

## An Empirical Study: Employee Engagement and Linkage to Organization Performance and Sustainability

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*Employee engagement is the driving force of the organizations success; organizations that have pitiable employee engagement have experienced extensive employee turnover, low production and efficiency, decrease in consumer loyalty, decline in stakeholder value, and an ultimate detriment to their organizational success. Organizations that do not foster and engage employees end up losing valuable talent to other organizations. The study was conducted to examine the influence of various factors on employee engagement among customer service employees that work in multiple customer service sectors in the United States. For this quantitative research design, a Likert scale survey was used with statistical analysis on a sample of 262 participants from customer service sectors that included: transportation, banking, athletics, childcare, insurance, hospitality, information technology, and administrative assistants from Northern New Jersey and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The factors explored to examine the influence on worker engagement included work environment, relationship management, employee engagement, and career development. The general business problem is that non-engaged employees in the workplace contribute to low performance rates and lack of goal achievements in the workplace. Statistical results revealed no significance with  $P > .05$ .*

**Keywords:** Employee engagement, customer service, performance, sustainability, organization

### Introduction

Employee engagement has taken precedence in organizations above the challenge of retaining talented employees. Employee engagement entails the ability for organizations to capture employee's minds and hearts at each level of their working lives (Lockwood, 2007; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Saks, 2006; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Employee engagement is the employee's commitment to an element or somebody in their respective organization; employee engagement is characterized by absorption, drive, and emotional commitment to the organization and higher performance can be attained from employees that derive pride and enjoyment in their work (Harter, Schmidt, & Keyes, 2002; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Saks, 2006). Similarity, Council (2004) and Markos & Sridevi (2010) shared that employee engagement entails emotional connection; normative and continuance commitment to their jobs with enthusiasm; shows effectiveness; and inspiration to exceed employer expectations and contractual agreement with a focus of attaining company objectives (Council, 2004; Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Employee engagement contributes to benefits that include reduction in absenteeism; unethical practices that include theft of inventory; improved consumer satisfaction; enhancement of return on investment; and increase of projected sales (Carr & Tang, 2005; Council, 2004).

Employee engagement contributes to building positive rapport about the organization thus becoming emotionally connected to their coworkers and direct clients among others in all levels from product manufacturing, logistics,

and customer service sectors (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Smith, 2013). Employee engagement is critical in maintaining a competitive edge. Organizations develop and nurture employees to be passionately committed to the organization with no direct correlation to the amount of money they are paid to do their respective roles, but their ability to show commitment because of personal choices (Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010; Shuck, Rocco, & Albornoz, 2011).

Employee engagement is driven by the connection between the employee and the company's strategy. The most essential driver of employee engagement is the employees understanding of the significance of their roles to the organizations success (Ho, Wong, & Lee, 2011; Welch, 2011). In this study the phenomena that upsurges organizational success would come available for the respective organizations that would seek to pursue avenues of integrating employee engagement contributors and removal of engagement barriers within their corporation (Bhatnager, 2007; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Research evidence with organizational employees would provide an insight to business professionals, academic institution personnel, and other organizations with knowledge related to engaging and sustaining their employees within the workplace.

Seventy percent of the United States workforce aren't engaged in the workplace as reported by Gallup (2015). Additionally, fifty to seventy percent of workers who aren't engaged in the workplace contribute to implications of employee turnover, low productivity and profitability, mental health and safety, and theft (Wollard, 2011). Employees are the greatest asset, and organizations that do not foster and engage employees end up losing valuable talent to other organizations (Beechler, & Woodward, 2009; Davenport, 1999; Frank, Finnegan, & Taylor, 2004). In relation to a healthy work environment, Gallup organization findings reported that the quantity and quality of work is impacted by the employee's psychological well-being and their physical health (Lockwood, 2007). The Gallup

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organizations findings confirmed that 62% of engaged employees had a positive connection of work to their physical health; in comparison to 39% for those who weren't engaged and 22% for who had no positive connection to their physical health; 54% of employees that were disengaged noted a negative impact of work to their health and 51% noted that work had a negative effect on their well-being (Fleming & Asplund, 2007; Lockwood, 2007). The study was conducted to examine the influence of various factors on employee engagement among customer service employees that work in multiple customer service sectors in the United States. The factors explored included: work environment, relationship management, employee engagement, and career development. The general business problem is that non-engaged employees in the workplace contribute to low performance rates and lack of goal achievements in the workplace. The specific business problem is that organizations hiring managers and operational managers inadequately incorporate contributors to engage employees, while capturing their commitment to increase levels of success and ability to stay afloat in the competitive marketplace.

