



Recognition of Employee Engagement in the Ministry of Education

التعريف بنهج إشراك الموظفين في وزارة التربية والتعليم

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes employee engagement as a HR management strategy, particularly as it is applicable in the Ministry of Education. It covers the concept of employee engagement from a broad-based perspective including factors that drive it, its benefits to an organization and the workforce, and the negative impacts of having a disengaged workforce. The line of argument is based on a review of the literature and on primary data from an empirical study conducted in the UAE. Unstructured interviews and structured questionnaires were used as the research instruments to collect data from 30 respondents. These respondents are key stakeholders in the Ministry of Education and were selected through a stratified sampling method that was complemented with simple random sampling. The main finding of the study is that employee engagement improves employees' enthusiasm for their jobs, and this translates to improved efficiency in service delivery since an enthusiastic workforce will exert discretionary effort to ensure the success of their organization.

Keywords: **HR Strategy, employee engagement, disengaged workforce.**

الملخص

تحل هذه الأطروحة أهمية إدراك معنى انتماء الموظفين لمكان العمل كاستراتيجية لإدارة الموارد البشرية ، وعلى وجه اخص قابلية تطبيقه في وزارة التربية والتعليم. ايضا تقوم الرسالة بتغطية مفهوم انتماء الموظفين من منظور واسع وما هي العوامل التي تدفعها ، أهميتها و فوائدها على القوى العاملة و أماكن العمل , وما هي السلبيات التي قد تواجه القوى العاملة التي ليس لديها حس الانتماء لأماكن العمل. على الرغم من أن الدراسة تستخدم مراجعة الأدب لدعم الحجج الرئيسية، فإنه يقوم أساسا على البيانات الأولية. وتستخدم هذه الدراسة المقابلات غير المنظمة والاستبيانات المنظمة كأدوات بحثية من خلالها لجمع البيانات الأولية من 30 من المجيبين. وكان المشاركون من أصحاب المصلحة الرئيسيين في وزارة التربية والتعليم، وتم اختيار طريقة أخذ العينات الدراسيه بطريقة معتمدة التي تم استكمالها بأخذ العينات العشوائية البسيطة. والنتيجة الرئيسية للدراسة هي أن مشاركة الموظفين تحسن حماسة القوى العاملة في وظيفتها، وهذا يترجم إلى تحسين الكفاءة في تقديم الخدمات حيث أن مثل هذه القوة العاملة ستبدل جهودا تقديرية لضمان نجاح المنظمة.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	i
LIST OF FIGURES	iv
LIST OF TABLES	v
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Research Overview.....	1
<i>1.11. The Aims/Objectives of the Study</i>	1
1.2. Research Problem	2
1.3. Scope	5
<i>1.31. Main Problems</i>	5
<i>1.32. Sub-Problems</i>	6
1.5. Research Limitations	7
1.6. Main Research Constructs.....	8
1.7. Research Assumptions	9
1.4. Research Aims and Objectives	10
Main Aim	10
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1. Introduction	12
2.2. Definitions	13
2.3. Roles of Different Stakeholders in the Ministry of Education in Building an Engaged Workforce	<u>1617</u>
2.4. Factors That Drive Employee Engagement in Organizations	20
<i>2.41. Effective Communication System</i>	20
<i>2.42. Workplace Authenticity and Transparency</i>	22

2.45. <i>Trust Employees</i>	30
2.5. Benefits of Building a Highly Engaged Workforce.....	32
2.51. <i>Improved Efficiency in Service Delivery</i>	32
2.52. <i>Improved Levels of Job Satisfaction</i>	33
2.53. <i>Improved Productivity</i>	34
2.54. <i>Improved Levels of Employee Retention</i>	35
2.55. <i>Improved Levels of Workplace Innovations</i>	<u>3637</u>
2.6. Impact of Employee Disengagement	<u>3738</u>
2.61. <i>Reduced Workplace Safety and Deteriorated Health</i>	<u>3738</u>
2.62. <i>Increased Cost of Operation</i>	39
2.63. <i>Tainted Organization's Reputation</i>	<u>4142</u>
2.64. <i>High Employee Turnover Rate</i>	<u>4344</u>
2.7. Summary	<u>4445</u>
2.71. <i>Research Questions Derived from the Review of the Literature</i>	<u>4647</u>
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	<u>4849</u>
3.1. Introduction/Research Methodology/Paradigm.....	<u>4849</u>
3.2. Research Design	<u>4950</u>
3.3. Population and Sample	<u>5152</u>
3.3.1. <i>Population</i>	<u>5152</u>
3.3.2. <i>Sample and Sampling Method</i>	<u>5153</u>
3.4. Research Instruments	<u>5354</u>
3.4.1. <i>Unstructured Interview</i>	<u>5354</u>
3.4.2. <i>Structured Questionnaire</i>	<u>5355</u>
3.5. Procedures for Data Collection	<u>5455</u>

3.6. Limitations of the Study	<u>5657</u>
3.7. Validity and Reliability.....	<u>5657</u>
3.7.1. <i>External Validity</i>	<u>5657</u>
3.7.2. <i>Internal Validity</i>	<u>5758</u>
3.7.3. <i>Reliability of the Study</i>	<u>5758</u>
3.8.1 Research Planning / Time-table	<u>6162</u>
3.8.2 Research Planning / Consistency Matrix.....	<u>6162</u>
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	<u>6263</u>
1.1. Data Analysis and Interpretation	<u>6263</u>
1.2.1. <i>Levels of Employee Engagement in the Ministry of Education</i>	<u>6263</u>
1.2.2. <i>Key Aspects of Employee Engagement in the Ministry of Education</i>	<u>6364</u>
1.2.3. <i>Factors That Boost Employee Engagement in the Ministry of Education</i>	<u>6667</u>
1.2.4. <i>The Significance of Building a Highly Engaged Workforce in the Ministry of Education</i>	<u>7273</u>
1.2.5. <i>Challenges of Building an Engaged Workforce in the Ministry of Education</i>	<u>7273</u>
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION	<u>7475</u>
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION	<u>7778</u>
6.1. Policy Recommendation	<u>7879</u>
6.2. Recommendations for Future Studies	<u>8182</u>
REFERENCES	<u>8283</u>
APPENDICES	<u>9293</u>
Appendix 1. <i>Cover Letter</i>	<u>9293</u>
Appendix 2. <i>Actual Research Instruments</i>	<u>9394</u>
Appendix 3. Unstructured Interview Form	<u>9596</u>

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Key Aspects of Employee Engagement in the Ministry of Education	65
Figure 2 Factors That Boost Employee Engagement in the Ministry of Education	71

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Time-Plan for the Research Study.....	<u>5960</u>
Table 2 Consistency Matrix.....	<u>6162</u>

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Overview

This research study analyzes and assesses employee engagement as a management strategy and its applications and impact on organizational operations particularly within the education sector. Over recent years, employee engagement has become an issue of massive concern in the field of organizational management. This is evident from the fact that scholars and researchers have taken a keen interest on the issue during the last three decades with many of them analyzing how it can positively and negatively impact organizational operations. Therefore, the primary purpose of this dissertation is to provide an in-depth analysis of employee engagement as a management technique and determine how it can be applied within the Ministry of Education to improve the performance of teachers and students.

1.11. The Aims/Objectives of the Study

The principal objectives of this research study are:

- A) To determine and analyze factors that drive employee engagement in the Ministry of Education, and give an evidence-based review on how employee engagement is an important aspect of modern-day management strategy.
- B) To analyze the strategies which can be adopted to build a culture of employee engagement within the Ministry of Education.
- C) To analyze the role of the senior management in the education sector in ensuring the development of a well-engaged workforce in the Ministry of Education.

D) To analyze factors that limit the development of the engagement of the workforce in the Ministry of Education, and to develop relevant management approaches that can be implemented to mitigate this challenge.

E) To explain the benefits and challenges of building an engaged workforce in the education sector.

F) To determine the role of different players (teachers, students, and key decision-makers) in the education sector in creating a favorable environment for building an engaged workforce.

1.2. Research Problem

Employee engagement is a management technique that results in the creation of favourable working conditions for all employees to attain their optimum potential while remaining committed towards the goals, values, and visions of their organization (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes 2002, p. 268). Basically, Harter et al. (2002, p. 268) define employee engagement as a strong emotional commitment and/or connection that employees have towards the goals, visions, and values of companies for which they work. This implies that an engaged workforce is often resolved to ensure the success of the company rather than to pursue their own individual interests. Moreover, an engaged employee is likely to put extra effort in his/her job with the primary intention to ensure the attainment of the company's ultimate goals rather than solely to achieve self-interested gains such as enhanced paychecks and workplace promotions.

Macey and Schneider (2008, p. 13) explained that an engaged workforce is usually motivated to contribute towards the success of the organization at optimum levels along with having an enhanced sense of well-being. Essentially, an engaged workforce is built on an organizational leadership system where employees are appreciated, valued, and motivated. Such a

workforce normally comprises of employees who are confident, empowered, inspired, and enthusiastic about driving the organization towards excellence (Macey and Schneider 2008, p. 17). Given that it creates ‘mutual gain’ in an employment relationship by making employees contented with their workplaces as the base for achieving their optimum career potential, while at the same time enhancing the productivity, efficiency and profitability of the company for the benefit of the employer (MacLeod & Clarke 2009, p. 17), employee engagement has become an integral aspect of many modern-day organizational management systems.

The establishment of an engaged workforce is an internal state of being (Harter et al. 2002, p. 268) since it involves the mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing of employees to become enthusiastic, motivated, and committed towards the visions, missions and goals of the company. It takes a human resource team that has a positive attitude towards the organization, shares its vision, believes in its values, and is contented with its leadership approach to develop strong emotional ties (with the organization) and consequently make discretionary efforts towards the achievement of its ultimate goals. Employee engagement also involves being positively present in the operations of the organization by being ready and willing to contribute intellectual effort towards the realization of its goals (MacLeod & Clarke 2009, p. 19). Furthermore, other than developing an emotional tie with the organization, employee engagement helps individual workers to experience positive emotional and meaningful connections with each other. As a result, it contributes immensely towards building coherent workforces in organizations.

According to a review by Luthans and Peterson (2002, p. 376) employee engagement is based on trust, good-will, integrity, and two-way communication between the leadership of an organization and its human resource team. Therefore, it is an approach to organizational leadership that enhances business success by improving individual and organizational performance,

productivity, and overall wellbeing. Additionally, employee engagement can not only be measured but should also be nurtured and can be dramatically improved through the adoption of proper organizational leadership systems. This sentiment is strongly supported by Albrecht (2011, p. 27) who pointed out that employee engagement is achievable by embracing an organizational leadership system in which employees understand their specific roles in the organization in facilitating the realization of its ultimate goals. An engaged workforce also understands the operations of change in the organization designed to meet the dynamics of the fluctuating business environment. It also provides supportive and innovative ideas on how to enhance the operations of the organization to improve its productivity, efficiency in service delivery, and profitability.

Albrech (2011, p. 47) has argued that employee engagement is attainable by involving employees directly in the decision-making operations of the organization. By so doing, the organization is able to internalize its short and long-term objectives among its employees and that consequently builds trust amongst them. Engaged employees are also empowered and tend to feel special attachment to the organization and its ultimate objectives. Other HR management strategies that enhance the levels of employee engagement in organizations as outlined by Luthans and Peterson (2002 p. 381) are the provision of regular and constructive feedback, clear communication of the organization's goals and vision, facilitation of career growth and development among employees, and adoption of appropriate employee recognition and motivation systems. Creating an engaged workforce also involves an adherence to strong and authentic organizational values, which are often built on trust and mutual respect. These values guide the operations of the organization and contribute significantly in enhancing the levels of commitment of employees towards the success of the organization. Thus, as MacLeod and Clarke (2009, p. 21) have asserted, employee engagement significantly concerns the creation of favourable conditions in which

employees develop emotional ties with their organizations and offer more of their potential and capabilities towards the realization of the company's ultimate goals.

1.3. Scope

This subsection of the chapter focuses on the description as well as analysis of the major issues that need to be addressed by the research study. Basically, the subsection identifies and analyzes matters of concern within the topic of study in order to give valuable insights into the exact issues which the research study aims to find solutions.

1.31. Main Problems

- 1) While employee engagement has become a mainstream approach of management in today's business environment, the education sector has not yet significantly embraced it, and that has consequently limited the overall performance of the UAE Ministry of Education.
- 2) The failure to develop an engaged workforce in the Ministry of Education is a primary risk factor for high levels of employee turnover in the education sector.
- 3) The top leadership in the Ministry of Education has overlooked the need to develop an engaged workforce, a factor that has consequently led to significant decline in the performance and efficiencies of service delivery within the sector of education.
- 4) Employees in the Ministry of Education lack the emotional ties with their employers because they are not engaged in their workplaces, and that has not only limited their career growth and development at personal levels but also has reduced the overall productivity and efficiency in terms of service delivery of the Ministry.

- 5) The lack of sufficient knowledge among the top leaders in the Ministry of Education on the benefits and drawbacks of employee engagement as a technique of management is the leading stumbling block for the development of engaged workforces in the education sector.
- 6) Poor leadership systems in the Ministry of Education have made it difficult to achieve high levels of employee engagement in the education sector.

1.32. Sub-Problems

- 1) The desire to achieve optimum career growth and development rather than organizational success among employees in the Ministry of Education is a major contributing factor for the low levels of employee engagement in the sector of education.
- 2) The lack of comprehensive understanding of the relationship between employee compensation, employee recognition, employee motivation, employee satisfaction, and employee engagement among top leaders in the Ministry of Education has made it more difficult for the education sector to create highly engaged workforces.
- 3) A majority of key stakeholders in the Ministry of Education do not perceive employee engagement as a key management technique that can significantly improve the quality of education; hence, it is difficult to build appropriately engaged workforces in the Ministry of Education.
- 4) The failure to create favourable workplace environments within which to build an engaged workforce in the education sector has drastically limited the implementation of management strategies that are aimed at achieving high levels of employee engagement in the Ministry of Education.

- 5) The lack of belief and confidence in the leadership of the Ministry of Education by key stakeholders in the education sector, especially teachers and other junior employees in the Ministry, has made it virtually impossible for the education sector to attain high levels of employee engagement.
- 6) Insufficient support from the government in terms of financial investment and policy development is a significant risk factor for low levels of employee engagement in the Ministry of Education.

