

Doctoral School

Nottingham Trent University

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Exploring Employee Engagement within the Context of
the UAE Waste Management Sector

In fulfilment for the Award for
Doctor of Business Administration

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to all who have supported my journey in completing my Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) doctoral thesis at the Nottingham Trent University. Their contributions throughout this journey have been invaluable, and I am truly appreciative of their assistance, advice, encouragement and belief as I went through the program.

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors Professor Michael Whittal and Dr. Yvonne Carlisle. Their unwavering support, guidance and expertise were instrumental in refining and shaping this thesis. The feedback, dedication to my academic development and constructive criticisms were invaluable to challenge me in pushing myself to the boundaries of my research.

Additionally, I would like to express my appreciation to other academic and non-academic staff, including external examiners for their assistance, professionalism and feedback, which have been helpful to me at the different stages of my research.

Furthermore, my thanks goes to members of my organization, who supported me in various facets of conducting my study. Additionally, I would also like to express my gratitude to my family, and friends for their unwavering support, encouragement and love throughout this journey. Their belief in my ability to complete the program have been a constant source of motivation and strength. I would also like to express my mother and late father who have been there for me.

Thank you all for being part of this important chapter of my academic journey.

Abstract

This thesis examines employee engagement within the context of the UAE Waste Management Sector, specifically a waste disposal company situated in Abu Dhabi Emirate.

An overarching research question is posed by the thesis, and it is as follows:

1. What are the key factors that impact upon engagement of employees in the public sector in the UAE, specifically waste management organizations?

The literature review explores the themes of employee engagement, employment relationships, barriers to engagement, the importance of engagement, and issues surrounding engagement in the UAE. Through the review of literature, it is identified that while several extant studies have been done on the concept of engagement, as it is not new, studies of engagement have not considered exploring the influence of Emiratization and its impact on engagement. It is also identified that within the waste management sector, previous studies have only considered engagement in relation to sickness/absence from work, and this was done quantitatively using surveys (Gallup Research, 2017).

This thesis closed these gaps in the literature by using qualitative approaches involving 30 interviews with employees from the UAE waste disposal segment, in investigating factors that influence engagement and the impacts of engagement on organizational outcomes.

The thesis employed NVivo software in conducting thematic analysis of the findings included in the transcription, the grouping of participant responses, cataloging themes, identifying connections between themes, and coding the research findings. Analysis of the findings reveals important factors which impact engagement in the UAE's waste disposal sector. These factors include access to relevant training, employee voice in terms of power distance dimension of culture, nature of rewards, positive factors alluded to the physical work environment, Emiratization Policy, and flexibility. The factors are also discussed in detail.

This thesis identifies several key themes. It identifies that Emiratization policies influence engagement by impacting knowledge sharing between Emirati and non-Emirati employees through influence on trust environment. The thesis identifies that this impacts engagement by reducing creativity and innovativeness. The findings from the thesis confirm prior studies which investigated the impact of cultural value orientations on the engagement of workers

conducted by Zhong et al (2016), which followed a quantitative approach. In this thesis however using qualitative approaches it is identified that power-distance as a measure of national culture, influences the engagement of employees. Furthermore, the work environment, including physical and non-physical (relationship), is identified to be an important factor in engagement. Lastly, the thesis identifies that poor employee engagement impacts productivity outcomes of workers in UAE's waste disposal sector and could impact the long-term sustainability of operations.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Emiratization and Engagement, employee voice, work environment.

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Chapter 1.0 Introduction

The Middle Eastern Region is one where waste generation is prolific, and this is a result of the standards of living urbanization and development, which has resulted in the generation of waste. Most countries in the region lack enough budgetary allocation, legislative regulation, and framework to deal with waste (Zafar, 2023). Lack of sufficient funds to support the sector, poor strategic planning, shortage of skilled manpower, and other operational and technical deficiencies are some issues that face the region's waste management sector (Zafar, 2023).

Kageyama et al. (2022) suggest that the nature of the waste management sector is such that employees experience stress and physical strain in their work role, in addition to several forms of occupational risks associated with their role. Considering that physical stress and other negative operational practices adopted in organizations, specifically those associated with the waste management sector could impact job satisfaction and productivity, it is crucial to understand these issues.

This study examines employee engagement within a State-owned waste management organization that has the responsibility of managing and treating waste within the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (U.A.E).

Undertaking this study within the context of this region is important as no previous studies have been conducted relating to engagement in the waste management industry. Also, the engagement of waste management employees is indicated to be challenging due to the nature of the duties and functions of individuals in the sector. The roles within the waste management sector are categorized as indecent, precarious, and detrimental to the health due to working within hazardous conditions, which impacts on motivation and job satisfaction of employees within the role. Additionally, the competition for skills for the waste management industry, with other sectors such as the oil and gas sector, which offers more competitive benefits and long-term opportunity for growth also impacts employee engagement in the sector. Furthermore, the introduction of the Emiratization policies by the UAE government created challenges for talent retention and recruitment. This is because the Emiratization policies impacts on recruitment of employees by the nationalization of the workforce; the challenge with this is that within technical services and the waste management industry, or professions where technical skills are required, there is a dearth of skilled workers. Furthermore,

Emiratization poses a challenge to diversity, innovativeness, and creativity within the workforce, which could affect the capability and opportunities available for employees in maximizing their job effectiveness. Exploring employee engagement within the waste management sector and the UAE in this thesis contributes to the literature on engagement by providing insights into factors that influence employee engagement in the sector. It also contributes to the available extant literature on Emiratization, culture, and employee engagement.

1.1 The issue of Engagement in the ADSSC

Employee engagement describes the levels of dedication and enthusiasm shown by employees towards their assigned work functions (Macey et al, 2009). Employees that are engaged care about their performance and duties in the organization and believe that their efforts are important (Macey et al, 2009). Farndale and Murrer (2015) describe employee engagement as things that positively impact employees effectively undertaking duties that have been assigned to them, in terms of dedication, absorption, and vigour within those roles.

Similarly, Xiao and Duan (2014) suggest that employee engagement is a positive individual commitment and loyalty or the positive psychological state that an individual has regarding their job or role. From these definitions, it can be suggested that employee engagement impacts positive outcomes which individuals can contribute to their organization.

Pang and Lu (2018) indicate that from the external point of view, several factors could impact the engagement of employees including obtaining satisfying wages and consistent communication with stakeholders, and these could impact the performance of employees. Garcia-Carbonell et al (2018) also identify those various elements that could impact employee engagement externally including the extent to which the work environment is consistent, the presence of a work environment, which is conducive, as these factors could impact job satisfaction, which affects engagement. This is because when the work environment is conducive, it enhances the ability for individuals to exude good performances, there is support for employees, and this bolsters job satisfaction and inadvertently work performance (Yousef, 2017).

Sofiah and Kurniawan (2019) also identify that internally, several factors could influence employee engagement including good quality of work-life, the passion of employees with their

role, self-efficacy, availability of relevant training for employees. This means that internally and externally, several factors impact the engagement of employees, as these factors influence the extent to which job satisfaction could be obtained by individuals, and it would be useful to explore these factors within the context of the waste management organization being under investigation, and the UAE waste management sector in general.

The CIPD (2019) argued that having learning and training opportunities is an engagement tool that employers can adopt to enhance productivity. In the waste management organization under investigation, which is based in the UAE, the average number of working days lost to sickness/absence for each worker is 10.3 days annually out of 664 employees (ADSSC, 2018). This equates to a working day absence rate of 4.0% (ADSSC, 2018). Compared with absenteeism within the waste management sector in the UK, it is noted that this is identified to be 12 days annually, which is considered to be high. This may suggest that there are general underlying issues with the nature of the waste management industry, as other industries have low rates of absenteeism when compared to the waste management sector globally (ONS, 2020).

Merill et al (2013), identify that absenteeism and self-related job performance impacts the key indices measuring engagement including physical health and health behavior. Self-related job performance which measures the performance of employees within their roles was identified to be more strongly aligned with engagement, while absenteeism was identified to be significantly associated with the physical health of employees (Merill et al, 2013).

Self-reported job performance is noted to be the element that is strongly associated with job satisfaction, and it is driven by an open (Merill et al, 2013). Absenteeism is found to be the physical health index, which is most strongly associated with physical problems including, physical health-related and mental health-related issues that could impact employees' ability to proactively engage with their duties. Looking at the waste management sector, some of the issues being faced by employees include physical hazards in the work environment, which could impact the health of workers, absenteeism, and consequently engagement. In the waste management organization being explored in this thesis, reports from an internal ADSSC survey identified that approximately 60% of all working days lost to absences from the workers were attributable to long-term absence spells (i.e., absence spells lasting 20 or more working days

(ADSSC, 2019). These absences were identified to related be to the physical health challenges of the workers (ADSSC, 2019).

Relating this with data presented by the Gallup Research Group (2017), it can be argued that 85% of workers in the UAE, the country where the waste management organization under examination is based, are not engaged with their work functions. The implication of this is that most employees working in the UAE have a lack of psychological enthusiasm towards their work functions and, as a result, there is an increased likelihood of lower productivity for organizations in the UAE compared to the maximum output of productivity which can be achieved organization (Gallup, 2017).

Findings by the WM Sustainability Report (2016), a waste management industry report, found that some activities result in long or short-term engagement of employees within the waste management sector. These are noted to include participation in various forms of coaching, as well as the organization/firm(s) incorporating actions such as performance reviews and feedback sessions in a bid to encourage engagement and identify issues of concern to the employees (WM Sustainability Report, 2016).

Additionally, the provision of training and developmental programs also aids in facilitating the continuous engagement of employees (WM Sustainability Report, 2016). The findings from the WM Sustainability Report (2016) come from a series of interviews conducted with workers working in waste management; email feedback for employees who could not attend the interviews was added to the results. The findings suggested that safety concerns and the availability of training and rewards are key engagement and retention factors for employees working in the waste management arena. This is because of the peculiarity of the working environment for the waste management industry where employees are exposed to hazardous conditions and better rewards in other industries such as the oil and gas sector where similar technical skills, are required with less exposure to health and safety issues in the waste management sector (WM Sustainability Report, 2016).

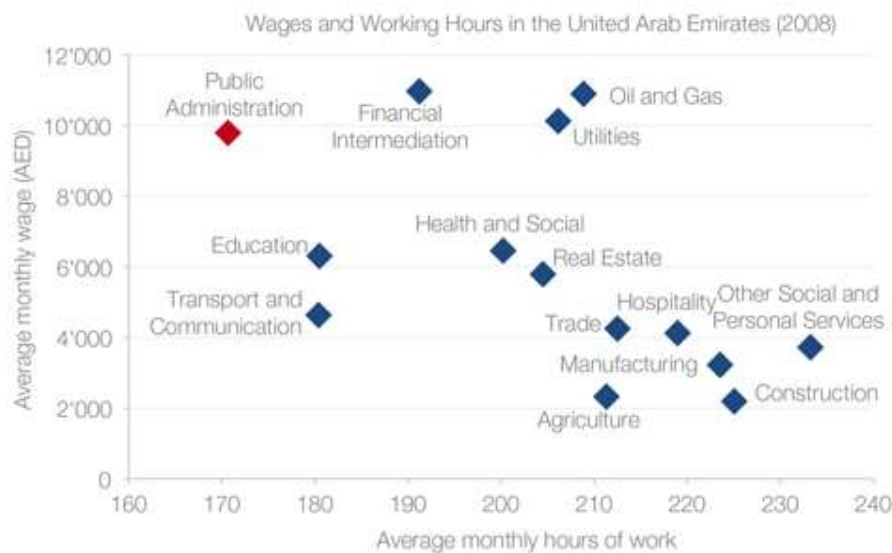
Another issue that impacts the engagement of employees is the nature of the organization, as firms that are traditionally public-sector organizations have varying engagement levels when compared to private sector organizations, mainly due to structural differences (AON, 2019). Expanding further, public sector organizations are described as possessing bureaucratic

structures where characteristic control and influence are exhibited by the management teams, as compared to private sector organizations, and this impacts on behaviours, satisfaction, and engagement of employees (Vigoda-Gadot and Schohat, 2012).

It is further suggested that in the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries, the preference for employees has largely been to work in public-sector organizations, due to the nature of such organizations in favouring better pay and benefits, more flexible working hours, and job stability and security (World Economic Forum, 2014).

Figure 1 which follows illustrates the labor dynamics in the UAE and shows that the public sector compared to the private sector offers attractive wages for fewer working hours compared to the private sector which provides insights into a preference for employees working in the public sector (UAE Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

Figure 1 Public Sector wage compared to the private sector in the UAE.



It is consequently not a surprise to identify that within public and private sector organizations, there is a range of factors that drive the engagement of employees. These factors include perception of available organizational support, nature of rewards, perception of available

training and development opportunities, positive relationship between organization and employees (Jin and McDonald, 2016).

Additionally, Emiratization, which describes the UAE government policies which have been put in place to close the gap between expatriate workers in the country and local Emirati employees is noted to have had several challenges (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2010). These include lack of sufficient Emirati talent to work in available roles created by the policies, impacts on learning and collaboration, and substantial imbalance of local versus foreign employees in the UAE, which affects employee motivation (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2010).

Lack of motivation can impact the satisfaction of employees in a positive manner, which in turn affects engagement (Gervais et al, 2016). As a result of the lack of detailed research peculiar to the waste management sector and a lack of specific literature identifying key issues influencing employee engagement as it relates with this sector in the UAE and the context of a waste management sector in particular. This study seeks to examine key issues of engagement, exploring how it affects the long-term sustainability of waste management sector organizations.

1.2 Research Question

The overarching research question for this study is as follows:

- a. What are the key factors that impact upon engagement of employees in the public sector in the UAE, specifically waste management organizations?

1.3 Document Structure

Chapter 1 of this document identifies the research aims, the research question, and the importance of conducting the study. It also highlights the structure which will be followed in the presentation of the thesis.

Chapter 2 explores a critical review of the literature conducted for this study. The literature explored includes theories on employee engagement and human resources management, employee relations, and the identification of issues that mitigate employee engagement (Gerrards et al.,2018; Van Allen, 2016; Kazimoto, 2016; Saridakis et al., 2016).

The literature exploration considered sociological insights about engagement and psychological perspectives on employee engagement, following which detailed insights as to how these impact on waste management organizations was done.

Following this, the thesis examined the issue of engagement within the UAE, the country whereby the research is set. This allowed for an exploration of historical insights into the issue of engagement within the country. Doing this also enhanced the nature of the research by providing detailed insights and backgrounds into engagement in the UAE. This included details regarding economic issues, human resources management issues, and political issues which influence employee engagement within the *Emirati* setting. Adopting this approach provided a rounded method to the project, in the sense that it improved knowledge about policies like Emiratization and how a variety of social factors influence the long-term engagement of organizations (Bajaj et al., 2013).

After this, the thesis will move on to Chapter 3 which is the methodology section of the research. In terms of implementing the methodology, this was done through consideration of various paradigms of the research which could be adopted, an exploration of the use of the qualitative research approach compared to other approaches, and justifying the rationale behind the adoption of the chosen approach (Saunders et al., 2016).

Following this, the data analysis, research context, and techniques, as well as the ethical issues involved in this research, were considered, in alignment with the suggestions put forward by Saunders et al (2016) that emphasize the importance of planning the methodological process for a study. For instance, this study follows a qualitative analysis process where data obtained from the research participants were coded and reduced to identify relevant themes and patterns. This was critical to the identification of relevant themes to the study.

After the methodological choice has been justified, Chapter 4 presented the findings obtained from the research. Here the findings obtained and analysed were presented. The findings presented related to employees and their experiences within waste management organizations, and other deep-rooted issues associated with employee engagement.

In Chapter 5, the discussion of the findings was presented; this was undertaken through a comparison of the research findings with the appropriate literature, allowing for identification of alignment as well as contrasts between the literature and findings.

Finally, the thesis concludes with chapter 6 where the research aims and research question are reiterated, the contributions of the research are identified. The conclusions are presented in such a way that answers to the research question is identified and additional findings outside the sphere of the research are recommended.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

Employee engagement has long been a topic of interest for researchers and practitioners in the field of organizational behavior. It has been widely acknowledged that engaged employees are more likely to be productive, innovative, and committed to their work, ultimately leading to improved organizational outcomes (Bakker et al., 2019). In recent years, employee engagement has gained particular attention in the public sector, as governments strive to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their services (Ng et al., 2019).

ADSCC, a State-owned waste management organization in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, is no exception in this regard. As the organization responsible for managing and treating waste within the UAE, ADSCC plays a crucial role in the sustainability and environmental management of the region. Therefore, understanding the factors that impact employee engagement and the effects of engagement on organizational outcomes is of great importance for ADSCC and other waste management organizations in the UAE.

This literature review aims to examine the current state of knowledge on employee engagement within ADSCC and other public sector organizations in the UAE, with a specific focus on waste management organizations. The review will address the overarching research question - What are the key factors that impact upon engagement of employees in the public sector in the UAE, specifically waste management organizations?

To answer this question, this literature review will draw upon a range of sources, including academic journals, conference proceedings, and books. Manual searches using key words including “employee engagement”, “employee engagement and waste management”, “employee relations”, are performed to identify any relevant papers useful to the study. The findings of this literature review will provide valuable insights for ADSCC and other waste management organizations in the UAE, as well as policymakers and researchers interested in employee engagement in the public sector. The literature review commences by providing insights into the various definition of the concept of engagement. A clear and thorough understanding of the concept of employee engagement is crucial for the success of this literature review. This is because engagement is a multifaceted and complex concept that has been defined and operationalized in various ways in the literature (Shuck et al., 2019).

Furthermore, understanding the different approaches to defining and measuring engagement is important in the context of this study, as it will allow us to critically evaluate the methods and measures used in previous studies as it relates to the concept central to this research.

In addition, by examining the different definitions and approaches to understanding engagement, we can gain a deeper understanding of the underlying conceptualizations of engagement and how these may differ across different contexts and cultures (Shuck et al., 2019). Overall, the section which follows focuses on defining and understanding engagement which will provide a necessary foundation for the rest of this literature review, allowing the research to be more effective, and accurate in the evaluation and synthesis of the existing research on the issue of engagement.

2.1 What is Employee Engagement?

When organizations are able to nurture their employees to the point of engagement, it enhances the organizational capacity to navigate through various challenges which they face and exploit their intellectual capital (Salimath and Kavitha, 2016). This is because employees who are engaged are passionate about their duties and assigned roles, which enhances productivity outcomes for these employees (Salimath and Kavitha, 2016). Engagement facilitates employees' absorption of their duties or jobs and provides a competitive advantage for ventures due to employees' exertion of their energy in their role (Salimath and Kavitha, 2016).

Schaufeli and Bakker (2018) in their definition of the concept of engagement suggest that it is used in reference to describing the extent to which employees feel passionate about their job, and the extent to which they are committed to their organization and feel a sense of fulfillment to the job they perform. From this definition, it is suggested that psychological and emotional aspects of engagement including commitment and feelings of enthusiasm of the employees are important to the employees.

Other researchers proposed a broader definition for the concept. For instance, in studies by Shuck and Reio (2020), employee engagement is described in terms of positive affective states and cognitive states. Expanding, employee engagement is described as the positive affective cognitive state of being which is exuded by characteristic dedication, vigor, and absorption exhibited by employees as a response to the experience they garner in their work roles. From

this definition, it is indicated that vigor and dedication, which are positive affective states, and absorption which describes a cognitive state are important to the engagement of employees.

In other definitions, emphasis is laid on the specific behaviors and outcomes which align with the concept of engagement. For instance, studies by Bakker and Schaufeli (2020) describe the concept as the extent to which employees are able to go beyond their normal duty requirements, experiencing higher levels of commitment, vigor, and absorption within their work roles. From this definition, it is seen that the emphasis is on the proactive and voluntary nature of engagement; the definition also emphasizes on the significance of psychological states including absorption and vigor in facilitating engagement.

More holistic definitions of the concept of engagement were provided by other authors, putting into cognizance the wide range of factors that may impact engagement. For instance, in studies by Talwar and O'Reilly (2018), engagement is described as a multi-dimensional construct encompassing a range of attitudes, outcomes and behaviors that are related to the work environment and the job role. From this definition, it can be seen that the complexity of factors that could impact on engagement is recognized, indicating the multi-dimensional and complex nature of the concept.

MacManus and Mosca (2015) in defining employee engagement describe the concept as an energetic state of employees being fully and personally connected to fulfilling activities which bolsters their personal sense of efficacy; employee engagement incorporates investments in the employees including emotional investments to improve their performance.

In another study, employee engagement is noted to be described as the extent to which employees favorably feels, thinks, and acts proactively as it relates to the pursuit of organizational goal for all stakeholders; employee engagement incorporates a mix of behaviors and attitudes of the employee (Iddagoda and Opatha, 2020).

In studies by Robinson et al (2019), employee engagement is defined by putting more emphasis on its importance in terms of the behavioural dimension associated with the concept. In describing the concept, Robinson et al (2019) define employee engagement as the extent of employee's motivation essential for contribution to the success of the organization and the willingness of the employee in going the extra mile as it relates to organizational tasks, and their ability to adapt to change. From this definition, it is seen that the emphasis is on how

motivation and effort could be used in the deployment of engagement, and how the adaptability of the employee is important to engagement considering the nature of the continuously changing business environment.

In studies by Halbesleben and Buckely (2019), in defining the concept of engagement, the focus was placed on the relational and social aspects of the issue. Expanding further, in defining the concept, it is indicated that engagement describes the level of connectedness employees feel to other workers and the organization, and the extent of the employee's willingness to go beyond the expected norms of their job requirements to support the organization. As indicated from the definition, it is indicated that social connections and the presence of supportive relationships impact engagement and facilitate the exhibition of organizational citizenship behaviors by employees, fostering a more engaged workforce (Halbesleben and Buckely, 2019).

In another definition, Harter et al (2015) describes engagement as the extent of an employee's involvement in job functions emotionally, cognitively, and behaviourally and suggest that it is an important factor that is crucial to the competitiveness and success of the organization. Expanding further, it is indicated that when there is higher employee engagement, this positively enhances productivity, profitability, customer satisfaction, and shareholder returns. A report focused on employee engagement within the context of different countries (Gallup, 2009) distinguished between employees who are engaged, employees who are not engaged, and actively disengaged employees. Engaged employees are described as workers that undertake their assigned roles with passion and exude dedication in their duties to their organization; engaged workers are noted to drive innovation and as a result of their profound sense of connection to their organization work to move the organization forward (Gallup, 2009). With regards to non-engaged employees, these are individuals that are not committed in terms of their energy or passion, to their roles within the organization and are passive in their commitment to their job roles (Gallup, 2009). This differs from actively disengaged employees who are described as employees that are unhappy within their job roles and act out their unhappiness by undermining the activities of their engaged colleagues (Gallup, 2009). Additionally, there exists a variety of models and frameworks which have been proposed to facilitate a better understanding of the concept of engagement. These include the Job-Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which suggests that the concept of engagement is impacted

by the demands associated with the job role including time pressure, workload, and the resources available to the employee to meet their demands of support and autonomy (Bakker and Schaufeli, 2020). In another model called the Positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap) model, it is indicated that engagement is impacted by the level of optimism, resilience, self-efficacy and hope exuded by employees (Luthans et al, 2018).

From the various definitions examined from the available extant literature, a working definition of engagement as it relates to the context of the waste management sector, and the ADSSC can be put forward. For this thesis, the working definition of employee engagement is that the concept describes the degree of employees' investiture including cognitive, behavioral, and emotional energy as they relate to employees in the waste management sector. The implication of this simply put is that employee engagement describes the absorption and enthusiasm of workers with their assigned roles, and the extent to which they find a greater sense of meaning in their duties/roles as it pertains to the waste management industry.

From the definitions, it is indicative that employee engagement is essential for various reasons including bolstering the productivity of organizations. This agrees with suppositions by Bakker et al (2019) which recognizes the concept as important in the field of organizational behavior, with significant implications for both employees and the organization. Engaged employees are generally more productive, innovative, and committed to their work, leading to improved organizational outcomes such as increased customer satisfaction, lower absenteeism, and higher profitability (Bakker et al., 2019). At the same time, engagement is important for employees themselves, as it has been linked to a range of individual-level outcomes, including job satisfaction, well-being, and retention (Bakker et al., 2019). Further to this, the review of the literature relating to the concept of engagement shows that overall, the concept is multifaceted and no one-size-fits-all definition exists for the concept, but it could be explored from a variety of perspective due to its importance to employees and organizational outcomes.

Given the importance of engagement for both employees and the organization, it is essential to understand the factors that impact engagement and the effects of engagement on organizational outcomes. Understanding the drivers and consequences of engagement within ADSSC will be valuable for the development of strategies and interventions that can enhance employee engagement and improve organizational performance. The section which follows provides insights into the benefits of employee engagement to the ADSSC.

2.2 The Benefits of Employee Engagement

According to suggestions posited by Sundaray (2011), when there is an increased engagement of employees within an organization, it results in immense benefits in terms of productivity and profitability. This is because when the employees are engaged, it results in positive characteristics of the employees in terms of their attitude, which leads to harmony in terms of performance and decreasing rates of absenteeism, which are characteristics associated with productivity in a firm. Abukhalifeh and Som (2013) identified that in organizations where there is increasing evidence of disengagement, the characteristics associated with such firms include increased rates of absenteeism, leading to a decline in performance rates and, of course, productivity. This indicates that having an engaged workforce is essential in terms of facilitating sustainability, as in highly engaged work environments there is increased profitability as the organization will not be expending revenue on recruitment costs and associated training costs which have to be implemented in organizations with high attrition rates as a result of decreasing engagement levels (Abukhalifeh and Som, 2013; Bakker et al., 2012).

In terms of the benefit of engagement to individual employees, suppositions by Rich et al (2018) identifies that engagement has been linked to a range of positive individual-level outcomes, including job satisfaction, well-being, and retention. One of the most consistently reported benefits of engagement for employees is increased job satisfaction. A meta-analysis of over 500 studies by Rich et al. (2018) using quantitative approaches found a strong and positive relationship between engagement and job satisfaction, with an average effect size of 0.57. This relationship has also been found in other studies, with engagement being significantly related to job satisfaction in diverse organizational settings and across different cultural contexts (e.g., Schaufeli et al., 2002; Scott et al., 2019). In addition to job satisfaction, engagement has also been linked to well-being among employees. A review by Schaufeli et al. (2019) found that engaged employees reported higher levels of well-being, including positive affect, vitality, and life satisfaction. These findings are consistent with previous research, which has also demonstrated a positive relationship between engagement and well-being (e.g., Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Further to this, in terms of the impact of engagement on individual employees, engagement has been found to be positively related to retention among employees (Truss et al, 2018). In a quantitative study where a meta-analysis of 225 studies was

performed by Truss et al. (2018), it was found that engaged employees were more likely to stay with their organization; this was demonstrated by the study's findings which showed an average effect size of 0.22. This relationship has also been found in other studies where it was identified that engaged employees were less likely to leave their organization compared to those who are disengaged (e.g., Bakker et al., 2019; Scott et al., 2019). Considering this argument within the context of the ADSSC, the implication is that positive attitudes towards engagement had positive benefits to both individual and organizational outcomes.