#### Literature Review

In today's competitive economy employees seek for more than just a pay check in their respective careers. For instance, employees drawn to work for Intel correlates to the organizations movement towards proactive engagement with stakeholders, transparency with their sustainability efforts, and promotion of employee engagement in the workplace. Research has evidence of companies adapting sustainability as a core element in their business motto. In an interview conducted by MIT Sloan Management Review with Suzanne Fallender, Intel's CSR strategic and communications director, Fallender discussed the value of integrating sustainability to executives and employee's compensation to boost their engagement in sustainability efforts (Dao, Langella, & Carbo, 2011; Kiron, Kruschwitz, Haanaes, & Velken, 2012). On the onset of 2008, Intel's integrated sustainability efforts were to reduce packaging by 40%, and in 2012 Fallender reported that the employee engagement plans were not only available to top executives but to all employees and included variable employee bonus plans that included profit-sharing. The efforts were to entice employees to be engaged in Intel's current and upcoming sustainability efforts. (Harland, Reichelt, & Yao, 2008; Kiron, Kruschwitz, Haanaes, & Velken, 2012).

Employee engagement is essential in all organizations, and those organizations that integrate the efforts of engaging employees like Intel could attract and sustain thus improving their long-term service and production costs (Gruman & Saks, 2011; Wollard & Shuck, 2011). To capture and provide an understanding of employee engagement in the hospitality industry Ramgulam (2016) conducted research that compared Trinidad and Tobago and sought out to determine if the two Islands could embrace sustainable employee engagement in their respective Islands. The findings confirmed that employee participation was essential in the increase of employee morale and creativity in the organizations, and that a conceptual difference existed between Trinidad and Tobago participants based on their

organizational culture (Ramgulam, 2016). Researchers confirm that employee participation is essential and signals inclusion, resulting in employee engagement and sustainability as the way forward in organizations (Ramgulam, 2016; Riordan, Vandenberg & Richardson, 2005).

Devi, Avanes, and Archana (2012) research objectives included the implications of employee engagement and environmental sustainability using journals, government publications, and annual reports. Research findings reveal that when employees are engaged in the workplace they vigorously participate in activities that contribute to higher performance levels and innovation. In contrast, non-engaged employees are not aware of organizations efforts and constantly resist change (Bakker, 2009; Devi et al., 2012). In simple terms, when organizations involve employees during the developmental stages the employees are prone to form a sense of ownership thus enhancing their engagement to the project and contribution to organizational performance (Bakker, 2009; Devi et al., 2012).

Milman and Dickson (2014) conducted research to evaluate and analyze line level employees' opinions and explore predictors for their retention as employees within the United States theme parks and attractions. Data collection from 307 participants and an evaluation of 27 characteristics yielded the opportunity to have a fun and challenging job, humane approach by managers to employees, and advancement opportunities in their career as the most important for theme park employees (Milman & Dickson, 2014). The research results revealed that employee engagement and retention had a correlation to development training, hourly pay, satisfaction, flexible working hours, and performance reviews (Christensen & Rog, 2008; Milman & Dickson, 2014).

Research by Welch (2011) focused on determining the role of internal communication in the enhancement of employee engagement within an organization. Similarly, other research findings revealed that communication enhanced employee engagement and that organizational communicators needed to take into consideration their employees communication needs and the overlap with commitment to the organization (Bambacas & Patrickson, 2008; Mishra, K., Boynton, Mishra, A., 2014; Welch, 2011). Additionally, a study conducted by Mosby (2012) aimed at understanding employee engagement and factors affecting engagement in knowledge sharing in the federal sector. An exploratory research was utilized to obtain data from 20 employees that were 50 years and older. The findings confirmed that older workers willingly shared knowledge and showed full engagement in the federal sector (Mosby, 2012). The findings also revealed that employee knowledge sharing was impacted by lack of influence and support by leaders; leaders should be tasked to transform the current practice to integrate change in the current practice and engage all within the federal sector (Mosby, 2012).

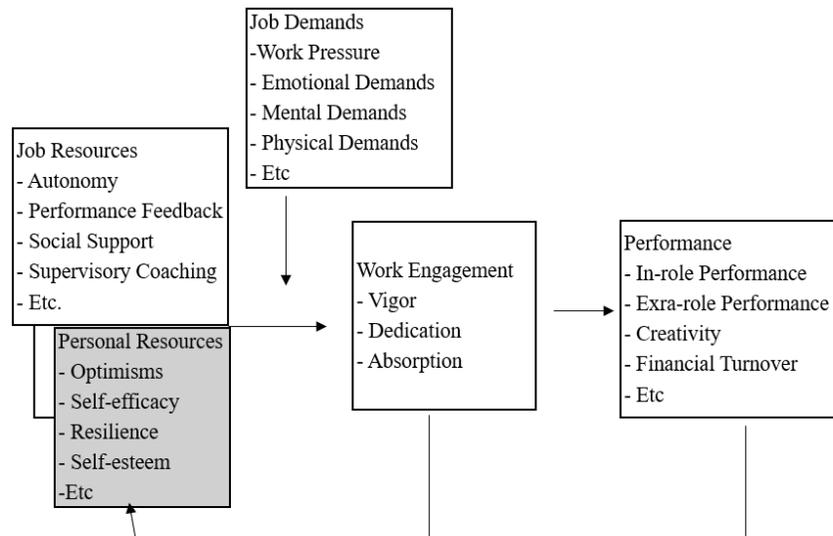
#### *The research models that have been most influential in employee engagement*