1.5. Research Limitations

One of the main limitations of this research study is the underrepresentation of the key players/stakeholders in the Ministry of Education. Clearly, the Ministry of Education is one of the leading and most important ministries in the government, especially due to the fact that it serves millions of students from the elementary to graduate levels of learning and employs thousands of staff members including teachers and the top leadership for the Ministry. However, the study only involved two representatives from the top leadership of the Ministry, and eight representatives from the teaching community with members from each of the main levels of learning in the Ministry of Education, which are: kindergarten, primary/elementary, and secondary levels. Also, the study involved 20 other respondents who completed and returned the structured questionnaires. The study assumes that the ideas or information collected from the 30 stakeholders in the education sector represents the situation in the entire Ministry of Education. This is likely to be inaccurate because the stakeholders who have been directly involved in the study cannot sufficiently or satisfactorily represent the thoughts of thousands of people operating within the Ministry of Education.

The second limitation of this study is the fact that it uses an extremely small sample size to arrive at its findings. As noted above, the study involved only 30 respondents to represent thousands of stakeholders in the Ministry of Education. While the researcher tried as much as possible to involve representatives from each of the main groups that influence the operations of the Ministry of Education including the leadership of the Ministry and employees of the Ministry at all levels (teachers), it is undeniable that the number of representatives directly involved in the study does not sufficiently represent the actual numbers of stakeholders of the Ministry. Therefore, as it is common knowledge, the use of an extremely small sample size (a sample size that does not satisfactorily represent the sample population) makes the outcomes of the study arguably inaccurate and unreliable. Hence, given the small sample size of this study, it is arguable that the legitimacy, accuracy, and reliability of its findings are significantly compromised.

1.6. Main Research Constructs

- 1) Stakeholders - people with an interest or concern in the Ministry of Education. In this study, the main stakeholders discussed are the government, the leadership of the Ministry of Education, and employees of the Ministry (the teaching community).
- 2) Discretionary effort - the levels of effort or input that employees of the Ministry of Education put in their work out of goodwill, and is often beyond and above the minimum effort required.
- 3) Going the extra mile - to work harder than expected or required in order to achieve specific ultimate goals of the Ministry of Education.
- 4) Employee/job satisfaction - the level of contentment that an employee of the Ministry of Education has with his/her job.

- 5) Employee motivation - the levels of energy, commitment, and innovation that employees in the Ministry of Education bring to their workplaces.
- 6) Work enthusiasm - the levels of excitement, interest, eagerness, passion, and zeal that employees in the Ministry of Education have towards their jobs.
- 7) Feeling of value - the feeling of being appreciated among employees by the management of the Ministry of Education.
- 8) Employee recognition - the acknowledgement of the efforts exerted by employees in the Ministry of Education towards the realization of its ultimate goals.
- 9) Conflict of interest - a situation in which key stakeholders in the Ministry of Education are involved in multiple interests that could potentially reduce their motivation and desire to achieve high performance in their workplaces.
- 10) Mutual gains - a situation in which both (or all) involved parties (stakeholders) benefit out of a given operation, in this case, out of building an engaged workforce in the Ministry of Education.

1.7. Research Assumptions

Several assumptions are applicable in the execution of this research study. These are:

- 1) All respondents involved in the study, both for the survey and interviews, will give honest and candid responses so that the researcher is able to collect accurate data that will be used to arrive at the findings of the study.
- 2) The responses given by the interviewees and respondents of the surveys represent the actual situation and thoughts of all stakeholders in the Ministry of Education and the education sector in its entirety.

3) All respondents who took part in the study had sincere and genuine interest; hence, they gave their honest and candid responses devoid of any influences from external factors such as the fear of retaliation from the top management of the Ministry of Education and senior government officials.

1.4. Research Aims and Objectives

Main Aim

It is intended that this research study will be significant for the Ministry of Education and the entire education sector in multiple ways. One of the main benefits of the study for the education sector is the fact that it provides evidence-based analysis of the application of the concept of employee engagement in the Ministry of Education. Through this in-depth analysis, key stakeholders in the Ministry of Education are able to obtain informed and detailed insights into employee engagement as a key management strategy and consequently develop operational policies that would not only enhance the performance of the education sector but also improve job satisfaction among employees in the Ministry of Education. Following that, the quality of education could exponentially improve while the Ministry of Education continues to remain an attractive work destination for top scholars in society.

Research Objectives

The study analyzes the main strategies that could be adopted to attain high levels of employee engagement in the Ministry of Education. Ranging from the creation of effective communication systems, provision of opportunities for career growth and development.

While it explains the challenges of creating an engaged workforce in the Ministry of Education, the study uses reliable evidence from scholars to give recommendations on the best management practices that can be applied to overcome these challenges.

Another significant contribution of this dissertation is the fact that it elaborates on the benefits of employee engagement not only for the employer in the Ministry of Education but also for the employees of the Ministry.

This study is also beneficial because it explains the roles of different stakeholders in the Ministry of Education in the implementation of employee engagement strategies. In particular, the dissertation explains that the government has a significant role to play in building an engaged workforce in the Ministry of Education.

It gives a well elaborated outline of what should be done by different players in the education sector to attain high levels of employee engagement, which is certainly an important factor in improving the levels of efficiency in the operations of the Ministry.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter analyzes the concept of employee engagement, including in regards to its acknowledgement within the Ministry of Education. It uses a wide range of legitimate sources that are relevant to the topic of study to present an elaborate analysis of the acknowledgement of employee engagement as an HR management strategy within the Ministry of Education. These sources include professional journals, books, practitioner reports, and scholarly articles. Moreover, in order to enhance the levels of accuracy and reliability of the study, this chapter uses sources that have been investigated through experimental research and statistical analyses (Spindler et al., 2007, p. 25). In addition, these sources of information are up-to-date to ensure they assess the topic of employee engagement based on the changing dynamics of today's business environment.

One of the main areas that the literature review of this dissertation covers is the strategy of implementing employee engagement in the Ministry of Education. With reference then to reliable sources of information, this chapter gives an in-depth analysis of the factors that drive high levels of workforce engagement as well as outlines their application in the education sector. The chapter uses appropriate sources to explain the benefits vis-à-vis drawbacks of building an engaged workforce within the Ministry of Education. What is fascinating about this field is the fact that while many sources of information that have been cited in this study recognize the substantial challenges that surrounds the whole concept of employee engagement and its application in organizational settings, their statistical analyses and extensive industry research investigations

highlight the benefits of building well-engaged workforces in organizations/institutions clearly outweigh the drawbacks (Torraco, 2005, p. 359).

This chapter is equally categorical in explaining the roles of different stakeholders in the Ministry of Education in building highly engaged workforces. In supporting its major arguments and ideas with information from reliable and up-to-date sources, this chapter shows that building a culture of employee engagement in the ministry of education is mainly dependent on the leadership and management approach embraced by the top leadership of the ministry. This chapter points out that clarity in communication of the visions and goals of the ministry to all its stakeholders and consequently developing and implementing appropriate policies that guide the operations of the ministry in line with employee engagement are the main strategies through which to build highly engaged workforces within the sector of education. Therefore, this chapter provides a detailed and comprehensive set of valuable insights into the strategies that can be implemented to improve the levels of employee engagement in the Ministry of Education as well as refuting potential criticisms of the necessity of building engaged workforces.

2.2. Definitions

Employee engagement has become a mainstream concept and an integral part of HR management systems throughout the global corporate and business environment. Although it has not yet been fully incorporated in the management systems of many local corporations, the concept of employee engagement is increasingly gaining prevalence among corporate leaders (Saks, 2006, p. 613). This is evident from the fact that statistical analyses and industry research reviews have shown that more corporate leaders than ever recognize the benefits of employee engagement and are launching operational strategies and policies that aim to enhance the levels of engagement

among their workforces (Rich, Lepine & Crawford 2010, p. 624). Nonetheless, with statistics showing that only 13% of the global workforce is engaged in its workplaces, it is apparent that the world is currently experiencing an employee engagement crisis. This crisis not only limits the ability of employees to reach their optimum potentials and maximum career growth and developments but also has adverse effects on the global economy.

The education sector is one of the highly affected sectors influenced by the global crisis of employee engagement (Attridge, 2009, p. 388). This dilemma can be attributed to the fact that unlike other sectors of the economy whose success is measured by the profits they make, the purpose of the education sector is to educate the future and existing workforces to contribute effectively to the challenges of local and global economies. With the dominant culture in today's society where corporate leaders focus more on productivity and profitability rather than efficiency in service delivery and workers' wellbeing, the education sector has lagged behind in terms of building engaged workforces since its ultimate goals are predominantly not concerned with increasing profitability (Council, 2004, p. 22). Therefore, leaders in the Ministry of Education have not invested significantly in laying down structures and implementing policies that motivate employee engagement, and that omission has subsequently limited the performances of the ministry (Macey and Schneider, 2008, p. 26).

In addition, due to the unique expertise and professionalism among a majority of the employees (teachers) in the Ministry of Education, it has experienced lower levels of employee turnover as compared to other sectors of the economy. Basically, the teaching profession is peculiar due to the kind of expertise that teachers receive in their schools of occupational professional education and training (Bhatnagar, 2007, p. 645). Unlike in other sectors of the economy where employees are just required to be proficient in teachers' areas of specialty such as accounting and

business management, the teaching profession requires its experts to be qualified professionals in their lines of professionalism and be able to complement their expertise with excellent teaching abilities. In essence, a teacher of Accounting (must have competence in mathematics) should be an expert in accounting as well as have additional skills in working with students and conveying the knowledge he/she has to them a clear and understandable ways. The same applies to other professions like management, human resource, law, and medicine among others (Power et al., 2016, p. 265). As a result, many teachers gain additional skills in their schools of knowledge and professional discipline, a factor that often makes them teachers for virtually all their professional lives. While this could be advantageous to the education sector, it is also a drawback to the sector because it means that employers in the education sector enjoy some levels of monopoly over the supply of expert labour. This is exacerbated by the fact that many teachers remain teachers for the rest of their lives. Often, they only change their workplaces from one educational institution to another and still remain employees of the Ministry of Education. Due to the limited degree of competition within the teaching occupations, the Ministry of Education tends to experience low levels of employee turnover (Ridge et al., 2014, p. 136). As a result, its leadership often does not find it very important to instigate modern human resource management strategies such as employee engagement and high performance employee motivation in order to mitigate the challenge of employee turnover. This has remained a significant risk factor and reason for the failure to build highly engaged workforces in the Ministry of Education (Ho, Wong and Lee, 2011, p. 28).

Nevertheless, it is case that the Ministry of Education is among the most important institutions in any given country's economy and in global society. This is because the ministry responsible for education determines the future of any given economy. By providing the technical and professional skills needed in the future labor markets by young people, the Ministry of

Education remains the hub of the future economy. It prepares employees who eventually will take over the labor market from the currently employed group of technicians and professionals (Ridge et al., 2014, p. 148). The efficiency of this sector can be best improved through the adoption of an employee engagement strategy of human resource management. By building a highly engaged workforce in the sector, employees in the Ministry of Education are likely to be happy with their jobs, become more proud of their respective responsibilities and professions, and exert discretionary efforts in their workplaces. They are also more likely to be enthusiastic about their jobs since they will feel valued by their employers and are guaranteed mutual gains as a result of working in highly engaged workforces. With increased employee engagement, therefore, the quality of education in the society is bound to drastically improve, a factor that impacts on the stability and effectiveness of future labour markets as well as the future of the economy (Gaad, Arif & Scott, 2006, p. 296).

Therefore, an analysis of employee engagement is a vital technique for human resource management and its application in the Ministry of Education is definitely an important area of research particularly due to its potential long-term impact on the education sector and the economy in its entirety (Godwin, 2006, p. 11). This justifies the relevance of this research study since it assesses the impact of the acknowledgement of employee engagement in the Ministry of Education and its ultimate consequences for the education sector and the national economy.

2.3. Roles of Different Stakeholders in the Ministry of Education in Building an Engaged Workforce

The Ministry of Education has many stakeholders with the major beneficiaries being students in all levels of learning (Raven, 2011, p. 138). This section of the chapter focuses on arguing that different players within the Ministry of Education have significant roles in ensuring the creation of a highly engaged workforce. Ultimately, this chapter explains that while the ministry assumes the leadership responsibility for the sector of education, it requires collaboration and cooperation from other vital stakeholders to implement policies that will facilitate the attainment of the highest possible levels of employee engagement within it.

One of the main stakeholders of the Ministry of Education that plays an enormous role in building an engaged workforce in the education sector is the government. Primarily, the Ministry of Education operates under the government. The government constructs the ministry, funds it, recruits its employees, and develops policies that govern it (Knight, 2011, p. 237). Therefore, for the Ministry of Education to successfully build a highly engaged workforce, it has to receive sufficient support from the government. For instance, the government should work together with specialists in the education sector and human resource management to design policies that enable the attainment of high levels of employee engagement within the Ministry of Education. These policies will guide the operations of the ministry to ensure proper compensation of employees, adoption of organizational and management practices that uphold employee motivation and recognition, ensure effective resolution of conflicts within the ministry, and enable the provision of sufficient opportunities for career growth and development for employees of the ministry. By so doing, a majority of employees in this ministry, especially teachers, will enjoy high levels of job satisfaction. As a result, they will be more likely to go the extra mile and make discretionary efforts in their jobs so as to reach their optimum levels of performances for the common benefit of their careers, their students, and the future economy. The government is also responsible to ensure the

recruitment of well qualified and highly experienced people to manage the Ministry of Education (Ridge et al., 2014, p. 145). It is common knowledge that highly qualified and experienced persons who work in their areas of expertise are more likely to deliver better results than will the unqualified and inexperienced. Since it is the role of the government to hire and fire the top leadership of the Ministry of Education, it is acceptable that the government has the absolute power to transform the ministry into a very successful and high-performing entity. It can achieve this goal by hiring the top brains in the education sector and demonstrate intolerance of mediocrity in the performance of the ministry. With that, it follows unconditionally that the government will be able to develop operational policies that will help in creating an engaged workforce in the Ministry of Education and establish the leadership that will implement the requisite policies (Macpherson, Kachelhoffer & El Nemr, 2007, p. 67).

