

# Exploring relationships amongst restructuring, work engagement and psychological safety of retained employees

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## ABSTRACT

**TITLE:** Exploring relationships amongst restructuring, work engagement and psychological safety of retained employees

**KEYWORDS:** Organisational restructuring, psychological safety, work engagement

The holistic aim of the study was to evaluate and discover the presence of affiliation between organisational restructuring, work engagement (employee level) and psychological safety of retained employees, post-restructuring at South African mines. Previous studies have not specifically explored the relationship between psychological safety and work engagement after restructuring as experienced within the South African mining context.

In this study, a quantitative research approach and a cross-sectional design were used. The sample includes a total of 266 participants. Participants were recruited from the Rustenburg Mine complex, under different job grades, including the C-band, D-band, E band and F band, as well as men and women from various ethnicities (black, white, Asian and coloured).

Findings pointed towards a significant positive relationship between organisational restructuring, work engagement and psychological safety. On average, respondents agreed to have been fully aware of objectives of organisational restructuring and leadership that were inclusive throughout the processes. Respondents were neutral about restructuring feedback flowing freely and whether it motivated work engagement, they agree to feeling psychologically safe to express themselves without fear, and also maintained work engagement besides going through restructuring.

Previous studies confirmed actively-involved employees in restructuring processes are seldom affected by going through the process; even if their jobs are threatened, the active involvement moderates the impact of restructuring on work engagement.

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **Research Introduction**



**TITLE:** Exploring relationships amongst restructuring, work engagement and psychological safety of retained employees

**KEYWORDS:** Organisational restructuring, psychological safety, work engagement

## 1.1. INTRODUCTION

This study's aim was to assess the relationship between restructuring, work engagement (employee level) and psychological safety of retained employees post-restructuring at mines.

The ultimate aim is to explore existence of relationship between organisational restructuring, work engagement (employee level) and psychological safety.

Chapter 1 contextualises the study background to highlight major events that recently took place in the mining industry as a preamble to the formulation of a problem statement. The problem statement suggests the need to explore experiences of retained employees post-restructuring and to explore whether restructuring has any influence on work engagement and psychological safety of those employees. Thereafter, the research objectives and design are discussed to try to reach the intended goal. Finally, a layout of the chapters of the study is provided.

### 1.1.1 Background to the study.

The target group consists of mining houses in South Africa where the core business is the extraction of mineral resources.

In today's versatile business environment, working together is key to achieve work objectives. This entails, among other things, sharing information and ideas, integrating perspectives and task co-ordination to achieve the common goals of the company or organisations (Edmondson & Lei, 2014:24).

Team work is characterised by different individuals with different mind-sets and knowledge who work together to achieve shared outcomes to fulfil shared objectives (Edmondson *et al.*, 2004:15).

The positive experience of working together promotes bonding, facilitates trust and cultivates a work climate that is experienced as psychologically safe, which, in turn, encourage openness

and willingness to share one's knowledge to the benefit of the whole team in order to achieve shared outcomes (Edmondson, 2004:2).

This status quo, however, seems to last only to the point when a company faces difficulty and has to go through restructuring.

Companies are facing fierce competition in order to survive in a competitive global economy and are consequently reliant on the ability to satisfy customer or global market needs without compromising quality, flexibility, innovation and organisational responsibility through the commitment and co-operation of employees (Olivier, 2006:v).

The market's volatility forces organisations to attempt to move towards flexibility by expanding capacity or shrinking their capacity, accompanied by job losses and job insecurity (Olivier, 2006:v).

As a result, many organisations have been going through restructuring processes to streamline business as best they can to secure sustainability. The reality is that every organisation, when it goes through financial difficulties, opts for restructuring in some or other form in order to redefine and realign to its operational strategy. This often results in seemingly endless processes of restructuring, consultations and headcount reduction proposals, employee benefit restructuring, positions and teams dismantling and so on, in order to come up with new structures that are aligned with the new strategy (Olivier, 2006:v; Olivier & Rothmann, 2007:49).