The models that have been most influential in this area are discussed starting with Figure 1: Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model by Bakker and Demerouti (2008) in the

overall employment engagement. The (JD-R) model used by multiple authors including: Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2007); Fernet, Austin, and Vallerand, (2012); Idris, Dollard, and Winefield (2011); Llorens, Bakker, Schaufeli, and Salanova (2006); Xanthopoulou, Halbesleben, and Buckley (2004). The model's hypothesis is that resources from supervisors and colleagues, skill variety, performance reviews, and autonomy are what ignite

motivation that leads to employee engagement and higher performance. The second assumption is when resources become prominent, employees gain motivation when confronted with demands in their jobs. Multiple researchers demonstrated that personal and job resources envisage employee engagement and when employees are engaged they do extra-role performance, are innovative, and production is increased.

**Figure 1** The JD-R model of employee engagement



The JD-R model of employee engagement: Source Baker & Demerouti (2007)

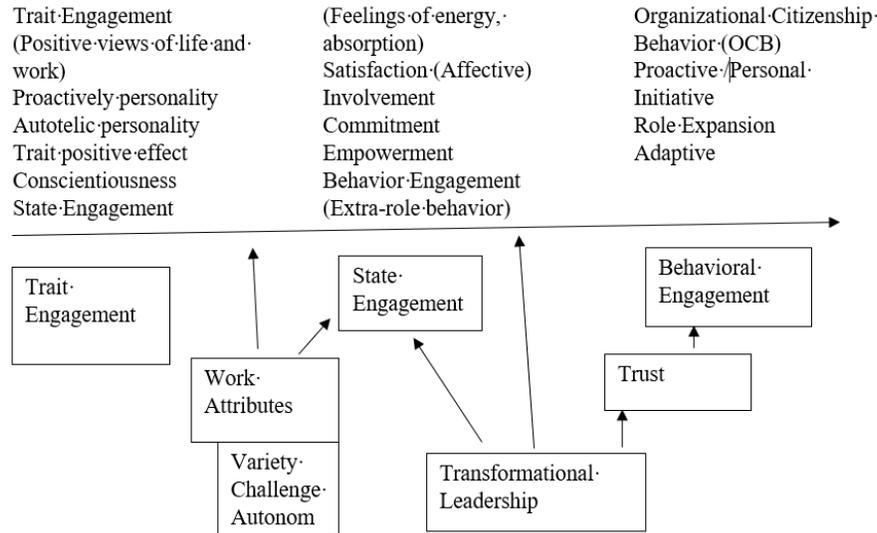
Employee engagement is connected to customer satisfaction, high productivity and profits, safety of consumers and employees, and employee retention (Endres, & Mancheno-Smoak, 2008; Mancheno-Smoak, 2008). Endres and Mancheno-Smoak (2008) research focused on how the United States Postal Services (USPS) addressed the improvement of productivity among workers through employee engagement. USPS shared that employee engagement was accomplished by continuous training development fundamental coursework among leaders to focus on elements that contributed to employee motivation because of its direct link to higher productivity (Endres & Mancheno-Smoak, 2008). The research noted that USPS management team ensures employee engagement via constant encouragement by the management team to inspire, challenge, be appreciative of their employees, encouragement of open communication, emphasis that employees' opinions matters, and focusing on making work meaningful for employees (Endres & Mancheno-Smoak, 2008). The findings confirmed that USPS identification and management understanding of behaviors leading to higher production is contributed from employees that are engaged in the workplace (Endres & Mancheno-Smoak, 2008).

Macey and Schneider (2008) in Figure 2 presented a conceptual engagement framework of three components, including trait engagement, behavioral engagement, and

psychological state engagement. The framework has been used by authors Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010; Meyer & Gagne, 2008; Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Shuck & Wollard, 2010; and Pugh & Dietz, 2008. The framework confirms that psychological engagement contributes to employee enthusiasm, attachment, and absorption to their jobs. The framework is influential for the conformity that employees with trait, state, and behavioral engagement are bound to work energetic, adaptive, active, and have positive aspects in meeting organizational objectives (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Another research method used to analyze the relationship between key economic indicators and employee engagement was conducted by the use of a survey on a sample size of 630 employees in financial and insurance establishments to analyze income and level of unemployment economic indicators relationship to employee engagement (Jaupi & Llaci, 2014). The findings indicated that when unemployment rate is high the employees in the workforce are highly engaged; additionally, there existed a relationship between employee engagement and GDP per region (Jaupi & Llaci, 2014). In this research the findings confirmed that employee engagement was at 76.4% when the unemployment rate was at 16.8% and GDP of 24%; specifically, employee engagement was high in regions that had lowest per capita (Jaupi & Llaci, 2014).