The top leadership of the ministry is also an important stakeholder that has a key role to play in improving the levels of employee engagement in the education sector. The leadership of the ministry is an influential force in designing the policies that govern the ministry. Other than designing the policies, it is the ultimate responsibility of the ministry's leadership to oversee the implementation of these policies (Findlow, 2005, p. 291). The ministry has authority over its employees. Thus, it is responsible to communicate its goals and visions to its employees, who are mainly teachers, in order to make them understand the need to adopt a style of leadership and common operational system that adheres to the principles of employee engagement. The leadership of the ministry is also responsible to create awareness about the whole concept of employee engagement throughout its workforce. It can achieve this by taking its employees through regular employee training programs where they are given accurate information about the principles of employee engagement, the mutual benefits of building a strong workforce, and the strategies of

implementing a management system that facilitates the attainment of high levels of employee engagement (Shuck & Wppard, 2010, p. 101). In addition, it is the responsibility of the ministry to establish a culture of employee innovation and recognition, provide internal opportunities for career growth and development, ensure the attainment of high levels of professional dignity, and implement employee training and mentorship programs within the education sector. This culture is important in the ministry because it creates a platform from which to implement employee engagement strategy while at the same time increasing the zeal among its employees to become fully engaged in their workplaces (Macey and Schneider, 2008, p. 24).

The employees of the Ministry of Education, particularly teachers in all levels of education, are also key stakeholders who have essential roles to play towards the attainment of high levels of employee engagement in the ministry. As is common knowledge, employees are the primary executers of organizational/institutional policies. Given that they work on behalf of their employers, employees in the Ministry of Education ought to understand the goals, visions, values, and missions of the ministry to be able to abide by them (Gaad, Arif & Scott, 2006, p. 297). Above that, employees must believe in the vision of their employer and demonstrate the desire to make it a reality so they can become maximally effective in implementing the policies set out to achieve it. Therefore, it becomes of great importance for employees in the Ministry of Education to understand the importance of building an engaged workforce, appreciate the policies put in place to improve employee engagement within the ministry, and show a positive attitude and commitment towards the attainment of the goals and vision of the ministry. As a result, the government and the ministry will find it easier to guide employees towards the realization of this dream (Swarnalatha and Prasanta, 2013, p. 3876). However, if employees are ignorant of the goals and vision of the ministry, they are unlikely to be enthusiastic about the implementation of the

policies that are aimed at improving levels of engagement within their workplaces. Hence, it is vital that the leadership of the ministry takes time to educate all of its employees about employee engagement and complement it with practices that help them to develop positive attitudes towards practice in order to implement successfully the policies that are designed to achieve excellence in terms of building highly engaged workforces (Luthans and Peterson, 2002, p. 382).

2.4. Factors That Drive Employee Engagement in Organizations

2.41. Effective Communication System

It is indisputable that communication is an essential aspect of organizational management. Through communication, the management of the organization is able to learn more about the concerns of employees in a timely fashion and attend to them in satisfactory ways. Communication also helps the leadership of a firm or institution to create awareness among employees on the policies laid down to achieve specific goals (Rodwell, Kienzle & Shadur, 1998, p. 281). In this context, effective communication involves creating a favorable environment on which information can easily, fluently, and clearly flow from one person to another within the setting of the organization. It is attributed by the adoption of democratic dialogue where all stakeholders of the ministry have the right to speak out their minds and be heard by their intended audiences without fear or favor (Maes, Weldy & Icenogle, 1997). Furthermore, effective communication involves the participation and collaboration of employees and other relevant stakeholders in the designing of goals, missions, and visions of the ministry as well as developing implementation policies that would ensure the attainment of the set goals and visions.

According to Robertson and Cooper (2010, p. 329), effective organizational communication systems enables the leadership of the organization to clearly communicate the goals and visions of the organization to appropriate audiences (the concerned stakeholders) in order to facilitate their realization or attainment. The goals, values, vision, and mission of an organization form the backbone of its operations. Therefore, an organization that has made its goals, mission, vision, and values clear to its employees is likely to achieve its ultimate objectives with ease and within a short period of time. Based on that, it is important for the Ministry of Education to adopt an effective internal communication strategy so as to attain the highest possible levels of employee engagement. Through effective organizational and management communication systems, the ministry will be able to clearly communicate its goals, vision, and mission to its employees and also outline the organizational values that it stands for as well as operational policies that will guide it towards the realization of its ultimate goals (Penrose, 2015, p. 501). Effective communication will also help the ministry to listen to the concerns of its employees and work with speed to find appropriate and satisfactory solutions for them. It will also help the top leadership of the ministry to consult directly with its employees on the efficiency of its operations and collect constructive criticisms and innovative ideas on what should be changed in order to create a more satisfied and engaged workforce (Mikkelsen, York & Arritola, 2015). By so doing, employees are bound to be more satisfied in their jobs, a factor that will consequently drive them towards becoming more enthusiastic about their jobs, develop positive attitudes towards the leadership and operations of the ministry, and more importantly develop the zeal to put discretionary efforts in their jobs to achieve the best possible performance as individuals and teams. This will fundamentally improve the levels of employee engagement within the Ministry of Education.

Effective communication is equally an important tool with which to amicably resolve conflicts in organizations. Certainly, conflicts are inevitable in any given organization, and the Ministry of Education is not different from any others in this respect. However, an effective organizational communication system will provide a clear framework on how stakeholders of the ministry can peacefully communicate their grievances to the relevant authorities and receive a fair hearing and just judgment (Markos & Sridevi 2010, p. 89). Within such a framework, junior employees will enjoy equal rights to a fair hearing and just judgment as do senior employees. Everyone in the organization has the right to report their concerns to the relevant authorities regardless of their position in relation to the leadership and authority hierarchy of the ministry. Also, an effective communication system will give employees of the ministry the right to share their discontents and compliments with the top leadership of the ministry without being subject to discrimination, retaliation, or any other form of mistreatment. With that, it follows that the ministry will be able to create a favourable working environment for all its employees by eliminating discrimination, and that will consequently ensure that employees are committed in their work and become more engaged in their jobs.

2.42. Workplace Authenticity and Transparency

Workplace authenticity refers to the genuineness of an organization in the execution of its core responsibilities. According to Schaufeli, Taris and Van Rhenen (2008, p. 177) statistical analyses and industry researches have confirmed the existence of a strong connection between organizational authenticity and employee engagement. Principally, an authentic organization is reputable in the eyes of employees, customers, competitors, and all other players in the business environment. Such an organization is likely to attract high performing employees who have focus

in the jobs and desire to achieve nothing but optimum organizational and career success. Such employees are often engaged in their workplaces because their top priority is to develop long-lasting and outstanding legacies with their organizations (Reis, Braga & Trullen, 2017, p. 1966). Hence, by becoming authentic, the Ministry of Education will be able to attract very ambitious and talented employees whose primary objective is to record the best possible performances in their places of work. Engaged employees work extremely hard and dedicate most of their time and minds in developing strategies with which to improve their performance and attain the goals of their employers.

The adoption of a culture of transparency in the Ministry of Education is also a significant factor that is an automatic driver of employee engagement. Transparency enables employees to understand how the organization runs its functions (Wagner 2006, p. 27). It enables employees to comprehend all operations of the organization ranging from its goals, vision, to short and long-term objectives. Transparency equally enables employees to understand how their contributions impact the operations of the organization. It provides a platform on which employees can openly and fearlessly discuss their performance with their immediate supervisors and receive honest feedback on their performance reports. Furthermore, transparency in operations enables employees and other stakeholders in the ministry to develop personal commitments and goals that are intended to help the organization attain its ultimate objectives. It achieves this by giving individual employees a systematic breakdown of the organizations' goals and making them to understand their individual contribution towards the attainment of these goals. As a result, it makes employees more committed to their work duties so that they make their individual contributions towards the attainment of the overall success of the organization (O'Malley, Fowler & Moore, 2016, p. 32).

Transparency is also perceived as a moral obligation of the leadership of any authentic organization. Employees who are keen to uphold high levels of workplace morality and professional ethics believe that transparency is an integral ingredient in the implementation of employee engagement strategy (Wagner 2006, p. 29). They perceive transparency as a strategy to allow democratic communication in the organization where all stakeholders, regardless of their positions in the organization, are subject to questioning and expected to give appropriate answers to the interested parties. Moreover, transparency comes along with accountability. Through transparency, all stakeholders in the organization will be able to observe their personal performances and those of other stakeholders in the organization. In such situations, high performance is expected from every single employee in his/her capacity of service. Thus, underperformance will attract attention from the management and or questioning from relevant stakeholders not with the intention to criticize and demoralize but with the aim to enhance accountability and address the potential causes of poor performance in candid and respectful manners (Tackney, 2018, p. 89). Therefore, the adoption of transparency in the operations of the Ministry of Education is bound to lead to high levels of workplace accountability, which in turn improves morality in the organization, enhances performance at individual and collective levels, and ultimately encourages employee engagement.

2.43. Effective Organizational Leadership Systems

The management of any given organization not only determines the levels of job satisfaction among its employees but also their work enthusiasm and consequently levels of workplace engagement. In essence, organizations and/or institutions that have adopted effective

leadership systems, especially those that show concern for employees' wellbeing, often have better engaged workforces than those that do not (Corace 2007, p. 171). This implies that employees desire to have managers and supervisors who not only care about their productivity and levels of workplace efficiency but also their personal lives. They want managers who care about how they feel, take interest in matters that are dear to them, and provide support for their out-of-work concerns. Basically, care leads to trust, which is a significant ingredient in driving engagement at workplaces. Therefore, it is important that the leadership of organizations employ managers who would show concern towards employees principally by demonstrating to them that they care about their workplace performance and also care about their wellbeing in and out of the work environment. With that, employees are bound to develop trust towards the management, and that eventually leads to improved levels of workplace engagement.

Effective organizational leadership systems also involve the implementation of proper talent management programs. According to Bhatnagar (2007, p. 647), talent management is key in driving employee engagement. Apparently, talent management is the commitment of an organization to recruit, retain, and develop the most talented and highly efficient employees in the job market. It not only helps to create an attraction force for top talented employees in the labour market but also creates an environment within which employees can attain their optimum career growth. Hence, it is vital that the leadership of any organization incorporates effective talent management programs in its operations in order to recruit the best employees, retain them, and help them to become better professionals for the benefit of the organization and their personal careers. Talent management can involve such programs as on-the-job training. This includes the adoption of skills training programs such as mentorship programs and implementing regular employee training programs through workshops (Sonnenberg, Zijderveld & Brinks, 2014, p. 277). On-the-

job training helps to equip employees with the skills they need to execute their duties at the highest possible levels of professionalism, a factor that often makes them confident in their abilities and better engaged in their workplaces. Talent management also involves the implementation of such programs as goal setting, performance reviews, team building, career planning and development, feedback programs, and provision of new workplace challenges through promotions, lateral movements and transfers of employees within the organization. The implementation of talent management programs often make employees feel valued, appreciated, accepted, and trusted by the management, and that eventually helps to keep them highly engaged in their workplaces (Al Ariss, Cascio, & Paauwe, 2014, p. 174).

Effective organizational leadership systems also create favorable workplace environments, which allow employees to exercise their right to freedom of personal expression, and consequently explore their innovative ideas. Workplaces are not meant to be prisons where employees are denied the freedom of expression and association. Ultimately, employees need to be able to express their honest feelings openly with each other and with the management regardless of whether or not they are good (Shamir & Howell, 2018, p. 262). This means that a favorable workplace provides an environment for candid communication where employees can express themselves without fear or favor. It should also have high levels of access to the management. This implies that employees ought to be able to approach their managers with ease and candidly share with them their joy and grievances, and receive the attention and support they deserve. Additionally, an effective workplace should give employees an opportunity to come up with innovative ideas and support their implementation to the extent that they are viable. Usually, highly-ambitious employees enjoy going the extra mile in their work to come up with new ideas on how to improve their personal performance and that of the overall organization (Collins & Holton, 2004, p. 221). While

innovative ideas may not be perfect at the beginning, providing support for them by consolidating expert knowledge and relevant ideas from different people can help to make them excellent. Therefore, an effective organizational leadership system does not only provide an opportunity for employees to be innovative in their workplaces but also listens carefully to their innovative ideas and provides moral and financial support for them in order to introduce new dimensions in the operations of the organization (Parry & Sinha, 2005, p. 169). By so doing, employees will feel supported by the management, which will eventually enhance their trust in the leadership of the organization and consequently make them better engaged in their workplaces. Therefore, creating an environment for candid communication, having an easily and readily accessible management, and building and supporting highly innovative workplaces contribute significantly to establishing a coherent workforce that has trust in the management; a factor that plays a vital role in driving employee engagement within organizations.

2.44. Opportunities for Career Growth and Development

In many cases, young, vibrant and ambitious employees always desire to develop their careers. Such employees normally perceive their jobs as adventures. They are usually committed to take up every possible opportunity available to them in order to attain optimum career growth and development. This sentiment is supported by Wolland and Shuck (2011, p. 429) who observed that highly talented and ambitious employees need to feel that are not stuck in dead-end jobs, but have sufficient opportunities for growth and advancement. Basically, all employees who are high performers need more opportunities for career advancement. In order to retain such employees, organizations are required to embrace management systems and organizational structures that offer opportunities for advancement to employees with outstanding performance. The failure to persuade employees to feel that the organization has sufficient room for them to grow and advance their

careers often encourages them either to leave for other firms that have such opportunities or remain in the organization and become disengaged (Wollard and Shuck 2011, p. 433). Either way, the organization stands to lose. Hence, it is paramount that the management of any organization adopts leadership systems that provide opportunities for career advancement to its employees.