All these efforts tend to cause disruptions and stress that elicit intense emotions of anger, fear and distrust, which, in turn, cause unhealthy competition among team members that adversely, affects work engagement and the psychological safety of employees as well as their meaningful and productive performance at work.

This study argues that there might be a relationship between specific disruptive events that took place in the mining sector that resulted in organisational restructuring as option for mining houses, and the effect on psychological safety and work engagement experienced by employees post-restructuring. Although a more detailed discussion will follow hereafter, it is important at this stage to briefly clarify two important concepts that will influence the discussion, namely what is meant by a psychologically safe climate and work engagement.

Schaufeli and Bakker (2010:16)\_Define work engagement as an optimistic complete happiness towards work felt by the employee that is characterised by attitude to succeed, commitment to work, and willingness to give it all.

A psychologically safety climate (PSC) can be defined as shared beliefs about company practice, policies and procedures for the protection of workers' psychological health and safety that depends mainly on management practices (Law *et al.*, 2011:1783).

## **1.2 Purpose of the study and problem statement**

South Africa experienced major platinum employee strikes at the beginning of January 2014 that lasted for five months; approximately 70 000 platinum mine workers went on strike, and majority of workers were from major platinum companies based in Rustenburg, and include companies such as Impala Platinum, Anglo American Platinum and Lonmin Platinum Mines, all based in the North West Province (South African History Online, 2014).

The root cause was believed to be the underlying economic causes of worker discontent that gave rise to the Association of Mines and Construction Union (AMCU), combined with continued poor living conditions on the platinum belt, anger over low wages and large pay differentials between workers and management, which gave birth to labour militancy (Bowman & Isaacs, 2014:16).

The Association of Mines and Construction Union (AMCU) under the leadership of Joseph Mathunjwa was made popular by a unified demand of a salary increase from R5 000 to R12 000 per month from employers where unions had members. In turn, the platinum companies called the workers' demands of R12 000 impractical and refused to go beyond a 10% wage increase (SAHO, 2014).

These emotional build-ups of issues included pressure from rising costs of living and pressures on the social reproduction of labour, and wages for lower-level workers, which remained low relative to these rising costs. The difficulty from the perspective of the workers is that demands are being pressed during a slump in demand for platinum and company profitability, rather than during the boom years when demands could have been accommodated more easily; this was main cause for the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) to lose membership to move from a once leading mining union to a minority union as

many members migrated to the Association of Mines and Construction Union (AMCU) (Bowman & Isaacs, 2014:16).

These mines lost approximately 40% of platinum production as a result of the strike and the subsequent shutdown that started in January 2014. Platinum Production was deprived in a region of four hundred and forty thousand ounces by the strike (SAHO, 2014). The three companies, Impala Platinum, Amplats and Lonmin, suffered a total revenue loss of approximately R24.1 billion during the strike and a further loss of R10.6 billion in wages; the five-month long strike affected both the workers and the mining companies (SAHO, 2014).

The South African mining industry shed 20 000 jobs in the 12 months leading to June 2013, and that trend was set to continue due to low margins, cost pressures and volatile commodity prices. Additionally, labour costs in the mining sector account for 45 to 50% of total cost, while the global average was 30 to 40% of total cost, with employee efficiency 10 times higher. The direct impact of the mining strike on first quarter of 2014's growth was clearly evident. A gross domestic product (GDP) reduction of 1.3% was reported. This resulted in an economic growth of only 0.6% in quarter 1, 2014 (SAHO, 2014).

During the five-month strike, mineworkers' debts escalated due to the no-work-no-pay policy mines had, which saw most of the miners going for months without income. Without salaries, mineworkers' dependence on credit increased and they were forced to borrow for basic necessities such as food, clothes and school fees for their children. It was reported that the average miner's accumulated debt had increased and they were paying back R5 000 per month. The strike resulted in high default rate on loan repayments or debts taken by mine workers. Miners lost 45% of their annual income, and it would take them roughly 2.5 years to recoup it through the recently negotiated wage increase (SAHO, 2014).