**Figure 2** Macey and Schneider engagement model



Macey and Schneider engagement model: Source Macey & Schneider (2008)

The Griffin, Parker, and Neal (2008) (Figure 3) behavioral matrix emphasizes contribution to employee effectiveness on individual, team, and organizational levels on proactivity, adaptability, and proficiency. The matrix has been influential and used by authors Dalal, Baysinger, Brummel, & LeBreton, 2012; Leroy, Palanski, & Simons,

2012; Martins & Nienaber, 2015; Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Hetland, 2012; and Rupayana, 2008 in their research. The matrix argument was that the employees working environments are uncertainly different and interdependent, therefore harder to determine beneficial behaviors (Griffin, Parker & Neil, 2008).

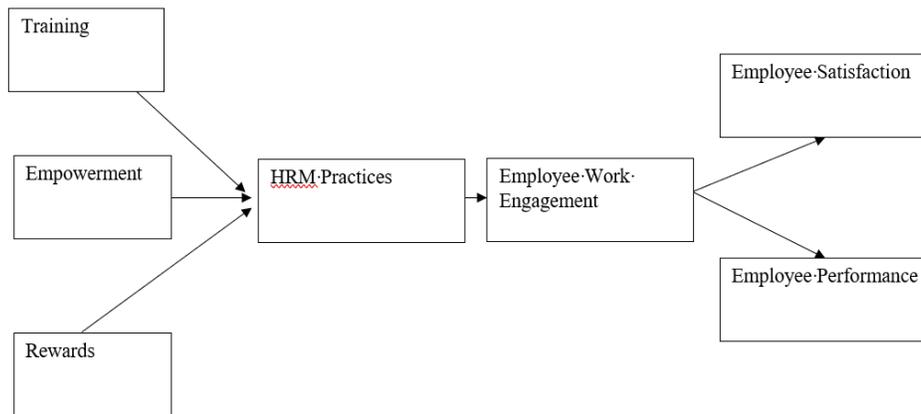
**Figure 3** Griffin, Parker and Neil Behavioral Matrix

	Proficiency	Adaptability	Proactivity
Individual Level	Task performance		
Team Level			
Organizational Level			Self-starting, future-directed behavior to change organization

A double-headed arrow is shown between the Team Level and Organizational Level cells in the Adaptability column.

Griffin, Parker and Neil Behavioral Matrix: Source Griffin, Parker & Neil, (2008)

**Figure 4** Employee Engagement Model Derivation



Employee Engagement Model Derivation: Source: Karapete (2011)

Employee engagement model derivation (Figure 4) confirms that minimal employee engagement within organizations contributes to consumer dissatisfaction and loyalty thus impacting the overall costs incurred by the organization; for instance, in the Netherlands there existed an estimation of \$30,000 per year for each employee that is not engaged at work (Rampersad, 2006). Rampersad (2006) research objective was to address the notion that self-examination is the road to sustainability of employee engagement in the workplace. Personal balanced scorecard (PBSC) was determined to be a mirror of what each employee expected of themselves in reaching their set targets in both nonworking and work-related events, drawing on each respective employee's personal skills, habits, and behaviors (Rampersad, 2006; Rampersad, 2008). The research Rampersad (2006) addressed had four perspectives of PBSC, (a) internal, (b) external, (c) knowledge and learning, and (d) financial in relation to a practical case of owner and CEO of a consulting firm in the United Kingdom. The findings confirmed that the increase of employee engagement is accomplished by formulation of the PBSC and the completion of the Plan-Do-Act-Challenge cycle. In implementing PBSC and the Plan-Do-Act challenge it provides a step-by-step contribution to employees' happiness, self-awareness, self-regulation, and creativity both in their personal and professional work environment. (Rampersad, 2006; Rampersad, 2008). The recommendation offered by Rampersad (2006) is for the management team to utilize four principles that would contribute to employee engagement; the principles recommended are (a) organizational performance as the sum of individual performance, (b) goal alignment between individuals and organization, (c) not measuring, but taking improvement actions, and (d) implementation of continuous improvement, starting from the top.

A study conducted by SHRM analyzing 132 U.S. manufacturing firms confirmed that utilizing high-performance work systems have higher production levels in comparison to their competitors. The organizations achieve this by empowering their employees to make work related decisions, equipping them with knowledge, training,

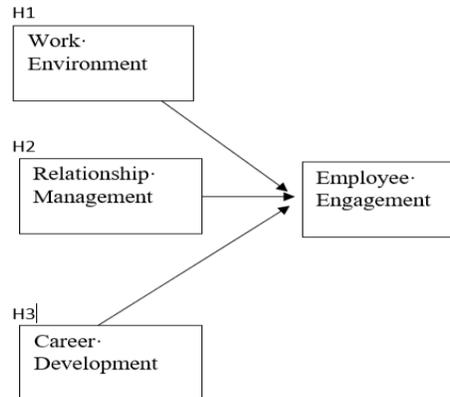
development, and giving them access to the organizations costs and revenues. (Lockwood, 2007). Engaged employees possess positive attitudes towards their organization and its values, have awareness of the organization context, and the ability to work with colleagues to achieve company objectives thus contributing to higher productivity, low turnover, and sustainable employees (Fleming & Asplund; 2007; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Lockwood, 2007; Saks, 2006; Wagner & Harter, 2006). Employee engagement is critical in maintaining a competitive edge. Organizations that develop and nurture employees to be passionately committed to the organization with no direct correlation to the amount of money they are paid to do their respective roles tend to show commitment due to their personal choices (Shuck, Rocco, & Albornoz, 2011).