Different strategies are available to provide opportunities for career growth and development. One of the main strategies through which to achieve this career opportunity is to embrace an organizational management system that supports internal promotion. Other than replacing the top managers of the organization with employees from outside, organizations should adopt management systems that nurture its own leaders and promote them from one rank to another within the firm. Essentially, the organization should have a succession system that identifies potential leaders from within its workforce, develops them into excellent managers through mentorship programs, and promotes them to appropriate positions at the right time (Nouri & Parker, 2013, p. 144). By so doing, organizations will be able to make their employees feel that their long-term career aspirations are attainable from within the organization and that will eventually lead them to be more engaged in their workplaces. Organizations can also create numerous job positions for its employees in order to increase their opportunities for career growth and development. For instance, an organization cannot have multiple Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) or Chief Executive Officer (CEOs) or Presidents. However, it can create such positions as Finance managers, operations managers, supervisors and other middle-level and top-management positions in order to cater for the need for career growth and development of its ambitious and highly talented employees. These positions may not necessarily come with large salary increments and greatly improved financial benefits, but they should always come with increased and more specialized responsibilities that will present employees new and better workplace challenges, which will

consequently help them to enhance their professional skills (Liu et al., 2010, 393). Nonetheless, promotions to the existing and created positions should exclusively be given to outstanding employees who have proven their abilities to lead the organization to greater heights. This will help employees to be more engaged in their jobs particularly because they will know that the failure to produce outstanding performance will suppress their career growth since the management will promote them based exclusively on merit. This strategy will also increase healthy internal competition among employees since all employees will work hard to produce the most impressive performance in order to stand a chance of being promoted up the organizational ranks, and that will definitely contribute to the establishment of highly engaged workforces (Bravo et al., 2011, p. 489).

Organizations can also provide opportunities for career growth and development to employees by implementing skills training programs (Stine et al., 2011, p. 207). One of the dominant skills training programs that can be adopted by organizations are mentorship programs. Under mentoring programs, talented and ambitious employees are able to advance their professional skills and experience through the guidance of senior employees and/or highly experienced and expert people in specific fields of operation. The experts (mentors) support and guide ambitious employees (mentees) and train them on how to become excellent professionals in given fields of operation (Mone et al. 2011, p. 207). Mentors achieve this by working together with mentees, giving them instructions to execute certain duties, and giving them assignments in their fields of expertise. Basically, mentorship programs are intended to instill specific values and dispositions in mentees, and to equip them with extensive knowledge and skills in certain operations to prepare them for future responsibilities in particular job positions. Skills training programs can also include taking employees through short and/or long-term professional courses that are meant to improve their expertise in specific areas of operations. Organizations can achieve

this by giving their employees educational vacations and even funding their studies. Other skills training programs that can be applied in organizations are the implementation of regular workshop programs on specific skills, giving pamphlets that contain information on ways to improve certain skills, and conducting regular skill-update training sessions within departments of an organization (Mone et al. 2011, p. 209-211). Through these skills training programs, employees will feel that the organization cares about the growth and development of their careers and that will consequently make them more engaged in their workplaces.

2.45. Trust Employees

According to Ho, Wong and Lee (2011, p. 26) employees in today's business environment value autonomy (independence/self-governance). They believe that since they have the necessary professional skills and experience needed to execute their mandates in their areas of specialty, they deserve to be allowed to perform their duties without unnecessary supervision from the management or any other authority for that matter. This does not mean that autonomy in workplaces should compromise accountability, but it should give employees the freedom to execute their duties without much influence from other parties, especially their immediate supervisors and the management ranks. However, this degree of independence in workplaces is only attainable when the management has trust in its employees.

Although it is important to uphold accountability within the workforce by regularly conducting performance reviews and monitoring employees' task and work operations, it is equally important to allow employees to self-manage themselves and their job tasks and work operations to a significant degree. This opportunity for self-management allows employees to use their intelligence, expertise, and experience to direct their work activities towards the accomplishment

of the organization's goals and attain their personal targets (Mayer & Gavin, 2005, p. 877). Moreover, autonomy in workplaces encourages employees to feel that the organization believes in their abilities. It also boosts the confidence of employees in their skills and professionalism since it conveys the sense that they are fully in charge of their areas of operation and the organization relies entirely on their proficiency, prowess, and efficiency to attain its goals. This eventually makes employees feel the pressure to produce outstanding performance by themselves since they would take full pride from their excellent performance and full accountability for their underperformance.

Building trust in employees also enhances their loyalty towards the organization (Ho et al. 2011, p. 39). Employees who feel trusted by the management to accomplish the goals of the organization are normally loyal to the organization. They usually commit their minds and work efforts towards ensuring the success of the organization, especially because they do not want to disappoint a management that has entrusted the vision of the organization in them. In addition, building trust in employees provides them with opportunities to develop innovative ideas and test their efficiency before presenting them to the management as viable and ready for adoption. Basically, having the freedom for self-management allows employees to develop their own work schedules so that they can be able to complete their assigned tasks within the deadlines and also have some time to engage in activities that are of interest to them like producing innovations. It encourages innovation in workplaces by minimizing if not eliminating the fear of failure since employees who are self-managed can try out new ideas in their own free time without being criticized or discouraged by their supervisors, especially in the early stages of the innovation process (Lämsä & Pučėtaitė, 2006, p. 135). As a result, employees who are trusted by the management to the extent that they can execute their duties without unnecessary influence and

control from their supervisors are more motivated to try out new operational techniques and strategies in their personal capacities before involving other parties. Hence, trusting in employees not only enhances employee loyalty to the organization but also encourages workplace creativity and innovation. It also improves self-discipline among employees and instills the sense of self-driven accountability. Generally, trusting in employees makes them more committed towards the success of the organization, and that improves the levels of employee engagement in workplaces (Vosselman, 2016, p. 611).

2.5. Benefits of Building a Highly Engaged Workforce

2.51. Improved Efficiency in Service Delivery

An engaged employee usually exhibits discretionary effort in his or her work aiming to attain the best results possible for the organization. Such employees each dedicate their mind, body, time, and skills in the operations of their employing organization with the principal intention to achieve short and long-term goals. They commonly strive the extra mile to include working overtime, conducting extensive research investigations on specific subjects relevant to the organization, coming up with innovative ideas and new products, and even mobilizing their colleagues to work smarter and harder in order to achieve the goals of the organization and realize its vision (Nene, 2016, p. 23). Engaged employees are also the ambassadors of the organization. They market the organization's brands and overall operations by delivering the best services to customers and disseminating/spreading positive information about their organizations and their employers. Essentially, engaged employees not only do everything within their reach to ensure the success of the organization but also work towards building a highly reputable and authentic

organization with the sole intention to increase its clientele in the market. Therefore, just as was supported by Cook (2008, p. 97), an engaged workforce is bound to work harder and in a more efficient way since its chief objective is often to attain the best results for the organization. In line with that, it is undoubted that a highly engaged workforce is normally motivated to produce outstanding performance with the intention to help the organization earn a competitive edge in the market, a factor that helps to improve the levels of efficiency in service delivery in the organization.

2.52. Improved Levels of Job Satisfaction

Several factors come to play in building an engaged workforce. For instance, the organization should adopt an effective internal communication system in order to ensure its employees understand its goals and vision and become part of it. The communication system also assists the management to convey information such as policies and instructions for operational change to employees in ways that are clear and easily comprehended. It equally facilitates effective and mutually satisfactory resolution of conflicts within organizations (Jung et al., 2016, p. 71). Basically, with an effective communication system, the organization is able to build a happy workforce that operates in an environment where employees have the freedom to share their grievances and express their personal feelings without being prejudiced. Other factors that lead to the establishment of an engaged workforce such as the provision of sufficient opportunities for personal and professional growth and development, implementation of skills training programs, adoption of effective organizational leadership systems, building trust in employees, and developing an authentic and transparent organization, are all important factors that promote job satisfaction (Gubman 2004, p. 42). In relation to job satisfaction, it follows undisputedly that a highly engaged workforce is a highly satisfied workforce. It is noticeable that a workforce that

experiences high levels of job satisfaction is likely to be more committed towards the success of the organization. Such a workforce is not only likely to be loyal to the organization but also is prepared to do everything possible to achieve the goals of the organization including working overtime and becoming the best ambassadors of the organization. Moreover, high levels of job satisfaction minimize the levels of employee turnover since employees who are satisfied with their organizations neither desire to leave the organization by themselves nor are easily swayed by competing organizations to join them for simple benefits like increased salaries and improved organizational positions (Neale, 2016, p. 739).

2.53. Improved Productivity

A highly engaged workforce is usually enthusiastic about its job, a factor that translates into an increased willingness to put in discretionary effort in order to ensure the organization realizes its vision and attains its goals and objectives. Primarily, a highly engaged employee would go the extra mile to ensure he/he executes the duties assigned to him/her in the most professional manner possible and within the set deadlines. Such an employee would also dedicate his time and effort towards the attainment of high levels of efficiency and productivity (Kumar & Pansari, 2015, p. 69). They would not find unjustified reasons to be absent from work or evade any added responsibilities. They would also not strongly resist organizational change but provide ideas on how to implement the necessary change in the most productive, efficient and competitive manner. Additionally, an engaged workforce is very unlikely to be wasteful of the organization's resources. It is likely to use all resources of the organization including time and infrastructure in the right way at any given time in order to improve efficiency and productivity (Wagner 2006, p. 28). Therefore, by building a highly engaged workforce, organizations are able to have dedicated human resource

teams that have their minds and efforts set towards attainment of the organizational vision and goals through improved efficiency, accountability, self-management, and commitment; and that subsequently increases the overall productivity of the organization.

2.54. Improved Levels of Employee Retention

A workforce composed of employees who are all enthusiastic about their jobs is often highly engaged; and hence is more likely to stick with and serve the organization for long periods (MacLeod & Clarke 2009, p. 41). Through being satisfied in the organization, employees have their minds committed towards the long-term goals and vision of the organization. Essentially, a highly engaged employee will usually internalize the goals of the organization and becomes part of its vision. Such an employee primarily desires to be part of the long-term success of the organization. He/she is usually motivated to work smarter and more efficiently motivated by the internal desire to make the organization great rather than the benefits and/or rewards he/she receives from the organization. His/her attitude towards the organization and its customers is normally driven by the zeal to become the best in terms of productivity and competitiveness (Kumar & Pansari, 2016, p. 502). Also, an engaged employee normally has trust in the management of the organization. By trusting in the management, he/she becomes loyal to the organization; a factor that diminishes his/her desire to quit the job. Furthermore, a highly engaged workforce is usually enthusiastic about its work. It executes its duties with the objective of establishing a competitive force in the market. It also works enthusiastically with the management to establish favorable working environments within which to attain the highest possible levels of personal and professional growth and development. It also takes part in making critical decisions on important matters that pertain to the organization like policy development. Due to that, the workforce feels

responsible for the success of the organization; and that usually encourages it to stick together as one team to achieve the goals of the organization (Jiang & Men, 2017, p. 230). Thus, the establishment of a highly engaged workforce helps to improve the levels of employee retention in organizations because such employees are not only linked to each other and the organization through friendship and loyalty ties, but also share the long-term vision of the organization. They are normally an integral part of the organization and have the pressure to make the organization as successful as possible. Hence, such a team is more likely to work together in challenging times in order to achieve the best solutions under the circumstances and motivate each other to attain the highest targets and difficult goals set by the organization (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2014, p. 64). Basically, highly engaged employees hardly ever consider quitting their jobs even in the most difficult times because their commitment and loyalty towards the organization is not motivated by what the organization does for them in terms of perks and promotions but what they do for the organization in order to achieve its goals and actualize its vision.

2.55. Improved Levels of Workplace Innovations

A highly engaged workforce not only works harder but also smarter. Such a workforce brings the element of passion in to the workplace. An engaged workforce achieves satisfaction in providing the best solutions for the difficult questions that arise in the organization. It is also committed to produce innovative ideas that would bring the sense of uniqueness and added efficiency into the operations of the organization in order to give it a competitive edge in the market. While taking care to maintain a stable work-life balance, an engaged workforce is usually exclusively interested in helping the organization attain its goals while simultaneously realizing optimum career growth and development at individual levels. Therefore, highly engaged

employees are bound to apply discretionary effort in their workplaces to make their organizations the best entities and institutions in the market. They are often willing to work overtime and spend most of their time conducting extensive research studies that would bring viable and long-term solutions for the major challenges experienced by the organization. They are also ready and willing to take part in skills training including furthering their education by taking short and long-term career courses to widen their professional knowhow in their areas of specialty. These employees use their extensive professional knowledge and job experience to develop business models through which to study the trends of the market and consequently come up with accurate predictions on the future state of the market. They also use their knowledge to come up with ideas for new products that would satisfy the dynamic needs of customers, develop operational policies that would give their organization a sense of uniqueness and improved efficiency, and propose operational changes that would enable the organization to curb competition. Through these innovative ideas that come from highly engaged workforces, organizations are not only able to record consistent performance but also build strong reputations in the market. Therefore, just as Macey and Schneider (2008, p. 11) asserted, there exists a close relationship between employee engagement and workplace innovation. This finding has been complemented by the analysis above that has discussed the impact of employee engagement on improving the levels of innovation in workplaces.

2.6. Impact of Employee Disengagement

2.6.1. Reduced Workplace Safety and Deteriorated Health

Disengaged employees are often uncomfortable with their work environments. They usually have strong issues against their supervisors, the management, and the policies and vision

of their organizations. According to Harter, Schmidt and Keyes (2003, p. 207), employees who work in environments that are negative and stressful to them are more susceptible to negative health consequences. Harter et al. (2003, p. 207) argued that there is a strong relationship between work, stress and health. This sentiment has been supported by Rich, Lepine, and Crawford (2010, p. 619) who have asserted that there exists a strong connection between the quality of workplaces and physical and mental illnesses like chronic anxiety and clinical depression. Since anxiety is a normal reaction to stress, it follows that working in highly stressful environments on a daily basis makes an employee constantly anxious to the extent of it becoming a medical concern. Disengaged employees rarely find happiness in their workplaces. They usually have negative attitudes towards their jobs, colleagues, supervisors, customers, and the management. Many times, such employees find it hard to perform their duties within the required deadlines and also experience difficulty in performing up to the quality standards required. Due to constantly increasing workplace pressure, disengaged employees are normally subject to persistent sadness, empty feelings, feelings of hopelessness and pessimism, a continual state of anxiety and feeling of unworthiness; which collectively can lead to clinical depression. Therefore, it is evident that a disengaged workforce is more vulnerable to negative health conditions particularly mental health diseases.