After the strike, Anglo American Platinum, Amplats, announced that it planned to sell four mines and two joint ventures because of the five-month long strike action. Those assets included Amplats' Consolidated Union-Rustenburg mine in the North West Province, and the Pando JV in the Limpopo Province, which is jointly owned by platinum mining company Lonmin's subsidiary company, Eastern Platinum. The Bapo Ba Mogale community owned the Bapo Ba Mogale mining company, as well as the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE)-listed exploration company, Mvelaphanda Resources. Amplats also considered discarding its Bokoni JV project, which the company owned with triple-listed platinum company Atlas Resources based in Burgersfort in the Limpopo Province (SAHO, 2014).

In 2015, companies in mining had to respond to global price slumps and previous years' labour unrest, which resulted in the company looking at restructuring as option to realign, and consequently employees were placed under severe uncertainty when they were all given letters of notice of intention to retrench, an indication of which operations are affected and the head count that needs to be achieved post-restructuring to streamline Anglo American Platinum to the new company strategy, which excludes the Rustenburg operations that were later sold to Sibanye Resources. This action led to the need to align head office and other operations with the new company strategy (AngloAmerican, 2015).

The sale came with the need for restructuring that required the company to give notice of intention to restructure and the process to be followed, known as the section 189 consultations (AngloAmerican, 2015).

Section 189 refers to instances where employers may dismiss employees based on their operational requirement as defined in section 213 of the Labour Relations Act. Operational requirements suggest requirements based on the economic, technological, structural or similar needs of an employer.

Section 189 of the Labour Relations Act is applicable and prescribes a joint consensus-seeking process in an attempt to reach consensus on appropriate measures (section 189(2)) (Du Toit, 2016):

- to avoid the dismissals;
- to minimise the number of dismissals;
- to change the timing of the dismissals;
- to mitigate the adverse effects of the dismissals;
- the method for selecting the employees to be dismissed; and
- The severance pay for dismissed employees.

The practice is to advise non-unionised employees to form their own organisation and to choose people to represent them at consultations because unionised employees will be represented by their registered unions. This practice involves the company tabling their intention to retrench and employee representing agents tabling counter proposals to reduce the impact of retrenchments and agreeing on fair pay-outs to employees who will be retrenched or who voluntarily separate with the company (AngloAmerican, 2015).

The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) is a body tasked with resolving dispute between employees and employers established in terms of the Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995 (LRA). It is an independent body, and does not belong to and is not controlled by any political party, trade union or business (CCMA, 2016).

Personal experience, as a person who went through the restructuring process, was that it was organised confusion that is characterised by a lack of trust and transparency.

Employees and management had their own interests at heart, and as self-protection was key, employees avoided saying things that will jeopardise their chances to retain their jobs; trust disappears, and teams started competing among themselves to gain notice for limited positions.

Asking questions and seeking feedback resulted in the questioning of authority with no clear answers given, apart from the continuous assurance that the process will be fair – this was the only answer given to staff to try to neutralise the environment.

The environment became tense as employees lost trust in each other; information sharing was a struggle as concerned employees saw other employees as competition and as trying to steal their responsibilities in order to expose them to redundancy.

During consultation, employees were careful of what they asked or said to avoid saying anything that will be traced to them and may be used against them; this saw most employees operating in self-protection mode, which led to reduced productivity and the large number of employees who were not feeling psychologically safe, ended up volunteering to separate with the company.

The practice was for managers to encourage staff to apply for voluntary separation packages to avoid retrenchment pay-out while waiting to re-apply for existing positions.

The practice was sold as a safeguard for employees to default to the severance package instead of retrenchment package, which is normally lower because it is guided by the minimum amounts the employer is legally allowed to pay without adding any ex-gratia or voluntary payments by the company to encourage employees to leave.

The practice appeared to cause more confusion than understanding as employees were unsure of their standing

Most employees who did not feel psychologically safe or who felt threatened by the process opted for the safe route and applied for voluntary separation to avoid being exposed to the retrenchment package that is less lucrative than voluntary separation.

For me, personally, though, the process caused work disengagement and misplaced trust, and voluntary separation triggered by anger, even though there are alternative placement opportunities.

In hindsight, one could identify several unfortunate events that could probably have been handled differently. Moreover, the question remains to what extent those employees who survived the turbulence have been affected on a psychological level and how this may, in turn, influence their future performance.