#### **Conceptual Model for the Study**

Employee engagement research conducted by Maha (2015) with 245 public bank participants in Cairo-Egypt addressed five elements; leadership, organizational justice, compensation and benefits, work policies, procedures, and training. Results confirmed that the two elements, organizational justice and effective leadership, were top in contribution to employee engagement. Having engaged employees led to higher job performance but didn't document any direct correlation to their commitment to the organization (Maha, 2015). Researchers that included Haynie, Flynn, & Mauldin (2017) on participant sample of 193; Matthews, Zablah, Hair, & Marshall, (2016) on sample of 235 business to business sales personnel; Popli and Rizvi, (2015) with 106 participants in a private sector in India; Rich, Lepine, and Crawford, 2010 with 245 fire fighters; and Vanam, 2009 with a sample of 62 full time employees; have explored employee engagement using similar models and argue that employees with higher engagement are ranked as higher performers. They also confirmed that employees that were engaged performed better than non-engaged employees. Based on these arguments the following (Figure 5) research framework was developed with 3 hypotheses with an objective to examine the influence of various factors on employee engagement among customer service

employees that work in multiple customer service sectors in United States.

**Figure 5** Research Framework for the Study



*H1: Work environment will be positively related to employee engagement*

*H2: Relationship management will be positively related to employee engagement*

*H3: Career development will be positively related to employee engagement*

## Methodology

### Participants and Data Collection Procedures

Validated 33 survey questions (see Appendix A) adopted with permission to use the survey questions (see Appendix B) were randomly distributed to 340 customer service employees from the age range of 18 to 40 was to capture multiple age generations that include Millennials, Xennials, and Generation X. The demographic sample were pooled from the following customer service sectors: transportation, banking, athletics, childcare, insurance, hospitality, information technology, and administrative assistants from Northern New Jersey and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In each customer service sector, we discussed our research to the eight volunteer lead participants who administered the questionnaires; this option was taken to combat the low participation rate and access to participants within the customer service industries selected. Of the total 340 distributed questionnaires, 262 were completed from the customer service sectors with a 77% success rate from participants' pool located in Northern New Jersey, Manhattan, New York, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania USA

### Data collection & Analysis

The study was based on participant perception on how strongly they agree or disagree with given statements, therefore the Likert scale was selected. A questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale survey was administered. Upon receipt of the data, in respect to the participants, a restatement was followed with the commitment to maintain participant confidentiality and anonymity; the coding was ES1, ES2, ES3 to ES262. The participant feedback was

coded in continued respect of their anonymity. Participants were given additional time to ask any questions in relation to the study and were sent thank you notes for their time and participation. They were informed of receipt of the summary of the completed study results.

### Measurement

In this research, a four-part questionnaire was used to evaluate the study variables; Career Development was measured using survey questionnaire with 6 items; Relationship Management was measured using 7 items; Work Environment was measured using 8 items; and Employee engagement was measured using 12 items. All measures were adopted from Gallup Inc.

### Demographic Analysis

Demographic variables in this research consisted of 262 sample participants that were willing to participate in the survey; the sample consisted of customer service employees with 168 males and 94 females with 238 participants within the age range of 18 to 30, and 24 participants in the age range of 31 to 40 years of age.

### Data Analysis and Study Results

#### Reliability Analysis

All the variables that were assessed in the research in the four-part questionnaire and measured using the Likert scale with five points with answers that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree); the five-points employee engagement had a mean of 3.45; career development at 3.47; relationship management at 3.77; work environment at a mean of 3.77. The descriptive statistics for the four-part

questionnaire with the mean and standard deviation with normally distributed scores. The four-part items in the study had similar mean scores; the relationship management and work environment with a score of 3.77 was higher than employee engagement at 3.58 and career development at 3.47; while the standard deviation of career development at .744, relationship management at .753 were slightly higher than variables in employee engagement at .685 and work environment at .664.

To determine the internal consistency of the Likert scale used in the study; Cronbach's alpha was conducted to each variable alpha .877 in employee engagement, .859 in career development, .856 in relationship management, .857 in work environment and a Cronbach's Alpha of .908. The score of 0.7 is termed as reliable; the study's coefficient alpha score of .906 confirms a higher level of internal consistency thus the questionnaire was reliable (Cronbach, 1951; Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). The internal consistency was reliable because research confirmed that items with Pearson's r score below .70 should be cautiously used by researchers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

The item-total statistics was reviewed to determine how each item correlated with the overall questionnaire and this was followed by review of the Cronbach Alpha to see if any item needed to be deleted for not belonging to the scale. The results confirmed that retaining the items would keep our *Cronbach's Alpha* at .908 but deleting the eight items

(leaving number of items at 27) in the Corrected Item-Total Correlation column (see Appendix C) with score of  $r = .31$  would strengthened the *Cronbach's Alpha* at .926. We decided against deleting the variables since the score was above .908; thus, worthy retention; our decision was based on existing research that confirmed against the deletion since the initial items of 33 questions had a good reliability (Bland, & Altman, 1997; De Vet, Mokkink, Mosmuller, & Terwee, 2017).