Employee disengagement also leads to reduced concentration on workplace responsibilities. In essence, an employee who is actively disengaged is less likely to be careful in the workplace not to cause accidents that may affect him/her and others. Such an employee may also be unable to control his/her frustrations in the workplace, and may redirect it to his/her colleagues by demonstrating negative attitudes towards them, picking up unnecessary quarrels with them, and even engaging in violent behaviours like physical fighting. The expression of workplace frustration through violence, which is a common phenomenon for actively disengaged employees,

compromises the levels of workplace safety. Such employees may even attempt to destroy vital organizational security parameters like CCTV cameras so that their ill-deeds at workplaces may not be exposed through these surveillance cameras. This also compromises overall security within the organization and reduces workplace safety for all employees.

2.62. Increased Cost of Operation

Employee disengagement also has severe cost consequences for organizations. One of the most notable operational costs that organizations unnecessarily incur due to active employee disengagement is the cost of lost productivity. Let alone meeting professional standards in the execution of organizational duties, actively disengaged employees rarely meet the set deadlines for completing specific tasks. They would either find lame excuses to be absent from work or would unjustifiably complicate their situations in order to find reasons for not doing their duties as expected of them. Moreover, active disengagement is strongly associated with workplace underperformance. A disengaged employee would hardly go out of his way to ensure the success of the organization. Such an employee cannot commit to go the extra mile to beat the deadlines and make up for lost working time. He/she would not engage in activities such as adopting recommended changes in operations to boost the organization's productivity and overall performance. As a result, the organization would not be able to make the optimum use of its disengaged workforce to attain high productivity and improve profitability.

Disengaged employees are also bound to be wasteful of organizations' resources. Other than misusing working time, which is one of the greatest resources organizations have, actively disengaged employees are bound to misuse organizational infrastructure. For instance, a disengaged employee is likely to use the organization's computers and Internet connections to

engage in activities that are not related to their work. Such activities may include live streaming movies, chatting with family and friends on social media sites, watching pornography, or even watching their favourite television programs. Additionally, actively disengaged employees can use their professional expertise to cause harm to the organization. For example, an employee who is specialized in IT (Information Technology) can use his/her professional skills and the fact that he/she has access to organization's premises and computing systems to install malicious software that can illegally retrieve important organizational information like bank accounts and important passwords. Such information can be used to hack the organization's information system and consequently disable its normal functionality. In order to resolve such a situation, the organization will have to incur extra cost to update its information systems and establish increased security in order to protect its confidential information from malicious and/or unauthorized access.

Employee disengagement is equally associated with high rates of employee turnover. This implies that actively disengaged employees are likely quit their jobs willingly due to increased workplace pressure or may be forced out by the management due to underperformances or negative attitudes towards the organization. In such situations, organizations have to hire new employees to fill the vacant positions (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2014, p. 67). However, recruiting new employees every time to replace the dismissed disengaged employees is not only costly but also very time-consuming. It takes some time to advertise a vacant position before conducting interviews on interested persons. During the recruitment period, the positions of all the employees who have quit their jobs are unoccupied, and that translates to a reduced workforce and an eventual decline in productivity. Also, after recruiting new employees, organizations must take them through orientation and induction processes including some forms of training to equip them with the specific knowledge needed to execute their new responsibilities according to the expectations of

the management. This process also takes up more time and resources that could rather be used to improve productivity had the disengaged employees not quit their jobs in the first place. This argument is supported by a study by Harter et al. (2003, p. 217) showing that the costs related to replacing an employee can be as high as 150% of his/her annual salary. This means that organizations often spend more money to recruit replacements for their disengaged employees than they would spend to pay highly engaged employees. This definitely increases the financial burden on the organization and ultimately reduces its profit margins and capacity to invest.

2.63. Tainted Organization's Reputation

It is undoubted that organizations need to earn a competitive edge in the market to remain sustainable for a long period of time, attract highly talented employees, and maintain a huge client base. One of the main strategies through which to build strong organizational reputation is the creation of authentic workplaces that are guided by transparent operations. However, having a disengaged workforce makes it very difficult for an organization to maintain the authenticity of its operations. For instance, it is a given that employees are the primary implementers of the organization's policies. They not only interact with customers directly on behalf of the organization but also provide services to customers. As a result, having disengaged employees would mean that customers are not served with the respect, professionalism, and efficiency they deserve and expect. This is because a disengaged employee is not committed to building an authentic organization that has an excellent reputation in the market. Such an employee would readily treat customers with negative attitudes in order to express his/her frustration towards the management and the organization.

Having a disengaged workforce also taints the company's employment brand. Basically, disengaged employees do not serve their organizations with passion. They only report to work for the sake of it since their motivation to go to their workstations each day is not to attain organizational goals but to keep their jobs and continue enjoying employment benefits. With such a workforce, the levels of employee turnover are bound to be high particularly because employees do not share the vision of the organization and are not committed towards achieving its long-term goals. A high rate of employee turnover tarnishes the employment brand of an organization. It portrays the organization as having an ineffective recruitment policy, poor human resource management systems, and unfavourable working environments. The tainted employment brand makes the organization unattractive for highly talented employees who have the vision of becoming outstanding, long-term performers in their workstations. Moreover, employees who are dismissed due to disengagement or quit their jobs at will due to low levels of job satisfaction are more likely to spread negative rumours about the organization. Such negative information, especially when it comes from insiders of the organization like its former employees, is often trusted as reliable information by many people even if it is based entirely on malicious and fictitious grounds. As a result, it is undeniable that employees who quit the organization in bad faith would normally taint the employment brand of the organization, and that consequently reduces the competitiveness of the organization in the labour market.

Disengaged employees cannot be good brand ambassadors for their organizations. Given that many people trust the word-of-mouth especially when disseminated by their family members and trusted friends and people in general, it is undisputed that having negative information about the brand of an organization being spread in the market significantly damages its reputation and adversely effects its sales. This situation is even worsened by the prevalence of

digital technologies particularly social media since a negative vibe can easily be spread to wide audiences within a very short period of time. It is reasonable to expect that a disengaged workforce has the capacity to spread more negative than positive information about its organization. While they may not go to the extent of posting negative information about the brands of the organizations on social media, disengaged employees would hardly recommend their company as a nice place to work or as having the best products in the market to their friends and family members. This argument is supported by a study by Harter et al. (2003, p. 221) which showed that only 3% of actively disengaged employees would recommend their organizations as good places to work to friends and family members, compared to 75% of highly engaged employees who would do the same. From that, it can reasonably be assumed that having a disengaged workforce would not only increase the cost of operations in organizations but also taint its reputation by damaging its employment and product brands.

2.64. High Employee Turnover Rate

Employee disengagement is one of the leading risk factors for employee turnover in organizations and/or institutions (Huang, Lee, McFadden, Murphy, Robertson, Cheung & Zohar 2016, p. 254). Although it may be some degree of relief for employers to have actively disengaged employees leave the organization, it is understandable that high employee turnover is not something that most managements of organizations would desire. This is partly because some employees who are disengaged are experts, highly talented and highly skilled in their areas of operation. However, due to disengagement, they end up quitting their jobs and joining competitor organizations. This means that companies lose their most valuable resources, highly talented and skillful employees, to other organizations in the market. As has been discussed earlier in this

chapter, high rates of employee turnover lead to wastage of an organization's time and resources. In the event of significant employee turnover, the organization has to spend more time on the recruitment process to strengthen its workforce. This process is not only wasteful in terms of the time it takes, but also costly. Nonetheless, active employee disengagement inevitably leads to high rates of employee turnover. In essence, disengaged employees normally work to fulfill their personal desires rather than to help the organization achieve its ultimate goals and actualize its vision. This is contrary to the ideal situation where employees' first priority should be to do their best to help the organization attain its goals within the set deadlines. As a result of that, disengaged employees are more likely to experience criticism from the management, especially when they demonstrate the lack of commitment towards the vision of the organization. In such situations, employees tend to experience low levels of job satisfaction. They also experience high levels of workplace frustration, which may lead to mental health conditions like clinical depression and chronic anxiety. As a result, disengaged employees have increasing desire to quit their jobs in favour of other jobs that would give them satisfaction. Furthermore, disengaged employees are likely to underperform in their workplaces. Underperformance is usually intolerable in many organizations and institutions, especially when it comes about as a result of professional negligence and employees' laziness. This causes the management to terminate the employment contracts of disengaged employees. In either way, employee turnover rates increases and the increased turnover causes significant damage to the organization.

2.7. Summary

From the literature review above, it has been argued that employee engagement is an important aspect of human resource management in today's business environment. Many

organizations have implemented employee engagement as an effective strategy for improving workplace performances and overall organizational outcomes. As for the Ministry of Education, building an engaged workforce is essential and is attainable through the collaboration of different stakeholders in the education sector among them the government, top leadership of the ministry, and employees of the ministry who are mostly teachers. Basically, the government establishes and funds the ministry. It also develops policies that govern its operations. The top leadership of the ministry recruits its employees and oversees the implementation of policies that govern it. The employees of the ministry, particularly teachers, directly implement these policies and works with relevant authorities to build an engaged workforce.

The literature reviews also identified and analyzed the main factors that drive employee engagement in organizations. One of the main factors analyzed under this subsection was the implementation of effective internal communication systems. In essence, the review of the literature showed that communication is the backbone of efficient and successful operations within an organization. It facilitates the conveyance of all forms of information within the organization including communication of organizational policies, exercising freedom of individual expression, sharing of innovative ideas, and conflict resolutions. More importantly, internal communication systems are vital in communicating the goals and visions of the organization to employees in clear and understandable ways; a factor that is necessary in building an engaged workforce especially since employees have to internalize the vision of the organization before they can believe in it and become part of it. Other factors that boost the levels of employee engagement in organizations and institutions as illuminated in this chapter are workplace authenticity and transparency; effective organizational leadership systems; provision of sufficient opportunities for personal and professional growth and development; and building trust in employees.

This chapter also analyzed the benefits of building an engaged workforce. The chapter used professional sources to analyze how an engaged workforce delivers more efficient services. Primarily, it was advocated in the chapter that engaged employees are normally committed towards the actualization of the vision of the organization and attainment of its goals. Hence, they not only work harder but also smarter in order to ensure the success of the organization. This translates to enhanced efficiency. Other benefits of building an engaged workforce as outlined in this chapter are improved levels of job satisfaction, improved productivity, high employee retention rates, and improved levels of workplace innovations.

The final subsection of this chapter analyzed the impact of employee disengagement in organizations. In this subsection, it was evident that employee disengagement increases the cost of operations in organizations. Essentially, disengagement translates to high levels of lost productivity, high turnover rates, and increased levels of time wastage, which collectively have a significant financial implication for the organization. Compromised workplace safety and deteriorated health, tainted organizational reputation, and high employee turnover were also outlined as the negative impacts of employee disengagement in organizations.

2.71. Research Questions Derived from the Review of the Literature

Following the above literature review, the following questions are posed.

1. Are the factors that drive employee engagement, benefits of building engaged workforces, and impact of employee disengagement as outlined in this chapter applicable in the Ministry of Education?

2. What is the impact of external factors such as political stability/instability and economic stability/instability on employee engagement in the Ministry of Education, especially since the government is a direct and highly influential stakeholder in the ministry?
3. What are the strategies that can be used to determine the levels of employee engagement in the Ministry of Education and assess its overall impact on the operations of the ministry?
4. How can the Ministry of Education motivate its employees to become highly engaged in their jobs, especially now that its success is not measured by the levels of productivity and profitability but the quality of graduates it releases into subsequent levels of education (from kindergarten to elementary to primary schools, from primary schools to secondary schools, and from secondary schools to colleges and universities)?

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction/Research Methodology/Paradigm

Kothari (2004, p. 79) defines a research paradigm as the underlying assumptions and intellectual structures upon which a research study is conducted. Basically, a research paradigm provides a framework for the direction of the research study to include how it would be executed. This research study used two research methodologies and methods, which are unstructured interviews and structured questionnaires, to collect the primary data used to arrive at its key findings.

Unstructured interviews were the preferred research methodology for the collection and recording of data in the empirical research for this dissertation because they allow individual respondents to give their personal and unique perspectives as well as experiences on the topic of study. These interviews involved direct interaction between the researcher and interview participants through face-to-face interviewing sessions. Unlike the structured interviews where all respondents are asked similar questions in a uniform structure and format, unstructured interviews do not have any predefined, fixed, formal protocol. This implies that the researcher is at liberty to ask any questions that are relevant to the topic of study to respondents without following any prior given structure or format. As a result, unstructured interviews enable researchers to moderate the conversation with limited restrictions since he/she is free to move in any direction that may be of interest to him/her (Kothari 2004, p. 81). For that reason, an unstructured interview methodology was selected for this research study since it allowed the researcher to explore the topic of interest

broadly by moving the conversation with individual respondents in any direction of interest that came up prior to and during the interview sessions.

Structured or closed questionnaires were also used to gather primary data collected to arrive at the findings of this empirical study. This type of questionnaire usually has similar questions with straightforward and simple wording arranged in a uniform format. Structured questionnaires were preferred for this research study because they require low levels of involvement of the researcher. Additionally, since they contain similar questions and in some instances provide a closed list of answers from which respondents must select options based on set instructions and response types, data collected through structured questionnaires is easy to arrange and analyze (Kothari 2004, p. 83). These questionnaires were administered to respondents electronically.

3.2. Research Design

This research study used two types of research design, which are exploratory and descriptive research. An exploratory research design focuses on the discovery of ideas and giving in-depth insights into the main concerns on the research topic (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013, p. 112). Given that the interview research methodology in this study involved unstructured interviews, it is clear that it intended to gather as much information from respondents as possible on the topic of study. Basically, through the unstructured interviews, the researcher was able to gather a wide range of data on different aspects of employee engagement within the Ministry of Education including its prevalence, significance, and limitations. As such, the exploratory questions in the interviews gave the researcher a richer quality of information than was given by respondents from wider perspectives. While this research design was effective in the sense that it enabled the researcher to extensively explore the topic of study by asking individual respondents a wide range

of questions and allowing them to respond to them without any limitations or restrictions whatsoever, it had its drawbacks with the main one being difficulty in arranging and measuring the data collected. In essence, information collected through open-ended questions is likely to be diverse and detailed. Such information is difficult to arrange based on similarities and differences, and that consequently makes it difficult to analyze.