One can argue that when employees witness the mass layoff of their colleagues, this might influence their own levels of perceived psychological safety, and might cause them to be more hesitant to freely express their thoughts and feelings due to concerns regarding how these might impact them in the future cycle of restructuring.

There is the possibility of retained employees feeling work disengagement post-restructuring, which was triggered by a lack of psychological safeness.

In short, there is a need to establish whether the organisational restructuring events could have influenced the work engagement and psychological safety on retained employees post-restructuring. In what follows, the more specific primary and secondary objectives of the study will be detailed.

### 1.3 Research objectives

The research objectives are divided in to primary and secondary objectives.

The **primary objective** of the research is to explore relationships amongst restructuring, work engagement and psychological safety of retained employees post-restructuring.

In order to address the primary objective, the following **secondary objectives** have been identified:

- To do a literature study that will serve to clarify the main concepts and their relation to each other as established by previous research, including:
  - Highlighting the critical effects typically associated with organisational restructuring.
  - To source documented verified and own formulated measuring instruments on restructuring experience, work engagement (UWES) and psychological safety to use in formulating a study questionnaire.
  - Identifying the core components of psychological safety and a psychologically safe work environment.
  - Clarifying the meaning and relevance of engagement within a work context at employee level.
  
- To empirically explore the relationship between organisational restructuring, employees' subjective experience of psychological safety and their levels of work engagement.
  - To analyse results to ascertain whether organisational restructuring (employee level) influences (a) work engagement and (b) psychological safety.
  
- To make recommendations to the mining industry to be aware of the impact that restructuring has on retained employees' psychological safety and work engagement.

The study will aim at testing the following hypotheses:

H1.0 There is a negative relationship between organisational restructuring and work engagement.

H1.1 There is positive relationship between organisational restructuring and work engagement.

H2.0 There is negative relationship between organisational restructuring and psychological safety.

H2.1 There is positive relationship between organisational restructuring and psychological safety.

H3.0 Organisational restructuring does not predict work engagement.

H3.1 Organisational restructuring predicts work engagement.



## 1.4 Research methodology

According to Welman *et al.* (2005:2), research refers to a scientific approach or careful investigation to discover facts by being objective in different methods and procedures.

Methods and techniques are tools to conduct research, while methodology provides logic to research and methodologies to follow in the completion of research (Welman *et al.*, 2005:2).

The research will be conducted in two stages:

The first stage will be a literature review where data will be collected from other authors' published work and their views organised in a logical manner.

The second stage will be to formulate hypotheses or relations indicated from the literature review to later test with the empirical study to be conducted.

## 1.5 Literature review of the topic/research area

The literature review will provide a summary of other authors' findings and learnings from prior research in line with topic of research. A literature review is source of insight into a specific topic currently and its future direction (Welman *et al.*, 2005:38).

The literature review will help to present a possible relation between three constructs under study and research done on them. Sources to be consulted will be credible and will include but are not limited to:

- Conferences, symposia and workshop presentations;
- Dictionaries and standardised reference materials;
- Dissertations, mini-dissertations, research reports and theses;
- Libraries and organisations;
- Scientific books;
- Scientific databases, such as EBSCOhost, JSTOR and Science Direct;
- The Internet; and
- The so-called 'grey' literature, including relevant documents from departmental guidelines, organisations, publications and others.

## 1.6 Empirical study

The empirical study defines the research design, the measuring instrument and statistical analysis to be used in the research, as well as the intended participants for the study.

### 1.6.1 Research design

The aim of a research design is the mapping out of intended study format and process to be followed to facilitate the accurate assessment of course and relation of the study's independent and dependent variables (Creswell, 2013:3).

Good research design should match design to question and construct description with operations and use measures with recognised construct validity. A construct is valid if the measuring instrument actually measures the concept in question and accurately.

Quantitative research, also known as the positivist approach, is used to test hypotheses to help determine relationships between constructs, and their occurrence in a sample further suggests that research must be limited to what we can observe and measure objectively, meaning what exists independently of feelings and opinions of individuals (Welman *et al.*, 2005:6).