Vogel et al (2021) in a paper focused on daily engagement and productivity identifies that engagement is important to organizations and enhances productivity because it facilitates employees in being able to apply their best efforts within their work roles. Expanding further, it is indicated that when employees are motivated, it facilitates them investing their cognitive, physical, and emotional energies within the roles they have been assigned (Vogel et al, 2021). It is also indicated that engagement facilitates improvement in the attentiveness of employees within their work roles, by improving concentration towards tasks which they have been assigned and enhancing their emotional connection to their roles (Vogel et al, 2021). Considering the focus of this study on the waste management sector, it could thus be argued that engagement is beneficial to the ADSSC in terms of enhancing physical, cognitive and emotional commitment of employees in performing their roles to enhance productivity outcomes of the organization.

In another study by Bhatt et al (2019) which examined the role of engagement as a tool for talent management, it is identified that engagement is important to organizations as it enhances job satisfaction, and better performance of employees, which relates to lower rates of attrition of employees within the organization. Attrition rate, also known as turnover rate, is a measure of the number of employees that leave an organization within a given period of time and is a key indicator of an organization's ability to retain its workforce and is often used to assess the health and stability of a business (Ng, 2020). Expanding further, it is indicated that when employees are engaged, it enhances creativity processes within the organization, alignment of employee with organizational change and job satisfaction which are important to reduce the turnover of employees or attrition rates of employees within the organization (Bhatt et al, 2019). Looking at the case of the ADSSC where there are high rates of attrition due

to the nature of the work roles and characteristics associated with assigned duties including the hazardous nature of several waste management functions, it can be argued that bolstering engagement would help facilitate the reduction of employee turnover within the organization. This is because the benefits of improved engagement extend beyond the individual employee level. Organizations with high levels of employee engagement have been found to have higher productivity, profitability, and customer satisfaction (Shuck & Reio, 2019). These positive outcomes can be attributed to engaged employees being more motivated and committed to their work, leading to increased effort and performance (Ali et al., 2020). This could be argued to have a significant impact on reducing attrition rates and improving outcomes for both individual employees and the organization as a whole. Thus engagement could be argued to serve as means to bolster the efficiency outcomes in terms of individual and organizational performance outcomes for the ADSSC.

Engagement is also indicated to be essential and beneficial to employee commitment. While the two constructs that are often used in the literature on human resource management, they are not interchangeable as they have distinct definitions and implications for employee behavior and organizational outcomes. For instance, in defining employee engagement Shuck and Reio (2019) describes the concept as "the extent to which employees feel passionate about their jobs and are committed to their organization". The definition of the concept suggests that engagement is characterized by an emotional connection to the work and a willingness to go above and beyond in order to contribute to the organization's success. This explains why engaged employees have been found to have higher job satisfaction, lower turnover intentions, and higher levels of performance and productivity (Ali et al., 2020). On the other hand, employee commitment refers to the extent to which an individual identifies with and is loyal to their organization (Kaur & Singh, 2019). The distinction is that commitment is a cognitive and behavioral commitment to the organization, and may be driven by factors such as shared values and a sense of belonging (Ng, 2020). This explains why commitment has been linked to lower turnover intentions and increased job performance (Ali et al., 2020).

Considering the focus of this research the implication of this is that the engagement and commitment of ADSSC, while related do not indicate the same thing and a committed employee may not necessarily be engaged with the organization, and vice versa (Shuck & Reio, 2019). Aizen (1985) argued that increased engagement of the employees within an

organization results in positive behavior being displayed by workers, which helps facilitate employees in aligning their actions towards the positive performance outcomes requisites (Ludwig and Frazier, 2012). Similarly, Stander and Rothman (2010) found in their study on engagement and its impact on organizational outcomes, that there is a relationship between positive attitudes in a work environment and increased commitment levels, as this can result in improved employee performance. Considering this argument within the context of the ADSSC, the implication is that engagement will result in positive attitudes in the work environment which will result in enhanced employee commitment. In the next section, literature relating to factors that impact engagement is explored further, as this is essential to answering research question.

2.3 Factors Which Impact Engagement

In order to understand and optimize positive outcomes associated with employee engagement, it is important to examine the various factors that impact it. This section of the literature review will systematically examine some of the key factors that have been identified in the literature as impacting employee engagement. These factors include stress, health and safety, and work-life balance, among others (Sapkota et al, (2020). Expanding on some of the social and health related issues, Sapkota et al (2020) in a study on risk mitigation within the context of the waste management sector identify that several challenges are faced by workers from the sector in terms of stigma and discrimination from members of society, family members, and from even colleagues within the sector. This is not considering the physical risks and occupational risks which they faced as a result of working within the potentially hazardous industry (Sapkota et al, 2020). In agreement, Grunner et al (1999) identify that employees working in the waste management sector compared to other industries face several potential health and hazardous challenges due to their higher tendency to be exposed to chemicals and microbial agents. Looking at the focus of this study on the UAE waste management sector and indeed the ADSSC, besides from the high-power distance which may further impose more pressures in terms of behavioral stigma against the workers in the waste management sector, the risks associated with working within the sector does not plead a positive case for engagement.

With regards to stress and issues relating to WLB, suggestions by Joshi and Sodhi (2011) determined that there are seven fundamental factors that influence engagement. Identifying

them systematically, the first one is work content, the second is the nature of remuneration received by employees, and the next is organizational equality, followed by employee relations and the availability of opportunities for career development and growth (Joshi and Sodhi, 2011). The sixth and seventh determinants are the characteristic work environment encouraging team working, and the nature of employee voice in the organization (Joshi and Sodhi, 2011). Expanding on these, it is suggested that work content is one of the determinants of employee engagement, and as such, an organization must develop an open-door policy, which is essential for learning (Joshi and Sodhi, 2011). In terms of how work content may influence engagement, Zeynep et al (2017) indicate that satisfaction with the work assigned to employees is a significant driver for a variety of work engagement dimensions, including the dedication of employees, their absorption to their jobs, and vigor with which they perform duties assigned to them. Parkinson and McBain (2013) found that when employees are exhausted from job pressures, negative emotions such as sadness due to stress can arise, and this can result in employees not engaging with the work functions assigned. Looking at the waste management sector, employees are faced with negative emotions which stem from behavioral stigma associated with their roles and the perception of the community's negative views on the role (Black et al, 2019). Considering the workers in the ADSSC having to deal with these negative perceptions and the nature of the work content of their roles, it could be suggested that these negative emotions and societal perceptions and beliefs about the nature of the work content in waste management influence the engagement of workers in the sector.

Remuneration is also a factor identified to influence the engagement of workers and organizational outcomes. In terms of the influence of remuneration, it is argued that financial obligations which are presented to employees also impact their level of engagement with a firm, and as such, the financial remuneration presented to employees should be enticing/competitive to ensure that they are kept engaged (Joshi and Sodhi, 2011). Thompson (2002) identified that remuneration influences the attitude of employees towards their work duties, their colleagues, and the organization, which in turn can influence engagement. Further to this, Selden and Sowa (2015) indicated that remuneration is a high-performance practice adopted by organizations in facilitating the reduction of the voluntary turnovers which occur within an organization. Remuneration developed appropriately can result in the fulfilment of

employees, increased job satisfaction, and a perception of equity, which in turn can affect engagement (Selden and Sowa, 2015).

Several studies agreed on the importance of the remuneration of employees in terms of its role in driving motivation which plays a huge role in the engagement of workers. In the papers by Saks and Rothman (2006); CIPD, (2018) and May et al., (2004), it was suggested that remuneration leads to motivation of the workers as it relates to the performance of their functions. Remuneration can come in both non-monetary and monetary reward systems, with some examples of the latter being bonuses and salaries, while the former includes paid holiday trips for employees with distinguishing performance rates (May et al., 2004). Gerhart and Fang (2014) suggested that in determining appropriate compensation, an organization should put into consideration the underlying characteristics associated with the job, such as type of work, location, and technicalities associated with the job, and compare those with the overall attractiveness of individuals towards the job. Following this, an inference is made about the value, which can be direct financial rewards or non-financial value associated with the role, and contracts relating to the role can then be agreed upon (Gerhart and Fang, 2014). Kahn (1990) also emphasized remuneration as an important factor that influences engagement by suggesting that when an employee's perceived value of the remuneration is high, it results in reinforced reactions being exuded by the employees in the implementation of their assigned duties. This is done through more dedication, focus, and emotional commitment to their roles (Kahn, 1990).

In another study, Woodruffe (2005) identified that the structure and policies being adopted within an organization influence engagement levels among the workforce. Expanding further, when the organizational policies embed positive engagement elements such as flexibility in time schedule policies, equality, and work-life-balance practices, it enhances engagement by impacting job satisfaction and motivation of employees (Woodruffe, 2005). For example, when the organizational policies are such that employees are provided with work schedules that are flexible in nature, it provides a positive reinforcement of the organizational value for the employees, which enhances their loyalty and productivity (Woodruffe, 2005). Gerrards et al (2018) also identified workplace flexibility as a factor that positively influences the engagement of employees, citing policies like the ease of access to knowledge within the organization and accessibility and openness of the work environment as critical factors which may influence

engagement. Expanding further, it is indicated that flexibility within the workplace enhances engagement through facilitating the increase of process control by employees, which enhances interaction and communication between employees (Gerrards et al., 2018). Flexibility in working relations positively influences engagement within organizations (Gerrards et al., 2018). The implication of this is that incorporating positive engagement elements such as flexibility in work schedules to improve employee motivation and job satisfaction would enhance engagement, especially given the very hectic nature of schedules for workers in the waste management sector and its associated risks.

Considering the ADSSC, it could thus be suggested that management would need to ensure that its policies relating to work-schedule be designed in such a way that they improve work-life balance and job satisfaction, which will in turn enhance the engagement of employees. Additionally, there is a need for consideration to be made of contextual and societal factors as well because societies are continuously evolving. For instance, in the UAE, there is an expansion of opportunities for female participation in the labour market which influences opportunities to improve work-life balance by improving opportunities for more flexibility of employees in the ADSSC.

In terms of organizational structure, findings by de Guerre et al (2013) identify that organizational structure influences engagement by impacting collaboration and relationship development between members of the organization, which is an important element that influences the internal environment of an organization and motivation among employees. Aylott (2015) agreed with this finding by identifying that in case scenarios where the organizational structure follows a top-down approach, this impacts on the relationship between employees and the strategic management as communication issues tend to exist in organizations that follow this structure. Expanding further, suggestions by Den Hartog and Koopman (2020) suggests that the top-down organizational structure is characterized by a clear chain of command, with decisions being made at the top and flowing down to lower levels of the organization. One of the challenges associated with the top-down structure is that it can create a lack of autonomy and control for employees. When organizational decisions which related to employees are being made solely at the top, employees may feel that they have no say in how their work is done and that their contributions are not valued. This can lead to a sense of powerlessness and disengagement (Turner & Perrewé, 2020). Furthermore, in terms

of communication the top-down organizational structure prevents information from being openly shared and decisions being made without input from employees. This can create a sense of mistrust resulting in the breakdown of relationships (Lepine & Erez, 2020). This can be demotivating for employees and may lead to a lack of motivation and commitment to their work.

Considering the case of the ADSSC, it is noted that the organizational structure adopted by the firm is top-down, and this could be argued to impact the manner of interaction between the employees and management in terms of decision-making strategy and communication methods. This is because in centralized organizational structure where decisions are made by engaging with employees, an agreement has to be reached between employees and employers which enhances the trust and satisfaction of employees, and job satisfaction is a by-product of engagement (Kataria et al, 2012). Consequently, it can be argued that the structure of the ADSSC is an issue that impacts the engagement of its workers, and this needs to be considered in strategic planning to bolster employee satisfaction within the organization.

In another paper, Saridakis and Cooper (2016) identify employee turnover as an important factor that impacts engagement. Saridakis and Cooper (2016) defined employee turnover as a procedure whereby employees voluntarily undertake to terminate their appointments with a firm. This is similar to the positions held by Hom et al (2012) with regards to staff turnover, which is described as the exit of some employees and entry of others into an organization. Hom et al (2012) further noted that employee turnover involves a firm's employees rotating in a labor market, between jobs, organization, careers, and periods of unemployment and employment. The occurrence of employee turnover can either take a voluntary means or it can be involuntary, with voluntary turnover used when referring to a situation where the turnover is initiated by the employees. In the case of involuntary, there is no choice held by the employee with regards to termination – sickness, death and employee-initiated forms of termination are among the involuntary forms of employee turnover (Grisom et al., 2016).

When employee turnover is low, it is perceived that this is acceptable as it allows for the elimination of low performers as well as the encouragement of creativity and innovation (Saridakis and Cooper, 2016). It is, however, noted that within the context of the ADSSC environment, there is a characteristic high turnover rate, and this can impact significantly the performance and effectiveness of the employees with regard to the implementation of their

key functions (Ingersoll and Smith, 2003). In agreement, Kurup and Stehlik (2009), in their research on the sustainability implication of industrial symbiosis within the waste management sector, found that turnover and safety of the work environment are of significant concern to employees within the waste management sector. If these issues are not addressed, it leads to an increased employee turnover rate and reduced employee engagement.

As the research is focused on identifying the key factors which have resulted in increased employee turnover in the ADSSC, the issues which influence high turnover rates such as toxic work environment, hazardous working conditions, and other negative elements can be argued to be crucial issues that affect engagement. This argument is supported by findings from Grissom et al (2012) which note that turnover is a problem that is managerial in nature and needing of attention, and could adversely impact engagement by leading to overall negative emotional feelings and more work pressure on remaining employees following the exit of some workers.

Other critical issues relating to the significance of employee engagement include its importance in terms of organizational equality and work-life balance (Wallace and Trinka, 2009). It is noted that when employees work in a firm that allows flexibility in terms of work periods, and where there is equality in the firm, it results in positive attitudes associated with work-life balance (Wallace and Trinka, 2009). Gerrards et al (2018) identified workplace flexibility as a factor that positively influences the engagement of employees, citing policies like the ease of access to knowledge within the organization and accessibility and openness of the work environment as critical factors which may influence engagement. Expanding further, it is indicated that flexibility within the workplace enhances engagement by facilitating the increase of process control by employees, which enhances interaction and communication between employees (Gerrards et al., 2018). Flexibility in working relations positively influences engagement within organizations (Gerrards et al., 2018). Within the waste management sector under investigation, it is noted that the only flexibility that has been adopted by the ADSSC is within the operational context for the management of its Global Information Systems (GIS) database for operational purposes, rather than within the human resources context, and this may influence the improvement of employee performance with regards to flexibility and consequently, lead to increased employee turnover.

Employee relations today is noted to focus on collective and individual relationships within the work environment; positive employee relations climate can impact the commitment and engagement of employees (CIPD, 2022). The next section provides more insight into employee relations and elaborates on how it can impact engagement.

2.4 Employee Relations and Engagement

Suggestions by Yongcai (2010) indicate that relationships between employees and organizations are unique. In defining employee relations, Yongcai (2010) stated that this is used when referring to the relationship which exists between the rights of the employee, obligations of the employee, and that of management to ensure that the interests of stakeholders of the organization are protected and their desires are attained. This implies that employee relations help in facilitating organizational cooperation, conflict resolution, and improvement of communication, as they can improve the relationship strengths between an organization and its employees.

Aylott (2014) described employee relations (ER) as being related to maintaining and managing the relationships between employees and management; essentially facilitating the interactions between employees and management. Farnham (2015), in similar a notion, suggested that ER describes the relationship between employers and employees through the help of representation if available; union and non-union representatives can help in facilitating ER if available.

In organizations, as with other relationships, communication between stakeholders is essential, but when there is a lack of balance between employees and employers, communication between managers can take the top-down structure. This results in the reduced time provided by senior management for listening to contributions made by employees/junior-level workers (Aylott, 2015). It is however noted that allowing for the contribution of employees and involving employees may result in increased motivation, which will be helpful in the development of support needed for bolstering the performance of the business (Aylott, 2015).

Considering the organizational structure of the ADSSC, it is noted that the firm's managerial division is responsible for assigning key functions that lower-level employees need to undertake within their roles. They set specific tasks/goals which need to be implemented and

identify the accurate remuneration which needs to be paid to individual employees based on the outputs per hour worked (ADSSC, 2018). Further to this, the ADSSC ensures that all employees are furnished with updated policy handbooks on an annual basis; the handbook iterates all the guidelines relating to the policies regarding behavior and the attitude that needs to be exuded by employees, as well as the general principles of employment in the organization (ADSSC, 2018). While there is an ease in access to handbooks and policies, it is however identified that ADSSC's policies are not encouraging in terms of facilitating support to enhance employee voice, which can impact the fluidity of communication between employees and management. This consequently leads to reduced employee relations and engagement of employees (ADSSC, 2019; Turner, 2019).

Rai and Singh (2013) state that it is essential that organizations take action to ensure that there is an enhancement of the relationship development process with stakeholders, and this can only be done if there are positive interactions between organizations and employees. The development of a healthy relationship between an organization and its employees can be done through the implementation of policies that promote interactions, and this will result in improved relationships between customers and the organization (Rai and Singh, 2013). Further to this, it has been suggested by Bajaj et al (2013) that when the human resources department of an organization is clear with regards to understanding the needs of employees and adopts actions such as facilitating training to improve skills, incorporating flexible work hours, implementing career planning workshops, holding performance appraisals, and others, there is a significant effect of these actions on the relationship management capacity of the firm. This is noted to inadvertently result in impacts on the satisfaction of employees with regard to fulfilling their work functions (Bajaj et al., 2013).

Agreeing with this, according to Chapman and Goodwill (2001), when there is improved relationship development between organizations and employees, it results in the optimization of productivity which may have been lagging, inadvertently leading to the promotion of effectiveness of the operations being implemented by employees, and consequently the improved quality of outputs of individual employees. This means that a combination of good relationships with good strategic management and leadership decisions can enhance the capacity of a firm in harmonizing the operational functions of its human capital, leading to work environment improvements (Chapman and Goodwin, 2001).

Kelly (2012) identified that in terms of industrial relations, collective bargaining and trade unions are key factors that help in facilitating the representation of workers in terms of enabling the workers to have a voice, consequently allowing for the development of a power balance that helps to improve employment relationships. Consequently, it can be argued that a decline in union numbers and the ineffectiveness of collective bargaining in organizations within advanced economies leads to the development of a crisis in employment relationships (Kelly, 2012). Within the ADSSC, the structure and policies do not allow for unions and representation, which implies that the structure of the organization does not positively align with union characteristics which are to facilitate employee voice. While the ADSSC has open-door policies which facilitate employee discussions with management about issues of concern, the nature of open-door policies does not equate to employee voice, which facilitates employees building open and trusting relationships with the organization's management. The reason for this is that employees fear being vocal about issues of concern despite these open-door policies may lead to negative reactions which could affect their employment.

Muller-Jentsch (2008) agrees with this supposition by indicating that employee relations influence advocacy issues relating to policies of operations within the organization in terms of employee voice. Expanding further, Rees et al (2013) found that employee voice allows for improved employee behavior, as it enhances positive group functioning within the organization. Furthermore, employee voice also helps in improving trust in management, which allows for enhanced employee engagement (Rees et al., 2013). In terms of ensuring the achievement of employee voice, suggestions in studies by Albrecht and Zemke (2018) indicates that an effective way to promote employee voice is through the use of participative decision-making processes, such as suggestion programs and team-level problem-solving sessions. It is indicated that the adoption of these types of interventions can not only enhance employees' sense of autonomy and control over their work, but also facilitate the identification and resolution of issues within the organization (Albrecht & Zemke, 2018). In addition to participative decision-making, the creation and adoption of an open and inclusive organizational culture can also foster employee voice (Den Hartog et al., 2019). This could be done through promoting open communication channels, such as anonymous suggestion boxes or employee surveys, and encouraging employees to speak up and share their ideas (Den Hartog et al., 2019). Other important means that organizations could adopt in facilitating the

implementation of employee voice is through establishment of procedures for addressing employee concerns and complaints in a fair and timely manner. According to a study by Holman and McMurray (2020), when organizations implement effective grievance procedures and support systems to enhance the ability of employees to speak up, this has a positive impact on work culture and higher levels of employee engagement.

Considering the focus of this study on the waste management sector, the implication of the findings are that promoting employee voice in the waste management sector requires a combination of participative decision-making, an inclusive organizational culture, and effective grievance procedures. By creating an environment where employees feel comfortable speaking up and having their ideas heard, the ADSSC will be able to enhance engagement and improve overall operational performance. The implication of this is that employee voice is a significant issue that influences engagement within the ADSSC, as there is no policy or leverage within the organizational culture which encourages employees to have a voice in terms of bargaining, either through unions or workplace bodies such as the Works Council (ADSSC, 2018). With regards to the firm's organizational policies on grievances or complaints made by employees, workers are usually referred to guidelines stipulated within the employee handbook, and the iteration within the handbook suggests that issues should be handled by direct complaints to the human resources segment of the organization rather than through a group representative strategy.

The figure 1 which follows provides some insight into ADSSC's policies.

Figure 1 ADSSC Policies



Looking at the specifics of the policies as it pertains to communication between the management and employees of the ADSSC, it is required that when there are issues of concern to the employees, complaints are made via line managers, who then relay the same to HR, who in turn discuss these issues with appropriate senior authorities. This long line of communication may influence the decisions of employees to communicate concerns, which can reduce the engagement of employees (Kleinbaum, 2008; Kupritz and Cowell, 2011).

Aggravating Circumstances

- Falsification of identity including nationality, submission of false documentation and certificates
- Commission of errors resulting in loss to ADSSC.
- Failure to comply with safety regulations
- Failure to fulfill basic duties
- Conviction of offence relating to morality
- Disclosing confidential information
- Drug related offences
- Physical or verbal assault in the workplace

Disciplinary Actions

- deductions from salaries
- Warning notice
- Deprivation from annual merit increase
- Suspension from work without pay for periods not exceeding 3 months
- Reduction of grade
- Termination with reduction of gratuity.

ADSSC Disciplinary Actions Policies

Additionally, it has been suggested by ACAS (2011) that when an organization incorporates employee relations policies, it allows for the work environment to be such that there is dissuasion of employees from exuding behavior that does not evidence full engagement. This is because with the adoption of these policies there is a development of a positive work environment characterized by support, trust and respect which significantly bolsters performance and engagement (Collins and Mellahi, 2019). Through establishment of clear employee relations values that are reflected by positive organizational value, organizations would be able to enhance a work culture which fosters employee engagement. Additionally, when employee relations policies are adopted by organization, it promotes engagement by addressing and mitigating conflicts within the workplace. In studies by Keashly et al. (2018) it was found that employees who experience high levels of conflict are less likely to be engaged in their work. By implementing policies that outline appropriate behaviors and provide mechanisms for resolving conflicts, organizations can create a more harmonious work environment and promote engagement.

Putting into consideration the focus of this study on the ADSSC, the implication of this is that the adoption of employee relations policies by the ADSSC will help to ensure that order is forestalled within the work environment of the organization. Expanding further, the implication of this is that the employee relations policies in the UAE and specifically the ADSSC

should be tailored to ensure fluidity in communication between management and junior-level employees. This will help improve operational and regulatory practices to allow for sustained interaction between the senior and lower-level employees unlike the current relations policies which is characterised by bureaucratic complexity, authoritarian approaches which could impact engagement. Amendments to these policies could enhance or facilitate the creation of a positive relationship between junior-level and management-level employees.

The ADSSC also implements a yearly review of its employee relations policy to ensure that unfair treatment of employees which may result in disengagement is prevented. The policy reviews are implemented by a special committee, created by the ADSSC's management; this committee is designated with the management of complaints, as well as issues identified by the human resources department on an annual basis (ADSSC, 2017). With regards to the metrics adopted by the ADSSC in identifying the success or failure of employee relations policies during the review, these include using the percentage of employees that have negative reports of bad supervision through employee surveys annually (ADSSC, 2019). Additionally, the organization uses a turnover percentage relating to managers that are rated as low performing, as well as employees annually obtained through the use of surveys conducted by the HR department (ADSSC, 2019). Additionally, the organization uses the percentage of poor-performing employees that have been placed on training programs and managers' satisfaction relating to the influence of employee relations efforts made by HR on the productivity of teams obtained through survey results from managers (ADSSC, 2019).

2.5 Work Environment and Employee Engagement

The work environment is described as the immediate existing environment in which the employee performs assigned duties and functions within their organization (Al-Omari and Okaseh, 2017). Suitable work environments are suggested to be characterized by features of employee security and comfort, ideal location, and one which considers the health and safety of the workers as they perform assigned duties (Al-Omari and Okaseh, 2017).

The work environment can be categorized based on the nature of interaction and relationships between employees into conducive and toxic work environments, with conducive environments being ideal, while toxic environments are those where the employees do not feel comfortable or secure implementing their duties (Assaf and Alswalha, 2013). Conducive

environments are described as those where employees are provided with empowerment to implement their duties, they have been assigned making use of resources such as various technologies. Additionally, in conducive work environments, occupational health and safety standards of employees are ensured (Ibid).

Previous studies have highlighted that the work environment is an important factor that influences the levels of engagement or the extent of worker engagement with their designated functions (Miles et al, 2001; Harter et al, 2002). For example, it is suggested that when the work environment is such that it facilitates effective collaboration, communication and relationship development between employees, it results in productivity targets being attained, and this has an impact on the engagement of the employees (Holbeche and Springett, 2003; May et al, 2004). Similarly, Deci and Ryan (1987) suggested that a positive work environment is characterized by features of fluid communication between workers and their colleagues and harmonious working relationship between all stakeholders. Positive work environments facilitates the ability of stakeholders in dealing with complex issues that relate with work practices, which in turn influences job satisfaction which is essential for improved engagement of employees (Wallace and Trinka, 2009). The implication of this is that ADSSC's work environment significantly impacts the engagement levels of its employees and stakeholders need to adopt strategies which enhances positive work environment. This could be fostered through internal surveys identifying factors which negatively impacts the work environment, and policies could be adopted to make changes to these negative elements to improve the work environment and bolster engagement.