This research study used a descriptive research design. Edmonds and Kennedy (2013, p. 115) explain that a descriptive research design is preplanned and structured such that the information collected through it can be statistically inferred based on a given population. This research design is normally effective in defining the opinions, attitudes and behaviours of specific groups of people on a particular subject. With the research study using structured questionnaires to collect data from respondents, all respondents were administered with similar questions that had predetermined answers within which they had to choose from various limited options and alternatives. These multiple choice questions gave respondents predefined categories within which they must choose, and that made the questionnaire study a descriptive research. Unlike the exploratory research which gave unique insights into different aspects of the topic of study, the descriptive research deliberately sorts and groups responses into predetermined choices. While this research design is effective in the sense that it facilitates the collection of statistical data and making inferences that is straightforward to arrange and analyze, it is ineffective in so far as it does not provide a platform on which the researcher can gather unique insights about the topic of study from respondents. As a result, the findings of the descriptive research are normally predefined since respondents have no opportunity of making their own observations and sharing their unique experiences and ideas on the topic of study beyond the predetermined choices of available possible answers.

3.3. Population and Sample

3.3.1. Population

While this research study intended to give a comprehensive analysis of employee engagement throughout the Ministry of Education, it only used a small sample size to achieve its objectives. Out of a population size of tens of thousands of stakeholders in the Ministry of Education with teachers in kindergarten, elementary, primary and secondary schools accounting for a greater percentage of it, the study only used a sample size of 30 people. Primarily, the study involved ten respondents who participated in the unstructured interviews out of whom two were senior officers in the Ministry of Education and the remaining eight were representatives from the teaching occupation with two being teachers of kindergarten schools, three from primary schools, and another three from secondary schools. Also, an additional 20 other respondents participated in the study by filling in the structured questionnaires. These respondents were selected from different stakeholders in the Ministry of Education including its top leadership and teaching profession. Unlike the unstructured interviews, which used the face-to-face method, the structured questionnaires were administered to respondents electronically. Hence, the structured questionnaires did not require much involvement of the researcher, and that is why it involved a sample size of 20.

3.3.2. Sample and Sampling Method

For respondents of both the unstructured interviews and structured questionnaires, a stratified sampling method was used. With this sampling method, the population size is divided into groups based on similarities on certain characteristics. Basically, under the stratified sampling

technique, the researcher works towards the identification stratum (subsets of the population size that share specific characteristics) before selecting the sample population from each stratum (Kumar, Mohri & Talwalkar 2012, p. 994). In this case, the researcher divided the population size into four strata, which are the leadership of the Ministry of Education, teachers in kindergarten schools, teachers in primary schools, and teachers in secondary schools. The researcher then used a random sampling method to select the specific respondents from each stratum who represented their respective groups in the research study. Based on the number of stakeholders making up each stratum, the selected number of respondents from each group varied. In particular, the management/leadership of the ministry has the least number of stakeholders, followed by teachers in kindergarten schools, then second schools, and finally primary schools. Hence, in order to ensure equity in the distribution of representatives, two respondents were selected from the leadership of the ministry, two from teachers in kindergarten, three from teachers in secondary schools, and another three from teachers in primary schools, for the unstructured interviews. Additionally, using the same principle and argument, seven teachers were selected from primary schools, six from secondary schools, four from kindergarten schools, and three representatives from the leadership of the Ministry of Education to respond to the structured questionnaires. Similar to the unstructured interviews, respondents of questionnaires were selected through stratified sampling that was coupled with simple random sampling.

The researcher sent all participants in the interviews official communications prior to the schedules of the interview sessions. Through these communications, the researcher was able to consult with individual interviewees on the most appropriate schedules for their interviews in order to achieve optimum efficiency, accuracy in data collection, and 100% participation. Moreover, the researcher communicated with all of the identified respondents of the questionnaires in advance to

seek their consent to participate in the study. The questionnaires were scheduled to be administered, filled in, and returned to the researcher within twelve weeks. This entire process was executed electronically through email accounts.

3.4. Research Instruments

3.4.1. Unstructured Interview

One of the research instruments that were used to collect primary data for this research study is unstructured questionnaires. Through this research instrument, the researcher was able to use open-ended questions to collect a wide range of information from respondents. This research instrument was designed such that it gathers extensive information on the topic of study from each respondent. While the topic of study was the same, different interviewees were asked different questions and diverse responses were collected through this research instrument. The research instrument was structured to collect personal information about each respondent, find out about the main causes of low employee engagement in the Ministry of Education, determine the understanding of respondents on the benefits and drawbacks of building a highly engaged workforce, and collect recommendations on strategies that can be implemented to improve employee engagement within the ministry. As noted above, this instrument was used on only ten respondents.

3.4.2. Structured Questionnaire

Structured questionnaires were equally important research instruments that were used for data collection in this research study. This research instrument comprised of a set of questions that had a formal and uniform format ranging from the sequence of questions to their wording. Most of

the questions in this questionnaire had predetermined answers (multiple choice answers) from which respondents were to make a selection. The questionnaires had questions that covered many aspects of the topic of study including the prevalence of employee engagement in the Ministry of Education, factors that limit the establishment of highly engaged workforces in the ministry, strategies for improving levels of engagement in the ministry, the roles of different stakeholders in the ministry in building an engaged workforce, and recommendations for building a highly engaged workforce in the ministry in present and future times.

3.5. Procedures for Data Collection

This research study used primary data to arrive at its findings. As described in the subsection above (Research Instruments), the unstructured interviews and structured questionnaires were the main research instruments used for data collection. The unstructured interviews were administered to participants through a face-to-face method. The researcher used the stratified sampling method that was combined with simple random sampling technique to identify the ten respondents of the unstructured interviews from within the Ministry of Education. Each of the identified respondents was sent an official communication by the researcher to explain the topic of the study and its objectives, and to seek their consent to participate in the study. In order to explicitly explain the purpose of the study and motivate the identified respondents of the questionnaires to participate, the researcher sent each of them a detailed cover letter. The cover letter had all of the necessary information about the topic of study and its ultimate goals. It was as well categorical in its explanation of the importance of the study to the entire ministry. Respondents who agreed to help in the study were then engaged at length by the researcher in order to develop favourable schedules for their interview sessions. Each of the interviews was scheduled to take

between one hour, and one hour and fifteen minutes. Also, since each interview was scheduled to be executed independently and separately, the researcher and interview participants had to work together to develop a schedule that was convenient for each individual as well as the researcher. The information collected from each interview was properly recorded before being analyzed by the researcher based on similarities and differences as well as relevance to the topic of study. This data was then arranged systematically and compiled in form of a report that is easy to interpret and understandable.

The second set of data that was used in this research study was collected using structured questionnaires. This instrument of data collection contained a formal set of questions and a uniform structure. The questionnaires had predetermined answers, which made the data collection process straightforward. Following the identification of the sample of respondents of the questionnaires through the stratified sampling method that was coupled with simple random sampling, the researcher made contact with them to inform them and invited them to take part in the study. This contact was complemented with a cover letter that not only elaborated on the study to include its objectives but also was designed to motivate the identified respondents to participate in the research. As in the unstructured interviews, the questionnaire respondents had up to twelve weeks to fill in the questionnaires and send them back to the researcher. The researcher administered the questionnaires to respondents electronically (through email) and respondents sent them back to him/her via the same communication media. The data collected through the questionnaires was arranged properly before being analyzed and presented in a report in a manner that is easily understood and interpretable by the target audience of the study. This research instrument was used to collect primary data from 20 respondents.

3.6. Limitations of the Study

- 1.** Insufficient representation of stakeholders in the study - the study only used a sample size of 30 to represent the views of tens of thousands of stakeholders in the Ministry of Education. Hence, it is justifiable to suggest that its findings are bound to be inaccurate.
- 2.** Dishonest information from respondents could jeopardize the study since its findings are mainly dependent on the quality of the primary data collected.

3.7. Validity and Reliability

3.7.1. External Validity

External validity is the extent to which the findings of the study are accurately and effectively applicable in the larger population in other contexts that may not necessarily be similar. Principally, external validity is the measure by which the findings of a study involving a small sample size are replicable and/or applicable to the population in other situations (Barratt, Ferris & Lenton 2015, p. 17). Based on this definition, it is justifiable to claim that this study has a high level of external validity. This is mainly because its key findings ranging from the fundamentals of employee engagement, factors that boost employee engagement, benefits of employee engagement, to challenges of employee engagement are not only applicable in the Ministry of Education but also in all organizations and institutions in the business and corporate world (Eisenberger, Malone & Presson 2016, p. 47-63; Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey & Saks 2015, p. 7-35). This sentiment has been explicitly justified in Chapter 2 ‘Literature Review’ of this dissertation, which shows that the findings of the study on strategies for improving employee engagement, benefits of

building an engaged workforce, and challenges of building an engaged team are the same as those found by previous studies that were conducted in different contexts and by different researchers.

3.7.2. Internal Validity

Based on this definition, it is evident that this study has a low level of internal validity. This is because the research study was general in the sense that it analyzed employee engagement within the Ministry of Education from a wide perspective to include its impact, benefits, drawbacks, and strategies for its improvement. As a result, it did not identify any specific variable or group of variables that lead to employee engagement within the ministry. Furthermore, the study was not designed such that it tested for cause and effect relationships since its topic of research was not limited to a specific hypothetical model of the relationships pertaining between a small group of variables.

3.7.3. Reliability of the Study

The reliability of a research study is defined by the consistency, repeatability, and inherency of its findings. It is measured by the extent to which the results of a given study are similar when conducted by other independent researchers when all factors are kept constant. The level of reliability of this research study is justifiably high. This is because the study used proven research instruments in unstructured interviews and structured questionnaires; data analysis techniques in content analysis; and sampling methodologies in stratified sampling coupled with simple random sampling to select its respondents. Based on this research design, it is justifiable to argue that this research study was conducted in a professional manner and in congruence with the standards of legitimate and reliable research studies. Thus, it is apparent that if independent researchers conduct

a similar study under similar conditions, they are more likely to achieve the same results. Additionally, compared to previous studies on the same topic, the findings of this study on such aspects as strategies for improving employee engagement, the impact of employee engagement on organizations, fundamentals of employee engagement, and challenges of establishing an engaged workforce are consistent and inherent (Sasse 2016, p. 12-39); a factor that confirms and/or justifies the reliability of the study.

Table 1 Time-Plan for the Research Study

Sub-problem	Review of Literature	Hypotheses/ Propositions/ Research questions	Data source	Data type	Analysis
<p>While employee engagement has become a mainstream approach of management in today's business environment, the education sector has not yet significantly embraced it, and that has consequently</p>	<p>➤ Trich 2003, p. 3 Mann & Harter 2016, p. 67)</p>	<p>1. Only 13% of employees in the global workforce are engaged at their jobs. 2. The research study showed that 34% of employees in the Ministry of Education are engaged at their jobs.</p>	<p>1. To what extent are employees in the Ministry of Education engaged? 2. What policies have the Ministry of Education put in place to build a highly engaged workforce?</p>	Ordinal	Descriptive statistics Analysis

limited the overall performances of the Ministry of Education.					
Poor leadership systems in the Ministry of Education have made it difficult to achieve high levels of employee engagement in the education sector.	➤ Corace (2007, p. 171) ➤ Bhatnagar (2007, p. 647),	1. Organizations that have adopted effective leadership systems, especially those that show concern about employees' wellbeing, often have better engaged	To what extent do effective institutional leadership systems contribute in building an engaged workforce?	Nominal	Content analysis

		workforces than those that do not			
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3.8.1 Research Planning / Time-table

Table 2 Consistency Matrix

Activity	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
Completing proposal							
Seeking approval							
Collecting data							
Analysing data							
Compiling the report							
Finalizing the report							

3.8.2 Research Planning / Consistency Matrix

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

1.1. Data Analysis and Interpretation

This research study used content analysis as the main technique of data analysis. The information collected from all respondents of the study through unstructured interviews and structured questionnaire instruments of data collection was properly recorded, arranged, and analyzed to arrive at the key findings of the study (Šerić 2016, p. 21). Content analysis methods were selected for this study which enabled the researcher to record open-ended responses of the interviewees and respondents of the questionnaires before arranging them based on similarities, differences, and relevance to different aspects of the study, and then analyzing them to arrive at credible, reliable, and valid findings (Šerić 2016, p. 23). Content analysis involved the characterization, arrangement, and summarization of primary data collected in the study and using them to derive the key findings on the topic of employee engagement.

1.2.1. Levels of Employee Engagement in the Ministry of Education

Although the levels of employee engagement in the Ministry of Education found in the data analysis for this study is significantly higher than that of the global workforce, it is clear that much still needs to be done to improve the prevalence of engagement within the ministry's workforce. In particular, it was found that 34% of employees in the Ministry of Education are engaged in their jobs. This is definitely a major achievement compared to the global statistics that show only 13% of employees are engaged in their jobs (Tritch 2003, p. 3; Mann & Harter 2016, p. 67). In as much as the statistics on employee engagement in the Ministry of Education could be positive, especially when compared with that of the global labor force, it is important to acknowledge that about 66%

of employees in the ministry are either not engaged or actively disengaged in their workplaces. This shows that about two-thirds of employees of the ministry do not offer their best in their respective workplaces, a factor that definitely compromises on the quality of education delivered to students throughout from kindergarten to secondary school levels. As a result, it is vital that the top leadership of the ministry in collaboration with relevant arms of the government, particularly the legislature and executive, should work towards the development and implementation of policies that would improve the levels of employee engagement in the ministry. Such policies may include raising performance standards in the ministry, implementing improved compensation plans, emphasizing the application of evidence-based teaching, providing opportunities for professional development, and adoption of strict recruitment practices and procedures to ensure that only highly-qualified and competent professionals are employed in the ministry.

1.2.2. Key Aspects of Employee Engagement in the Ministry of Education

From the analysis of data collected for this study, it is clear that respondents consider several factors to be the building blocks of employee engagement within the Ministry of Education. One factor that was dominant in the study was appreciation. Essentially, respondents in both the unstructured interviews and structured questionnaires pointed out that appreciation is fundamental to building a highly engaged workforce. It involves the recognition of employees' efforts towards the realization of the ministry's goals by awarding top performers through promotion, improved salary and remuneration, and provision of opportunities for career development like financing their further studies. Appreciation makes employees feel more valued by their employers, and that consequently makes them highly engaged in their workplaces.

