comparative analysis and enhancing the generalisability of the research findings.

- Future studies may also employ time series data to assess changes in employee engagement and productivity over time and in response to organisational interventions.

- Qualitative studies may further provide deeper insights into employees' perceptions, experiences, and expectations regarding engagement and productivity within parastatals.

5.6 Solution framework diagram

The proposed solution framework brings together the main issues identified in the study and the actions that can be taken to address them at Air Zimbabwe. It focuses on areas such as leadership and communication, training and development, wellness programmes, employee benefits, participation in decision-making, resource constraints, and job insecurity. The ADKAR model is included to help guide the implementation process and deal with possible resistance to change. The aim is to improve employee engagement and, in turn, employee productivity, given the positive relationship found between the two in the study.

The framework also shows who should be responsible for implementing the different interventions, the expected timeframes, and how progress can be monitored. This gives management a clearer starting point for putting the study recommendations into practice, rather than treating employee engagement as a general organisational issue.

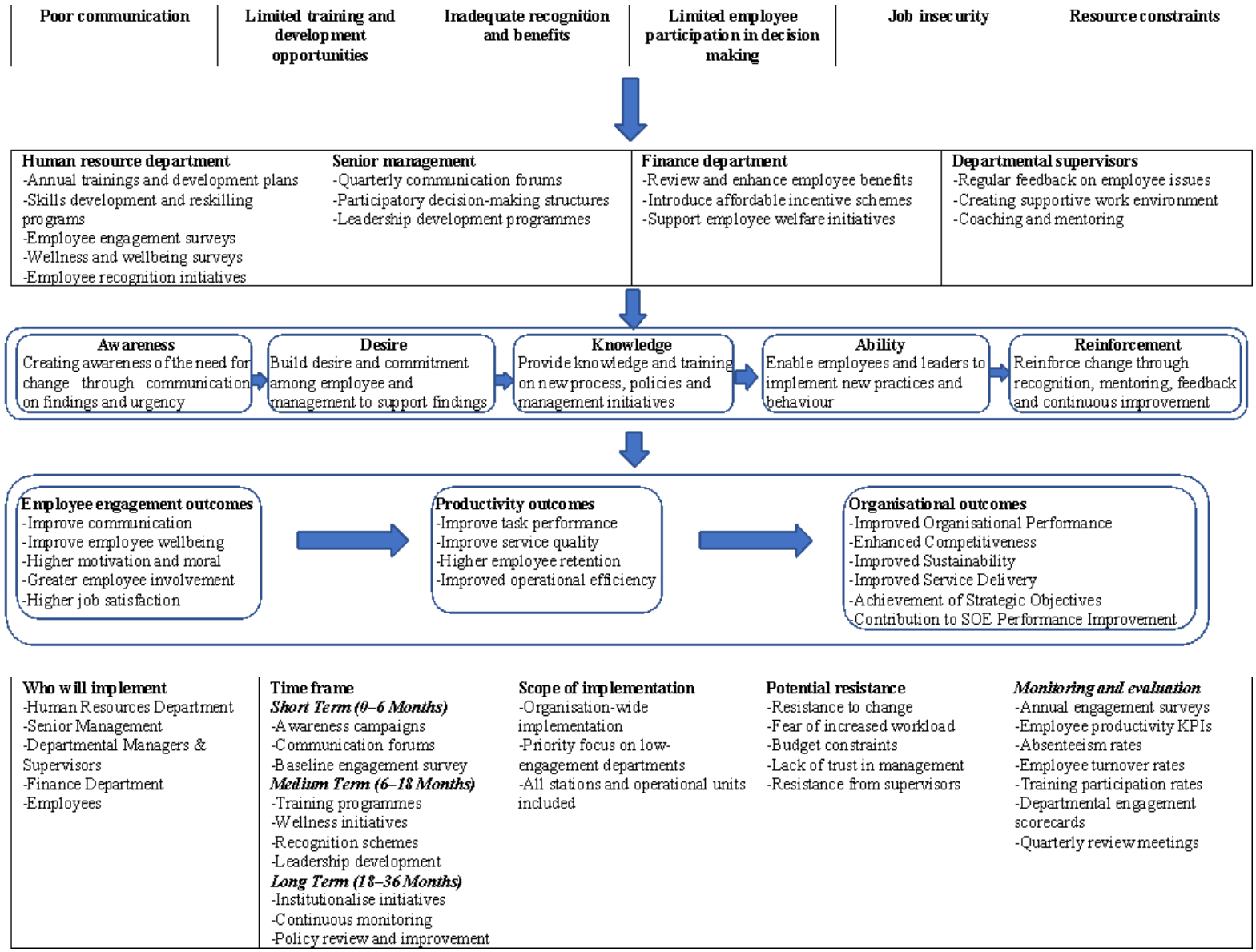


Figure 5.1: Solution framework diagram (author's own conception)

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is for Trust Magedhe, a postgraduate student pursuing a Master of Business Leadership degree at Bindura University of Science Education. I kindly request your participation in this research study by completing the attached questionnaire. This study is conducted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Business Leadership degree and is entitled "**Developing a Framework for Enhancing Employee Engagement and Productivity in a State-Owned Airline: A Case Study of Air Zimbabwe**." The purpose of this research is to examine factors influencing employee engagement and productivity, and to propose strategies that can improve organisational performance. Your responses will provide valuable insights for this study. All information collected will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality. Participation is voluntary, and your responses will remain anonymous.

Section A: Employee Demographic Characteristics