Leadership actions is another crucial element which impact the extent to which the work environment is positive or toxic (Wallace and Trinka, 2009). When the leadership exudes characteristics of being inspirational or motivational towards employees, this enhances the condition of the work environment being perceived as positive. The indication of this is that the characteristics associated with the leadership of the organization in wielding its duties affect the productivity and engagement level of workers. Positive leadership traits enhance employees' drive for self-involvement in their assigned roles and also helps to improve the enthusiasm of workers in performing their duties (Ibid). Similarly, Walumbwa et al (2008) identified that effective leadership results in employees' self-awareness becoming improved and this enhances transparency in communication within the work environment, resulting in

improved communication culture within the organization. Putting into consideration the context of the ADSSC, the implication of this is that leadership characteristics and competencies impact the nature of the work environment and as such leadership of the ADSSC needs to take appropriate action to facilitate the improvement of the work environment.

Kahn (1990) suggested that teamwork and developing good relationships between employees impact the work environment and as such there needs to be development of trust to bolster relationships within the work environment, enhancing work satisfaction and engagement of workers. Paradise (2008) identified that when the work environment is such that it is supportive, it enhances the teamworking characteristics of employees, resulting in improved interaction between employees, a safety avenue that enhances employee interactivity with their roles, and a better relationship environment. This agrees with suggestions by May et al (2004) who found that when the work environment is positive, it facilitates the development of better employee relations which enhances the effectiveness of employees in performing designated work functions, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. The indication of this considering the case of the ADSSC is that policies need to be developed for the purpose of ensuring positive collaboration, and the team working capacity of workers to enhance the relationship environment.

Understanding the role of diversity on engagement is important for a number of reasons. Research has shown that diversity in the workplace can enhance creativity and problem-solving (Jackson et al., 2019), as well as lead to increased innovation and better decision-making (Khojasteh et al., 2020). Additionally, a diverse workforce can also help organizations better reflect and serve the needs of their customers and clients (Berson et al., 2018). Diversity describes the extent of the presence of variations of unique individuals based on grouping or categorization and impacts the motivation, creativity, and teamworking attitudes of employees in an organization, and is an important element that influences the job satisfaction and engagement of workers (Urick, 2017). The next section expands on the nature of diversity and its influence on the engagement of workers.

2.6 Diversity and Employee Engagement

Chandani et al (2016) reasoned that gender diversification and cultural variation within an organization are some environmental factors that can influence engagement by affecting how team members collaborate and engage with designated functions assigned to them.

Roberson (2019) argued that the nature of reality within the work environment today is such that the human capital of most firms is diverse. It is suggested that if diversity is well addressed by an organization, it results in value addition and an increased capability of the organization because it increases the competitiveness and creativity of workers within the organization (Ibid). Urick (2017) cited an example of how diversity can benefit organizations, noting that if the opportunities for training which are mostly tailored to younger employees are incorporated for older employees, it results in the improvement in skills of older employees. This is because the diversity will enhance collaboration between the different categories of employees, facilitating older employees in matching their skills with that of the younger employees and also because diversity mirrors the outside world (Ibid).

In another study, Chung et al (2015) suggested that when diversity within organizations is effectively managed, it enhances creativity, collaboration, and innovation as diversity would enable the synergizing of various talents and skills needed to achieve and surpass organizational objectives.

Hicks-Clark and Iles (2000) in their study on diversity and engagement within the workplace suggest that when the policies of an organization are diversity-oriented, it facilitates a positive relationship environment such that there is the inclusivity of employees irrespective of cultural affiliation, which is important in facilitating innovativeness and creativity within the organization. Boehm et al (2014) argued that when diversity-oriented practices are adopted in an organization, it helps to ensure bias alleviation when it comes to important decision-making periods, while a lack of practices that encourage diversity may result in increased discrimination. Madera et al (2017) indicated that when diversity practices are adopted, it can result in improvement in job satisfaction and commitment and also lead to declines in turnover intentions.

Arguments by Brett et al (2006) indicate that diverse work environments characterized by increased intercultural interactions being visible among the employees. This impacts the

effectiveness of the organization, specifically when it comes to projects involving teams. In agreement, suggestions by Stahl et al (2010) indicate that when an organization has a multicultural team or diversity within organizational teams, it results in an increased supply of insightful perceptions, which will be useful in the resolution of problems. This is because in multicultural teams, there is increased involvement of human capital in organizational procedures and this helps employees gain skills (Stahl et al., 2010).

While there are several positive benefits to diversity, several studies have identified challenges with diversity within groups, including differences in opinions which are a result of the various cultural unique characteristics and views which may be subscribed to within a diverse team. This can result in conflict (Stahl et al, 2010).

Cultural diversity can impact the approaches used by teams in undertaking operations within an organization and in the management of resources. As such it will be essential for cultural diversity within the ADSSC to be considered as this may impact the capability of the organization to ensure the long-term engagement of employees.

With regards to the diversity information of employees within the ADSSC, the total number of employees is 670 employees with the total number of employees of local origin numbered at 588 employees. Expatriates working number 82. Further to this, the employees comprise 222 female workers and 448 male employees.

In terms of how diversity is perceived in the UAE, the country's immigration laws are quite relaxed, and the country has no opposition to professionals moving to the country to live (De-Bel-Air, 2015). Although in terms of numerical evidence, the nationals of the UAE are identified to live within the country as minorities due to the high influx of professionals into the country to work and live. There is relative peace and acceptance of the citizens of the country to cultural diversity (De-Bel-Air, 2015). The underlying reasons attributed to this include the motivations of common religion, deep-rooted institutions, and traditional norms that culturally welcome individuals from other places.

Brett et al. (2006) noted that when there is cultural diversity in groups, it results in communication issues for individuals within teams because there will be variations in the means adopted by team members in expressing themselves. When there are issues in communication within teams, it may result in a decline in cohesion among team members and

consequently a decrease in the performance of team members individually and the team as a whole (Brett et al., 2006).

Expanding on the importance of Culture as a factor that influences the engagement of workers, it is suggested that culture impacts the ways through which employee relations policies are implemented within an organization (CIPD, 2006). For example, the UAE is a collectivist society, with hierarchical features due to its highly power-distant culture and as a result, the nature of interaction between those who are higher-up in society with lower ranked members of society is one-directional (Hofstede Center, 2021). Hofstede Centre (2021) in describing power distance identifies that the cultural dimension describes the notion of belief that individuals in society are not equal and expresses the cultural attitudes relating to inequality within society. The power distance measure for the United Arab Emirates, the society where the ADSSC operates is noted to score high – 90 on the standardized measures, which indicates that hierarchy, centralization, and inherent inequalities are reflected within the society (Hofstede Centre, 2021). The implication of this considering the context of the ADSSC is that the power distant culture influences interactions between management-level employees and operational-level employees and could impact the relationship environment which in turn affects the job satisfaction and the engagement of workers.

Within multicultural and diverse work environments, there are different levels of motivation from individuals working in different teams as a result of the differences in culture; some employees, as a result of their cultural affiliation, may have a preference to work in an autonomous manner, while others may have a preference for an environment which is collectivist (Stakhl et al., 2010).

Furthermore, when there is group diversity, it has been suggested by Foldy (2004) that there may be certain interactions and behaviors which may impede the development of creativity and learning interactions experienced by the team. This inadvertently impacts engagement in the team, as there will be a decline in motivation for teams where creativity is not present (Foldy, 2004). Ely and Thomas (2001), in their position on the impact of diversity on engagement, suggested that in teams with diverse group members, there are increased interactions, clearer definitions of goals, and integration with regard to the performance of tasks, as a variety of learning perspective and operational perspectives will be identified. This allows for improved engagement and learning within organizations that have such teams (Ely

and Thomas, 2001). Foldy et al (2009) argued that when there is diversity in teams, it will reduce the feeling of marginalization by some members, which will no doubt impact information transmission and a sense of belongingness being experienced by specific group members.

From the statistical employment data of the ADSSC in terms of diversity, the employees are not that diverse in terms of their national cultural identity when compared to the national statistics on diversity in the UAE as a whole (ADSSC, 2020). Liff (1999) identified that it is essential that equal opportunities are presented to employees in alignment with legislation. Cornelius et al. (2000, pp67) indicated that ensuring policies which facilitate the management of diversity within teams is essential, as this can influence inclusivity. With regards to the diversity in teams within the ADSSC, the ADSSC's recruitment policies changed in 2013 in alignment with the UAE's introduction of *Emiratization*, which was established for the purposes of overcoming structural disadvantages of locals within UAE's labor market (ADSSC, 2015). The new policies of *Emiratization* allowed for the increased replacement of already existing staff within the ADSSC with nationals of the UAE, and in cases where UAE nationals were already existing within the organizations, favoritism was shown toward new UAE nationals (Moussly, 2012).

The implication of the Emiratization policy being adopted is to facilitate the nationalization of the workforce of the country such that there is a more visible focus on the recruitment and employment of Emirati citizens to gradually replace the growing expatriate workforce in the country (Moussly, 2012). Although the actions and policies of Emiratization are well intended, they have an impact on recruitment and employment in the UAE, as suggestions by Moussly (2012) in a study on the challenges of Emiratization identifies cultural factors including the "fussy" nature of employees as impacting on the effectiveness of the policy. Furthermore, Emiratization is noted to have impacted on continuity of jobs within the UAE, as it has resulted in cultural clash based on the difficulty of integrating Emirati workers with other co-workers (Moussly, 2012).

Further to this, the culture and the social status of the Emirati people are such that locals are disinclined towards applying and working in roles that are vocational or technical, or jobs that are aligned with manual functions/blue-collar employment. This is because it is perceived that these jobs are perceived as not appropriate and are perceived to be jobs for individuals at the

lower end of the social strata (Harnish, 2004). This no doubt influences the dynamics in terms of team divergence within the ADSSC, as the organization's recruitment policies are in favor of employing locals rather than allowing for equal opportunities.

It is also important to understand significance of training and human capital development to employee engagement as this enhances the commitment and performance of their workforce (Boudreau et al., 2018). In the study by Boudreau et al., (2018) it was shown that employees who have opportunities for learning and development are more likely to be engaged in their work and committed to their organization. Additionally, training and development can enhance the capability and skills of employees leading to increased job satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment (Lawler et al., 2021). The next section provides further details and insights into the importance of training and human capital development to the engagement of workers.

2.7 Training and Human Capital Development and the Impact on ADSSC's Engagement

According to Rahman and Ruben (2018) there is the equity between the competencies observed as a result of education and the training provided for employees to improve specific skills. Rahman and Ruben (2018) identified that investment in training should be tailored in such a way that the training opportunities provided meet the needs/wants and requirements of the employees while making them relevant to work function. This is because poor strategic investment in human capital may not lead to the best outcomes for the organization's competitiveness (Rahman and Ruben (2018). Luthans and Youssef (2004) argued that the usual perception of human resources is that investment in skills is core to the knowledge of the employees, as well as important for the competitiveness of the organization. This is because employees comprise individuals having a variety of skills and knowledge which is explicit in nature and investing in specific skills facilitates the ability of the organization to attain its deliverables and ensure competitiveness. Luthans and Youssef (2004) also noted that while the explicit knowledge can be measured, there are limitations with regard to selection processes for training employees, and this impacts the benefits derived by the organization. For example, educating employees has a predictive validity with regard to positive outcomes. This is because education through training procedures facilitates the improved performance of the employees

(Luthans and Yousef, 2004). This implies that the provision of training opportunities is beneficial to both the individual employees in terms of their engagement with their duties, and to the organization in terms of facilitating the achievement of deliverables.

Suggestions by Baumruk (2004) further indicate that training is a key activity that influences job performance, as training helps to bolster the shortcomings of employees with regard to operational skills needed for the firm's production or service functions being bolstered. This is because training not only enhances individual and the personal growth of employees but also creates a feeling of internal satisfaction for the employee as well as confidence, leading to an improvement in the engagement of employees (Baumruk, 2004).

Bakker et al (2008) indicated that training is also critical to employee engagement, as it not only enhances the strategic operational efficacy of the organization but also facilitates employee development and long-term organizational sustainability. It is also noted that when employees are trained, psychologically it improves their confidence with regard to implementing work functions, and this tends to increase the engagement of the employees. The implication of this is that provision of relevant training furnishes employees with competencies needed for their future prospects and growth, and also competencies needed for long-term dedication to duties to which they have been assigned. Considering the case of the ADSSC, this means that providing relevant training enhances the individual prospects of employees and bolsters their confidence in implementing assigned duties/functions which inadvertently impacts the job satisfaction of employees and their engagement with their duty.

Baumruk (2004) argued that when employees are trained, it enhances their capacity to be innovative within the work environment in addition to enhancing the feeling of actualization of employees as more opportunities are made available to them due to their improved competencies.

Looking at the features of the organization of focus for this study, while it is noted that the ADSSC has reduced its investments in training targeted at its employees, the organization still incorporates training programs and workshops into its operational actions (ADSSC, 2019). Some training programs include the "illustrator workshop" which was developed to enhance communication skills within the workplace, "certified consultant in -ER" training program which was developed to address issues in human resources and employee relations, amongst

others (ADSSC, 2019). It is argued that these training programs facilitate the enhancement of productivity and consequently the sustainability of the organization, as these programs facilitate continued engagement of the firm's employees.

Furthermore, the ADSSC is noted to have developed many special training programs to improve the development of employees, as well as encourage employee engagement and reduce employee turnover. Some of these programs include the provision of scholarships for employees that have served in the organization for more than 6 years, paid study leaves for employees that have served for more than 6 years, tuition assistance to aid employees that have served in the organization for at least 4 years, as well as special training for employees who have worked in the organization for a minimum of 4 years (ADSSC, 2018).

There are several control mechanisms, including terms and conditions which are put into ADSSC's organizational policy books to ensure that the benefits associated with training and human capital development are not abused. For instance, in choosing training programs, employees need to get approval from senior managers or line managers within their departments in attending the programs (ADSSC, 2018). This is to facilitate and ensure that employees are not just selecting irrelevant programs which may be of no consequence to their roles or future career aspirations and reduce opportunities for others in attending such programs (ADSSC, 2018). Additionally, it is noted that a lack of effective implementation of policies significantly impacts the policy's effectiveness in terms of adoption, and this may influence the lack of long-term engagement of workers within ADSSC, as well as increase worker attrition. Expanding further, based on the researcher's experiences in working with the ADSSC, it is perceived that while benefits such as training programs and allowances play a significant role in facilitating the increased engagement and retention of employees, the peculiar nature of the industry in which ADSSC is positioned makes it unattractive as a long-term organization, based on cultural perceptions about being employed in ADSSC's sector. Moreover, most of the training programs available to employees to select from are deemed irrelevant to their roles and future prospects. This could explain why the training programs made available do not positively impact the job satisfaction of workers and their engagement with their roles.

Ngatia (2014), in a study of the effect of non-monetary rewards on the engagement of employees within sanitation firms in Muranga County, Kenya, found that while training and

development helped in the attainment of effective organizational activities for the firm, adoption of non-monetary reward systems such as flexible working hours and actions to improve the morale of employees helped improve productivity, retention and employee engagement. While this study concludes that recognition of employees' training needs and incorporation of solutions to meet these training needs have a significant impact on an employee's satisfaction and productivity, the study recognizes the need to ensure that training needs are met (Ibid). This is because the provision of training opportunities facilitates a high level of organizational effectiveness and engagement as it impacts career development pathways for employees and could serve as a strategic means of boosting employee performance.

Al-Aina and Atak (2020) investigated the impact of talent management practices including training and development on organizational performance within the context of real estate firms in the UAE. The findings from the study identify that within the real estate segment in the UAE, the use of learning and development, in addition to other sustainable strategies, such as career management of employees enhances sustainable organizational performance (Al-Aina and Atak, 2020). Similarly, Rabbi et al (2015) in a study investigating talent management as a source of competitive advantage identified that talent management facilitates the development of opportunities for employees when activities such as coaching and training are employed to enhance employee competitiveness. Considering the case of the ADSSC and the nature of the waste management industry it could be argued that because the nature of the industry is such that there are scarce training opportunities for employees, waste management organizations provide general training programs, which explains the challenges of irrelevant training programs being promoted within the ADSSC. The implication of this is that organizations within the sector need to create and tailor training opportunities which enhance the competencies of workers, and facilitate the creation of future opportunities for workers, enhancing their motivation to perform assigned functions, and achieve job satisfaction, impacting the engagement of workers. This is important because the availability of opportunities for training and development is a key metric that influences the engagement of employees in a significant manner (CIPD, 2018). This is because training opportunities create opportunities for career advancement and help enhance the improvement of the skills of employees (CIPD, 2018).

According to Alderfer (1972), there are certainties that come with career development and improvement programs which are instituted to develop the skills of employees. When employees are sent on training, the perception of the employees about their organization is one that is supportive of employee goals and values. Putting into cognizance the ADSSC, this implies that the stakeholders need to consider the nature of the available training and development programs offered as this could affect the extent of job satisfaction of employees and their engagement within their roles. As seen from the reviewed literature so far, a variety of factors could impact the engagement of workers but these factors are categorised into two based on the dual-factor theory or the two-factor theory as posited by Herzberg (1966). The section which follows expands on this theory with the purpose of exploring the variety of factors which could impact engagement considering the context of the ADSSC.

2.8 Herzberg's Motivation Two-Factor Theory

The dual-factor theory suggests that separate mutually exclusive factors are present in the workplace, and these factors could lead to job dissatisfaction or satisfaction (Herzberg, 1966). The factors which encourage job satisfaction are noted to relate to self-growth and actualization of the employees. Further to this, while motivating factors help with ensuring the satisfaction of employees with their jobs when the hygiene factors are absent, this results in negative impacts on job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1966).

Ozoy (2019) in describing hygiene factors suggests that they are the job factors that enhance the motivation of employees within an organization. It was suggested that the hygiene factors over the long term do not result in the satisfaction of employees, but when these factors are absent, it could result in dissatisfaction.

Aleandri et al (2014) further identified that hygiene factors are responsible for maintaining satisfaction (Aleandri et al., 2014). These factors are external to the work functions performed by employees and include key practices like the policy of the organization, practices of supervision, wages and salaries, and others (Ozsoy, 2019). Looking at the case of the ADSSC, the hygiene factors that can influence the engagement of employees include the policies of the organization, the nature of the relationship between supervisors and junior employees, working conditions, remuneration, security, and salary rewards (Ozsoy, 2019). The ADSSC's

policies can be argued to be favorable and job security is high due to the nature of the organization being a public sector firm (ADSSC, 2019). Additionally, the salary which describes compensation that employees obtain as payment for services they render while working for a firm is high and this is indicated to positively affect job satisfaction (Hu and Hrish, 2017).

ADSSC employees are also identified to be provided with working hours that are *flexible*, in addition to vacations and health care plans which improve the working conditions environment of the organization (ADSSC, 2018). Other hygiene factors include the physical working conditions and environment, and the fact that equipment and working areas should be clean and safe in terms of the absence of hazardous exposure (Ozsoy, 2019).

In addition to the issue of the pay scale as a means of making work in the ADSSC attractive, other factors undertaken include providing access for employees to attend special entertainment events, such as the Sultan Bin Zayed Heritage Festival, amongst other celebratory events to enhance motivation (ADSSC, 2018). Furthermore, the ADSSC also adopts an occupational health and safety policy to promote safety within the work environment and this is critical to the long-term engagement of employees (ADSSC Annual Report, 2019).

The HSE (2018) identified that having a safe environment, particularly within the sewage services sector, is important as this impacts upon the long-term engagement of employees in addition to the effectiveness of employees in implementing their functions due to the hazardous nature of operations in sewage management operations. When the physical working conditions and work area are conducive, it improves the morale of the employees and, consequently, the effectiveness of employees in implementing their functions (HSE, 2018).

In terms of motivation factors, suppositions by Gervais et al (2016) argue that hygiene and motivational factors differ in the sense that motivational factors can result in the satisfaction of employees in a positive manner. This is because these factors are inherent to job satisfaction and the performance of the organization. Motivational factors include recognition which bolsters satisfaction by improving the sense of achievement and increased accountability shown by employees (Gervais et al., 2016). Understanding the variety of factors that can increase or reduce dissatisfaction and motivation is a key step with regard to the development of recommendations to enhance the capacity of an organization to retain staff (Kasu and Raju, 2015). This implies that the use of the dual-factor theory enhances the stakeholder's ability to

identify hygiene and motivator factors present within the ADSSC and adapt their policies in a manner that will help facilitate employee job satisfaction and engagement in the organization. While there are many benefits to employee engagement that have been highlighted throughout this chapter, the review of the literature also suggests that there exists a dark side to the subject of engagement i.e. negative consequences which could result from employees being overly engaged with their job roles. Exploring the dark side of engagement is important in this thesis for several reasons. First, examining this aspect of engagement provides an understanding of potential existing negative outcomes which can result from engagement, facilitating the ability of this study in understanding consequences of engagement and understanding strategies to facilitate positive forms of engagement which is important for organizational development. Additionally, the examination of the dark side of engagement is useful for ensuring the provision of a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted construct associated with engagement and for informing the development of effective interventions which may be useful to the ADSSC in promoting positive aspects of engagement within the work environment. The next section explores further insights into the dark aspects of engagement and highlights how this could impact the ADSSC's stakeholders in achieving their objectives.

2.9 The Dark Side of Engagement

The dark side of employee engagement discusses the absurd inconsistency associated with the same factors that drive engagement of employees, precipitating negative outcomes including complacency, turnover, and burnout, among other elements. It suggests that when there is improper management of the factors such that they are disproportionate in terms of implementation strategies (Wang et al., 2018).

In studies conducted by Wiguna et al. (2023), it is evidenced that the dark element engagement is influenced by leadership attitudes and behaviors, and a lack of ethical principles being evidenced by leadership. The study found that these could undermine benefits associated with the engagement of employees. Expanding further, in the study conducted within the context of the Indonesian corporate segment, a mixed methods design was applied in conducting quantitative studies with 1013 managers and supervisors and evaluating insights based on

qualitative investigations conducted with 20 seasoned professionals within the same sector (Wiguna et al., 2023). The findings from the quantitative studies evidenced through regression analysis that the dark side of leadership had a negative impact on engagement and inadvertently evidenced a non-direct impact on the performance of the corporation. This indicates that employee engagement plays a mediating role with regard to corporate performance and leadership, implying that engagement can serve as a buffer to minimize the effects of dark leadership but still has a susceptibility to being undermined by it (Wiguna et al., 2023).

In another study undertaken by Garrad and Chamorro-Premuzic (2016), the dark side of engagement was discussed from a critical view, with the findings cautioning about how a lack of critical approach in facilitating engagement by organizations causes several of the challenges faced in operations. The findings outlined that although engagement has strong links to retention and productivity for an organization, focusing on engagement as a corporate mantra alone could result in poor consideration of other elements that could affect organizational outcomes (Garrad and Chamorro-Premuzic, 2016). They emphasized that overall consideration of elements such as the well-being of the employee, could affect long-term commitment. The study further identified that over-engagement could also increase the tendency for emotional exhaustion to be experienced, indicating that when there are poor support structures and poor management strategies are employed in managing engagement, this results in stressors impeding job satisfaction (Garrad and Chamorro-Premuzic, 2016).

Similarly, in studies by Wang et al. (2018), the concept of engagement was evaluated against psychological ownership, expanding on the antecedents associated with concept of psychological ownership. The findings elucidated the presence of underlying elements that align employee engagement and note have varied consequences in the work environment. From the findings, it is indicated that avoidance motivation is critical in facilitating the manifestation of negative behaviours within organizations (Wang et al., 2018). Expanding further, the findings highlighted that the strategies which the management of an organization adopts shapes employee's orientations of motivation. Specifically emphasizing scenarios where adopting developmental interventions were shown to enhance motivations, the findings evidenced that fostering a mindset for growth in addition to ensuring the accessibility of employees to supportive employee climates were important to minimizing the negative

impacts of over-engagement and counteracting negative impacts of psychological ownership associated with a role (Wang et al., 2018).

In studies by Maslach (2011), it is indicated that a curvilinear pattern exists between engagement and burnout. Expanding further, it is suggested that highly engaged employees could result in negative consequences for the employee and the organization by impacting the attitude of employees within the work environment and the motivational climate within the work environment (Maslach, 2011). Considering the case of the ADSSC, this means that over-engaged workers in the ADSSC could pose a challenge relating to employee burnout which impacts the efficacy of workers in implementing their duties and roles, and the long-term performance of workers within the ADSSC.

In studies by Parker et al (2003), it is suggested that there are differences between psychological and organizational climates, and these impact the behavior of employees at work. Expanding further, it is indicated that there are two forms of psychological climates including mastery climate and performance perception climate (Parker et al, 2003). Nestad (2012) identify that in organizations that adopt a mastery climate, the characteristics of such environments are that there is a focus on personal growth and learning and these can enhance work engagement and reduce burnout. This is because employees within mastery climates tend to foster adaptive cognitive, affective, and behavioral patterns due to the nature of the environment. This is unlike in performance climate where the focus is on the attainment of outcomes and in meeting external standards that can foster results that are maladaptive, including increased burnout and decreased engagement (Nestad, 2012). An explanation for this is that performance climates often involve high levels of pressure and competition, which can lead to feelings of stress and frustration among employees (Gagné & Deci, 2005). A possible reason for the differences between performance climate and mastery climate is that a mastery climate promotes a sense of autonomy and control among employees, while a performance climate may be more controlling and directive (Nestad, 2012). According to studies by Deci and Ryan (2000), autonomy is a key factor in promoting engagement and well-being in the workplace, while a lack of autonomy can contribute to feelings of burnout and disengagement (Maslach et al., 2001).

The implication of this is that the motivational climate within the work environment could play an important role in the level of engagement of employees within their roles and could impact

the tendency of employees to burn out as a result of their engagement. Putting into consideration the context of the ADSSC, the implication is that stakeholders need to ensure that while actions are taken to ensure the engagement of employees with their roles, it should also be ensured that employees are not engaged to the detriment of their health and work-life balance as this tends to result in negative outcomes for stakeholders and the organization in general. There are barriers that impacts organizations' capacity to deploy practices that enhance engagement. Understanding these barriers is essential as it can facilitate stakeholders' capacity to ensure transparency and accessibility to engagement activities. Collectively, the arguments put forward by the review of literature on the dark side of employee engagement underscores the importance of adopting a balanced approach to engagement. One which takes into consideration the shortcomings and proposes recommendations to mitigate the impact of these failures. The review of literature relating to the dark side of engagement argues for a critical and nuanced evaluation of the approach to implementing engagement by considering the multifaceted dichotomies associated with the complex construct. The section which follows identifies the barriers to engagement considering the context of the ADSSC.