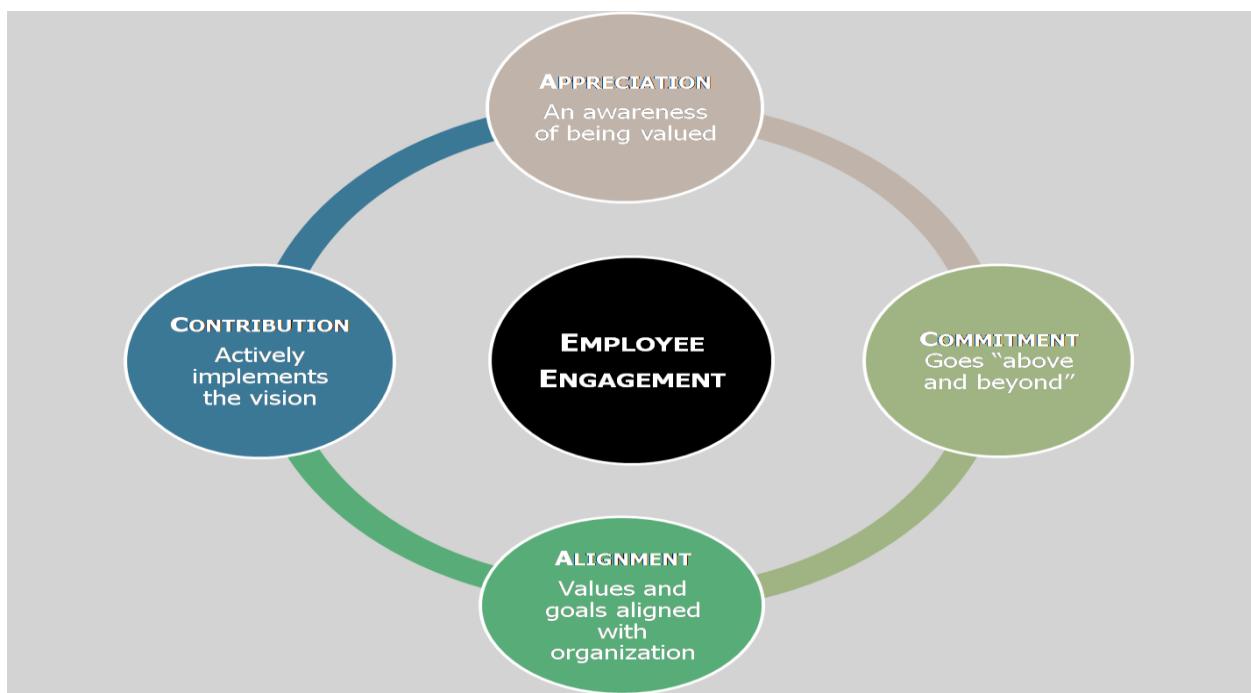
Respondents in the study also pointed out that alignment is a key aspect of an engaged workforce in the Ministry of Education. In this context, alignment involves the congruence between the values and goals of employees with those of the organization. Employees are then more likely to exert discretionary effort to ensure the actualization of a vision they believe in. They are equally more likely to work harder and smarter towards the attainment of goals that they believe are realistic, attainable, and important. More importantly, employees are bound to uphold values they believe in. Hence, as is evident from the analysis of the data collected in this study, the alignment of the values, goals, and vision of the Ministry of Education with that of its employees is a vital ingredient for building a highly engaged workforce.

Active contribution, particularly towards the implementation of the ministry's vision, was also pointed out as one of the building blocks for the establishment of a highly engaged workforce. Active contribution in this context involves the adoption of human resource practices that ensure extensive consultation between the top leadership of the ministry and its employees while developing its short and long-term goals as well as procedures for their implementation. Through these consultations, employees will not only feel important and valued by the ministry, but also will personalize the objectives of the ministry. As such, they would probably work harder and more diligently to ensure the attainment of the goals and realization of the vision for which they were part of commencing from the early development on to the implementation processes.

Another key aspect of employee engagement as outlined in the data analysis of this research study was commitment. Commitment in this situation is two-way since both the leadership of the ministry and its employees ought to demonstrate the desire to attain its ultimate goals and actualize its vision. The leadership of the ministry should show its commitment towards building a highly engaged workforce by developing policies that enhance employee engagement and oversee their

implementation up until the end. For their part, employees should show their commitment by contributing discretionary effort at their respective workplaces in order to ensure the attainment of outstanding performance regardless of the challenges that may come along the way. This commitment creates cohesion among different stakeholders in the Ministry of Education, and that translates to high levels of cooperation towards the attainment of common ministerial goals, which in this case is building a highly engaged workforce.

Figure 1 Key Aspects of Employee Engagement in the Ministry of Education



1.2.3. Factors That Boost Employee Engagement in the Ministry of Education

Based on the data collected in this study, it is evident that key stakeholders within the Ministry of Education consider several motivational and hygiene factors as being foundational to increasing employee engagement. One of the motivation factors for boosting employee engagement that was apparent in this study was a sense of achievement. Under this factor, it was evident that employees in the ministry are likely to be more engaged in the jobs when they feel that they are gradually achieving the goals of the ministry. Therefore, in order to enhance employees' sense of achievement, the leadership of the ministry, through heads of learning institutions, should set small targets such as realistic internal performance targets for each class and ensure that all teachers work hard towards attaining them. By so doing, employees of the ministry will develop an increased sense of self-belief in their performance, and that will lead them towards putting in extra effort towards achieving the ministry's ultimate goals.

Giving employees interesting and challenging work is equally an important factor that was found to boost levels of employee engagement within the Ministry of Education. This factor is achievable through the adoption of job rotation and promotion practices. With job rotation, teachers are given an opportunity to educate different classes over specified periods in order to experience new workplace challenges every now and then. On the other hand, the promotion strategy involves giving qualified and deserving employee's opportunities to work in different capacities within the ministry. Either way, employees are given new challenges in their workplaces, and that not only makes their work interesting by breaking the daily routine throughout the years but also keeps them highly engaged in their jobs.

The provision of opportunities for personal and professional growth was equally identified as an important factor for boosting employee engagement in the Ministry of Education. Employees in the Ministry of Education are usually ambitious. Normally, they will look forward to personal growth as well as optimal career development. To facilitate effective personal growth, the leadership of the ministry should ensure appropriate compensation of employees by giving them good pay and other work-related benefits like medical insurance, education cover, housing/accommodation allowances, and retirement benefits. This helps them to be able to sustain their economic needs and achieve significant progress in their personal lives, and that subsequently makes them more engaged in their respective workplaces. Professional growth is equally important for building an engaged workforce in the Ministry of Education. Since many employees, especially top-performing and highly ambitious employees desire to achieve optimum career potential, they dedicate their minds and energy towards improving their professional competency. Hence, in support of professional growth, the Ministry of Education should provide its employees with the opportunity to advance their careers by furthering their education. It can further facilitate the professional growth of its employees by embracing succession systems that allow its qualified employees to climb the ranks internally. This will certainly contribute towards the improvement of the levels of employee engagement exhibited within the ministry.

The study also found career progression as being an important factor for boosting employee engagement in the Ministry of Education. Career progression involves providing employees with an opportunity to realize significant career development. Other than rising through the ranks within educational institutions, career progression in the Ministry of Education can be attained by graduating from being a kindergarten teacher to being a primary school teacher, then becoming a secondary school teacher. Therefore, the ministry should implement human resource practices that

allow its employees to further their education and attain career progression by being promoted from being instructors in low-level to high-level learning institutions. Through this, employees in the ministry are likely to be highly engaged in their workplaces since such a practice encourages them to believe that their future lies within the ministry and their career ambitions are also attainable from within the same organization.

Employee empowerment is also a vital factor that was evident in the study as being fundamental in raising levels of employee engagement in the Ministry of Education. Empowerment in this context involves providing employees of the ministry with the moral, financial and technical support they require to execute their professional mandates at the top level. For instance, the ministry should build enough classrooms, hire sufficient teachers, and build and equip laboratories to enable teachers to execute their responsibilities effectively. Empowerment of employees in the Ministry of Education helps to reduce performance pressures on teachers since they will not have overwhelming responsibilities due to insufficient staff nor experience excessive difficulty in executing their mandates due to insufficient infrastructure in learning institutions.

Recognition is another motivation factor that was found to be effective in heightening employee engagement in the Ministry of Education. It involves the identification and appreciation of employees who produce outstanding performance. Through recognition, employees of the ministry tend to feel accepted and valued by their employers. This is because recognition makes them feel important since their contribution to the ministry is not only needed but also appreciated. Recognition in the ministry can be attained by giving bonuses to the best performers as tokens of appreciation, promoting the best performing employees, giving employees improved compensation and benefits, and presenting them with medals for their good performance. Apparently, recognition advances employees' engagement in a workforce by enhancing internal competition and

emphasizing top performance standards where only the best employees are recognized and awarded.

Hygiene factors have also been found to contribute significantly to boosting the levels of employee engagement within the Ministry of Education. For instance, appropriate remuneration and benefits were found to be a fundamental promoter of employee engagement. From the data collected in the study, it was clear that respondents associated remuneration and benefits with high engagement levels. In essence, employees who feel that the salaries and benefits to which they are entitled are proportional to their professional qualifications and job experience are bound to be more engaged at their workplaces, and vice versa. Hence, it is important that the ministry implements compensation plans that would ensure the distribution of appropriate and satisfactory salaries and benefits to their employees in order to enhance their levels of workplace engagement.

High quality working conditions was also found to be a vital factor that increases employee engagement in the Ministry of Education. If employees have favourable work environments, which are characterized by minimal internal conflicts and the availability of good infrastructure, they tend to be engaged in their workplaces. Thus, the Ministry of Education should work towards ensuring the establishment of the best work conditions in all learning institutions by putting in place affective leadership structures and supporting infrastructure development. Through that, employees will experience high levels of job satisfaction, which will translate to improved workplace engagement.

Job security is another hygiene factor that was found to boost employee engagement within the Ministry of Education. Every employee enjoys working in institutions where their jobs are secure. High levels of job security help employees to commit their minds and effort to the organization mainly because their future is guaranteed at the organization for the long-term. Therefore, since the Ministry of Education normally employs its employees on a long-term basis,

it so happens that most of them have a high sense of job security, and that motivates them to commit the better part of their careers and professional lives to working in education overseen by the ministry. This often can lead to high levels of employee engagement.

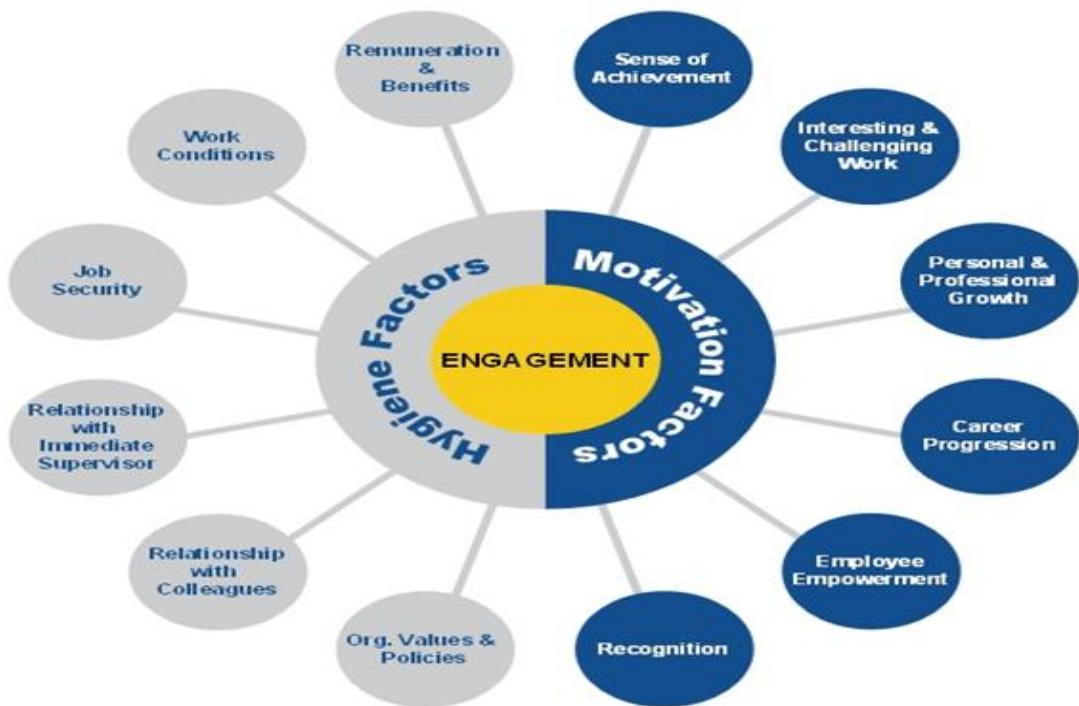
Good workplace relationships between employees and their immediate supervisors was evidently a factor that improves the levels of employee engagement within the Ministry of Education. Immediate supervisors in this context are the Heads of Departments and head teachers of learning institutions. Whenever there is a good working relationship between employees of the ministry and their immediate supervisors, it means that employees are enthusiastic about their jobs and commit their minds and careers towards the attainment of outstanding performance, and vice versa. As a result, it is essential that the ministry puts in place appropriate leadership structures that would ensure the establishment of good working relationships between its employees and their immediate supervisors in order to enhance employee engagement.

Good relationships between employees of the ministry and their colleagues was equally found to be an essential factor for improving the levels of employee engagement. Apparently, employees are dependent on each other to achieve the ultimate objectives of the ministry. However, conflicts at workplaces are virtually inevitable. This means that employees, regardless of how professional and ethical they may be in their workplaces, are bound to disagree with each other for various reasons. Nonetheless, it is the duty of the leadership of the ministry to develop institutional leadership structures that will ensure proper resolution of workplace conflicts in order to maintain good relationships between employees and their colleagues. This would help to improve job satisfaction in the ministry and consequently enhance employee engagement.

The study also found that organizational values and policies that govern the Ministry of Education play a vital role in raising the levels of employee engagement. Policies are laws and

regulations that govern an institution whereas values are the principles and behavioural standards that define a person or group or community. Institutional policies and organizational values governing the Ministry of Education determine the levels of employee engagement in it. For instance, such policies as compensation plans, retirement systems, succession practices, and overall human resource practices determine job satisfaction, and eventual employee engagement. Furthermore, such organizational values as competency, consistency, accountability, and efficiency encourage employees to be more committed in their workplaces, which in-turn leads to high levels of employee engagement.