Qualitative research is used to gain clarity on the human experience to have an idea of how people make sense of specific issues; this approach further suggests that human experience as object of behavioural research cannot be separated from the person who experienced it (Welman *et al.*, 2005:6).

Descriptive research focuses on the identification of relationships, and on the other hand, exploratory research focuses on identifying the core reasons behind identified relations.

Ideally, exploratory will be preferred, but the time limitation of our study will warrant descriptive research with only quantitative research to be pursued.

A cross-sectional survey design will be followed where a single questionnaire will be compiled from standardised validated questionnaires.

The participants will have the opportunity to answer the questionnaire once and it will be internet based, where Fluid Surveys or Monkey Survey will be used to collect the primary data from selected sample of respondents.

## 1.6.2 Participants

Written Permission was sourced from mining house management to use Rustenburg mine to study middle management to top management.

Mostly in terms of Peterson's grading used by mines, Band 6 to Band 4 of mine management will be studied.

Everyone on band D and up is classified as managers and literacy will be high with all of them having access to the internet and computers on a daily basis.

All employees identified will be requested to participate, ranging from the General Manager to Band C managers in mines and head office, male and female, permanent and contractors, different age groups and race.

The Paterson Job Grading System is a method where jobs are evaluated based on predefined criteria; this system is mainly used in South Africa. This categorises of jobs divided it to six groups that are graded and grouped into two to three sub-grades based on extend level can make decision(Paterson Job Grading, 2006). These factors include level of stress combined with individual tolerance, job scope and number of responsibilities (Paterson Job Grading, 2006) .

## 1.6.3 Paterson overview

The Paterson Job Grading system has been around since the late 1960s and is widely used in the United Kingdom, South Africa and some other countries. The grading system in essence grades a job based on decision-making or freedom to act in the specific role (Paterson Job Grading, 2006), See below:

Band	Kind	Title	Grade	Kind	Title
F	Policy-making	Top management	10	Coordinating	President (MD)
			9	Policy	Vice-president (Ex Dir)
E	Programming	Senior management	8	Coordinating	General manager
			7	Programming	Admin manager
D	Interpretive	Middle management	6	Coordinating	Department manager
			5	Interpretive	Superintendent
C	Routine	Skilled	4	Coordinating	Supervisor
			3	Routine	Technician
B	Automatic	Semi-skilled	2	Coordinating	Charge hand
			1	Automatic	Machinist
A	Defined	Unskilled	0	Defined	Labourer

Table 1.1 Paterson Grading Adapted (Paterson Job Grading, 2006)

## 1.7 Measuring instruments

The three constructs to be measured are organisational restructuring using own developed scale on process used with scale by Marais *et al.* (2013:23), work engagement employee level (UWES) Schaufeli (2013) , psychological safety own developed scale used together with scale by May *et al.* (2004:36).

For the purposes of this study, psychological safety is defined as the freedom to express oneself in work or opinion without fear of failure or victimisation (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009:711).

Work engagement can be defined as an employee's full commitment to work as a result of the happiness and fulfilment that the employee feels towards the job and willingness to give all to his or her best ability to maintain harmony by doing that work or working for that organisation (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010:16).

Organisational restructuring is defined as a major overhaul in the structural properties of the organisation, which consist of a major change in the composition of a firm's assets combined with a major change in its corporate strategy in a bid to improve organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Weir *et al.*, 2005). A more in-depth discussion of these concepts will be explored in Chapter 2.

According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2010:16) Utrecht Work Engagement Scale [UWES] will be adapted to formulate a measuring instrument for work engagement. The UWES was originally developed by Schaufeli and Bakker and had 24 items in the questionnaire. The original version of this instrument consists of 17 items, but the student version consists of nine items, and is scored on a seven-point frequency rating scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (always) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010:16).