2.10 Barriers to Engagement

Macey et al (2009) noted that there are both positive and negative factors that influence engagement within organizations. Briefly expanding on this, it is identified that after an individual decides to become part of an organization, there is an initial ecstatic feeling shown by the recruit, but this tends to depreciate over time (Macey et al., 2009). Expanding on the key barriers which negatively affect the engagement of employees to their work function, it is suggested that these include a lack of consistency of the organization's management style/structure, specifically with regards to the management level employee behavioral attitudes (Macey et al., 2009). Table 2 provides a summary of these barriers as identified by Macey et al. (2009).

Table 1 Barriers that influence employee engagement Macey et al. (2009).

Barrier	Implications
Decreased advocacy	Decreased advocacy in the organization leads to a decline in the engagement of employees in the organization. This can be facilitated by always incorporating new policies which are not in favor of employees
Work-Life Balance	Inadequate provision of means to help employees in balancing their day-to-day activities.
No collaborative platforms	Lack of platforms to share ideas or communicate may result in a negative perception of employees in terms of their view on the strategic management of the organization. This is because it affects the trust level in the organization.
Poor Communication	Incoherence in the communication between the major stakeholders in the organization can also significantly impact the sustainable engagement of employees.

Gatenby et al (2009) identified that there are some barriers that can result in negative engagement shown by an organization's employees, including a lack of a consistent management style shown by the organization's leaders, which results in negative attitudes amongst employees. Another barrier identified to significantly impact the engagement of employees includes a decline in advocacy levels within the organization, which results in the creation of a situation where there are increased disengagement levels of employees in

addition to resentment by employees (Gatenby et al., 2009). It has also been argued that when the work environment is such that there is a lack of flexibility to enable the employee's work-life balance, it reduces engagement (CIPD, 2017).

A lack of appropriate communication channels which help to facilitate communications between employees and the organization also impacts the engagement of workers (CIPD, 2017; Armstrong, 2009). This is because when there is no communication coherence between workers and the organization, it results in increased conflicts which in turn leads to poor engagement levels (Armstrong, 2009). This could be explained by poor communication impacting the relationship environment within the work environment, which affects conflict resolution capacity and collaboration of employees. Considering the context of this study, it can be argued that within waste management organizations workers face many challenges which they may want to raise with their colleagues and management. When there is poor communication or a lack of platforms to facilitate communication, this could impact engagement levels due to the decreased level of management-level interaction and relationships which influences the trust and understanding of employees, which is important to attain job satisfaction. This could be argued to play an important role in influencing the engagement of employees.

The review of the literature in this chapter has identified that the concept of employee engagement can be described in a variety of ways. Suggestions indicate that the concept of employee engagement is multifaceted. The section which follows provides a summary of the findings from the literature and also identifies the gaps in the literature that this study fills.

2.11 Summary of Literature

The review of the literature in this chapter identified that the concept of employee engagement can be described in a variety of ways. Suggestions indicate that the concept of employee engagement is multifaceted (Valeva et al., 2017; Mandip, 2012; Gomes et al., 2014). The reviewed literature sheds evidence that having an engaged employee will allow for improved procedures and operations, resulting in a better competitive strategy for the firm and increased knowledge of the focus area of the organization (Gomes et al., 2014).

The review also identifies how hygiene factors and motivator factors can impact the engagement of employees, allowing for consideration of how these factors may influence engagement within the ADSSC.

Generally, the literature reveals that there are a variety of reasons why employees are engaged with their role/duty including rewards, cultural factors, training, employee voice, and Emiratization. Other factors examined in this literature include investment in human capital, availability of support, development of employee relations policies to encourage fluidity in communication between employees and employers, and motivation (Anyango et al., 2015; Gomes et al., 2014). The review also identifies that there are good and bad implementation strategies that impact employee engagement outcomes.

For instance, the review of the literature identifies that there is an impact of diversity within teams on the engagement of employees and identified that while there are benefits to diversity in teams such as increased creativity, which allows for the development of positive outcomes, diversity can also result in problems due to differences in values of the employees in the organization as a result of variances in culture (Ely and Thomas, 2001). While the ADSSC was identified to be an organization with lower diversity due to the nature of the organization as a public sector firm, and as a result of the current policies of Emiratization which encourages the recruitment of Emirati citizens compared to other nationalities, it will be useful to explore if the lack of diversity impacts upon the engagement of employees in the firm. Furthermore, the review of the literature identified the barriers to engagement, discusses the importance of employee voice in relation to the engagement of employees, and identifies how this can impact organizational productivity. The review also explored the negative aspects of engagement considering the context of the ADSSC.

Table 3 which follows identifies the summary of the key findings from the literature examined.

Literature Theme	Relevance	References
Employee Relations	This describes the relationship between employees and the management of the ADSSC and understanding the kind of relationship and organizational culture that exists, as well as critical literature on employee relations will help in identifying the underlying issues which may exist within the firm's Employee Relations Policies.	Yongcai (2010), CIPD (2006), Flanders (1974), Chapman and Goodwin (2001), Macey et al. (2009)
Employee Engagement	This is the central theme and focus of the study and as such it will be essential to explore all key relevant areas of employee engagement including theories and industrial critical reviews on the various factors which influence the engagement of employees. Doing this will allow for an exploration of the variety of issues which may be currently impacting upon the ADSSC's employee engagement policies in a bid	Miles et al (2001), Rich et al. (2010), Wallace and Trinko (2009), Kahn (1990), Paradise (2008), Rath and Harter (2010).

	to make recommendations as to the mitigation of these issues/factors.	
Diversity and Engagement	Papers reviewed identified that diversity enhances innovation by increasing value of the organizational skills and talent. Furthermore, studies reviewed identified that diversity enhances opportunities for organizations by increasing innovativeness, creativity which stems from employees from different experiences and cultures.	Buhrman (2017), Urlick (2017), Chung et al (2015); Harnish (2004), Moussly (2012)
Employee Voice and Engagement	The papers reviewed identified that employee voice affects engagement by impacting on employee perception regarding communicating with senior management about issues which could impact on productivity. Also lack of employee voice was identified to be negatively impact on, individual motivation and this affects	(Anyango et al., 2015), Detert and Edmonson (2011)

	overall organizational performance.	
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2.12 Gaps in Literature

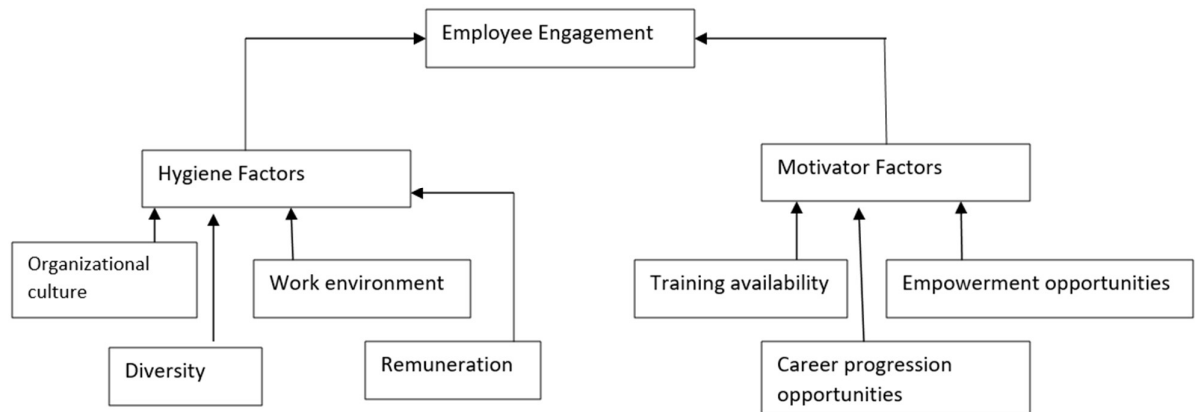
From the review of literature, it is noted that there are some gaps relating to the issue of engagement in the literature and this study would fill the following gaps identified:

- 1) There is a lack of previous studies examining the impact of Emiratization on Engagement. Prior studies only conceptually examined the policies of Emiratization in terms of its effect on inter-organizational relationships (Harnish, 2004; Moussly, 2012).
- 2) Previous studies on engagement examined the issue by investigating factors that impact engagement and barriers to engagement, and these studies have been done in several contexts. No studies have been done qualitatively exploring the concept within the context of the UAE and the waste management sector.

To fill these gaps, the researcher developed a conceptual framework adapted from the reviewed literature. The section which follows expands on the conceptual framework for the study.

2.13 Conceptual Framework

The use of a conceptual framework within a study facilitates an explanation of the key concepts or variables and the relationships between them; it explains the argument of the study. For this research, the conceptual framework put into cognizance by the researcher is illustrated in the figure 1 which follows.



The theoretical foundation of the conceptual framework has its basis on Herzberg's dual-factor theory which suggests that there are two categories of factors which impact employee engagement including motivator and hygiene factors. Hygiene factors include factors such as organizational culture, work environment, the nature of remuneration received by employees of the ADSSC, diversity with the work environment and policies which relate to employee voice. For the motivator factors, these are noted to include availability of training opportunities, employee empowerment opportunities and career progression opportunities.

From the conceptual framework illustrated in the figure, it is seen that there are two broad categories of factors that influence Employee Engagement within the context of the ADSSC including the hygiene and motivator factors as identified by Herzberg's dual-factor theory reviewed in the literature. Hygiene factors based on the review of the literature were identified to be extrinsic elements that motivate employees in performing their optimal within their designated functions. Within the ADSSC, they include organizational culture, work environment, nature of remuneration, diversity, policies relating to employee voice, etc. For motivator factors, these are factors that impact the level of engagement of employees with their duties and have the capacity of satisfying the psychological needs and sense of achievement and personal/professional growth of employees within the organization. In the ADSSC, these factors include but are not limited to the availability of training opportunities, employee empowerment opportunities, and career progression opportunities. The conceptual framework considers the context of the focus of the research on the context of the UAE waste

management sector and suggests that a combination of hygiene factors and motivator factors influence the nature and characteristics of engagement of workers with their jobs. The illustration identifies based on the review of the literature that key factors which influence employee engagement within the context of the ADSSC include employee relations factors, work environment, diversity of staff, the nature of employee voice, and the availability of training opportunities among other factors are important elements which drive engagement of workers. Overall, this framework highlights the complex interplay between various factors in determining the level of employee engagement within the ADSSC.

In order to answer the research question for the study, it is essential that the methodological approach is clearly presented. The next chapter highlights the methodological approach followed by this study in answering the research question posed and also filling these missing gaps in the literature. Reiterating the aims of the study, it is noted that the study explores employee engagement and factors which influence the engagement of employees in ADSSC, a public sector waste management organization in the UAE. The study also aims at understanding the effect of engagement on the ADSSC's long-term sustainability.

The key research question posed by this study is as follows:

- a. What are the key factors that impact the engagement of employees in the public sector in the UAE, specifically waste management organizations?

The methodology chapter identifies the philosophy, approach, tools, and methods of analysis that the study used in providing answers to the research question posed.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter identifies the research methods that this study followed to achieve the research aims. The chapter provides insights into the various philosophies and methods which were considered in the implementation of the research, with justifications for the applicability and suitability of the various methods used. Considerations of prior methods used in similar studies and their influence in facilitating the attainment of the previous study aims are also provided in justifying the approaches used in this study. The chapter begins with the identification of the research philosophy selected in the study and the justifications for the choice of the philosophy.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Burrell and Morgan (1979) described a research philosophy as the techniques used in understanding the truth about the world and the perception of how this is seen by the world and individuals therein. The philosophy of a study is founded on the assumption and perspective of different individuals relating to a concept being investigated (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Putting this into context, this study is focused on employee engagement and consequently, the philosophy will consider various perceptions relating to employee engagement decline in the ADSSC, as well as factors that influence engagement of employees within the organization. It is essential for a philosophical review to be implemented when undertaking some studies because a philosophical review allows for consideration of various perspectives and approaches to be incorporated in a study, and also to facilitate confidence in the results obtained (Saunders et al., 2016; Holden and Lynch, 2004). The section which follows identifies the study's philosophical stance.

3.2 Philosophical Stance

Most studies consider three philosophical stances to be critical in driving research and these include the epistemology, ontology, and axiology of the research (Saunders et al., 2016). In defining the research epistemology, Knight and Cross (2012) argued that the epistemology drives all philosophical assumptions which are considered in research. Saunders et al (2016) added that the research epistemology focuses on addressing factual information through

questioning what form of knowledge is acceptable and what information can be described as true as a result of several tests done to validate such knowledge.

Reiterating that the focus of this research is on the theory of engagement, the epistemological framework considered the knowledge and factual information regarding engagement within the ADSSC. The study followed an interpretivist epistemology which, according to Littlejohn and Foss (2009), is an epistemological stance which is useful particularly when the research's nature is such that it seeks insights relating to themes regarding the concept being investigated. A reason why the use of the interpretivist approach is of merit to this study is that the use of this approach enhances the ability of the study to analyse the meanings which are conferred by professionals working in specific positions in the ADSSC on the subject of engagement, in order to identify key patterns and themes which may influence engagement in the organization (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009). Following an interpretivist epistemological position enhances the ability of the study to clarify the insights of employees of the ADSSC on the concept of engagement, thus enhancing the capacity of the research to provide answers to the questions being asked.

Adopting an interpretivist philosophy aligns with qualitative approaches to research and consequently will enhance the research's use of interviews as a tool for obtaining rich information relating to engagement and how it influences organizational and employee outcomes in the ADSSC.

The use of the interpretivist philosophy also differs from the positivist paradigm due to less emphasis being placed on this philosophical thinking on adopting objective means to information; the interpretivist thinking in this study allows for the research to focus on meanings which are deeper concerning the issue of engagement, because participants will share knowledge of the subject matter based on practical experiences rather than a broad knowledge of engagement that would have been facilitated by objective paradigms such as the positivist paradigm (Creswell, 2009).

Also, interpretivism aligns with the epistemological paradigm of constructivism, which is based on beliefs that knowledge is subjective in nature and can only be socially constructed and is dependent on human experience (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). This means that the knowledge of the professionals working in the different areas of the ADSSC is unique, and as such only

these individuals are able to provide valuable contributions on the subject of engagement within the organization. The use of the interpretivist paradigm within this study is based on the belief of the researcher that experiences of individuals that have worked in specific capacities within the ADSSC will help in providing insights relating to the context, history, and culture in the ADSSC as it relates to the issue of engagement. Consequently, adopting this philosophy is believed to be central in ensuring that the research aims of understanding factors which influence engagement within the ADSSC and how engagement influences organizational outcomes will be achieved.

Several studies have used interpretivism in examining the issue of engagement, including Heaney (2010), who noted that the use of interpretivism enhances the researcher's capacity to enter the research participant's social work, allowing for the study to understand the world from the participant's unique position. Greef (2015) also adopted the interpretivist paradigm in examining engagement and organizational diversity, and the use of this approach allowed for the study to examine the methods used by employees in experiencing and interpreting diversity. The interpretivist approach enhanced the capacity of the study to examine the experiences of the employees and allowed for the researcher to understand and comprehend the meanings which the participants created (Greef, 2015).

To sum up, using interpretivism in this study enhances its capacity to holistically understand the concept of engagement as it influences the ADSSC, as understood by professionals working within the organization. This facilitated the study's capacity to achieve its main aims and objectives.

3.3 Research Approach

After an ideal philosophical stance has been identified, the selection of an approach which will help ensure the research aims are achieved needs to be done and two key approaches can be used in studies (Matthews and Ross, 2010). The two approaches considered include deductive and inductive approaches (Matthews and Ross, 2010). With regards the deductive option, this implies that the study commences with a question or statement and the research attempts to resolve the research question posed (Reimer et al., 2012). The deductive approach commences from theory and then the research questions follow by the collection of data and iterating

findings in order to reject or confirm the questions which have been posed (Reimer et al., 2012).

For the inductive approach, this is described as an approach which implies research in order for theory to be developed (Saunders et al., 2016). The inductive method is noted to work in the opposite way of the deductive method, and the direction of focus in this approach originates on the working title of the research (Saunders et al., 2016). The approach commences from the research questions, following which observation is done, and a descriptive analysis of the phenomena being investigated is provided before the final development of theory (Reimer et al., 2012).

For the purpose of this study, the inductive approach was followed as a result of examining already existing literature related to the subject of employee engagement, employee satisfaction and other themes that this study reviews. This allowed for rejection or confirmation of the iterations in the research questions posed (Saunders et al., 2016).

Using the inductive approach facilitates the collection of data and development of theory through analysis of the data which has been obtained; the approach enhances the capacity of the researcher to gain insights into the phenomena of investigation through allowing for the investigator to gain an insight related to the situation (Bryman, 2008). In terms of deduction, it is noted that when deduction is used in a study, it allows for the variables being examined to be interpreted without considering the interpretation of humans regarding their understanding of their social world, preventing the research from being holistic (Bryman, 2008). Furthermore, the deductive approach is more rigid and does not put into cognisance alternative issues which may influence the results obtained by a study, unlike the inductive approach which allows for studies to consider a wide array of situations and events which may influence the study, making the approach more interpretive and flexible in nature (Saunders et al., 2016). This is essential for development of knowledge on observations and to make inferences relating to specific details found from the data obtained from the participants. In studies by Davies and Crane (2010) which investigated corporate social responsibility within the context of SMEs and its impact on employee engagement, inductive approaches were adopted as it facilitated the ability of the study in exploring different HR practices which impact engagement and CSR.

The decision to follow the inductive approach in this study allowed for considerations to be made relating to the nature of evidence required to facilitate accurate inference of the study, identification of where data will be obtained from, the appropriate techniques that will help provide insights into the data and also interpretation of the research findings (Saunders et al., 2016). For this study, the use of the inductive approach helped to identify patterns and themes relevant to engagement in ADSSC and consequently facilitated the research's capacity to draw accurate inferences.

3.4 Research Method

Research methods refer to the procedures, strategies, and techniques used in collecting data or evidence required for analysis so that new information or knowledge about the phenomena being investigated or a better understanding of the issue being explored is uncovered (Hameed, 2020). Simply put, they can be referred to as the systematic procedures followed in conducting an investigation; they incorporate the rules followed by the investigator and procedures followed in providing insights into the questions posed by the investigation (Hameed, 2020).

Quinlan et al (2012) describe research methods as the means that studies can follow in order to ensure that the aims of the investigation being conducted are fulfilled. Several methods can be followed in implementing a research study, including the use of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research techniques (Quinlan et al., 2012). For this study, the qualitative method was chosen. The qualitative method is advantageous to studies focused on gaining insights relating to the behavior and perception of individuals of the phenomena being investigated, as the use of this method allows for insights into experiences and descriptions of the concepts being investigated (Saunders et al., 2016). Using the qualitative approach allowed for the identification of themes and key patterns relating to engagement within the ADSSC, which helped inform the research by providing insights about the research questions posed (Quinlan et al., 2016).

In studies by Busse and Weidner (2020) which investigated the combined impacts of leadership, organizational agility and digital collaboration on engagement of employees, the use of the qualitative approach was adopted. This enabled the study in gaining deeper

meanings relating to the factors examined on performance indicators and employee engagement (Busse and Weidner, 2020).

For the quantitative technique, this more rigid in structure when compared to qualitative methods, hence the decision not to use this method in this study, as it features did not align with the research objectives (Saunders et al., 2016). Furthermore, while considering the quantitative approach, it was found that it follows procedures which have been pre-determined in a bid to measure the variables being examined, which is not the purpose for this study (Saunders et al., 2016). The use of quantitative techniques is useful in studies which have their basis on a sample size which is large (Kumar, 2014). Furthermore, findings from quantitative techniques are often presented in a statistical format and using graphical illustration to explain the variables being explored (Kumar, 2014). As this study explores only engagement within the ADSSC based on the perception of employees, using a quantitative technique would not enhance the capability of the research to gain insights and recommendations related to engagement in the ADSSC.

With regards to the third method, which is the mixed research technique, this method incorporates analysis and collection of data by using both quantitative and qualitative strategies in the same study for the purpose of data prioritisation in a sequential/concurrent method in a bid to ensure that the research questions are answered (Creswell et al., 2003). According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), mixed methods are useful in studies where both qualitative and quantitative techniques are essential in order to gain a holistic view of the phenomena being investigated; mixed methods allow for the drawbacks and weaknesses of either qualitative or quantitative methods to be mitigated.

3.5 Data Collection

Walliman (2005, pp157) indicated that in data collection the decisions made by a researcher in terms of data source choice is between secondary and primary data sources. Primary data refers to data, which is obtained empirically through the observation of data, experience, and documenting the procedures relating to the phenomena being examined. This differs from secondary data which describes data obtained in prior times and is already available for use

(Bryman and Bell, 2007). For this study, data were collected using primary and secondary resources.

3.6 Primary Data

This study depended significantly on detailed primary data due to the nature of the research being exploratory. Also, due to a lack of significant research relating to employee engagement within the waste management segment, it was essential that first-hand insights, specifically within the context of the ADSSC and the UAE, were obtained in order for the aims of the study to be achieved.

Several techniques can be used in the data collection process, including focus groups, surveys and interviews (Bryman and Bell, 2007). For this study, interviews were considered to be the most appropriate tool for collecting primary data. There are three forms of interviews: structured, semi-structured and un-structured interviews (Saunders et al., 2016). The use of structured interviews mainly aligns with quantitative studies, which does not apply to the study being implemented. Additionally, unstructured interviews have significant similarities, can be used in qualitative studies, and also have the characteristics which enhance the ability of a study to obtain rich data (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Due to time limit constraints, amongst others, this study did not adopt unstructured interviews.

DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) argued that semi-structured interviews are the tools which are most adopted in qualitative studies due to their characteristics of enabling the research participants the required freedom to examine details relating to a subject of investigation. Furthermore, the use of semi-structured interviews enhances the researcher's control over conversations with the participants; this facilitates guidance of the study through questions and other issues which are have been pre-defined and are being examined by the research (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006).

The current study aimed to examine the relationships between the ADSSC's long term sustainability and employee engagement in addition to examining the impact of engagement of employees working within UAE's waste management segment. As a result, semi structured interviews were adopted based on the belief that using semi-structured interviews would

facilitate the research's ability to achieve its aims. It should be noted that the interviews which were conducted took approximately 45 minutes to an hour for each participant. This allowed for a deeper probing and collection of relevant data essential to achieve the research aims.

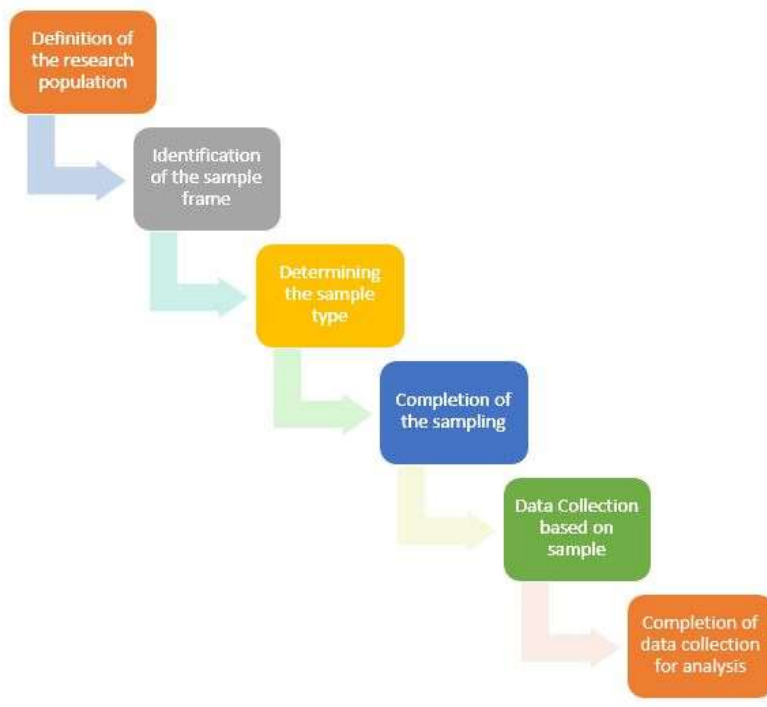
3.7 Sampling

Various techniques can be used when a research sample is being developed. For this study, key questions which the researcher considered prior to developing the research sample included the following:

1. What population is being targeted within the context of the investigation?
2. What sampling frame should be put into consideration for the study?
3. What sampling frame will help ensure the questions posed by the study will be answered?
4. What is the sample size needed for the development of the study?
5. What is the population being targeted in the study?

Fig 6 which follows identifies the process followed in the data collection process for the study.

Fig. 6. Data Collection Process Followed by Study as adapted by the researcher based



According to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005), the population describes the total amount of persons that are in a category or event that relates to the area being investigated. Similarly, suggestions by Saunders et al (2016) indicated that the population can be described as a unit from when a sample selection can take place. Putting this within the context of the study being implemented, the population is used in reference to the total number of workers in the ADSSC that are influenced in one way or another by the engagement policies of the firm.

In the selection of the study's population, several factors were considered. These include the following:

3.8 Inclusion Criteria

1. The research participant must have worked in the ADSSC for a minimum of five years.
2. Participants must have gone through ADSSC's employee performance evaluation procedures.
3. Senior Management members working within the HR team and also lower-level officers within various departments of the ADSSC who meet the aforementioned criterion.

In order for information relating with these participants meeting the criteria to be obtained, the researcher contacted the HR department of the ADSSC. Doing this allowed for the study to identify a list of individuals that meet the criteria for inclusion. Potential participants not meeting the research criteria were then excluded from the study.

In terms of the sampling technique followed, the study used purposive sampling, which involves selecting a sample based on the purpose of the research and the belief of the researcher that the selected participant will be able to provide insights into the details relating to the study being undertaken. This study would make use of a small sample size.

Crouch and McKenzie (2006) in describing small samples, identify this to represent participants less than 20 in conducting qualitative interviews and note that when a study adopts a sample of a smaller size, it influences the quality of the study outcomes. This is done by impacting the capability of the study to provide details and insights required for understanding the phenomena under investigation (Crouch and McKenie, 2006). This is because the longer the time spent by the researcher in interacting with the participants, the better the capability of the research in being able to gain deeper meanings to the subject of investigation (Maltrud et

al, 2016). The research will require a smaller sample size in order to gain deeper meanings of the phenomena under investigation as extended period requirements will be needed for a larger inquiry to be undertaken (Maletrud et al, 2016). Furthermore, Ritchie et al (2003) argued that when research is being conducted, the use of a small sample size allows for improvement of the quality of information which the study can obtain.