Figure 2 Factors That Boost Employee Engagement in the Ministry of Education



1.2.4. The Significance of Building a Highly Engaged Workforce in the Ministry of Education

The data analysis of this research study showed that building a highly engaged workforce in the Ministry of Education has numerous benefits. For example, building a highly engaged workforce helps to improve job satisfaction, which in turn contributes towards building a committed and focused team of employees. A satisfied team of employees is bound to be more committed at work, especially towards the actualization of the organization's vision and attainment of its goals. Therefore, through the adoption of strategies of building an engaged workforce such as the establishment of good workplace relationships, guaranteeing employees' job security, creation of favourable working conditions, implementing employee recognition practices, and providing opportunities for personal and professional growth, the Ministry of Education will be able to build a highly satisfied workforce that will not only commit to and focus on its education service but also become loyal to its employers. This will subsequently reduce the levels of employee turnover within the ministry.

1.2.5. Challenges of Building an Engaged Workforce in the Ministry of Education

One of the main challenges of building an engaged workforce as has been pointed out in this study is the lack of cooperation between key stakeholders in the education sector. For instance, it requires a collective effort from the government, particularly the legislative arm of the government; the top leadership of the ministry; and its entire workforce to attain the highest possible levels of employee engagement. The failure to achieve collaboration among all stakeholders of the ministry, particularly in terms of developing and implementing appropriate policies and leadership structures as well as disbursement of sufficient funds to support the

infrastructure and human resource operations of the ministry, have remained the leading challenges for the creation of an engaged workforce.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This dissertation sheds light on the important role of the Employee Engagement approach in contributing towards the success of the organization at its optimum levels with an enhanced sense of employee wellbeing. There were lots of problems and one of the main problems is that the education sector has not yet significantly embraced employee engagement which has become a mainstream approach of management in today's business environment. From the findings identified, it is noticeable that the levels of employee engagement in the Ministry of Education as found in this study following data analysis are significantly higher than that of the global workforce, however, much needs to be done to improve the prevalence of engagement within the ministry's workforce.

As we examine a framework in literature review section given by Macey and Schneider (2008, p. 11) which postulating that there exists a close relationship between employee engagement and workplace innovation. This claim is not strongly confirmed by our empirical analysis. Because Ministry of Education needs to develop the innovative culture in the organization. Another finding from the collected data is that respondents consider several factors to be the building blocks of employee engagement within the Ministry of Education. Appreciation is dominant in this study as employees want to be recognized and appreciated for their efforts and achievements. As was previously stated, appreciation leads to employees feeling valued by their employers, and that consequently makes them highly engaged in the workplace. This empirical claim of our study is invigorating the (Knight, 2011, p. 237) framework who talks about involvement of the stakeholders in decision making process.

One of the major problems identified in this research is that the UAE educational system has not yet fully embraced the methodology of employee engagement which has limited the overall performance of the staff. This claim is developing nexus with the framework provided by (Wagner 2006, p. 29) about the organizational transparency. Thus, it is noticeably believed to have become a principal risk factor contributing to the number of job turnovers in the ministry. What's more, the lack of a sufficient emotional bond between the top management and employees has also influenced the management and contributed to its insufficient understanding of the importance of engaging employees and establishing strong working relationships by involving them more in organizational decisions. A small number of employees showed a desire predominantly for personal growth rather than linking it to the success of the organization which demonstrates a lack of comprehensive understanding of the precise meaning of being work engaged. Also, the ministry missed the clear link between the contribution of employee recognition, motivation, compensation and satisfaction with creating a foundation for an organization of well engaged employees.

These findings present in addition the dilemmas that the ministry confronts in implementing employee engagement in its systems where there is evidence of a major gap between understanding the concept of employee engagement and adopting it in the system in an informed and enlightened way. Again, this empirical claim of our study is associated with the framework of (Ho et al. 2011, p. 39) who concluded that employees' loyalty strongly associated with their engagement of organization.

One of the main limitations of this research study is the underrepresentation of the key players/stakeholders in the Ministry of Education in the study. Also, it uses an extremely small sample size to arrive at its main findings. Further research should conduct more studies and identify

cases that reveal the links between having an engaged group of employees as teachers and its effect on the students.

In sum up, majority of frameworks presented in the literature review sections are confirmed by our empirical study. There are plenty of policy recommendations can be derived from our empirical analysis which we will present in the later section. An important recommendation is, to increase the employee's engagement in the Ministry of Education, they should be allowed or provide discretionary powers to make decisions at their level of authority. Also, they should be realized that they are responsible for every good and bad outcome of their decisions. However, the Federal Government should provide them with coaching and plan management to execute their decisions in a better way.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

From this dissertation, it is clear that employee engagement has become an integral part of human resource management in the corporate and institutional world. Although statistics show that the prevalence of employee engagement in the global labour market is only 13%, it is claimed that human resource specialists have identified employee engagement as the pillar of successful HR operations in the future. Essentially, this dissertation through the Literature Review and Research Methodology chapters has shown that employee engagement brings numerous benefits to an organization or institution with the main ones being: improved efficiency and productivity; high levels of job satisfaction; high levels of employee retention; and enhanced employee innovation. While these benefits are particularly applicable in the Ministry of Education in the context of this study, it is clear that their application can be extended to other organizations and virtually every context of human resource management.

The dissertation also analyzed various factors that drive employee engagement. These factors include implementation of effective internal communication systems, establishment of workplace authenticity and transparency, adoption of effective organizational leadership systems, provision of opportunities for personal and career growth and development, and building trust and confidence in employees. The dissertation equally analyzed the impact of employee disengagement in organizations. Some of the main effects of having a disengaged workforce as outlined in the dissertation are: reduced levels of workplace safety, increased cost of operation, tainted organizational reputation, and high rates of employee turnover.

The dissertation also outlined the essential pillars of employee engagement. The four pillars of employee engagement defined in this research study are appreciation, commitment, alignment,

and contribution. These factors are basically the building blocks of creating a highly engaged workforce. In summary, the dissertation was exhaustive and systematic in analyzing employee engagement as a human resource management practice, and particularly as it is applicable within the Ministry of Education.

6.1. Policy Recommendation

As mentioned earlier, employees' engagement means the loyalty, commitment level and passion of the employees towards their organization and work. A plethora of studies are available claiming that there is a direct and positive correlation between the employee engagement and organizational performance. In other words, employees' productivity exponentially increases with their engagement at the organization because engaged employees are more likely to stay and give their best shots on every assigned task. The manuscript in hand is exploring the employee engagement in the Ministry of Education on the basis of primary data and review of previous empirical studies. The main finding of the study is that employee engagement improves employees' enthusiasm for their jobs, and this translates to improved efficiency in service delivery since an enthusiastic workforce will exert discretionary effort to ensure the success of their organization. On the basis of this empirical analysis, this section emphasis on the suitable policy recommendations that can be adopted by different stakeholders to boost the employee's engagement which ultimately put positive externality on other sectors along with the Ministry of Education.

- 1) First and foremost, employees of the Ministry of Education should be briefed regularly on hot issues which directly or indirectly have an impact on the organization or work. The way of information communication should be explicit and in a such a way that it flows to all

layers of workers no matter what is the designation of employees. The best way to achieve this objective is to conduct meetings in all offices of the Ministry of Education on regular basis.

- 2) Another important policy recommendation is to provide opportunities to all employees for expressing their views and make suggestions on the meeting agenda. Through this process, they will feel worthy which ultimately affect the annual turnover and force them to stay in the organization.
- 3) To increase the employee's engagement in the Ministry of Education, they should be allowed or provide discretionary powers to make decisions at their level of authority. Also, they should be realized that they are responsible for every good and bad outcome of their decisions. However, the Federal Government should provide them with coaching and plan management to execute their decisions in a better way.
- 4) The employees should be free to provide suggestions for the betterment of the Education Ministry. This can be done via asking them to provide input ideas but they must have the requisite skills, ability, and knowledge of understudy problem.
- 5) Human Resouce of the Education Ministry should realize their employees that their provided ideas or suggestions in the decision-making process have significant importance for us and not limited only to sitting in the meetings.
- 6) The culture of ideas sharing and providing suggestion will put positive impacts on the productivity of employees which will create an atmosphere of belongingness and harmony. In this way, they will be more engaged with the Ministry and give their best shots in all circumstances.

- 7) Senior management of the Ministry of Education and the Federal government must have some vocal champion who can make sure that the office work is absolutely prioritized, pushed and backed by available resources. For example, in a University a Finance Director is recognized as Well-being Champion. When such type of seniors present in the organization, the employee's engagement will increase in the Ministry of Education because they will idealize them and wish to replace them in the future.
- 8) If the management is feeling that the employee is not fulfilling their duties and mishandling responsibilities then the HR department should conduct some training to provide them motivation. Subject specialists can be hired to eliminate the frustrations and confusion of employees.
- 9) There should be found different ways to notify the Ministry of Education related to impacts of psychological significance of work. Also, teachers and education department authorities should be involved in the policymaking process to increase the productivity of the Education sector of the country.
- 10) For attaining the objective of keen employees engagement, the Ministry of Education along with the Federal Government should set their short-term and long-term goals. In addition, engage the employees to predetermined short-term goals which automatically convert these short-run achievements to the long run.
- 11) The federal government should pay proper attention to encouraging accountability in all layers of the Ministry of Education which can be achieved via seeking feedbacks on regular basis. Another important strategy in this regard is to conduct employees surveys on the weekly or monthly basis by the Federal Government which will make the Ministry of education employees active and alert.

6.2. Recommendations for Future Studies

Given that employee engagement is indisputably a dominant factor that drives success in human resource operations, it is important that future research studies focus on the analysis of the impact of building a highly engaged workforce in the Ministry of Education on students in kindergarten, primary, and secondary schools.

The study also showed that building an engaged workforce helps to improve efficiency in the operations of the Ministry of Education. Basically, an engaged team of employees is likely to work harder and smarter to achieve the objectives of the organization.

Such a team would make minimal mistakes by avoiding controllable errors in their workplaces. It would also be subject to minimal instances that derail the efficiency of the ministry such as absenteeism, safety incidents, and unjustified retaliation from employees.

As such, a highly engaged workforce in the Ministry of Education would help to enhance the efficiency of its operations since such a workforce will remain focused on the delivery of quality and evidence-based education to students. It would also work in collaboration with other stakeholders to achieve the vision of the ministry and attain its ultimate goals.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Cover Letter

Re: Request for your participation in the study

Dear Sir/Madam

It is my pleasure to invite you to participate in my research study. The topic of the study is ‘Employee Engagement,’ and it will focus on the Ministry of Education. The study will seek to gather information on such subtopics as the prevalence of employee engagement within the Ministry, the benefits of building a highly engaged workforce, factors that drive employee engagement, and the impact of a disengaged workforce on an organization/learning institution. The study is scheduled to take place between June and August.

Please understand that I bank on your participation to make this study a success. I therefore request you with utmost humility to please take part in the study, and contribute in building credible, legitimate, and reliable knowledge on employee engagement. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Best regards.

Appendix 2. Actual Research Instruments

2.1. STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE STUDY ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

NB: Please give accurate information to the best of your knowledge.

Name: _____

Position in the Ministry of Education: _____

1. To what extent do you consider yourself engaged in your workplace?

Actively disengaged _____ Engaged _____ Highly engaged _____

2. To what extent are employees in the Ministry of Education engaged?

Actively disengaged _____ Engaged _____ Highly engaged _____

3. To what extent do effective institutional leadership systems, especially those that show concern about the wellbeing of employees, contribute in building an engaged workforce?

Low _____ Moderately Low _____ Moderately High _____ Clear High _____

4. To what extent does employee disengagement lead to employee turnover?

Low _____ Moderately Low _____ Moderately High _____ Clear High _____

5. To what extent does the sense of achievement contribute in building an engaged workforce?

Low _____ Moderately Low _____ Moderately High _____ Clear High _____

- 6.** To what extent does interesting and challenging work environment and responsibilities contribute to building an engaged workforce?

Low _____ Moderately Low _____ Moderately High _____ Clear High _____

- 7.** To what levels does personal and professional growth and development contribute in building an engaged workforce?

Low _____ Moderately Low _____ Moderately High _____ Clear High _____

- 8.** To what extent does career progression help in building a highly engaged workforce in the Ministry of Education?

Low _____ Moderately Low _____ Moderately High _____ Clear High _____

- 9.** To what extent does employee recognition help in building an engaged workforce?

Low _____ Moderately Low _____ Moderately High _____ Clear High _____

- 10.** What policies have the Ministry of Education put in place to build a highly engaged workforce?

- 11.** What role does organizational values and policies play in building an engaged workforce?

- 12.** How does organizational leadership systems help in building an engaged workforce?

13. What are the main limiting factors for the establishment of a highly engaged workforce in the Ministry of Education?

Appendix 3. Unstructured Interview Form

Please give accurate information to the best of your knowledge.

Name: _____

Position in the Ministry of Education: _____

1. What is the prevalence of employee engagement in the Ministry of Education? Please use your experience to give a review of its trend over the past few years.

2. Do remunerations and benefits contribute significantly in boosting employee engagement within the Ministry of Education?

3. *Do you believe that work conditions under which employees of the Ministry of Education work influences the levels of employee engagement? Please elaborate your answer.*

4. *Do you think the Ministry of Education guarantees its employees of high job security? Does that help in enhancing the levels of employee engagement in the ministry? Please explain.*

5. *It is certain that workplace relationships play a major role in improving job satisfaction. Following your experience in the Ministry of Education, do you believe that the relationships between employees and their immediate supervisors, and employees and their colleagues influence the levels of employee engagement? Please elaborate.*

6. *What do you think are the essentials/fundamentals/building blocks of employee engagement? Please explain your answers.*

7. *What factors do you think drive employee engagement within the workforce of the Ministry of Education? Explain your answer briefly.*

8. *What are the benefits of building a highly engaged workforce in the Ministry of Education?*

9. *What is the impact of employee disengagement on the operations of Ministry of Education?*

10. *Do you think there is a relationship between employee engagement and employee turnover?*

Do you think employee engagement is an effective strategy through which to reduce employee turnover?