Tick where appropriate

1.	Department
2.	Position
3.	Work station
4.	Gender (1) Male ☐ (2) Female ☐
5.	Age .....
6.	Years of service at air Zimbabwe ……
7.	Highest level of education attained (1) O' Level ☐ (2) Certificate ☐ (3) Diploma ☐ Degree ☐
8.	Employment status. (1) Full time …… (2) GT …… (3) Student ……

Section B: Employee Engagement

Tick where appropriate

9.	Have you received any formal training in the past 12 months (1) Yes ☐ (2) No ☐
10.	If yes how many? … (1) 0 ☐ (2) 1–2 ☐ (3) 3–5 ☐ (4) More than 5 ☐
11.	Does the organisation provide wellness programmes? (1)Yes ☐ (2)No ☐
12.	How many wellness events do you attend per year? (1) 0 ☐ (2) 1 ☐ (3) 2–3 ☐ (4) 4+ ☐
13.	On a scale of 1 to 5 do these activities improve your motivation at work? (1 = No improvement … 5 = Very high improvement) ……
14.	To what extent do these activities improve your perfomance? (1 = No improvement … 5 = Very high improvement) …….
15.	Are there any employee benefits you receive (1)Yes ☐ (2)No ☐
16.	If yes state them 1)…… 2)……..... 3)……
17.	On a scale of 1 to 5 are you satisfied with the benefits (1=not satisfied….. 5 = highly satisfied) .....
18.	Do they motivate you to perform better (1)Yes ☐ (2)No ☐
19.	Are you satisfied with your current level of engagement? (1)Yes ☐ (2)No ☐
20.	Do you feel your performance is appreciated? (1)Yes ☐ (2) No ☐
21.	Do you intend to remain in the organization for the next 3 years? (1)Yes ☐ (2)No ☐

Section C: Employee Engagement Drivers

To what extend do you agree with the following statements.
NB. On a scale of 1 to 5 indicate your position. Use 1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree and 5-Strongly agree.

		1	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
i	My supervisor provides adequate support in my work.					
ii	Communication within my department is clear and effective.					
iii	I receive recognition for good performance.					
iv	I am satisfied with the training and development opportunities available.					
v	I have opportunities for career growth within the organisation.					
vi	My work environment enables me to perform effectively.					
vii	I am involved in decisions that affect my work.					
viii	I feel motivated to go beyond what is expected in my job.					

Section D: Constraints To Employee Engagement

To what extend do you agree with the following statements.
NB. On a scale of 1 to 5 indicate your position. Use 1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree and 5-Strongly agree.