To estimate an organisation's shared beliefs with regard to the extent to which its members feel psychologically safe in taking interpersonal risks, speaking openly and discussing failures, Edmondson's (1999) seven-item team psychological safety scale will be adopted. To assess psychological safety at the organisational level, word 'team' will be replaced, as originally used by Edmondson, with the word 'organisation'. This will allow research to preserve the theoretical conceptualisation of the assessed construct (Carmeli & Gittel, 2009:715):

- Sample items will be "If you make a mistake in this organisation, it is often held against you." (reverse)
- Scored item: "It is safe to take a risk in this organisation," and "No-one in this organisation would deliberately act in a way that would undermine my efforts."
- Items were all anchored on a five-point scale ranging from 1¼ strongly disagree to 5¼ strongly agree.
- Questionnaires will be formulated to measure employees' experience of the past restructuring process to assess the relation to work engagement and to assess whether psychological safety moderates the impact of restructuring where scientific questioners published are not available to address the same objectives.

## 1.8 Ethical consideration

Ethical consideration to be undertaken was to apply for permission from the mine where research was undertaken (approval attached in appendix).

Northwest University Ethics Committee approved the study and assigned ethic number: **EMSPBS16/02/16-01/62**

Irrespective of the way research data is collected, the ethical consideration is extremely important and should always be given priority (Welman *et al.*, 2005:184).

## 1.9 Statistical analysis

Electronic data was downloaded from the cross-sectional survey's completed questionnaires retrieved from Monkey Surveys (online survey) and hard copies hand filled at Rustenburg Mine by targeted population and submitted to the North-West University's Statistical Consultation Services to analyse with IBM 2013 SPSS statistics, version 21 program.

Descriptive statistics was used to calculate frequencies, means and standard deviations on the sub-dimensions of organisational restructuring, psychological safety and work engagement.

Pearson's product-moment and Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficients was used to access relationships between the latent variables(Walker & Almond, 2010:154).

Factor analysis will be used as statistical techniques to simplifying complex data and usually applied to correlations of variables as defined by (Kline, 2014:3)

Reliability and validity will be used collectively to assess data as quality measure of instruments as guided by Sarantakos (2012:107);

<b>Validity</b>	<b>Reliability</b>
Is a measure of the quality of measurements.	Is a measure of the quality of measurements.
Tests the quality of indicators and research instruments.	Tests the quality of indicators and research instruments.
Measures relevance, precision and accuracy.	Measures objectivity, stability, consistency and precision.
Tests the ability to produce findings that are in agreement with theoretical or conceptual values.	Tests consistency, i.e. the ability to produce the same findings every time the procedure is repeated.
Asks: Does the instrument measure what it is supposed to measure?	Asks: Does the instrument produce the same results every time it is employed?

*Table 1.2: Reliability and validity*

Cronbach alpha coefficient measuring instrument will be used to measure reliability of the study measuring Instrument.

Depending on data sufficiency, predictive modelling was attempted using linear regression. This will enable us to make recommendations regarding the relationship between organisational restructuring, psychological safety and work engagement (employee level).

### **1.10 Limitations or anticipated problems**

The study questionnaires required employees in Paterson's C to F bands at head office and Rustenburg mine to complete the questionnaires.

The 250 employees targeted were literate and have access to the internet and computers or can read , and to my knowledge, everyone who is in Paterson's C to F band working at head office or Paterson's C to F at the mines is literate and has daily access to computers and the internet.

The language used was English and kept at basic level to facilitate easy understanding.

The use of online surveys such as Monkey Survey and the length of questionnaire to cover research for three variables may result in a low response rate from employees at mines and head office, who may claim that they do not have time to complete the survey or the spoiled completion of the survey for the sake of completion.

The possibility of the mine or head office's refusal to complete the questionnaires.

The research covers one mine and does not provide the view of the whole company's operations of Anglo American Platinum or platinum belt as a whole.

Selective questions answering or incomplete questionnaires.

This will negatively affect intended statistical analysis, empirical study, testing and informed recommendations to mines.

## 1.11 Chapter division

The chapters in this mini-dissertation are presented as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement and Research Methodology

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 3: Methods

Chapter 4: Empirical results and findings

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

## 1.12 Chapter summary

Chapter 1 was written to detail the background of the study to be conducted and to provide the problem statement.

The research's primary and secondary objectives were detailed and explained.