Burrows and Kendall (1997) indicated that in the selection of research participants it needs to be ensured that the participants in the study have insights relating to the area of which the study is being conducted. This indicates that the knowledge, social characteristics, and insights of participants allow for participants to engage in the conversations and questions being asked during the interviews. As a result, in selecting the participants, it was ensured that the participants selected had the relevant knowledge and experience needed for informing the research in order for research aims.

3.9 Participant Recruitment Process

Smith (2020) suggests that it is important for researchers to ensure that participants are not at risks to harm, including risks to their source of livelihood and job as a result of an investigation, and that the privacy and autonomy of research participants are assured. In recruiting participants for this study, the researcher recruited participants employed in the same organization themselves. This was because the research objectives being focused on issues surrounding the ADSSC, and target participants to the study from the organization meeting the criterion required relating to insights on issues surrounding engagement as they pertain to the ADSSC. While this increased risks of research bias in terms of responses provided by the participants, it did not necessarily compromise the ethical principles of research due to actions undertaken in the study by the researcher. Among the actions adopted in the study includes the ethical actions of respect for the participants which requires researchers in respecting the autonomy, dignity, and self-determination of research participants (American Psychology Association, 2020).

In order for this ethical principle to be upheld, consent was obtained from all participants prior to commencing the research. An interview schedule document which clearly provides insight into the nature and purpose of the research, and also informed potential participants of the benefits and risks associated with voluntary agreement to participating in the study. Both oral

and written consents were obtained from the participants, and they were informed of their rights and freedom in withdrawing from the study at any point in time.

Additionally, considering the issue of risks relating to the prospective bias of participants in their responses, care was taken by the researcher in the development of the research schedule such that the researcher avoided the use of leading or biased questions in the interview schedule produced for the participants, but designed the questions using neutral and objective language. Further to this, the research questions used in the study were open-ended in terms of style/design which was advantageous for reducing bias by providing the opportunity for respondents to answer questions using the basis of their opinions and thoughts. Additionally, it was made clear to participants that their suggestions or comments during the interview in response to questions relating to the ADSSC or any other research questions would not be accessed by the ADSSC or any other third parties. This was done to ensure confidence in the research process and to enhance the fluidity of the participants in providing responses to the questions posed during the interviews.

3.10 Interview Implementation

In implementing the interviews, the first consideration made by the researcher was to do with obtaining ethical approval. This involved the submission of consent documents and the justification of research methods being used, in addition to justifying the research philosophy adopted within the study. Following the approval of the ethics application from the university/institution, the researcher reached out to the proposed participants in order to provide them with details on why the study was being conducted. Further to this, the stakeholders of the ADSSC Human Resources were contacted in line with the HR policy of the organization for research. Among the participants who were recruited for the research include the following individuals, along with the justification for inclusion of these participants in the research sample frame:

3.11 Interview Participants

- Senior Human Resources Officers
- Operations and Maintenance Managers
- Lab Manager

- Design Manger
- Senior Inspection officer
- Sustainability Specialist
- HR Manager
- Manpower and Employee Relations Manager
- Development Officer

The reason for the selection of these individuals is justified as follows

Senior Human Resources Officers:

The reason why these individuals are relevant to this study is because they are in charge of policy changes relating to the engagement of employees and they have insights relating to employee attrition rates. Furthermore, prior to leaving the ADSSC, the senior human resources officers conduct exit interviews to identify the reasons for the employee leaving and, as a result, they will have insights relating to peculiarities of engagement within the firm. Their involvement in the research helped to ensure key questions on engagement relating to the case organization and industry could be answered.

Operations and Maintenance Managers:

These individuals work on the sites and engage at ground levels with employees, and, from their experience within their roles, they possess insights as to why employees at the sites are not keen on being engaged with the organization in the long run. Consequently, these participants were selected as it was perceived that they could provide insights needed for the research questions to be answered.

Lab Managers:

These individuals work in the lab, engaging with employees implementing waste management functions at the laboratory sites where chemicals and hazardous operations are implemented. From their interactions with employees working at this level, and from their experiences they have insights as to why employees at the laboratory are not keen on engaging with the organization in the long run. Consequently, I believed these individuals played a significant role in ensuring that the research questions were answered.

Senior Inspection officer:

These individuals manage the occupational health and safety of employees within the ADSSC. As a result of the peculiarity of the industry in which ADSSC operates, it is noted that health and safety practices can significantly influence employee engagement. Consequently, these individuals were able to provide insights relating to the impact of health and safety, as well as the nature of the job functions of ADSSC, on the long-term engagement of employees within the firm.

Sustainability Specialist:

These individuals have been laden with the task of ensuring the long-term sustainability of the ADSSC, the company's vision and mission. I believe that these individuals were able to provide insights relating to the organization's long-term vision and how engagement could impact on the capacity of the firm to achieve its goals.

HR Manager:

The HR manager is responsible for overseeing HR department functions and also the management of employees. They are versed in policies of the organization relating to benefits and compensation, development and training, recruitment processes and employee relations and, as a result, it was believed that these individuals could add value to the issue of engagement within the ADSSC.

Manpower and Employee Relations Manager:

They are responsible for consulting on existing and new policies within the ADSSC, in addition to being given the responsibility of creating benefit packages for employees. Additionally, as the ADSSC does not entertain unionism, they act as representative of employees if issue arises within the organization and are responsible for the negotiation of contracts with employees. Furthermore, they are responsible for ensuring that employees comply with policies and laws governing the ADSSC. Based on this, it was believed that they could provide detailed insights on issues of engagement within the ADSSC and add value to the study.

Development Officer:

Development Officers within the ADSSC are given the responsibility of planning and discussing the training needs of the organization with various department heads. They are also responsible for upskilling in the firm. Additionally, they manage the training programs to ensure that they are meeting the stakeholder needs in terms of results and maintain the training records of employees. As a result of this, it was believed that they could contribute significantly to the research value through sharing their experiences on engagement issues within the ADSSC.

3.12 Procedures followed in Interviews

In order to understand the factors that are responsible for the declining engagement levels in the ADSSC, specific individuals were selected based on the perception of the researcher that these individuals have the experiences needed to contribute to the study. Further to this, the selection of interviews rather than using surveys as the principal tool was based on the insights relating to quantitative techniques not being able to provide insights on the subject being investigated when compared to qualitative methods (Saunders et al., 2016).

Confidence and trust are essential when holding discussions with people and it is essential that the appropriate techniques are adopted to facilitate insightful dialogues during interview proceedings (Boje, 2001). Cohn and Lyons (2003) argued that it is essential that a relaxed atmosphere is adopted when an interview is conducted, as this enhances the interactivity between the interviewees and researcher. In agreement with this, to ensure that a relaxed environment was provided, the researcher ensured that the interviews were conducted within the facilities of the ADSSC, the conference room. This allowed for the research participants to be placed within an environment which is conducive and relaxed, allowing for enthusiasm and focus during the period of the study. Klugman et al (2011) argued that when participants are within an environment which is conducive and are treated in a manner that makes them aware of the researcher's interests in the experiences which they have and are respectful towards participants, it enhances insights provided.

3.13 Case Study Research Strategy

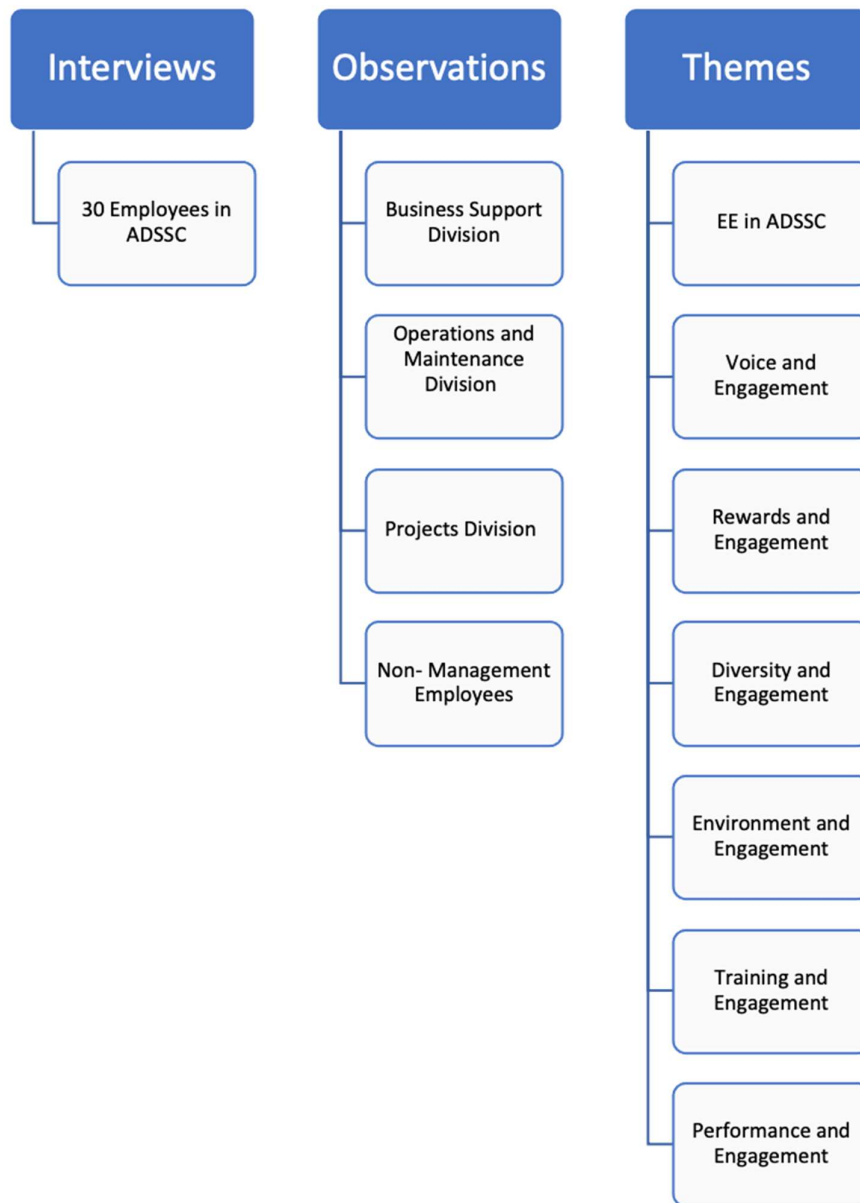
According to Yin (2003), case study approaches allow for a study to gain insights that relate to the subject of investigation as per the context of the reality of the phenomena, particularly

when no evidence yet exists to link the studies being conducted and the investigation's context. Based on this description, the merits associated with the adoption of the case study strategy in this study is based on the credibility of the method which allows for clearer insights into the engagement of employees within a real-life context and the ADSSC.

Yin (2003) suggested that case studies have advantages when adopted as a result of their characteristics which make them dependent on multiple realities, facilitating deeper meanings and clarity relating to the study being undertaken. Yin (2003) further cited three conditions that need to be put into consideration before deciding on the research strategy, which are the nature of the study, the kind of questions being posed, and the capability of the study to control the behavior in the environment in which the study is conducted. Additionally, the capacity of the research to focus on issues that are contemporary is another condition that must be fulfilled for the case study approach to be adopted.

Recalling the aims of the study in understanding the issue of factors that impact on the engagement of employees in the ADSSC, using the case study approach allowed for the "what", "why" and "when" in relation to the deeper understanding relating to employee engagement in the organization (Creswell, 2003). With regards to the extent to which the researcher has control of behavioural events, there exists no degree of control of the researcher relating to the phenomena of engagement within the ADSSC. Expanding on this, the lack of control makes the researcher an observer, which prevents biases in the study. Further to the research being implemented is in the field of human resources management, making it satisfy the last condition required for the use of this strategy in exploring issues surrounding the research aims. Reiterating the objectives of the study the investigation focuses on engagement within the context of the ADSSC, an Emirati Public Sector organization that collects and treats wastewater discharged from all residential and commercial customers in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Consequently, research design which was applied in this investigation is illustrated in the figure 5 which follows.

Figure 2 Research Design (Developed by the researcher)



As indicated in the illustration, 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees from different departments in the ADSSC. This was done to provide information about their experiences on engagement, the challenges of engagement in the ADSSC, the peculiarities regarding ADSSC's environment.

A summary of the various participants, the codes they were assigned and descriptions of their functions is provided in the table 3 which follows:

Table 2 Summary of Participants and Roles

Participant Code	Function/department
P001	Senior Manager, Assets and Management Division
P002	Environmental Officer, Environmental Health and Safety Division
P003	Health and Safety Inspector, Health and Safety Division
P004	Security Officer, Environmental Health and Safety Division
P005	Engineer, Engineering Division
P006	Chemist/Laboratory Officer, Health and Safety Division
P007	HR Officer, Human Resources Division
P008	HR Officer, Human Resources Division
P009	Maintenance Officer, Project Management Division
P0010	Quality Assurance Officer, Strategy Division
P0011	Quality Assurance Officer, Strategy Division
P0012	Health and Safety Officer, Health and Safety Division
P0013	Admin officer, Human Resources Division
P0014	Health and Safety Officer, Health and Safety Division
P0015	Senior Engineer, Operations and Management Division
P0016	Media Officer, Strategy Division
P0017	Project Engineer, Project Management Division
P0018	Sewage Officer/Engineer, Project Management Division
P0019	Accountant, Accounting Division
P0020	Risk Management Specialist, Strategy Division
P0021	Compliance Officer, Strategy Division
P0022	Executive Secretary, Strategy Division
P0023	Senior Planning Officer, Strategy Division
P0024	Senior Engineer, Operations and Maintenance
P0025	Standards and Policy Engineer, Operations and Maintenance
P0026	Customer Happiness Representative,
P0027	Electrician
P0028	Receptionist
P0029	Programmer (IT section)

P0030	Inventory Officer
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The interviews were conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams as a result of Covid 19 restrictions and health and safety guidance as required by the State of Emirates, as well as current research data collection guidelines. Covid 19 presented some challenges to the research, including technical difficulties with the usage of online platforms such as internet connectivity issues and some participants needing re-assurance of research privacy due to the video nature of the interviews and the culture of the UAE in avoiding video technology for interviews. These were however overcome by reassuring the participants over email about the ethics of the study and how the data would be used. Participants were informed that their anonymity would be assured in the use of any data provided within the study. Doing this helped to prevent biased responses from the participants.

3.14 Qualitative Data Analysis

This study used thematic analysis in the study by using NVivo software. The adoption of thematic analysis allowed for evaluation of the obtained data by identifying, examining, and documenting the patterns or themes which the study identified based on the data collected (Breakwell et al., 2000). From the themes, data related to the concept of employee engagement within the context of the ADSSC were pointed out. Furthermore, tools within the NVivo software were used to reduce the data into categories that are meaningful (Grbich, 2007). In conducting thematic analysis some steps were followed by the researcher including familiarization with the research data collected; this was done through reviewing and reading through the interview transcripts obtained following the interviews. Additionally, thematic analysis in this study incorporated coding of the data. This was done by identifying and labelling key ideas and concepts specific to sections of the transcripts and tracking the codes. The next step involved identification of the key themes from the study, and this was done by searching for commonalities and patterns across the coded data, and grouping codes that were similar to form the themes. The themes were then analysed by exploring the relationship between the themes obtained and the research questions posed, and identifying ways of interpreting and making sense of the data obtained.

Various features of NVivo were used in the analysis including wordle maps which allow for analysis of word frequency and identification of significant themes. NVivo also facilitated the development of an overall structure which enabled clarity of the analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic illustrations were adopted to ensure that the findings could be conceptualized. NVivo Software enhanced the capacity of the research in mapping and understanding the relationships between the statements coded, and their contexts for the purpose of developing further points which provided more insights relating to the relevance of the codes devised.

The table 4 identifies the breakdown of the coding and analysis process and evidence of how the themes were developed based on participant responses.

The themes identified in the table include themes around work environment, training and engagement, positive engagement factors, work experience and engagement, employee voice and engagement, and Emiratization.

Scale:

1 – insignificant

2- unimportant

3- fairly important

4 – important

5- very important

Table 3 Themes from study

Dominant Themes of significance	Clusters	Weighting of importance	Lessons Delivered
Work Environment	Work experience (contextual description), uniqueness of ADSSC environment,	Important (4) because it provides details and insights relating to job roles and	Different departments have different participants and of course their experiences are

	organizational structure and engagement, flexibility of job	functions and the practical aspects of the jobs, which could impact on engagement	different. In terms of the lessons learned, the physical and mental requirements of the job role influences employee engagement.
Training and engagement		Very Important (5)	Training and engagement as most of the respondents are suggesting that while there is training in ADSSC, the training programs are irrelevant to their functions, and this is specifically those in the non-technical functions, those in technical duties suggest training is available and helps them stay engaged.

<p>Positive factors</p>	<p>Engagement</p>	<p>Rewards and engagement, Diversity and engagement, Employee Voice and engagement</p>	<p>Very important (5)</p>	<p>Things mentioned include incentives and rewards, healthy relationship with others in the work environment, flexible work schedule, having employee voice is identified to be also important. One thing which I found surprising was that most respondents suggested events and activities like social events, which have a positive significant impact on engagement. The thing mentioned the most was the opportunity for social interaction and social events to take the mind away from</p>
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			constant work activities.
Environmental Structure and Engagement	Physical environment, structural environment (bureaucratic structure (Key factor (3)	From this theme, I identified that the structure of the organization being bureaucratic in terms of interacting with people at the top (like the managers) influences engagement, as sometimes the process of getting feedback may be delayed in some projects. Also physically, the structure influences engagement: having an open floor structure and common rooms help to facilitate informal communication and informal learning which

			enhances engagement.
Emiratization		Important (4)	Most participants acknowledged that diversity is important for creativity and innovation but are aware of the government policy which restricts a culturally divergent environment within the ADSSC. It was however identified to play a role in impacting engagement by most participants. Diversity is noted to impact on creativity within teams.
Employee Voice and Engagement	Communication and engagement, employee relationship and engagement	Important (4)	Several of the senior respondents suggested that employee voice was available and present in the ADSSC and there is

			<p>freedom of staff to discuss and speak out about any issues of concern to them. However, from the responses obtained from the low-level employees, they said yes there is policy of employee voice, but there are some issues they feel they cannot speak out about, depending on the type of manager which they need to speak to.</p>
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Using themes developed from the research findings, the validity of the findings obtained was done by cross-referencing with the suppositions from the literature review.

3.15 Secondary Research Data

Secondary research data in this study were obtained through the collection of journals and papers to help with the literature review, allowing for the identification of gaps in the literature. Saunders et al (2016) indicated that ensuring that relevant data is used in a study influences the outcomes in the study and this can be done by exploring sources including peer-reviewed articles on employee engagement, academic literature, and examining reports from government sources, among other forms of desk research. Consequently, this study

implemented desk research through the collection of various data from a range of resources, ensuring that the data used was not dated.

3.16 Ethical Considerations

In the implementation of a study, it is essential that ethical requisites are considered by the researcher because a lack of consideration of ethics can negatively impact the participant's willingness to provide reliable information (Saunders et al., 2016). Furthermore, ethics need to be put into consideration due to the policies which govern institutions including the ADSSC and Nottingham Trent University, which have strict policies relating to conducting studies in order to protect the institutions, the researcher, and the participants (Breakwell et al., 2000).

In ensuring ethics were considered, it was ensured that informed consent from participants was obtained prior to the start of the interviews. This facilitated the knowledge of the participants about how the data they provide were used and protected (Breakwell et al., 2000). In ensuring ethics were considered, it has also been ensured that unauthorized access to participant data is only accessible to the researcher, and this is done by ensuring that the collected data are stored using passwords only known to the researcher. Recordings were deleted following the transcription of the interviews.

3.17 Reflexivity

This describes the procedures which relate to the examination of the relationship between a researcher and the research (Willig, 2013). There are two forms of reflexivity including epistemological reflexivity and personal reflexivity. For the epistemological reflexivity, this is used in the description of the assumptions which are made on the basis of knowledge and the world. This is done by critically appraising the research by questioning how the questions posed by the research are defined, identifying what has been found, and if there has been any imposition of the findings and data obtained from the study as a result of the design or analysis process. It also allows for the identification of the possibility of understanding if other approaches could have been adopted to conduct the study.

Considering the study's philosophical position being interpretive, it can be suggested that the knowledge derived from this study contributes to a small amount of reality. This is because the nature of this philosophy is that it facilitates participants being able to give voices to their lived experiences, which facilitates further insight into the issues under investigation. The researcher

brings themselves to this process through interpretation of the experiences of the participants to facilitate a detailed insight into the phenomena under investigation.

3.18 Validity

A critical aspect of undertaking research is validation because it establishes the quality of the work presented (Saunders et al, 2016). Four tests could be used in the examination of the quality of research outcomes including construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability (Yin, 2003). For construct validity, this was done by ensuring the selection of appropriate/relevant measures to examine, while for internal validity, this was done through the determination of the existence of causal relationships in scenarios where those conditions were identified to result in outcomes (Yin, 2003). External validity was done through the establishment of scenarios and situations to which the findings from this study could be applied, while reliability was ensured by demonstrating the replicability of the study (Yin, 2003).

Table 2 which follows shows how these guidelines have been applied in this thesis

Table 4 Quality Assurance of Research Design

Tests	Tactic	Phase of research Utilized
Construct Validity	Multiple sources of evidence were used	Data collection
	Chain of evidence was established	Data Collection
Internal Validity	Pattern Matching	Data analysis
	Explanation building	Data analysis
		Data analysis
External Validity	Review findings with previous studies	Research Design
		Data Collection
Reliability	Reviewing transcript and ensuring stability of multiple codes of data sets obtained from participants	Data Collection

Adapted from Yin (2003) pg 33

3.19 Honesty and Integrity

According to Resnik (2015), honesty is important within a study when interpreting the results and explaining to the participants the study's aims and citation of ideas that did not originate from the researcher. Consequently, within this study, sincerity, and honesty have been shown by the researcher, who has upheld all moral codes expected of the researcher, and has also ensured that the findings are representative of the phenomenon under investigation. Resnik (2015) argues that when honesty and integrity are shown by researchers, it enhances the ability of the research, preventing data misrepresentation, which is essential to facilitate holistic outcomes.

The next chapter identifies the findings obtained from the study, following the application of the identified methodology in this section.

4.0 Chapter 4 - Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the findings obtained from the study. In describing the findings from the study, it is essential to reiterate the research aims and question posed by the investigation. With regards to the research aims, this thesis examines the issue of employee engagement within the ADSSC, a state-owned waste management organization which has the responsibility of managing waste within the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. The thesis also examines the relationship between the engagement of employees and long-term sustainability of the ADSSC. It also seeks to understand the relationship between employee engagement and organizational outcomes in terms of productivity/output performance.

The research question for this study is noted to be as follows:

- a. What are the key factors that impact upon engagement of employees in the public sector in the UAE, specifically waste management organizations?

The investigation focused on engagement within the context of the ADSSC, an Emirati Public Sector organization which focuses on collecting, treating and wastewater discharged from all residential and commercial customers in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, and safely disposing both the solid and liquid wastes in the region. Consequently, the following research design (fig 6) was applied in this investigation:

30 semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees from different departments in the ADSSC. This was done to provide information about their experiences on engagement, the challenges of engagement in the ADSSC, the peculiarities regarding ADSSC's environment.

A summary of the various participants and the descriptions of their functions is provided in the table 4 which follows:

Scale:

1 – insignificant

2- unimportant

3- fairly important

4 – important

5- very important

Table 5 Themes from study

Dominant Themes of significance	Clusters	Weighting of importance	Lessons Delivered
Work Environment	Work experience (contextual description), uniqueness of ADSSC environment, organizational structure and engagement, flexibility of job	Important (4) because it provides details and insights relating to job roles and functions and the practical aspects of the jobs, which could impact on engagement	Different departments have different participants and of course their experiences are different. In terms of the lessons learned, the physical and mental requirements of the job role influences employee engagement.
Training and engagement		Very Important (5)	Training and engagement as

			<p>most of the respondents are suggesting that while there is training in ADSSC, the training programs are irrelevant to their functions, and this is specifically those in the non-technical functions, those in technical duties suggest training is available and helps them stay engaged.</p>
<p>Environmental Structure and Engagement</p>	<p>Physical environment, structural environment (bureaucratic structure (</p>	<p>Key factor (3)</p>	<p>From this theme, I identified that the structure of the organization being bureaucratic in terms of interacting with people at the top (like the managers) influences engagement, as sometimes the process of getting</p>

			<p>feedback may be delayed in some projects. Also physically, the structure influences engagement: having an open floor structure and common rooms help to facilitate informal communication and informal learning which enhances engagement.</p>
Emiratization		Important (4)	<p>Most participants acknowledged that diversity is important for creativity and innovation but are aware of the government policy which restricts a culturally divergent environment within the ADSSC. It was however</p>

			<p>identified to play a role in impacting engagement by most participants. Diversity is noted to impact on creativity within teams.</p>
<p>Employee Voice and Engagement</p>	<p>Communication and engagement, employee relationship and engagement</p>	<p>Important (4)</p>	<p>Several of the senior respondents suggested that employee voice was available and present in the ADSSC and there is freedom of staff to discuss and speak out about any issues of concern to them. However, from the responses obtained from the low-level employees, they said yes there is policy of employee voice, but there are some issues they feel they cannot speak out about, depending on the</p>

			type of manager which they need to speak to.
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Generally, initial findings from the investigation found that employee voice, training opportunities, work environment, nature of rewards, and Emiratization are relative factors which impact upon engagement in the ADSSC.

The research further explored deeper meanings associated with the themes found, and their indications as they apply to the research questions and further explored themes relating to positive engagement factors. In the following section we provide more insights into the research findings.