### Pearson Correlations, Multiple Regression, and Hypothesis Testing

Correlation is a method used to assess the degree of correspondence between variables within a study (Dziuban & Shirkey, 1974; Mukuka, 2012). The use of Pearson correlation is also suitable to understand the data obtained with the use of the Likert scale in conducting factor analysis (Holgado-Tello, Chacón-Moscoso, Barbero-García & Vila-Abad, 2010). Research that includes, Junaid and Nasreen (2012) to measure millennial behavior towards skin care products and Akkucuk and Turan (2016) to understand millennials, both used Pearson correlation to analyze and obtain factor solutions.

Pearson correlation was conducted to determine relationship between the tested variables with results as shown in Table 1. The summary of Pearson correlation coefficients (r) are explained below:

**Table 1: Correlations**

		Career Development	Employee Engagement	Relationship Management	Work Environment
Career Development	Pearson Correlation	—			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
Employee Engagement	Pearson Correlation	-.003	—		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.958	.000		
Relationship Management	Pearson Correlation	.008	.638**	—	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.898	.000	.000	
Work Environment	Pearson Correlation	.007	.437**	.630**	—
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.908	.000	.000	.000

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

The Pearson's r statistic for the correlation between career development and employee engagement had a score of -.003 and a sig (2-tailed score that was higher than 05) which in the Pearson rule means that there was a negative correlation between the variables. When one variable increases the other decreased in value (Lee Rodgers & Nicewander, 1988; Yamane, 1973). The Pearson r results for career development, relationship management, and work environment both exhibited close to 0 result; representing both consisted weak relationships between each other thus weren't strongly correlated (Holmes & Rahe, 1967; Lee Rodgers & Nicewander, 1988). The Pearson correlation with significant results had a positive r score included: relationship management and employee engagement, work environment and employee engagement, and employee engagement and relationship management (Holmes & Rahe,

1967; Lee Rodgers & Nicewander, 1988; Sedgwick, 2012). The most uncommon finding, Sig (2-tailed) value was above .05 that brings us to a conclusion that there existed no correlation between the variables tested (Chan, 2003; Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005).

Multiple regression model summary as shown in Table 2 was used to determine if the values on our research residuals were independent. Statistic value that are below 1 and above 3 could be a concern and render our research analysis as invalid, to check and validate we included Dubrin-Watson that had a result of 1.974 (Hill & Flack, 1987). The current research statistic value was between 0 to 4, therefore we conclude that the assumption of residuals being independent was met as our Dubrin-Watson value at 1.974 (Hill & Flack, 1987; Nerlove, & Wallis, 1966). The value of R-squared was .41 which is meaningful and statistically significant; this

indicated that 41% of the dependent variable (with an adjusted value as shown in Table 2) employee engagement was explained in the independent variables.

**Table 2** Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
Dimension	1	.641a	.410	.399	.531

a. Predictors: (Constant), Age Range, Work Environment, Career Development, Gender, Relationship Management  
 b. Dependent Variable: Employee engagement

The ANOVA in Table 3 was conducted to determine the overall significance of predictor in our research. Our results show that the *P* value listed as .000 (1.266) meaning that the test was not significant since the *p* value was greater than

.05. The overall regression model significance was at  $F(5, 256) = 35.64$ , with a  $R^2 = .41$ , the sig 000 (2.48) was higher than .05 and couldn't conclude significance in our statistical analysis.

**Table 3** ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Regression	50.259	5	10.052	35.637	.000a
Residual	72.206	256	.282		
Total	122.465	261			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Age Range, Work Environment, Career Development, Gender, Relationship Management  
 b. Dependent Variable: Employee engagement

In linear regression, the coefficient tells us individual level in which the predators are statistically significant (Cronbach, 1951; Lee Rodgers, J., & Nicewander, 1988). In our analysis we used Alpha of .05 as a criterion for our research statistical significance use in most of analysis and as research documents that alpha level should be of low value to report significance in variables (Cowles & Davis, 1982). The statistical significance of each independent variable used was tested with an objective to determine if the  $p < .05$ , the results as shown in Table 4 confirms that a *p* value of greater than .05. (Chaubey, 1993; Cowles & Davis, 1982). In our research, we rejected all the hypothesis because our *p* values were greater than .05 thus the research results were not statistically significant.

There was no significant influence found between the 3 independent variables (career development, relationship management, and work environment on their influence on worker engagement) thus hypothesis H1, H2, and H3 were not statistically supported. Additionally, to eliminate the assumption of our data showing multicollinearity when using two or more independent variables are correlated with each other; multicollinearity was tested and shown in Table 4 as the VIF value (Blalock, 1963). The results output consisted of VIF value that was between 1 and 10; we concluded that there existed no multicollinearity symptoms as our values were below 2 in our research and the predators were moderately correlated (Knock & Lynn, 2012).