The research methodology was explained in detail under following headings:

- Literature study
- Empirical study
- Research design
- Participants
- Measuring instruments
- Statistical analysis

The limitations of research and the layout of the following chapters were explained.

The next chapter will be a consultation of different authors' work to formulate a comprehensive review on the constructs of organisational restructuring, work engagement and psychological safety.



# **CHAPTER 2**

## **Literature Review**

## 2.1. Introduction

The purpose of the literature review is to get insight from other research on the identified constructs and associated subjects, as this will help in compiling the necessary background for the proposed study. A comprehensive literature review on the constructs of work engagement, organisational restructuring and psychological safety will follow.

The focus is to explore whether organisational restructuring has an influence on work engagement and whether psychological safety moderates the influence.

## 2.2. Psychological safety

Edmondson and Kahn are still regarded as psychological safety experts.

### 2.2.1. Brief history of psychological safety

According to (Edmondson & Lei, 2014:24-25), psychological safety originates in early discussions of what it takes to produce organisational change. In 1965, MIT professors Edgar Schein and Warren Bennis argued that psychological safety was essential to allow people to feel secure and capable of changing their behaviour in response to shifting organisational challenges. Schein (1993) later argued that psychological safety helps people overcome the defensiveness, or learning anxiety, that occurs when they are presented with data that contradict their expectations or hopes. With psychological safety, he reasoned, individuals are free to focus on collective goals and problem prevention rather than on self-protection.

Edmondson and Lei (2014:24-25) Further explain that rejuvenated research on psychological safety with thoughtful qualitative studies on summer camp counsellors and members of an architecture firm who showed how psychological safety enables personal engagement at work.

Kahn (1990:694) proposed that psychological safety affects individuals' willingness to "employ or express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances," rather than disengage or "withdraw and defend their personal selves" (Edmondson & Lei, 2014:25)

Kahn further argued that people are more likely to believe they will be given the benefit of the doubt – a defining characteristic of psychological safety – when relationships within a given group are characterised by trust and respect (Edmondson & Lei, 2014:25).

Since that time, several other researchers have explored psychological safety in work settings and defined it as follows:

According to Edmondson (2004:4), psychological safety is defined as individuals' perceptions about the consequences of interpersonal risks in their work environment. This includes beliefs always taken for granted such as how others will react or respond when one exposes oneself to risks such as asking questions, requesting feedback, highlighting mistakes or tabling new ideas without fear of victimisation.

According to Edmondson (2004:4) in research by Kahn (1990:708), psychological safety was defined as feeling free to express and employ oneself without fear of negative consequences to one's career, status or the self-image one wants to portray.

According to Detert and Burris (2007:872), "psychological safety is a belief that mediates the relationship between the external stimuli provided by leader behaviours and the decision by subordinates to speak up or remain silent".

(Edmondson & Lei, 2014:24) explain that for decades psychological safety analysis has showed that it facilitates the willing contribution of ideas and actions to a shared enterprise. It also helps to explain why employees share information and knowledge, speak up with suggestions for organisational improvements and take initiative to develop new products and services.

Positive interpersonal climate associated with psychological safety, which is conducive to learning and performance under uncertainty, does not emerge naturally. This is evident in situations where employees are embedded in an organisation with a strong culture. Their perceptions of feeling safe to speak up, ask for help or provide feedback tend to vary from different business units, and from team to team (Edmondson & Lei, 2014:39).

Management styles tend to pre-empt consequences for taking interpersonal risk of being open to say or experiment without fear. The more the manager of a business unit or department is

approachable, open for ideas and others' opinion without using it against employees, the better (Edmondson & Lei, 2014:39).

## 2.4 The antecedents of psychological safety

There are five factors that may give rise to employees' teams having psychological safety (Edmondson, 2004:13).

### 2.4.1. Leader behaviour

Subordinates do not tend to find it easier to confide in peers and outsiders than to their immediate bosses. Leaders who show supportive behaviour tend to have a positive effect on employees' creativity as a form of self-expression. This, in turn, tends to facilitate psychological safety in the organisational environment.