Table 6 Summary of Participants and Roles

Participant Code	Function/department
P001	Senior Manager, Assets and Management Division
P002	Environmental Officer, Environmental Health and Safety Division
P003	Health and Safety Inspector, Health and Safety Division
P004	Security Officer, Environmental Health and Safety Division
P005	Engineer, Engineering Division
P006	Chemist/Laboratory Officer, Health and Safety Division
P007	HR Officer, Human Resources Division
P008	HR Officer, Human Resources Division
P009	Maintenance Officer, Project Management Division
P0010	Quality Assurance Officer, Strategy Division
P0011	Quality Assurance Officer, Strategy Division
P0012	Health and Safety Officer, Health and Safety Division
P0013	Admin officer, Human Resources Division
P0014	Health and Safety Officer, Health and Safety Division
P0015	Senior Engineer, Operations and Management Division
P0016	Media Officer, Strategy Division
P0017	Project Engineer, Project Management Division

P0018	Sewage Officer/Engineer, Project Management Division
P0019	Accountant, Accounting Division
P0020	Risk Management Specialist, Strategy Division
P0021	Compliance Officer, Strategy Division
P0022	Executive Secretary, Strategy Division
P0023	Senior Planning Officer, Strategy Division
P0024	Senior Engineer, Operations and Maintenance
P0025	Standards and Policy Engineer, Operations and Maintenance
P0026	Customer Happiness Representative,
P0027	Electrician
P0028	Receptionist
P0029	Programmer (IT section)
P0030	Inventory Officer

The interviews were conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams as a result of Covid 19 restrictions and health and safety guidance as required by the State of Emirates, as well as current research data collection guidelines. Covid 19 presented some challenges to the research, including technical difficulties with the usage of online platforms such as internet connectivity issues and some participants needing re-assurance of research privacy due to the video nature of the interviews and the culture of the UAE in avoiding video technology for interviews. These were however overcome by reassuring the participants over email about the ethics of the study and how the data would be used. Participants were informed that their anonymity would be assured in the use of any data provided within the study. Doing this helped to prevent biased responses from the participants.

Following possession of the data obtained, a coding structure was devised in line with the research questions. Initial codes were drawn up based on points identified from the field notes (See Figure 2). Following completion of the coding process, the use of NVivo analysis software was adopted for mapping and understanding the relationships between the statements coded, and their contexts for the purpose of developing further points which provided more insights relating to the relevance of the codes devised.

After this was done, further coding analysis was implemented in understanding the connection between objects and the meanings relating to the different connected themes as they relate with the research questions. These themes were documented and further explored. The table 4 which follows identifies the breakdown of the coding and analysis process and evidence how the themes were developed based on participant response.

The themes identified in the table include themes around work environment, training and engagement, positive engagement factors, work experience and engagement, employee voice and engagement, and Emiratization. From the review of the literature, it is identified that toxic work environment negatively influences engagement of employees. Furthermore, the review of literature indicates that training positively influences employee engagement by facilitating provision of development opportunity which positively influences job satisfaction. The review also identified that the work experience of employees within their roles, and nature of employee voice adopted in the organization influences engagement. Additionally, review of literature identified that rewards could also impact on engagement. Using themes developed from the research findings, the validity of the findings of the review is done by cross referencing the findings.

4.2 Training and Engagement

Like most firms, ADSSC trains its employees to strengthen and sharpen their skills, improve competency and the efficiency of the organization's various operations. The ADSSC makes programs which enrich employees with knowledge in various areas, including technical functions and general skills management and improvement (ADSSC, 2020). The waste management sector generally is noted to incorporate a variety of forms of training including coaching, performance reviews and workshop activities due to several concerns of occupational health and safety which impacts on workers in the sector (WM Sustainability report). Thus, this investigation examined the nature of training being adopted in ADSSC, the availability of training and other issues regarding training and engagement based on the peculiarity of the waste management sector.

Jain and Khurana (2017), in an empirical investigation relating to employee engagement and training, identified a significant relationship between the two factors, identifying that training

resulted in organizational commitment, intention to stay, advocacy, pride, and overall employee engagement. Similarly, Siddiqui and Sahar (2019), in an investigation examining the impact of training, communication, and development on engagement of employees within the banking sector in Karachi, identified that training positively impacted on internal communication and consequently on the engagement of employees. The study, which was conducted using quantitative techniques through distribution of 120 surveys, of which 100 returns were made, showed that training impacted on tactical improvement in communication between team members which helped foster upskilling (Siddiqui and Sahar, 2019). The findings suggest that, with regards to improvement of strategy, training and development allows for improvement of strategic communication procedures between stakeholders, which allows the current job requisites and needs to be met (Siddiqui and Sahar, 2019). This is because of the positive impact of training on communication elements, such as interaction and engagement of employees, leading to general communication improvements (Siddiqui and Sahar, 2019).

An internal survey from the ADSSC highlighted that one of the issues being raised by employees was related with appropriate training opportunities being provided by the organizations. In terms of how training opportunities are provided, the HR department presents employees with the available training programs via a catalogue about the options available. Employees are then asked to select programs, following which the line manager approves/disapproves using the firm's HR system. Based on the ADSSC employee survey results not all employees are offered relevant training programs; employees working in the waste management department for instance do not have any suitable or available training courses currently on the catalogue, and as such are limited in their options of choice for training.

The study examined the relationship between training, its accessibility and engagement in the ADSSC, and several participants cited the fact that training was important for their engagement and development. Some participants acknowledged the extent to which training was one of the essential reasons for working or continuing in the ADSSC, as the opportunities for training assisted in their own personal development needs.

P001 who is a senior manager within the Assets Management Division of the ADSSC, gave one example. Some functions which P001 performs within their capability as a senior manager include hydraulic capacity development and management for the engineering team, asset development involving working with stakeholders in investing in equipment, and performance

of maintenance functions on engineering projects. When questioned about the available training in the ADSSC, the participant P001 identified the following:

"...The training policies at ADSSC are very good. Training is encouraged and arranged for as per department..."

At this point the participant was emphasizing that the opportunities for training provided by the organization are immense, particularly for his department. This indicates that perhaps not the same training opportunities are available across board, and this may affect the overall perception of training.

This training which we have in our departments are usually expensive for individuals to undertake on their own. So, getting these internationally accredited training certificates not only positions us for our current jobs in the ADSSC but also gives us access to other career growth opportunities. I believe every employee will agree that the training has been highly effective in driving motivations to continue with ADSSC, as not many firms would provide their employees these opportunities..."

The suggestions from P001 indicates their admiration of the opportunities to attend specific and specialised training course and indicates that this serves as a motivation for their engagement with the organization.

Another participant, P004, identified the benefits of having access to training. Expanding further, the participant identified that the cost associated with personal development tends to be high and having the opportunities provided by ADSSC enhances and improves the efficiency of workers and long-term engagement with the organization. P004 works in a role of a Health and safety officer department. The participant's functions include health and safety checks, and technical/security functions within the ADSSC.

P004 noted the following:

"...Preventing mistakes and improving efficiency of work comes from good training. ADSSC provides training for its employees and many of these mandatory trainings are expensive certified courses which employees normally would not be able to afford on their own..."

Training is also noted to boost operational efficiency and the confidence of employees, as it enhances their skills and competency in their ability to perform their duties.

P008 is an HR officer within the ADSSC whose functions include recruitment and the organization of internal and external training events for the ADSSC. P008 is also involved in various administrative functions within the HR department, including participation in strategic planning tasks and functions within the department. P008 was questioned regarding their

insights as to how training could impact on engagement. The participant focused more on the nature of the training provided by the organization.

P008 suggested the following:

“...ADSSC policy supports the training and development of the employees, even sponsored many employees seeking professional certificates such as Chartered Financial Accountants (CFA), Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM), Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD), Project Management Professional (PMP), Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS)... These programs are quite expensive for employees to afford and they are useful beyond the scope of working for ADSSC so I believe these training programs and courses help drive engagement levels, as they not only facilitate competency for employees as per organizational needs but also career development skills...”

The review of the standard costs for the training programs suggested by the participant are reported as follows

- SHRM - \$400
- CFA – Standard rate for each level of certification \$3,300
- CIPD - Level 3 between \$2700 and \$3400. Level 5 between \$4,500 and \$5000. Level 7 between \$9000 and \$9500
- PMP - \$555
- CIPS - \$1500

Evaluating the costs associated with these programs, it is noted that several of the training courses available to ADSSC employees are expensive in nature and, as a result, self-funding these training opportunities is difficult. This indicates that making these programs which are expensive in nature available to employees have a positive impact on engagement. Suggestions from the respondents indicates that the access to these opportunities serve as a motivation to their continuity in their role in the ADSSC and should have an impact on engagement.

This would seem to confirm findings by Lockwood (2007) which suggests that accessibility to training for employees to help them in their career development is not only essential for engagement but also empowers employees in being proactive in their duties, consequently leading to the development of competencies and skills essential for development and growth. Expanding further, Lockwood (2007) noted that when organizational resources such as training and technology are available and present, it positively enhances the performance of employees and creates loyalty to the organization. This is because when these resources are available it

leads to an improved climate and fosters engagement (Lockwood, 2007). Considering this within the context of the ADSSC, evidence from the findings suggests that when training is available, it creates and fosters quality of outcomes and also creates a sustainable and likeable work environment, which helps in boosting productivity and work outcomes.

Nda and Fard (2013), in a study on the impact of training on productivity, noted that “the aims of the organization is to generate high revenue and maximize profit and a vital tool to realize this is an efficient and effective workforce “. Thus, a workforce is only efficient and effective if the appropriate training and development is provided for, therefore leading to productivity. The findings from the study indicate that while there are various options of training, the available choices are not of interests to the employees due to the lack of relevance to their roles and career interests, and as such most of the training provided are irrelevant to ADSSC employees.

P0024 a senior Engineer working in the Operations and Maintenance Department, highlighted different positive employee engagement factors, specifically discussing empowerment of employees. ADSSC is noted to employ an empowerment plan which incorporates promotion as a dedication to duty by employees, the provision of skill development opportunities, enhancement of talent through upskilling and network mentoring events, and promoting creativity. Discussing this, P0024 noted the following: The findings suggest that training can lead to greater empowerment which in turn can improve engagement.

“...In terms of positive factors, I would suggest that when the organization is such that it has a flexible work structure, fairness in pay, has a culture which is embracing of learning and development of employees and one where there is honesty and transparency, this enhances the employee engagement...”

Some participants cited the importance of continuous development and training and made recommendations that performance evaluations need to be applied to ensure that the appropriate training is made available. This is because from the interviews, not all employees are offered relevant training programs; employees working in the waste management department for instance do not have any suitable or available training courses currently on the catalogue, and as such are limited in their options for training. The ADSSC has a catalogue of training programs which has been developed and made available to employees, and they are only provided with the opportunity to select from the available training programs on the catalogue. The lack of available requisite technical training for specific departments could be

because of declining budgetary costs of the ADSSC, and the expensive nature of technical training programs.

Furthermore, the participants generally agree that training facilitates increased operational efficiency of employees, although there are slight disagreements regarding the kind of training provided. Several participants suggested the need for training to be more specialised and relevant to the career interests of the employees for the training to impact engagement. The responses from the participants indicate that, because specialised training opportunities are not available to some employees, this is reflected in productivity outcomes and organizational outputs.

P0012:

"...the training has helped me learn more about my tasks which has helped in the improvement of actions and events relating to work duties. This overall aids productivity and efficiency in the department..."

P0020:

"...These workshops and training give us opportunity to understand our roles more and things we can do to improve our productivity... So for example, because of the training I obtained on efficient testing of samples, I was able to improve the number of tests carried out, which helped in passing results needed by other departments for waste management operations..."

This indicates that while the ADSSC is trying to provide opportunities for the development for its employees, these opportunities may not be relevant and could be a waste of resources. This is because poor communication on employee training needs results in the provision of non-relevant training opportunities.

P0024, a participant working as a senior engineer with the Operations and Maintenance department, was responsible for management of internal activities such as building management, resource management, among other operational tasks, and provided more insights into the importance of relevant training opportunities. P0024 highlighted the challenges of training in ADSSC:

"...Well, as an employee in ADSSC, I believe there is room for improvement even though the company and the management are currently doing well. For example, in terms of training, there are training chances for us as workers, but the extent of the relevance of the training is one of question as these training programs most times have to do with maybe work culture and ethics of safety, which is good, but what about specific and specialised training

programs which will actually have a direct influence on an employee's career growth... more of these programs need to be done as just only few are run for specific departments..."

Investment in training in communication and business relations declined from AED 4,445,639 in 2013 to AED 2,177,868 in 2014 (ADSSC Annual Report, 2016). Some of the training policies currently adopted include adopting a control mechanism such as terms and conditions for qualifications for specific forms of training. For instance, only employees that have served 6 years with the organization are allowed tuition assistance or scholarship towards study development. Additionally, for training programs, employees are allowed a capped number of training programs, depending on their position within the organization; line managers make use of performance evaluations to select employees for training programs.

The responses from the participants indicate generally that while training is encouraged within the ADSSC, the organization invests through providing several training options to its employees, and this method of selecting training options makes it difficult for training needs to be met. This indicates that the approach being applied by the ADSSC in providing training options is too broad and is not tailored to the employee's needs. The findings indicate the need for training to be more specialised and relevant to the career interests of the employees for the training to impact on engagement. This is because when employees in specialised roles are not provided with the appropriate training, it reflects in their operational proficiency, and this could impact on organizational outputs.

The study probed the importance of employee voice to engagement, as employee voice is identified to be important in promoting internal relations which are essential for positive morale and could affect organizational productivity and growth (Anyango et al., 2015).

4.3 Employee Voice and Engagement

With regards to the findings on employee voice and engagement, this study aligns with suggestions by Selvaraj and Joseph (2020), who argued that when there is effective voice within an organization, it influences productivity, innovation, and improvement. This is because it facilitates increased job satisfaction for the employees and results in the development of more opportunities and greater influence for employee outcomes, in terms of ensuring that requisite tools which facilitate the improvement of conditions for productive outcomes are achieved (Selvaraj and Joseph, 2020).

From the suggestions obtained from all participants it is noted that in the ADSSC, employee voice is present, albeit it is ineffective, and various channels are available for employees to pass across their message or raise issues with management. The channels of communication available for employees to engage with the management of the organization include online methods, such as email and the ADSSC online social board, in addition to the firm's open-door policy which encourages all employees to speak freely about issues of concern which may impact on their productivity. Despite this, the findings still indicate the ineffectiveness of the firm's employee voice policy when it comes to issues related to certain group of employees. This could be a result of the notion of culture in the UAE, which is highly power-distanced, and the perception from lower-level employees that they should not engage with those in the higher ranks.

Expanding further, indications from the respondents suggest that when it comes to issues of conflict, employee voice does not work in the ADSSC, perhaps because of the power relations and communication issues between upper and lower management. Unions or employee led structures which allow for discussions between employees and management are not present within the ADSSC organizational structure. Employee voice is only suggested to be effective when it comes to operational procedures, where requests are made by employees as per tools and resources needed for operations – the ADSSC is noted to usually expedite issues relating to unavailable resources when requested by employees. For instance, when organizational resources like health and safety equipment need replacement, employees communicating this management would result in immediate resolution, rather than other issues raised by employees. Also, it was found that some employees only had general knowledge on employee voice. This means that while employees had knowledge of the importance of employee voice and were aware of the policies, many employees did not know the extent to which they could utilise the policies in engaging with senior management. This was particularly noted from respondents within the lower-level ranks, with the respondents suggesting that this affects employee motivation, especially in the resolution of conflicts.

P0030:

"...I know that I have right to speak to my manager when there are issues, and they did training for us about our right in the beginning when I started but I did not understand most things if I am being honest..."

P0029:

“... I cannot remember much about the policies and details of our right or employee voice, but I know that we have right to discuss issues with managers when they concern us or they affect our work...”

Furthermore, a unique finding to the research, which has not been considered within the literature, which was emphasised by participants, is that the presence of **social interactive** events such as quarterly town meetings for employees to interact with one another drives engagement. ADSSC is noted to provide annual social gatherings and quarterly gatherings which could be sports themed or entertainment themed for its employees to interact on a non-work level. Some of the events include town hall events, where employees are able to meet others from different departments, and interact socially within non-work scenarios, giving opportunities to de-stress and discuss both work-related and non-work-related issues.

P0015, a senior engineer working with the operations and management department, said:

“...Events such as sports events, family events, employees’ trips, community events, such as volunteering; charity; national day, and some employee’s awards such as al Thuraya and any other competitions between employees will influence the employee to be engaged within the ADSSC. When we go to such events it not only influences our ability to relate with other colleagues, but it also enhances our positivity which influences our engagement with the company because such social activities change the mood and the usual routine and allows for networking and discussion of issues faced...”

This indicates that social environment and interactions between employees impact employee voice and engagement of workers and as such, it is pertinent that environments which facilitates social activities and interactions between workers is provided as this could aid in identification of issues through encouraging informal discussions about issues related to work functions at these events.

Indications from the ADSSC Annual Report (2019) public sector organization, ADSSC suggests that the pay scale and monetary rewards obtained by employees of the ADSSC is highly competitive. Consequently, the section which follows provides insights into the study’s finding on the nature of rewards and its impacts on engagement in the organization.

4.4 Rewards and Engagement

Questions were posed to the participants regarding the impact of rewards on engagement. While some participants noted that engagement does not only have to do with rewards and pay, most of the suggestions and indications highlighted that rewards, particularly the good

pay structure of the ADSSC, was a significant factor in engagement. It would be recollected from earlier suggestions that the pay scale in the ADSSC, which can be categorised as a public sector organization, is highly competitive when compared to private firms (employees earn between \$90,000 to \$315,000 annually), which is a reason for most individuals seeking employment opportunities within the organization.

Following questions posed to participants on rewards and their impacts on engagement, the findings indicate that employees agreed that the remunerations is competitive in the ADSSC, and this enhances the engagement of workers. The remuneration is not limited to just the pay scale, which is indicated as quite competitive, but also includes other forms of rewards such as health insurance and housing allowances. The responses indicate the need for adopting individual rewards rather than just team rewards as a means to further bolster and improve engagement.

The rewards and remuneration structure adopted by the ADSSC follows standard guidelines established by the Abu Dhabi government, under which the rewards are posed to employees in the organization based on their qualifications and experience in relation to their capability to achieve set benchmarks.

P0015, a senior engineer with the operations and maintenance department, when questioned on the impact of rewards on engagement, emphasised how rewards influenced the motivation to work:

"... As earlier mentioned, the pay is quite competitive in ADSSC... and not just this, even the benefits are very good; housing allowance, health and safety insurance... Knowing that these things are covered by the organization gives me the confidence to continue working with the company, knowing that if any issues arise, the organization will do its best to cater for its employees..."

Furthermore, P0015 said:

"...ADSSC environment is fair, medium challenging, friendly, medium engaging, highly rewarding, collaborative, medium flexible... In terms of highly rewarding, as mentioned earlier, the pay is really good, and the members of the organization are collaborative in terms of sharing information and working together to ensure that all the aims of the organization are achieved..."

From the responses, high pay, the provision of requisite allowances and insurance are some of the rewards experienced by employees in the ADSSC. Suggestions from Macey et al (2011) indicate that adopting the right reward strategy enhances the engagement of the workforce,

which aids in ensuring sustainability and offers a competitive advantage for an organization. This indicates that the ADSSC needs to incorporate an apt reward strategy in order to ensure its competitive advantage and effectiveness of the rewards policy of the organization.

P009, a project engineer working within the health and safety department, whose role includes ensuring the maintenance of technical equipment and health and safety procedures, highlighted the importance of not just focusing on financial rewards but non-financial rewards for engagement:

"...Currently there are rewards in the form of bonus but no public recognition except at maybe few events organised during the year... I feel introducing programmes like this will motivate other employees to enhance their performance, fostering a culture of healthy competition that leads to high performance and increased productivity..."

ADSSC is noted to pay well with section heads, specialists and consultants noted to earn an average of \$145,000 annually, officers earning an average of \$90,000 annually and senior managers earning an average of over \$315,000 annually, depending on the department or functions/role. Comparing this to the average pay in the industry/other public sector organizations, the ADSSC's financial rewards are arguably competitive. P0011 provided more insights into nature of the rewards provided by the ADSSC on their engagement with the firm. P0011, an administrative officer with the ADSSC whose functions includes benchmarking (Onsite, Offsite, & international benchmark visits), ensuring stakeholders satisfaction, was questioned on rewards and engagement. In describing the impact of rewards on engagement P0011 cited positive accolades on the pay structure and remuneration obtained by ADSSC employees in a positive light, although noting the importance of non-financial rewards to employees:

P0011: "...Yes, I believe so because ADSSC like other government organizations in the UAE pays very competitive wages and the benefits associated with the job are also competitive. This I believe is a simple economic reason for an employee to remain engaged. If the pay package and benefits are perceived as highly rated in the industry by a worker, they would definitely want to remain engaged in the organization..."

"...ADSSC has a reward system and probably is one of the best paying when it comes to environmental health and safety in the UAE. But generally, the rewards and recognition are done on a team basis rather than individually, and this impacts on motivation as people should be recognized for their hard work..."

Pawar (2020) indicated that recognition is a non-monetary form of reward which aids increases in employee productivity, improves high levels of engagement and also improves employee

motivations to cultivate new skills, which results in overall long-term benefits to the organization.

The responses from the participants indicate that, besides from monetary rewards which are quite high and positive in the ADSSC, there does not appear to be a system of recognition or effective non-monetary reward system. According to Kurosaki (2003), incentives and other forms of non-monetary reward systems are noted to be linked with engagement and the performance of employees. P0023 is a project officer whose functions include coordinating project activities, working with other project officers in monitoring project progress, engaging in project activities such as setting deadlines, preparing reports related to projects for section heads and upper management and some project research functions.

P0023 highlighted the importance of non-monetary rewards to employees, saying that employees like to be appreciated and recognised for individual efforts, unlike the current approach being used in the ADSSC, which is group recognition or a system of monetary rewards:

“...Trust and appreciating. So, in terms of appreciating employees maybe introducing an individual reward system would enhance/facilitate engagement improvement within the ADSSC. In addition, I believe being more flexible with employees and more listening to their needs will create a strong trust relationship between employees in the organization...”

P0025, a standards and policy engineer working with the ADSSC whose function includes developing technical design specifications and standard drawings for projects, controlling amendments of specifications, also highlighted the importance of non-monetary rewards.

“...I think this has to do with people not feeling like they can grow in terms of pace of careers. There are not enough promotion in terms of position in ADSSC because it's a small company perhaps but due to this, people don't feel appreciated...”

Responses from the participants indicates that employees agree that the remuneration is competitive in the ADSSC, and this improves the engagement of workers. The remuneration is not limited to just the pay scale, which is quite competitive, but also includes other forms of rewards such as health insurance and housing allowances. The suggestions from the participants indicated that employees had positive attitude towards these rewards and that they enhance the motivation of employees within their role.

The findings also indicate that non-financial rewards influence the engagement of employees, and these include a recognition system which shows appreciation for the jobs done by workers and offers promotion opportunities to employees. The findings further suggest that non-financial rewards need to be improved in the ADSSC, as there is poor access to such elements such as promotion of employees, due to a lack of available positions for which employees could easily be promoted to. Additionally, improvements suggested to be needed with regards to individual rewards system; the ADSSC currently operates in a manner that rewards are granted to employees on a team basis rather than individual efforts, and this could demotivate employees, and impact on engagement.

4.5 Work Environment

This section studies/considers the extent to which the work environment in the ADSSC impacts on the engagement of employees. The work environment refers to elements which include the settings in which employees of the ADSSC perform their duties, and which affects the workers. In Deci and Ryan (1987), it is indicated that when the work environment is such that it allows for positivity of employees, there is improvement in the development of relationships between employees and employers. Reiterating the suggestions from the literature review, Aleandri et al (2014) identifies that hygiene factors are factors which are job related, and positively impact on employee motivation. This aligns with the study's findings that suggest that the physical environment of the ADSSC is one which meets the health, safety, and other environmental needs of the employees. Physically, the firm's headquarters, where most of the departments operate, is next to a shopping mall which allows for ease and flexibility of employees in carrying out both work and home-based shopping for resources. Also, nurseries to provide flexibility for employees in commuting to drop-off and pick-up their children from school are present in the ADSSC, making it an attractive workplace for employees with families, particularly female employees. Also, the organization ensures the safety of its workers by providing safety guidance and hazard signs all around the buildings and on site. For instance, the ADSSC laboratories, which are known to carry out various chemical and bacteriological tests related to wastewater and treatment of effluent water, is provided with the most up-to-date, state of the art equipment, which helps in the reduction of hazards.

Considering the case of the ADSSC and the safety of its employees, particularly those working with waste and hazardous materials, it is noted to be significant factors which impact upon

engagement, and which could influence commitment and positive outcomes for the organization.

Citing an example, P0011 offered a different insight on employee engagement, emphasising the need for a conflict-free environment and its impact on engagement of workers.

"...Well, in my opinion, work environment is not just the resource but the behaviour and attitude of the people working within a specific position towards others... it's like a toxic negative personality trait ... I could use the word ego or envy... and when there are egoistic people working in your team, it could result in negative impact on productivity outcomes within a team. Some managers here feel entitled and egoistic and this could affect the engagement of workers..."

Here, the participant emphasised the impact of management culture, and element of work environment on productivity, with the arguments suggesting that organizational climate has significant impacts on productivity.

Evidence from respondents indicate that with regards to the work environment, the ADSSC provides an appropriate physical structure, including workspaces that are safe, with appropriate equipment and tools required to perform a job/function and with access to the correct resources. When there is lack of access to a safe working environment, employees are discouraged from optimally performing their duties and functions assigned to them. This is because when the environment is not conducive, employees are not satisfied and as a result become less committed to the duties assigned to them.

P0020, a risk management specialist in the ADSSC for 6 years, whose role includes identification of risks which could impact on revenue, reducing rates of insurance for the firm by assessment and implementing strategies and plans to minimise losses, gave an insight into the impact of the work environment on employee engagement and productivity in the ADSSC.

"...The work environment is such that it is supportive, flexible, friendly, centred around working as a team ... I mean you come to work knowing fully well that you have the required support and management support to help the team achieve its key aims, you perform...they provide flexible working hours, clear goals and objectives for each employee, clear evaluating and appraisal system, promote teamwork, and promote a positive happier culture by creating events like the townhall events where we can freely relate with one another..."

Expanding on this, the ADSSC makes provision for a creche for working parents and offers also various office spaces which allows for people to work at different convenient spots.

To sum up, the work environment was suggested to include both the physical and non-physical work environment, with some suggestions from participants indicating that if the work environment is toxic, it could result in conflicts, which impacts on employee engagement and also their commitment to their duties. The findings also show that although the physical environment is good the management culture might need to be improved to enhance engagement of workers.

Emiratization, a government policy, was also identified to be a cultural issue which could impact on engagement due to its influence on demographics in the ADSSC's work environment. The section which follows gives further insights into Emiratization and its effect on employee engagement.

4.6 Emiratization and Diversity

The ADSSC as a public sector organization is noted to operate under the Emiratization law established within the country's labour laws. The aim of Emiratization is to ensure that the challenge of structural division against the locals within the labour market is overcome, particularly in the private sector through ensuring a minimum quota of the number of Emiratis employed within an organization to bolster the contributions of locals to the economy.

In 2017, for example, 47 male employees and 16 female employees were recruited to the ADSSC who were all UAE nationals. This reduced the cultural diversity in the ADSSC.