**Table 4** Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.320	.250		5.288	.000	.828	1.811		
Career Development	-.008	.044	-.008	-.178	.859	-.095	.079	1.000	1.000
Relationship Management	.548	.056	.602	9.776	.000	.438	.658	.603	1.660
Work Environment	.059	.064	.057	.927	.355	-.066	.184	.603	1.660

a. Dependent Variable: Employee engagement

**Discussion**

The sample population contained 90.8% of age group of 18 to 30 (millennials) and 9.2% between 31 to 40 years of age. A majority of our research sample population belonged to millennials. Research conducted by Ferri-Reed (2014) confirmed that millennials do struggle in taking initiatives in the workplace and research by Park and Gursoy (2012) confirmed that employee engagement with United States hotel employees was different depending on employee’s generation. Although our research had 90.08% from the millennials age group, our statistical analysis confirmed that all three hypotheses weren’t supported in this study. Specifically, work environment, relationship management, and career development, using Likert scale type of questionnaires to examine the influence on worker engagement weren’t significant among employees in customer service.

Model summary (Table 2) and Anova (Table 3) was conducted to confirm if there was an overall significance; an important fact to emphasize in our research is that although our model summary had a statistically significant R-square .41, p values on an individual level were not as significant, with the p values being less than .05. In this research, our situation doesn’t happen often whereby the R-square is meaningful but the P values in Table 3 (individual tests) are larger than .05. This confirmed that our predictors were correlated with each other and didn’t offer unique variance to explain a unique contribution to our dependent variable (worker engagement).

In our research the R-square was statistically significant but the individual tests on predictors had higher p values that were greater than .05 thus we couldn’t conclude that the significant results existed. In review of relevant literature, we discovered that research by Berry, 2010; Lamm and Meeks (2009); and Shuck, Twyford, Reio and Shuck (2014) confirmed that cases of non-engaged employee existed among different age generations and turnover existed among non-engaged employees in the workplace. In contrast, cases of quantitative research in service sectors (although uncommon) had cases where the research was termed as non-significance in regression analysis Lyall et al., 2018;

Maity, Chaudhuri, Saha, and Sen (2018) with reported cases of P>0.05.

**Conclusion**

Gallup Inc. (2015) reported that 70% of the United States workforce is not engaged in the workplace. Employee engagement has taken precedence in organizations above the challenge of retaining talented employees. This is due to the realization of employees being the greatest asset. It requires fostering and engaging the employees to minimize the loss of valuable talent to other organizations. This study was conducted to examine the influence of various factors on employee engagement among customer service employees that work in multiple customer service sectors in the United States. Employee engagement among organizations is the determining factor of employee loyalty; productivity; retention; consumer satisfaction; increase of stakeholder’s value; and improvement of organizations reputation (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Macey & Schneider, 2008). The drive for organizational success is rooted to employees that are engaged; these employees possess characteristics that include behavioral factor, which is the employee’s efforts in their work; emotional aspect, the employee’s feelings about the organization; cognitive engagement, employee belief of the organizations culture, leaders, and the overall organization (Lockwood, 2007; Saks, 2006).

**Managerial Implications**

Organizations that have pitiable employee engagement have experienced extensive employee turnover; low production and efficiency; decrease in consumer loyalty; decline in stakeholder value; and an ultimate detriment to their organizational success (Lockwood, 2007; Wollard, 2011). What influences employee commitment? The manager and employee relationships are critical in influencing employee commitment. The lack of positive employee-manager relations in an organization will lead to the organization having lower retention rates (Bell & Menguc, 2002; Lockwood, 2007). The organizations are tasked with ensuring that their managers possess characteristics to keep their employees engaged. The manager characteristics that encourage employee

engagement include managers' ability to set performance expectations that are realistic with honesty and integrity; have passion for success; defend direct reports; responsibility for failure and success with ability to find solutions for problems; respect employees; and embrace diversity (David & Fahey, 2000; Lockwood, 2007).

Employee engagement contributes to the building of positive rapport about their organization, in turn becoming emotionally connected to their coworkers and direct clients among others in all levels from product manufacturing, logistics, and customer service sectors (Mukherjee & Malhotra, 2006; Smith, 2013). In contrast, lack of employee engagement can contribute to a disengagement among employees who can work against the management team and company goals by arranging or partnering with colleagues to ensure product or service failures, leading to the reduction of return on investment by the company (Seijts & Crim, 2006; Smith, 2013). Additionally, as shared by Lockwood (2007) and Reynolds (1992) employees that aren't engaged in the workplace have officially "checked out," have a lack of passion, and sleepwalk through their day at work. Unfortunately, actively disengaged employees spend their work time actively making their unhappiness known to all co-workers and undermining their coworker's accomplishments.