		1	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
i	Poor leadership practices reduce my motivation at work.					
ii	Lack of incentives reduces my motivation at work.					
iii	Limited career advancement opportunities affect my commitment.					
iv	Poor communication reduces my engagement at work.					
v	Resource constraints limit my ability to perform well.					
vi	Job insecurity affects my level of engagement.					

Section E: Employee Productivity

To what extend do you agree with the following statements.
NB. On a scale of 1 to 5 indicate your position. Use 1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree and 5-Strongly agree.

		1	2	3	4	5
	I complete my tasks within the required time.					
	The quality of my work meets organisational standards.					
	I consistently meet my performance targets.					
	I maintain high performance even under pressure					
	I am punctual and adhere to work schedules					
	I effectively manage my workload to meet job demands.					
	I maintain good attendance at work.					

Section F: Strategies To Enhance Engagement And Productivity

To what extend do you agree with the following statements.
NB. On a scale of 1 to 5 indicate your position. Use 1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree and 5-Strongly agree.

	Improved reward systems would increase my engagement.	1	2	3	4	5
	Better leadership practices would improve my performance.					
	More training opportunities would enhance my productivity.					
	Improved communication would increase my engagement.					
	Providing clear KPIs and KRAs would improve my performance.					
	Greater employee involvement in decision-making would enhance engagement.					

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE

This questionnaire is for Trust Magedhe, a postgraduate student pursuing a Master of Business Leadership degree at Bindura University of Science Education. I kindly request your participation in this research study by completing the interview. This study is conducted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Business Leadership degree and is entitled "**Developing a Framework for Enhancing Employee Engagement and Productivity in a State-Owned Airline: A Case Study of Air Zimbabwe**." The purpose of this research is to examine factors influencing employee engagement and productivity, and to propose strategies that can improve organisational performance. Your responses will provide valuable insights for this study. All information collected will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality. Participation is voluntary, and your responses will remain anonymous.

SECTION A: Understanding of Employee Engagement

1. How do you define employee engagement in your organisation?

SECTION B: Current Engagement Practices

2. What initiatives or programmes are currently in place to promote employee engagement?
3. How effective do you think these initiatives are? Why?
4. How does the organisation support employee training and development?

SECTION C: Drivers of Employee Engagement

5. What factors do you believe most influence employee engagement in your organisation?
6. How are employees recognised or rewarded for good performance?
7. Are employees involved in decision-making processes? Please explain.

SECTION D: Constraints to Employee Engagement

8. What challenges or barriers affect employee engagement in your organisation?
9. To what extent do resource constraints affect employees' ability to perform?
10. Does job insecurity influence employee morale and engagement? How?

SECTION E: Employee Productivity

11. How do you assess or measure employee productivity in your department?
12. What factors do you believe influence employee productivity the most?
13. In your experience, how does employee engagement affect productivity?

SECTION F: Strategies for Improvement

14. What strategies would you recommend to improve employee engagement?
15. What changes could enhance employee productivity in your organisation?
16. How can leadership improve its role in driving engagement and performance?
17. What role should communication play in improving engagement and productivity?

Appendix3: Data collection letter

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

P. Bag 1020
BINDURA, Zimbabwe
Email :
rid@buse.ac.zw

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION [BUSE]

11 June 2026
Trust Magedhe
Bindura University of Science Education
Graduate School of Business
P. Bag 1020
Bindura

Dear Trust Magedhe

RE: INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE ETHICAL CLEARANCE-APPROVAL NUMBER: BUSEREC/0216/2026

Your application for research ethical clearance related to the topic '**Developing a Framework for Enhancing Employee Engagement and Productivity in a State-Owned Airline: A Case of Air Zimbabwe'** has been approved and allocated approval Number: **BUSEREC/0216/2026**. You are to quote this approval number for all correspondences inclusive of consent forms and any other documents as and when appropriate. The approval period is as stated below:

Type of Meeting	:	19th Research Ethics Committee meeting
Approval Date	:	11/06/2026
Expiry date	:	10/06/2027

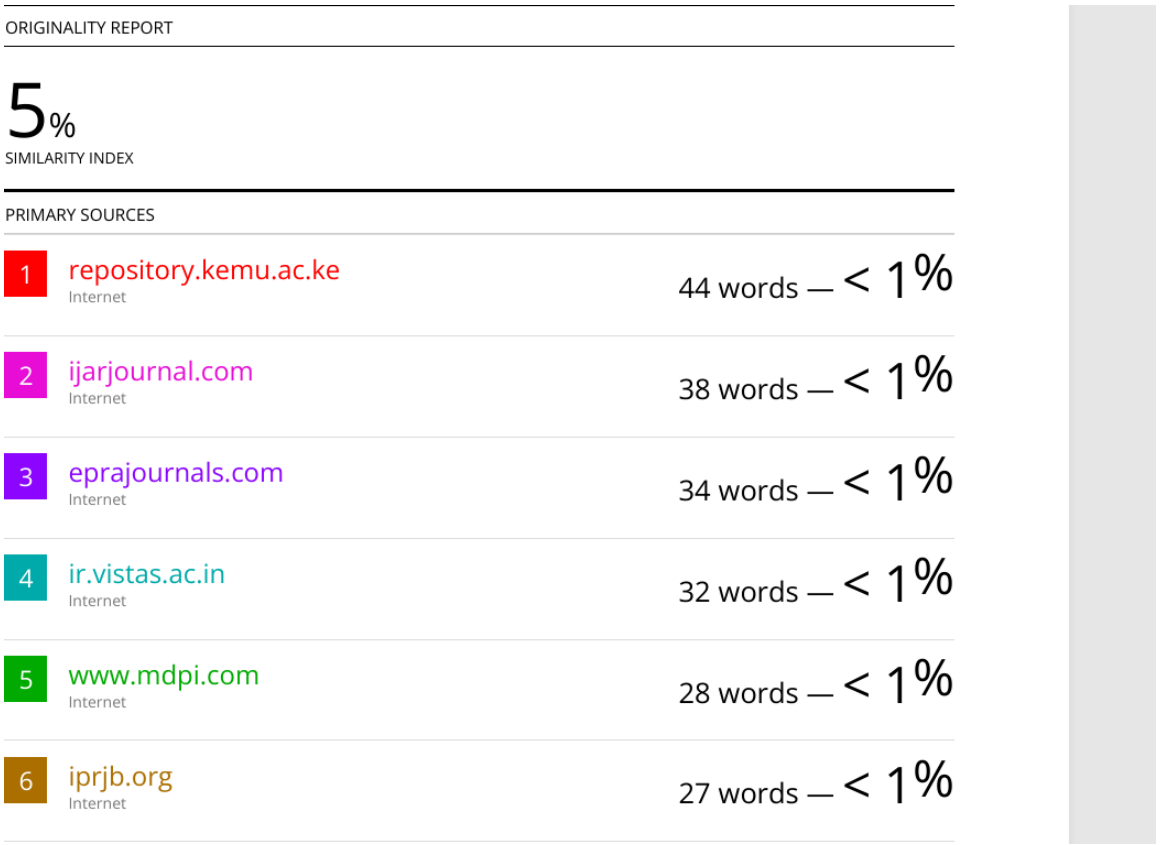
The project will automatically discontinue on the expiry date. You can apply for renewal three months before the expiry date. The renewal application should be accompanied by a progress report.

You are not expected to make any changes/adjustments to the protocol including the consent documents. Any trials involving drugs, devices and biologics require approval of the Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe before commencement. All problems to do with the safety of participants must be reported to BUSEREC within three (3) working days.

Upon termination of the study, a report has to be submitted to BUSEREC.
Yours sincerely

BUSEREC CHAIRPERSON

Appendix 4: Turnitin Report



ORIGINALITY REPORT

5%
SIMILARITY INDEX

PRIMARY SOURCES

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