As suggested earlier, Emiratization is a government established policy which was initiated to narrow the ratio of expatriate to Emirati workers in the UAE, and also ensure that Emiratis are integrated into the working population in both private and public sector firms. The idea behind Emiratization is as a means to facilitate and increase the local contribution to decision making in different industries in the country.

With regards to Emiratization and its impact on engagement, the study finds that Emiratization reduces the cultural, national diversity within the organization, which is important for ideas, creativity, and innovation development. This is because the policies increase the chances through a quota system, which requires for organizations to recruit a minimum number of locals within the organization, and in public sector organizations, provide more opportunities to Emirati employees. The implications of this for non-local workers in the UAE is that there

are reduced opportunities, particularly in roles where more local workers are qualified, which reduces cultural diversity within organizations.

Furthermore, it was found that Emiratization impacts on knowledge sharing, as individuals from different nationalities and cultures have varying experiences which could impact on the approach followed in the implementation of certain functions. Expanding further, the UAE national culture is one which is characterised by high uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede Centre, 2021). The society and the culture are well regulated, perception of members of society with regards to taking risks is that risks should be avoided or minimized. Additionally, the culture in the UAE is one of high-power distance (Hofstede Centre, 2021), which creates multiplier problems in terms of Emirati workers working together with non-Emirati co-workers as a result of their reluctance to work longer hours or work in technical positions, which creates a problem of knowledge sharing and team working in organizations. Consequently, this study investigated the impact of Emiratization on engagement.

Several participants identified the fact that Emiratization policy perhaps prevented cultural diversity in the ADSSC. For instance, P0016, a media officer with the ADSSC whose functions includes the development of campaigns, writing and editing newsletters, letters, and general administrative functions, said:

"...I would say my department is quite diverse. Gender-based, we are a diverse team because there are men and women on my team, but there is less diversity based on nationality and this is due to the popular government policy of Emiratization which favours recruitment of locals specifically in public sector organizations..."

Probing further into the participant's perception of this policy of Emiratization, the participant said that the policy could influence creativity within the team.

"... Of course, there are some policies which restrict the extent of diversity like the national policy on Emiratization which prioritises some positions for locals in the country, this may have some limit on creative thinking in the organization in my opinion..."

P0019, an employee with the Accounts Department of the ADSSC, whose role involves project cash flow planning, financial analysis, and CAPEX control, gave a different insight into the impact of Emiratization.

"...In finance, most of us work together as we are all dealing with similar analysis and challenges... We have a fairly mixed team of different nationalities including Indian, British, Emirati and we all work together in delivering the department objectives..."

When asked about the impact of having a fairly mixed team on productivity, the following statements were made by P0019:

"...I can't speak for every department; in my department we have open communication with each other, and we work together to get the work done. We have each other's backs. We communicate clearly with each other, and we talk to our senior colleagues if there are any challenges along the way. This is despite that some individuals are young and some older and have more experience in the organization. In my opinion, it enhances trust climate... for example, if I am performing a function which I am not too sure of, I will speak to a colleague with perhaps more experience based on age or whatever other factors I consider. Having this wide range of individuals with different experiences to work with enhances my confidence and improves my performance..."

This indicates that the Emiratization policies limits opportunities for knowledge development and knowledge sharing within teams, which may affect productivity.

Similarly, P0015, a senior engineer working with the operations and management department, indicated that Emiratization affects learning and creativity, although when the teams are less culturally diverse there tends to be fewer conflicting issues resulting from cultural differences.

"...The range of diversity in ADSSC is a bit limited since the Emiratization is about 90%. ... I think when there is a culturally diverse team, we learn more from each other by learning from past activities a colleague has done, although when teams are diverse, there tends to be some issues in communication which could lead to conflict in teams. What this indicates is that there are benefits as well as challenges associated with a culturally diverse team".

P0015 also indicated that diversity significantly impacts on relationships and the trust climate, which in turn impacts employee performance.

"...I think diversity will help change the perception of employees relating to different cultures as they will learn new things and alternative methods of performing tasks. In terms of trust, I think it will enhance trust as it would lead to more relationships and interaction between employees, and this will in turn translate to better performance I believe..."

With regards to the implication of this finding to the ADSSC, the suggestions from participants indicate that while the nature of Emiratization restricts the ability of the ADSSC and forces it to provide more opportunities for locals, it influences knowledge sharing and the knowledge capacity of the ADSSC.

4.7 Summary of Findings

With regards to the finding on training, evidence indicates that while the ADSSC provides training opportunities and invests in the development of its employees, the management of the ADSSC need to ensure that the training opportunities provided are relevant to the personal development, career development and functions of the roles in which the employees are employed. The lack of available useful training impacts upon the willingness of employees to undertake such programs and inadvertently impacts on the performance outcomes within the organization. Furthermore, training opportunities need to be accessible to all employees irrespective of the departments where they function in order for the firm's organizational goals to be achieved.

With regards to employee voice, the study finds that employee voice policies in the ADSSC are present, as are and policies relating to encouraging employee voice, but these policies are not as effective within the ADSSC due to issues of power relations existing between strategic senior management and lower-level employees. The study findings suggests that while employee voice is documented as the policy of the organization, employees at lower ranks suggest little or few practical signs of the employee voice policies being followed in everyday operational activities. This implies that action needs to be taken by management stakeholders with regards to ensuring employees are informed regarding their rights as employees in terms of employee voice. Doing this through induction programs or re-training programs would enhance the optimisation of operations, improve communication fluidity and team working within the organization.

Furthermore, the study found that while employee voice is present in the organization, as there are elements and structures such as platforms for engaging employees within the firm, several elements, including poor understanding of employee voice policies, could be a factor impacting engagement within the firm. This could be argued to be in alignment with previous studies conducted by Hofstede Centre (2021) on cultural dimensions and their influence on business operations; high-power distance is noted to influence communication issues and could be the cause for the lack of trust. These, when lacking within the organization, tend to impact on motivation and communication, which is essential for employee voice.

The study also finds that while the ADSSC provides adequate rewards for its employees, which positively impacts worker stability and motivation, there is a lack of effective non-financial rewards in the ADSSC, with a lack of recognition of individual efforts of employees. Further to this, there are no ample opportunities for employee promotions, with the system being geared towards more group rewards. The findings suggest that non-financial rewards need to be improved in the ADSSC, as there is little access to such elements, and this could impact on the long-term engagement of workers.

In terms of the impact of the work environment on engagement, it is also indicated that the physical and non-physical work environment could impact on engagement. While the physical work environment in the ADSSC includes high quality structures and workspaces that consider the health and safety of workers, evidence from the findings indicate the need for improvements to be made in the non-physical work environment. This implies that actions need to be taken to reduce toxic perceptions of the work environment, through providing support to encourage workers and motivate them in the performance of their duties.

Evidence suggests that with regards to the work environment, employees in the ADSSC have the appropriate physical structures, including safe workspaces and the appropriate equipment and tools required to perform their jobs/duties, as well as access to the right resources. When there is lack of access to a safe working environment, employees are discouraged from optimally performing their duties/ functions assigned to them. Furthermore, the work environment is suggested to include both the physical and non-physical work environment, with suggestions from some participants indicating that if the work environment is toxic, it could result in conflicts.

Physically, the environmental structure of the ADSSC meets high quality standards and this positively influences motivation. For instance, the organization provides facilities such as crèches closely located to the office, and this was indicated to be positively aligned with the motivation of female employees in the organization. Furthermore, health and safety facilities are noted to be provided for employees and appropriate technological innovations are made available for employees, indicating a strong presence of positive physical environmental artifacts driving the motivation of employees. The study also identified that relationship-wise, the environment had some elements of toxicity, such as a poor relational environment between senior and junior management, which could be associated with negative elements of

motivation and EE. This indicates the need for the organization to adopt policies to improve its relational environment, as this could enhance employee motivation.

The study also examined Emiratisation and its impact on engagement, and the findings revealed that Emiratisation as a policy, while having positive benefits to the local population, also has challenges, including its impact on cultural diversity. The lack of cultural diversity could explain issues such as a lack of creativity and innovation within the organization, as Emiratisation puts a limit on knowledge sharing. This is because it causes some division between employees based on the perception that it provides more opportunities to one group of employees over the other. Furthermore, the increased power distance that results from the national culture of the UAE being highly-power distanced increases the lack of trust between non-local employees, which could impact on knowledge sharing, and consequently innovation and creativity within the firm.

The next chapter discusses these findings in detail. The chapter explores the findings, the implications of the findings, and includes a comparison with prior literature. It also examines the study's contribution to the field of employee engagement within the context of the waste management sector and the UAE in general.

5.0 Chapter 5 – Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings that have emerged based on the analysis of the data obtained from the research participants. The chapter also provides a conclusion to this DBA thesis and presents a summary of the main findings and contributions of the study on exploring employee engagement within the context of the UAE waste management sector. It also reflects on the implications of these findings for both theory and practice, as well as the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research. The chapter provides a brief overview of the research process and the outcomes of the study and draws meaningful conclusions that can inform the development of strategies to enhance employee engagement in the waste management sector in the UAE and beyond.

To commence the chapter, it will be ideal to reiterate the aims and objectives of this investigation, in addition to the research question being posed by the study. In terms of the study aims, this is to explore employee engagement and factors which impact upon engagement of employees in ADSSC, a public sector waste management firm in the UAE. The research question for the study is noted to be as follows:

a. What are the key factors that impact upon engagement of employees in the public sector in the UAE, specifically waste management organizations?

The chapter commences by discussing the findings of the study relating to training and engagement, before delving into discussions relating to other findings by the study including findings on the themes of employee voice, work environment, Emiratization, rewards and engagement. The chapter concludes by identifying the contributions of the research and the practical implications and reflections outlining the development of the researcher during the doctoral journey.

5.2 Training and Engagement

One key finding of this study is the finding of importance or the crucial role of training in promoting employee engagement within the waste management sector in the UAE. Through analysis of qualitative data, it was revealed that employees who received regular, relevant

training were more likely to be highly engaged in their work and committed to the organization. The section which follows discusses this finding in more detail

Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006) found that the purpose of human resource management is to facilitate achievement of worker dedication through creating means to monitoring, motivating, and achieving performance expectations, and as such human resources is critical to the organization. Effective training is identified as an ideal method to ensure that workers 116maximises their professional commitment to their operations (Hallberg and Schaufeli, 2006). Consequently, questions were posed to the participants regarding the importance or impact of training on the engagement of workers in the ADSSC.

From the findings, it is indicated that training boosts the engagement of workers by enhancing their operational efficiency and confidence in undertaking designated tasks, because this improves the skills of workers and their competency (Statements, 1,2). Furthermore, the study identified that it is essential that the kind of training provided to employees in the ADSSC is relevant to designated functions and are useful in the long-term for employee development. This is because the current training/upskilling programs do not take into consideration the functions of employees, and are not fully relevant to their functions, making them ineffective at enhancing worker engagement (Statement 4). In a study by Manuel (2014) examining the impact of training and development on organizational performance, the findings indicated that employees, when nominated to undertake relevant training, felt valued, and because of the training understood the importance of their roles with the organization, which enhanced their engagement with the company. Additionally, training is important to long term engagement of workers because when training opportunities are provided, it facilitates the ability of employees to develop and acquire resources such as knowledge and skills, which elicits the employee to have a strong obligation towards the firm (Manuel, 2014). Through training employees are able to gain skills which provides them with opportunity for career development through promotion, and opportunities for self-fulfilment (Manuel, 2014).

This is in agreement with this study's findings, which indicate that one of the positive factors associated with the training opportunities of the ADSSC is that the policies of the organization facilitate sponsorship of employees to be involved in training programs which can be quite expensive (Statement 3). When employees are provided with such training opportunities, it increases their obligation and engagement towards the organization.

The study also found that a weakness associated with the training in the ADSSC is that the organization provides a portfolio of unconnected training and development programs, which impacts on the effectiveness of productivity. This is because many of the training programs provided do not align with employee roles, and impacts on employee interest and motivation to attend such programs (Statement 6).

The implication of this to this research is that for the ADSSC, there needs to be design of appropriate/relevant training such that talent within the organization is nurtured in order to increase the levels of engagement.

Summary

Within the Waste Management sector, employee turnover is high as a result of the demand for skilled workers and also the competitive demand for skills that employees within the waste management sector have from other sectors such as the oil and gas sector (Waste Management Sustainability Report, 2021). This study found that within the context of the ADSSC, while training opportunities are made available to employees, the nature of the opportunities is such that not all employees have access to relevant training. The study identified that training impacts engagement because it bolsters the operational effectiveness of employees and consequently performance outcomes. Furthermore, training was identified impact on engagement because it provides opportunities to perform their roles which in turn motivates employees. Looking at previous studies on the impact of training on employee high turnovers, and as a consequence of employee engagement Moussa (2013 pp44) identifies that training increases positive employees relating to organizational support which in turn impacts the engagement of workers.

In another study that critically reviewed research relating to challenges associated with training in Saudi Arabia, Othayman et al (2020 pp1632), it was identified that the organizational climate and structure of training programs influence the effectiveness of such training and impact individual employee engagement with the training opportunities. The findings are similar to that found in this study where it was indicated by the respondents that access to relevant training programs is an issue, as while training opportunities exist, several of the training programs are irrelevant to employee functions. Alvarez et al (2004) indicate that various

factors influence training effectiveness and as such it is essential that training programs are such that they facilitate the likelihood of knowledge transfer and opportunities.

The indication from this analysis is that not only is it important to provide training opportunities for employees, but it is also essential that stakeholders within the organization take relevant steps to ensure that the training opportunities available are relevant to the needs of the employees. Furthermore, the conclusions which can be drawn from the study indicate that training is important to employee engagement as it facilitates improved operational effectiveness of employees based on developed skills, and also opportunities for employees.

5.3 Employee Voice and Engagement

Another finding of this study is the finding relating to the importance of employee voice and employee engagement within the waste management sector in the UAE. Based on analysis the qualitative data undertaken, it was indicated that when employees feel that they have a say in decision-making processes, this can contribute to the improvement of organizational practices resulting in better engagement of employees and commitment to the ADSSC. This finding has significant implications for practitioners and policymakers seeking to enhance employee engagement in this sector, as it suggests that fostering a culture of openness and communication may be a key factor in promoting employee engagement. The section which follows provides more insight into this finding.

In previous studies, the importance of employees having a say within the decision-making process and in activities has been identified to be important, as employee voice is noted to aid stimulation of performance and efficiency (de Azevedo et al., 2020). Employee voice has been identified to be essential for creating effective stakeholder-focused strategies, which bolsters productivity (de Azevedo et al., 2020).

The study showed that within the ADSSC, there are clear statements outlining to employees the different channels of communicating different issues to different management groups, including an open-door policy that allows for issues which could impact on employee outcomes to be discussed with relevant individuals (statement 7).

Following investigations into the extent to which voice is important to engagement, this study revealed that voice is critical to engagement within the ADSSC and identified that some

challenges to the concept of employee voice in the ADSSC include the ineffectiveness of employee voice in the resolution of conflicts or individual challenges experienced by employees. This was found to be because the ADSSC lacks structure including representative bodies for promoting employee voice.

The findings of the study show that the concept of employee voice is only effective in the ADSSC when employees communicate with organizational stakeholders about issues such as communicating a change of resources, such as technology, or a change of procedures from a top-down hierarchical approach (Statement 9). However, voice was identified to be ineffective when it comes to employees at lower ranks/positions in terms of discussing issues relating to conflict or disagreement between lower ranked employees and senior management (Statement 10). This was found to be as a result of the high power-distance culture of the UAE, which impacts on lower-level employees and their ability to communicate with senior management. Kwon et al (2016), in a study investigating employee voice and work engagement at the macro social level, found that power distance influences engagement. Expanding further, Kwon et al (2016) found that at the macro socio cultural level, national culture affects the ways organizational norms are shaped as it affects the attitudes and behaviours of individual employees. If the national culture is one where there is high power distance, there would be a collective mental programming of individual members of such societies to adopt those norms within organizational settings (Kwon et al., 2016).

Because power distance is a determinant for behaviours and attitudes, and this influences the decision-making power in society, this affects employee voice as less powerful members of organizations are not able to apply their inputs to decision making procedures. Looking at this study, in the UAE the cultural dimension of power distance as identified by Hofstede Centre (2021) is identified to be high-power distanced, and for this reason, it can be argued that the high-power distanced culture is one of the issues which affects employee voice in a negative way in the ADSSC.

Sun et al (2020) found that power distance reflects the differentiated cognition associated with inequality of power distribution within an organization and this cognition influences the behaviours of workers in the firm. This explains why employees in the ADSSC, who have high power distance, believe that due to the position gaps between them and senior management, they need to listen to rather than interact and express their concerns about their challenges.

In studies by Johnstone and Ackers (2015), employee voice is noted to be explored from two different angles including the idea of worker participation, where there is a managerial idea that workers need to be involved in contributing to goals. The second angle is through use of old-fashioned hard unitarist position where it is assumed that similar goals are shared by employers and employees with regards to understanding the best approach for operating the organization is through a command-and-control approach. The ADSSC's structure does not support unionism or employee unit in engaging with management, indicating the lack of an effective structure in enabling voice. While the findings suggest that employees are encouraged to discuss with management based on "open door" policies of the organization, and indicates that the organization does follow a hard unitarist position, the lacking structure for voice could be an issue which negates engagement in the organization.

The findings suggest the need for ADSSC management to adopt more definitive style of facilitating employee voice. The first could be having clear procedures that facilitate ability of employee in engaging with workers and the latter involving employees having independent procedures which they could follow in discussing issues. Additionally, socially engaging events, such as the current quarterly town meetings, gala events, and other informal meeting events were suggested to improve employee voice as they facilitated interactions between senior management and lower ranked employees, at an informal level. This improves employee voice by reducing bureaucracies surrounding discussions, which are influenced by power distance (statement 11).

Müceldili and Erdil (2016), in a study investigating the impact of workplace fun on engagement, argued that management involvement and participation in social events enhance employee interaction and voice, which positively influence engagement. Expanding on the findings, the study showed that when there is perception by employees that there is organizational support for fun/social activities, this increases motivation to discuss constructive issues, which could enhance productive outcomes (Müceldili and Erdil, 2016).

Summary

The study identified that employee voice is an important factor that influences the engagement of workers because it impacts productivity, access to relevant resources, and interaction between lower-level workers and senior management which is important for communication. The findings also indicate that the power distance culture in the UAE influences employee voice and policies regarding employee voice. Looking at studies by Sun et al (2020) which explored leader-employee power distance and its impact on employee voice, it was identified power distance has a negative impact on the psychological security of employees and the employee voice behavior associated with the employee. Further to this it was identified that power distance orientation exuded by leadership negatively influences the voice behavior and psychological security associated with employees (Sun et al, 2020). This explains the fear identified by participants to be a key factor that influences the effectiveness of employee voice as identified by the study.

The study further found that social interactivity and events that facilitate social interaction between employees however enhance. Tumen and Zeydanli (2016) in a study examining the importance of social interactions in facilitating job satisfaction found that when social interactions are increased in an organization, it influences individual work satisfaction, and job satisfaction influences engagement (Wirawan et al, 2020).

5.4 Rewards and Engagement

Anitha (2014) identified that recognition and rewards are essential to improving engagement and performance of employees, and with a good reward system there is significantly higher productivity and outcomes. This study consequently examined the extent to which rewards influenced engagement in the ADSSC. The findings are discussed in further detail in the section which follows.

Another notable insight from this study is that related to the strong relationship between employee rewards and employee engagement within the waste management sector in the UAE. Questions were posed to participants which examined various aspects of employee rewards, including the types of rewards offered, the frequency with which they were provided, and the perceived fairness and effectiveness of the reward systems. The results showed that

regular, meaningful rewards were more likely to result in high levels of engagement among employees.

The findings also revealed that the ADSSC has a very good capital reward system, deployed through good salaries and pay packages, noted to be very competitive when examined from both local and international standards and at all levels (Statement 11). The findings however revealed that an issue which participants agreed to be a challenge facing employees despite the nature of the reward system was due to the policies of the organization in adopting team reward approach rather than individual rewards, impacting on individual motivations for engagement in scenarios where employees feel overwhelmed (Statement 13).

Ladley et al (2015) noted that in organizations, a lot of the work implemented is done through using groups/teams which comprise individuals interacting in various procedures, including production and service delivery. The study which investigated the impact of individual/group rewards on cooperation and team effectiveness found that the use of individual-based reward systems enhances performance compared to group-based reward systems, only when the interests of the individual and groups are aligned. Additionally, in prior studies conducted on rewards and engagement by Hakanen et al (2021), it was found that high incentives/pay for individuals directly impacts their productivity, engagement, and commitment to their organizations.

In this study, the findings revealed that there is a weakness associated with the ADSSC's reward system in the sense that the organization focuses on monetary rewards/pay, and there is a lack/weakness of individual rewards or systems of recognition, which impacts engagement (Statement 15).

Furthermore, the findings suggest that the use of more individual reward systems rather than group-based rewards could enhance engagement, because group-based rewards may not be effective due to lacking alignment between individual and group interests. This could be explained by the feelings of not being sufficiently catered which is higher when group reward systems are adopted as against individual reward system. Consequently, it is recommended that the use of individual rewards be incorporated into HR policies to enhance motivation and consequently improve engagement. In general, this finding emphasizes the significance of employee rewards in fostering employee engagement and indicates that the ADSSC and other

stakeholders in the waste management industry in the UAE should take into account the role of rewards in their plans to foster engagement. The findings show that by providing suitable rewards, particularly on an individual basis, the ADSSC will be able to establish a more favourable work environment and improve employee performance as this enhances the recognition and respect of the organization for the contributions of their employees.

Summary

The study also found that while employees in the ADSSC are provided with very competitive rewards such as salaries and other forms of incentives, which were recognized to be important to the engagement, non-financial rewards were identified as important to the engagement of employees. The study showed that non-financial rewards including opportunities for employees to grow through promotion, and recognition were important for the engagement of employees.

In a study that followed a quantitative approach where 585 questionnaires were distributed across 25 business units, Stumpf et al (2013) explored intrinsic rewards and their impact on the engagement of employees. From the study, it was found that intrinsic rewards are positively related to employee satisfaction, which positively influences retention and engagement. This is because intrinsic rewards, due to their non-financial nature have their basis on employees deriving positive value from performing their assigned functions and as a result increases the self-worth and intrinsic motivation associated with employees performing their roles (Stumpf et al, 2013).

In another study, Waqas and Saleem (2014) investigated the importance of both monetary and non-monetary reward forms on employee engagement and the overall performance of the organization. The study found that monetary and non-monetary rewards are important because they can both influence a high level of engagement, with non-monetary rewards noted to be specifically important because it provides employees with a sense of stability and security which is essential for them in effectively implementing their duties.

5.5 Work Environment and Engagement

The findings obtained also highlighted the importance of the nature of the work environment, including both the physical and relational aspects, in promoting employee engagement among workers in the ADSSC and UAE's waste management sector. From the findings, it is revealed that by creating a positive and supportive work environment, the ADSSC can improve employee satisfaction and motivation, leading to increased productivity and overall organizational success. The section which follows discusses this finding in more detail.

Wang et al (2020) noted that two kinds of workplace environments exist, including a collaborative work environment and a toxic work environment. A work environment which is collaborative is characterised by a friendly demeanour, and positive organizational citizenship behaviour, while a toxic environment describes one where negative attitudes and behaviours including threatening behaviour, harassment, and an environment with safety issues, among other aggressive/challenging issues (Wang et al., 2020).

Within this study, the findings revealed that ADSSC in terms of its physical work environment is characterized by an environment that meets the safety needs of employees and also has the resources to enhance a collaborative work environment (Statement 17, Statement 15). Kaliannan and Adjovu (2015), in a study on effective engagement and organizational success, found that it is important that the work environment cultivated by organizations is such that it encourages employees. This is done by ensuring that physical resources and support needs for employees are provided, and through ensuring that only ethical behavior and attitudes are encouraged and practiced at the place of work (Kaliannan and Adjovu, 2015).

Additionally, the findings from the study revealed challenges associated with presence of toxic traits in the work environment, including conflicts in internal communications between lower-level employees and senior-ranked employees (Statement 16).

Khatri (2009), in a study of the consequences of high-power distance to organizations, argued that several toxic traits result from high-power distance, including significant challenges in communication between subordinates and superiors, unlimited management power and control, which results in submissive and unquestioning attitudes, which are negatively related with motivation and engagement of workers. Additionally, toxic work environments are noted

to result in increased employee stress and other consequences, including physical and mental health issues which negatively impact employee productivity and organizational outcomes.

The implication of this finding to this study is that while there are positive elements to ADSSC's physical work environment which enhances the collaborative capability of the organization, there are some challenges relating to the toxic nature of the work environment, which as indicated may be informed by the cultural dimensions of high-power distance in the UAE. This means that the work environment, including the physical and non-physical work environment, in the ADSSC needs to be improved such that employees are safe from occupational hazards by the provision of conducive and standardized work environments, but also such that support is provided to enable collaborative work between employees in both management positions and subordinate positions.

Summary

The findings from the study showed that the characteristics of the physical work environment including safety characteristics, location, and facilities influence the motivation of employees in performing duties that have been assigned to them within their organization. Specifically, the findings suggest the presence of facilities that enable the health and safety of workers including state-of-the-art equipment to reduce hazards, signages, and information posts to guide employees and ensure occupational health and safety of employees.

In studies by da Costa et al (2020), it was identified that a positive relationship exists between the physical environment and work engagement. Expanding further, the study found that when the physical environment is such that the ergonomics of the environment, noise level, and design among other physical factors are enhanced, it results in improved work engagement by employees (da Costa et al, 2020).

Looking at several studies conducted investigating the relationship between employee engagement and the physical work environment, it is noted that the work environment conditions highly influence engagement (Naharuddin and Sadegi, 2013; Changrasekar, 2011). Buhter (1997) suggests that when the environmental factors at the workplace are such that they comprise positive psychosocial and physical elements, it enhances the level of employee engagement within the organization.

Furthermore, the nature of the non-physical environment including the social environment which comprises the interactive environment between employees and management was identified to influence engagement. Expanding on this, the findings indicated there are some toxic traits within the work environment, which impact communication and interaction between employees and senior management. This could be antithetical to organizational goals and productivity outcomes. In studies conducted by Rasool et al (2021), where the impact of a toxic work environment on the engagement of workers, it was identified that when employees are placed in a toxic scenario, issues that are detrimental to the health of employees such as burnout, depression, and stress affect the employees, which influences motivation and engagement.