#### Limitations / Future Research

Lastly this research focused on examining the influence of various factors on employee engagement among customer service employees that work in multiple customer service sectors in United States. Our research was limited to service sector employees. Future research can expand the sample size and use other variables or moderating factors to identify the factors that influence employee engagement in the workplace. Further studies in qualitative and quantitative statistical tests are required to examine employee engagement in customer service sectors.

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### **Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire**

#### *Career Development (Coded as Career Development SQ1 to SQ6)*

1. I am satisfied with my opportunities for professional growth
2. I am pleased with the career advancement opportunities available to me
3. My organization is dedicated to my professional development
4. I am satisfied with the job-related training my organization offers
5. I am satisfied that I have the opportunities to apply my talents and expertise
6. I am satisfied with the investment my organization makes in training and education

#### *Employee engagement (Coded as Employee engagement SQ1 to 12)*

1. I am inspired to meet my goals at work
2. I feel completely involved in my work
3. I get excited about going to work
4. I am often so involved in my work that the day goes by very quickly
5. I am determined to give my best effort at work each day
6. When at work, I am completely focused on the job duties
7. In my organization, employees adapt quickly to difficult situations
8. Employees here always keep going when the going gets tough
9. Employees proactively identify future challenges and opportunities
10. Employees in my organization take the initiative to help other employees when the need arises
11. Employees here are willing to take on new tasks as needed
12. Employees in my organization willingly accept change

#### *Relationship Management (Coded as Relationship Management SQ1 to SQ7)*

1. Communication between leaders and employees is good in my organization
2. I am able to make decisions affecting my work
3. Management within my organization recognizes strong job performance
4. My supervisor and I have a good working relationship
5. My coworker and I have a good working relationship
6. Senior management and employees trust each other
7. Employees treat each other with respect

#### *Work Environment (Work Environment SQ1 to SQ6)*

1. My organization has a safe working environment
2. I am satisfied with my overall job security
3. My organization's work positively impacts people's lives
4. My organization operates in a socially responsible manner
5. My organization's fiscal well-being is stable
6. I am satisfied with the culture of my workplace
7. I understand how my work impacts the organization's business goals
8. My organization is dedicated to diversity and inclusiveness

### **Appendix B: Permission to use Survey Questions**

From: Permissions <Permissions1@gallup.com>

Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2016 5:38 PM

To: Mboga, Jet

Subject: RE: Mboga Jet\_ Request

Hello Dr. Mboga,

Thank you for your patience while our panel reviewed your request. The panel has approved your request to use the themes and concepts from the Q12® survey, but permission is not given to use the Q12® survey questions verbatim. We appreciate your understanding.

Thank you,  
Gallup Permissions

**Appendix C: Item-Total Statistics**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Career Development	119.28	274.068	0.209	.	0.907
SQ1					
Career Development SQ2	119.44	275.275	0.139	.	0.909
Career Development SQ3	119.5	272.18	0.224	.	0.907
Career Development SQ4	119.21	278.239	0.08	.	0.909
Career Development SQ5	119.19	277.832	0.098	.	0.908
Career Development SQ6	119.21	276.01	0.158	.	0.907
Employee Engagement SQ7	118.97	248.106	0.742	.	0.898
Employee Engagement SQ8	119.33	253.155	0.656	.	0.9
Employee Engagement SQ9	119.83	269.43	0.272	.	0.907
Employee Engagement SQ10	119.37	254.502	0.684	.	0.899
Employee Engagement SQ11	118.91	263.991	0.512	.	0.903
Employee Engagement SQ12	119.16	268.687	0.379	.	0.905
Employee Engagement SQ13	119.09	264.506	0.45	.	0.904
Employee Engagement SQ14	118.9	264.832	0.477	.	0.903
Employee Engagement SQ15	119.29	264.664	0.508	.	0.903
Employee Engagement SQ16	118.89	267.882	0.449	.	0.904
Employee Engagement SQ17	119.3	268.898	0.429	.	0.904
Employee Engagement SQ18	119.29	266.696	0.502	.	0.903
Relationship Management SQ19	119.2	259.861	0.604	.	0.901
Relationship Management SQ20	119.04	263.52	0.544	.	0.902
Relationship Management SQ21	119.36	252.967	0.744	.	0.898
Relationship Management SQ22	118.81	263.435	0.577	.	0.902
Relationship Management SQ23	118.87	263.513	0.591	.	0.902
Relationship Management SQ24	119.2	261.85	0.458	.	0.904
Relationship Management SQ25	118.71	262.057	0.591	.	0.901
Work Environment SQ26	118.97	260.043	0.648	.	0.901
Work Environment SQ27	119	272.822	0.272	.	0.906
Work Environment SQ28	119	263.273	0.59	.	0.902
Work Environment SQ29	119.07	262.861	0.645	.	0.901
Work Environment SQ30	118.72	271.117	0.375	.	0.905
Work Environment SQ31	119.06	264.095	0.529	.	0.902
Work Environment SQ32	119.06	259.839	0.642	.	0.901
Work Environment SQ33	119.05	269.603	0.31	.	0.906
Gender	121.42	280.624	0.037	.	0.907
Age Range	121.69	281.3	0.008	.	0.907