5.6 Emiratization and Engagement

Another important finding from this study was the findings related to Emiratization and its impact on the engagement of workers in the ADSSC. In terms of the findings, the analysis of the data identified that while through prioritizing the hiring and promotion of Emirati citizens, the government is able to foster a sense of national pride and ownership among local employees, this impacted the levels of commitment and engagement of the general workforce including non-local employees who make up the larger population of employees in their roles. This emphasizes and underscores the importance of such policies in impacting employee engagement and supporting long-term success relating to the retention of talent in the organization. The section which follows provides more insights.

The study identified that Emiratization, a government policy developed for the purpose of enhancing local participation in the UAE workforce, influences the engagement of workers because it affects cultural diversity in the organization, which is important for productivity (Statement 18).

Emiratization is described as a multi-level procedure through which the UAE government actioned policies to facilitate the reduced dependency on the non-UAE national labour force and increase the participation of nationals in the country's workforce (Raji, 2019). Achieving the Emiratization goals requires nationals to perform various roles already being performed by non-nationals, in an equally good manner based on standard requirements of different industries (El Sawy, 2019).

When the issue of Emiratization and its impact on engagement was explored in this study, it was found that the challenges that come with Emiratization include a decline in creativity, challenges of knowledge sharing, attrition of talent in technical positions, and a lack of skilled local workers for vacant positions due to limitations regarding recruitment of other nationalities to select positions (Statement 19).

Sarker and Rahman (2020), in a study exploring the Emiratization policy of the UAE as a tool for social engineering, found that in its simplest term, Emiratization is being used by the State in moulding the behaviour of members of society. This is being implemented in such a way that environmental and social forces are arranged to create highly effective social actions within the UAE labour force. These social actions within the labour force however come with several challenges, such as lack of local of sufficient technical expertise among the local population, particularly within the fields of engineering, technology, and science (Sarker and Rahman, 2020). This explains the findings on why Emiratization influences talent attrition in technical positions and a lack of skilled workers in vacant positions, which could result in productivity issues for the ADSSC.

A British Council (2018) future skills report on the UAE identified that the dearth of technical skills affects all sectors and that there is a widening gap between employers and skills available in the UAE. The report further found that 40% of employers agreed that a lack of skills in the country was a key reason for vacancies at the entry-level in the country, while 60% of employers suggest the local workforce lacked the required skills for work (British Council, 2018). The ADSSC, as identified previously is a waste management organization having several departments including engineering departments and other technical departments, whose duties include the performance of technical functions and roles associated with the waste management process. The decline in the lack of skilled workers, coupled with the Emiratization policy, can thus be argued to influence the availability of skilled technical workers, which influences engagement and overall performance of the organization. This is because for many of the roles within the ADSSC which are technical in nature, the skills required for performance of these duties are scarce, and Emiratis do not possess these technical skills (Forstenlechner et al, 2012). The indication is that current employees are under pressure and do not have the required knowledge to perform these functions effectively, indicating that Emiratization is antithetical to effective productivity outcomes which could affect the motivation of employees.

With regards to the findings on knowledge sharing and how Emiratization affects it, which in turn influences the engagement of workers, this domain of job nationalisation could be explained by possession theory (Pickford et al., 2016). This theory suggests that when individuals form a strong sense of control within a specific sphere of their everyday events, there might be a lacking inclination of sharing this dominance with others (Pickford et al., 2016). Explained within the context of engagement and Emiratization in the ADSSC, knowledge, and experience could be perceived as a factor that allows professionals to exercise dominance and control within their roles in their organization. Due to this reason, there may be a reluctance of non-nationals in sharing knowledge associated with their experiences, and this influences cooperation between non-locals and locals, which could be a problem for teamwork within the organization. Additionally, the connections between knowledge sharing as a factor could be linked with Maslow's hierarchy, because the desire for dominance and power can be categorised as esteem and self-actualisation needs (Haak-Saheem et al., 2017). Expanding further, the expatriate employees of the ADSSC may feel insecure in sharing knowledge of their skills and techniques which enables them to actualise themselves within the organization.

The discussion above suggests that Emiratization influences engagement in the ADSSC by impacting on recruitment and selection of relevant talent, and also orientation of employees with regards to knowledge sharing.

Summary

This study found that the policies of Emiratization are important factors that influence engagement because the policies of Emiratization impact the diversity of the workforce in the ADSSC. Expanding further, the findings from the study showed that Emiratization influences the strength in the creativity of employees and also innovativeness, which is important for productivity outcomes. Additionally, from the study, it was indicated that the policy of Emiratization affects knowledge sharing because it influences the perception of trust between Emirati employees and non-Emirati Employees. Studies by Yaghi and Yaghi (2013) which explored the issue of human resource diversity in the UAE identified that several issues exist with the Emiratization policies such as the issue of inequality in recruitment, which impacts diversity in the workforce. The study suggested a revision of the policies such that equality is emphasized in the recruitment of prospective employees as these influences work-related conflicts, work effectiveness, and trust as the current policies influence the recruitment of

competent individuals to relevant positions, and engagement of employees with their duties (Yaghi and Yaghi, 2013). This could explain give other meanings as to the perception of the impact of Emiratization policies on the engagement of workers in the ADSSC.

5.7 Conclusions

5.71 Introduction

The section which follows explores the general findings on positive engagement factors in the ADSSC. It is pertinent to discuss the general findings from the investigation as this is central to achieving the research aims of identifying factors which influence engagement. Exploring these is also important to ensure appropriate recommendations are made to relevant stakeholders regarding policy changes to enhance engagement in the organization.

Based on these questions, there are seven main conclusions that can be drawn based on this study's findings. The conclusions relate to the engagement and factors which influence engagement within the context of the waste management sector, and public sector organizations, in the UAE.

The ADSSC over the years has incorporated new policies which have been influenced by several factors including government policies, and changes in legislation, such as its recruitment policies which have been influenced by the national policy of Emiratization. This no doubt among other factors such as the employee voice, the nature of training available to employees, work environment and the nature of rewards influences engagement in the ADSSC.

The concept of employee engagement has been investigated in several facets including academic and organizational contexts, and in these studies, the findings have either supported an already existing theory or contributed to the field of engagement. While so many studies agree about the commonality in engagement, which is that employees that are engaged are happy and to fulfill contractual duties.

On analyzing the findings obtained, six conclusions are drawn from this study. The findings are explored in detail but are summarized as follows:

- 1) Access to relevant training is an important factor that impacts employee engagement.
- 2) Employee voice is an important element that influences employee motivation, innovation, productivity, and engagement. Power distance culture was also identified

to influence the effectiveness of employee voice such that in cultures that are high power distance, employee voice is weak.

- 3) It is also indicated that both financial and non-financial rewards are important elements that influence the engagement of employees.
- 4) Physical work environment including safe working environments, access to relevant workspaces and appropriate equipment, and non-physical work environments are important factors that influence the engagement of employees.
- 5) Emiratization policy influences the engagement of workers as it influences organizational behavior and organizational culture.
- 6) Poor employee engagement impacts on productivity outcomes of workers in ADSSC, and could impact on the long-term sustainability of operations

All the conclusions drawn relate to employee engagement within the context of the UAE and the waste management sector of the UAE. The section which follows discusses these conclusions and highlights the study's contribution.

5.8 Practical Implications

The findings of this study have several practical implications for the ADSSC and the waste management sector in the United Arab Emirates.

First and foremost, the study highlights the importance of employee engagement in driving productivity and performance outcomes. This finding emphasizes the need for organizations such as the ADSSC to prioritize the engagement of their workforce in order to achieve success. This can be achieved through a variety of means, including the implementation of flexible work arrangements, the creation of a positive and supportive work environment, and the development of programs and initiatives that promote employee satisfaction and well-being.

The study also identified that Emiratization policies can have negative impacts on employee engagement, specifically in terms of trust and innovation. These findings suggest that stakeholders in the ADSSC should carefully consider the potential consequences of such policies, and take steps to address any negative effects on employee engagement. This may involve the implementation of diversity and inclusion initiatives, or the development of programs that promote collaboration and knowledge sharing among employees of different nationalities.

In addition, the study's findings on the impact of national culture on employee engagement have important implications for organizations operating in the UAE. Specifically, the high power distance culture of the UAE was found to be associated with lower levels of employee engagement. The ADSSC considering these findings may need to take steps to address this issue, such as promoting a more participative leadership style, or implementing programs that empower employees and foster a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Finally, the study's findings on the importance of the work environment in promoting employee engagement are particularly relevant for the ADSSC and other stakeholders in the waste management sector in the UAE. By creating a positive and supportive work environment, organizations can improve employee satisfaction and motivation, leading to increased productivity and overall organizational success. This can be achieved through a variety of means, including the provision of appropriate infrastructure and resources, the development of positive relationships among employees, and the promotion of positive and healthy work culture.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that by taking into account the factors that impact employee engagement, such as Emiratization policies, national culture, and the work environment, organizations can take steps to improve employee satisfaction and motivation, leading to increased productivity and overall organizational success.

The findings of this study suggest several areas for future research in the field of employee engagement in the waste management sector and public sector in the United Arab Emirates.

First, given the negative impact of Emiratization policies on trust and innovation among Emirati and non-Emirati employees, as well as their potential impact on sustainable talent recruitment, it would be valuable to explore in more depth the specific mechanisms through which these policies affect employee engagement. This could be done through the use of quantitative research methods, such as surveys, to better understand the causal relationships between Emiratization policies, employee engagement, and other variables, providing more generalizable insights into the issues surrounding engagement in the waste management sector.

Second, the study's findings on the impact of national culture on employee engagement highlight the need for further research on the ways in which cultural factors shape employee

attitudes and behaviors in the UAE. This could involve the use of cross-cultural research methods to compare the engagement of employees in different cultural contexts including the exploration of cultural differences within the UAE and other GCC countries on the issue of engagement in the waste management sector.

Third, the study's findings on the importance of work flexibility and the work environment in promoting employee engagement suggest the need for further research on the specific factors that contribute to a positive and supportive work environment. Future studies could adopt the use of mixed methods research designs, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches, to better understand the factors that influence employee attitudes and behaviors in these contexts.

Finally, given the potential for employee engagement to impact organizational performance, it would be valuable to conduct additional research on the ways in which organizations can effectively promote employee engagement in the waste management sector and public sector in the UAE. Future studies could explore the development of interventions or programs aimed at improving employee satisfaction and motivation, as well as the use of experimental research designs to evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions in facilitating engagement for the sector.

Overall, the findings of this study provide several directions for future research on employee engagement in the waste management sector and public sector in the UAE. By continuing to explore the factors that influence employee engagement and the ways in which organizations can support the engagement of their workforce, future research can help to promote the success of these organizations and support the long-term development of the UAE.

5.9 Reflective on Doctoral Journey

This section provides a reflection on my journey to completing the DBA program and submitting my thesis in partial fulfillment of the award for a doctorate degree. The section provides insights into the importance of reflecting and accepting challenging decisions and also provides some insights into my learning and development through the doctorate journey. Furthermore, the section discusses the challenges during the peak of the COVID-19 period when the data collection of the study was done, and highlights lessons learned through the

periods. The section concludes by providing insights into how the doctoral journey has transformed my identity.

A doctorate degree is usually considered a journey that facilitates the development of new knowledge and the extension of existing knowledge through the use of original approaches and methods of inquiry (McCulloch, 2013). I commenced my research originally to advance my knowledge in the field of employee engagement, and also because I believe in continuing professional development and its importance to my career and my interests in advancing my academic knowledge in the field.

The doctoral journey is one that transforms individuals, from my experience shared by individuals who have gone through the process. Reflecting on my development from the period I commenced my DBA till the current period, I can confirm that I am a different individual in terms of my development of academic identity and also in terms of skills. For instance, prior to engagement with the DBA, and during my first year, I only had basic knowledge about issues pertaining to the focus of my research. Engaging with literature over the years has not only helped me improve my knowledge about the issues surrounding employee engagement but has helped in my ability to engage with other professionals during workshops and conferences on employee engagement, where I have been able to partake and contribute to academic knowledge through reviewing different papers, discussing with colleagues and taking-on feedback provided by my supervision team and other professionals.

Prior to commencing the degree, I was ignorant of the depth of understanding and hard work required for the doctorate process, but through practical engagement with my studies, reviewing several feedback provided by my supervision team, and engaging with other doctoral students, I realized the standard requirements to continue the degree and obtain successful outcomes in research. Suggestions by Watson and Thompson (2006) identify that the process of obtaining knowledge is based on intellectual and technical processes, and involves a lot of hard work. Reflecting on my journey, hard work, learning to deal with technical terms, reviewing and adopting suggestions from the supervision team, reading, and documenting findings were important elements that helped in facilitating my development of knowledge through the DBA.

With regard to the impact of supervision guidance and the role of supervisors in my journey, feedback, suggestions, and understanding of advice provided by the supervision team influenced my thinking and development throughout the program. Having studied for my prior degrees in the Middle East, being able to meet the requirements and expectations of writing a doctorate degree from the UK was a challenge, as the standards of writing and reporting are different.

Through guidance obtained from my supervision team during meetings, written and detailed feedback and prompts were provided which helped to improve my work. I was able to learn better ways to improve my research project, present my thesis findings, and improve generally on my outputs and research outcomes.

5.10 Skills Development

The DBA also provided me with the opportunity in enhancing various skills. This includes improvement of project management skills and organization, enhancement of leadership and interpersonal skills, research information management skills, and self-management skills. Other skills which were improved as a result of partaking in the DBA program included analysis skills, written communication, and oral communication skills as I was able to present my research at various events such as workshops which bolstered my confidence in presenting my research. Prior to commencing the DBA, and due to my former studies, I had some of these skills at a basic or elementary level. For example, I knew about different methods of research and their meanings such as qualitative or quantitative methods, and I had knowledge about some analytical procedures, but undertaking the DBA afforded me the opportunity to apply these techniques and methods, and to improve my experience of various research methods. For instance, I was able to undertake workshops where I learned about qualitative analysis software such as Nvivo, and other analytical procedures such as thematic analysis which was applied in my studies.

Additionally, I was able to improve my project management and research information management skills. During the DBA program, I learned the importance of labelling and storage of research files was emphasized. I learned how to note and organize my files for easy access; for instance, references to articles reviewed over the years and used in the research had to be

evidenced, and through using referencing managers like Mendeley, I was able to organize and store article references for future access.

Furthermore, engaging with the DBA program helped me in developing oral and written skills. As a non-native English speaker, engaging with academics in a different language is more difficult. Although I could speak, write and understand English prior to commencing my DBA journey, studying in a different language was quite challenging. Initially, I had to use language translator software to assist me in understanding complex sentences. I had to work extra hard in improving my written and oral skills. In doing this, I attended writing workshops with other doctoral colleagues, I wrote several versions of my thesis document and other sample articles which were peer-reviewed, and I always ensured that I obtained feedback on all pieces of work completed to ensure my development.

The DBA journey also helped with the improvement of my planning and self-management skills. Prior to the DBA, I used a normal diary in planning my activities and tasks, based on my organization's needs and personal needs. The DBA however involved a lot of activities, some of which had to be done concurrently or had to be planned ahead. I learned about the effectiveness of Gantt charts, which I applied in conducting my research and my overall DBA planning. Using the Gantt chart helped me stay more organized and to apply the right approach in a timely manner to meet deadlines.

5.11 Challenges

There have been several challenges that I faced during my doctorate journey including financial challenges due to the costs associated with the DBA program, personal challenges experienced that impacted my ability to progress, and COVID-19 challenges.

In terms of financial challenges, the cost of higher education is at an all-time high and as a self-funded student with a family, the inflation rate impacted my earnings and made it much more difficult to fund the program. I was able to overcome these financial challenges through agreements with the university's finance department, but these challenges did have an impact on my ability to concentrate fully during my research program.

There were also personal challenges that I experienced during my program such as illness, which also impacted on schedules for the delivery of some research outcomes. However, I learned that hard work is as important as rest and ensuring that in times when I was facing stress and mental burnout as a result of trying to cope with managing the doctoral journey with work schedules, I took time off. This helped me in re-strategizing and coming up with better ways to advance in my journey.

Another significant challenge that I faced was during the peak of the Global Pandemic – COVID-19. As a researcher collecting data was done during this period; I lost some family during the period including my father, which impacted me emotionally and also affected my ability to concentrate. Additionally, during the pandemic, I had to learn to resort to remote interview methods; several issues came up during the data collection including challenges in convincing participants that all personal data collected during the interview process was going to be anonymous and used for research purposes. This is due to the culture in UAE with people being more private and not trusting of the way research data may be handled. Moreover, the hybrid nature of data collection impacted my research process by causing delays; some participants rescheduled their appointments suddenly and some appointments had to be rescheduled due to technical challenges such as internet clarity issues. I however in the end was able to collect relevant data till the point of saturation, which I analyzed by reorganizing dates for meetings when technical issues came up and convinced the participants that their information was going to be anonymous and used only for research purposes. Eventually, I conducted my research, analyzed my data, and drew up the research deductions.

My identity has been transformed as a result of the DBA program. I developed new insights about various research methodologies and processes and also learned to become more organized and independent/self-reliant. The DBA also improved my confidence in being able to engage with professionals about my research as it involved a lot of presentation exercises and networking events. While several challenges were faced during the program, I was able to overcome these through support from my family, supervision team, other academic staff, and non-academic staff. At the end of it all, I am thankful for the journey and the opportunity to complete my thesis in partial fulfillment for the award of a doctorate degree.

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7.0 Appendix

7.1 Interview Questions

- 1) How long have you worked for the organization and what are the nature of the tasks performed within the organization?
- 2) Did you work with a previous organization before working with ADSSC? What could you say differentiates ADSSC from your previous Employer?
- 3) What do you like or dislike about your job?
- 4) What are the peculiarities of working in ADSSC?

These questions were asked to ensure that participants meet the selection criteria for the research and also understand if personal judgements of the participants influence their decisions to work within the ADSSC.

Challenges with Employee Engagement in ADSSC

- 5) What do you understand by the term employee engagement?
- 6) What are the underlying challenges which you believe employees face that influences their engagement with the organization?

What factors positively influence engagement of employees within the ADSSC?
- 7) What do you believe are employee's thoughts about the organization's commitment to increase engagement of workers?
- 8) Do you believe ADSSC Pay package and benefits which are contracted influence employee's engagement in the organization?
- 9) What is the nature of interaction between senior level employees and those at the bottom in the ADSSC and do you believe it influences engagement levels?
- 10) What are your opinions regarding the policies of the ADSSC relating to training and development of employees and how does this relate with engagement of employees?

These questions were asked to identify challenges being faced by employees in the ADSSC which may influence their engagement with their work function. These set of questions help in achieving the research objectives of identifying factors which influence engagement within the organization.

Employee Engagement and Operational Efficiency

- 9) What has been the effect of engagement on operations within in your department?
- 10) Could you describe the nature of the tasks and activities which you perform on your job and the extent to which you believe the rewards for the job balance the activities on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being very bad and 10 being excellent)?
- 11) Can you describe current level of job satisfaction within your department and how do you think it affects efficiency of employees with regards to performance on a scale of 1 to 10?
- 12) What factors do you think are essential for ADSSC to consider which would help the organization to achieve its long-term vision of self-sustainability?

These questions were asked to explore the issue of how employee engagements influence organizational outcomes in terms of performance, allowing for the research objective of understanding how engagement influences profitability and outcomes in the organization.

Organizational Environment, Operational Tasks and Engagement

- 13) How would you describe the working environment at ADSSC?
- 14) Does ADSSC's work environment help ensure that employees are engaged?
- 15) What do you think could be done to improve the work environment in ADSSC to increase engagement and performance of employees?

These questions were asked to explore the issue of how the work environment influences engagement and performance outcomes of employees in the ADSSC.

Diversity and Employee Engagement

16) What do you understand by diversity?

17) Can you describe the nature of diversity within the ADSSC, specifically within the teams/departments where you function?

18) On a scale of 1 to 10, one being very unlikely and 10 being likely, do you think diversity and inclusion could enhance engagement and performance of employees within the ADSSC?

19) What do you believe is the influence of diversity and inclusion on trust climate within the ADSSC and how does it affect employee performance?

These questions were asked to understand how variety of factors explored within the literature influences engagement in the ADSSC. Asking these questions are in alignment with the research aims of understanding how various factors influence engagement within the ADSSC.

Employee Voice and Employee Engagement

20) Can you describe the rights of employees in terms of voice in the ADSSC?

21) How does the environmental structure of the work environment at ADSSC influence relationships and what is the impact of this on employee voice?

22) What do you believe is the impact of employees having a voice on their performance within their functions?

22) Do you have any other comments you would like to provide relating to the subject of ADSSC which has not been brought up in this interview?

7.2 Statements

LEGEND:

Training and Engagement

Voice and Engagement

Rewards and Engagement

Emiratization and Engagement

Work Environment and Engagement

Flexibility/ Other Positive Factors and Engagement

Statement 1

P009 I would say that in general the overall effect of engagement on operations within our department is positive. For example, there is generally positive competency with regards to the skills of the members of the teams and this is because of the available training programs which are designed to improve employee skills.

Statement 2

...When coaching and training is made available for these employees it boosts their confidence with regards to being able to perform tasks assigned to them which in turn boosts engagement with their duties...

Statement 3

ADSSC policy support the training and development of the employees, even sponsored many employees seeking professional certificates such as CFA, SHRM, CIPD, PMP, CIPS. These programs are quite expensive for employees to afford and they are useful beyond the scope of working for ADSSC so I believe these training programs and courses help drive engagement level as they not only facilitate competency for employees as per organizational needs but also career development skills.

Statement 4

P005 I don't like the current policies of training and development since it was stopped years ago, and I believe training courses by external institutions can increase the engagement level of employees in the organization. We need to run more training especially from external

consultants because in Engineering, there is continuous update regarding practices in use based on the advancement of technology and these advancements are meant to improve efficiency in process. If we are not provided with the adequate training or improved training which has been stopped now, it reduces us as engineers to be useless eventually within our field.

Statement 5

I think it is necessary for ADSSC to increase training opportunities as this will not only help employees in getting confidence to do their jobs more effectively but also to help employees have necessary skills to advance in their careers.

Statement 6

Training has been and will always be a motivation tool for employees in principle. ADSSC since inception supported this tool strongly believing this would support the majority of freshly graduated employees in the company. However, this has been on the decline due to budgets but this significantly impacts on engagement in my opinion...

Statement 7

ADSSC have always adopted open door policy especially at the departmental management level, the interrelation ship has never been less attractive... Employees are free to register their disapproval of management decisions through consultation with their supervisors who they relay the issues being faced and the recommended changes suggested by workers, to enhance their performance. Serious response is usually received and acted upon....

Statement 8

Voicing in organization is as important for its success, those bottoms to middle management employees when voiced and heard out in an organization will definitely feel respected and feel important especially when they take part of the future changes leading to the success

Statement 9

the relationship between employees influences the work environment directly, especially employee voice. If you have a conflict with the higher manager, it is easy for them not to listen

to what ever complain you are stating they would rather go and search for your mistakes. In some cases, it is hard to justify yourself because once a person has a bad idea about you it is hard to change it. What I am saying is employee works in ADSSC when it comes to issues like things to improve speed of performance and recommendations of equipment to improve our process and standards but however when it comes to issues of conflicts or issues between lower employees and higher management, I find that lower employees don't have voice.

Statement 10

I think maybe not just ADSSC but every organization... I think people have the perception especially when you are in a society like ours where maybe wealth and position are respected a lot, people do not believe they have the right to speak to those above them about issues... and this is a wrong notion.

Statement 11

For example, we have some inter-departmental social events where we get to meet people from other departments and have a social interaction whereby no work is discussed just general interaction. Aside from these helping employees with de-stressing which is important for a work-life balance, the use of measures such as this helps employees in breaking social boundaries and sharing ideas which improve work satisfaction

Statement 12

It really does. Compared to other companies, ADSSC salaries, allowances and benefits are considered high and once the employee is satisfied with his salaries it influences engagement levels. I believe maybe rewards like recognition would enhance the pay package which we receive.

Statement 13

ADSSC has a reward system and probably is one of the best paying when it comes to environmental health and safety in the UAE. But generally, the rewards and recognition are done on a team basis rather than individually, and this impacts on motivation as people should be recognized for their hard work...

Statement 14

We are provided with essential personal protective equipment PPE to do our job like in every international organization. Also, the safety standards are high to ensure health and safety of the worker. So, I believe in this regard, ADSSCs work environment physically is helping facilitate engagement.

Statement 15

Depend on many factors; not all voices are heard because not all managers are willing to hear all employees, the opinion itself, and the administration. So, for example as I was saying some managers may disregard issues which have been brought up in an aggressive tone and this could affect employee attitude to work... the structure of the work environment is good in the sense that the physical design is such that people are able to communicate openly rather than a cubicle design in most of the departments, but as I said I think the issue of poor relationship and its impact on employee voice lies with the management.

Statement 16

Well, in my opinion, work environment is not just the resource but the behaviour and attitude of the people working within a specific position towards others... its like a toxic negative personality trait ... I could use the word ego or envy... and when there are egoistic people working in your team, it could result in negative impact on productivity outcomes within a team. Some managers here feel entitled and egoistic and this could affect the engagement of workers.

Statement 17

Yes... as I mentioned, they provide the right work environment, resources and flexibility which enhances engagement of workers

Statement 18

I can say it affects engagement too because you know the policy of the UAE regarding Emiratization... this policy is bad for diversity because we are junior workers feel we will not be

able to get to leadership position because of this policy. so, I think maybe this should change or be amended to favor promotion and growth irrespective of where one comes from... leaders can emerge from any culture

Statement 19

Inclusion of people from different backgrounds/education is a great way to enhance engagement and performance of employees. There will be different ideas, debates, and discussions on how things should be done. Of course, there are some policies which restrict the extent of diversity like the national policy on Emiratization which prioritizes some positions for locals in the country.

Statement 21

“...In terms of positive factors, I would suggest that when the organization is such that it has a flexible work structure, fairness in pay, has a culture which is embracing of learning and development of employees and one where there is honesty and transparency, this enhances the employee engagement...”

Statement 22

“...I like the good working relationships with colleagues and management, flexible working hours, and working within my field of engineering. I dislike some of the HR policies, lack of promotion opportunities, and occasionally uncomfortable office environment...”

Statement 23

“...Our previous boss for example did not condone many of the things which we do currently like the flexible working schedules but the change in leadership in the organization allows for us to feel more comfortable doing our jobs...”

Statement 24

“...In addition, I believe being more flexible with employees and doing more of listening to the needs of employees plays a significant role in ensuring the engagement of workers in the company... I believe ADSSC is very flexible... they provide us with flexible work schedules and we can take excuses when necessary to attend to other tasks...”