Leader behaviour influences perceptions of appropriate and safe behaviour among employees. The benefits of this include, among other things, employees' freedom to express themselves because there is a feeling of the leader being available, being approachable, inviting input and feedback, modelling openness and being fallible

- The leader is accessible when he/she can avail him/herself, and subordinates feel they are approachable and see no barriers that prohibit discussions.
- The leader invites input or is open to free discussions, which encourages the likelihood of the team's psychological safety.

Modelling openness by the fallibility-leader is associated with power in the organisation and his/her behaviour will likely set precedence of perceived acceptable behaviour among employees because of the leader's power in the organisation (Edmondson, 2004:14).

According to Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009:1276), leaders serve as important filters to remove the constraints that often discourage followers from expressing their concerns and other ideas. This is evident in environments characterised by high psychological safety. Leaders also actively communicate the importance of such behaviour and guarantee that it will not have negative repercussions for the individual or the work unit as a whole.

### 2.4.2. Trusting and interpersonal relationships

Edmondson further explains that employees should be able to trust one another to feel psychologically safe. When employees have interpersonal relationships, they will trust each other and support each other. This will then promote psychological safety and will aid freedom to share without fear of destructive criticism and harming reputation, trust and respect and will promote employees' psychological safety (Edmondson, 2004:17).

Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009:1275-1276) explain that individuals who are empowered with authority in an organisation must practise information sharing and provide a rationale for the benefits of ethical behaviour. Interpersonal trust among followers will increase and this occurs through both role modelling and through reassurance to subordinates that individual rent seeking, social undermining and other behaviours that reduce trust among employees will not be tolerated (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009:1276).

Walumbwa *et al.* further explain that when followers believe leadership ability, benevolence, and integrity, which are key foundations of employee trust, then followers tend to be more comfortable about engaging in interpersonal risk taking because they trust that the leader will not unfairly punish them when risk-taking leads to an unfavourable outcome (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009:1276).

### 2.4.3. Practise fields

Organisations' leadership should form simulation environments that help employees to fully understand the harmful consequences of mistakes, and failures are removed or suspended, and this will be more effective if they are treated as offline meetings or simulations. This will teach employees that learning is important and getting it right the first time is understood to not always be possible, meaning that it is understandable to fail sometimes and it will not be held against you. Practise fields promote psychological safety (Edmondson, 2004:18).

### 2.4.4. Organisational context support

When information or resources are freely available, this will promote psychological safety. When all employees feel equal this will reduce insecurities and defensiveness due to employees feeling other employees have access to more resources than what they have at their disposal within the organisation, and this also promotes employees psychological safety (Edmondson, 2004:20).

#### 2.4.5. Emergent group dynamics

According to Edmondson, people tend to assume unconsciously unconfirmed roles like assuming one is in an authoritative role. The psychological safety experience of any employee will depend on whether an employee assumes or perceives his or her character stands in an informal group play environment. Typically, in the working environment, an employee's psychological safety is influenced by informal dynamics in the working environment (Edmondson, 2004:21)

Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009:1279) Further explain that individuals who experience a high level of psychological safety have no risk to believe there is risk to their personal welfare. This facilitates engaging in open free behaviour

In general, high-status individuals or highly opinionated individuals assume that their voice is valued and they are more likely to be asked for their opinion than those with low status (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006:945)

Naturally, they are used to having their opinions sought – often in formal capacities – and they learn to offer them freely, which explains why they do not perceive the same level of interpersonal risk associated with self-expression experienced by those with low status (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006:945-946).

Qualitative evidence of this difference in psychological safety according to status was found in early 90's by Kahn's study of an architectural firm and a summer camp; informants described their interactions with those positioned higher in the hierarchy as more stifling and threatening than their interactions with peers. The lower status individuals in Kahn's study reported a lack of confidence that higher status individuals would not embarrass or reject them for sharing contradictory thoughts (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006:945-946).

Psychological safety can be summarised as an environment where people are less likely to focus their energy on self-protection when faced with a task that requires them to move out of their comfort zones, but encourages expression of freedom through work or opinions that aid productive discussion that enables early prevention of problems and the accomplishment of shared goals because employees know that they are in this together and there is no need for self-protection.

Other scholars define psychological safety as follows:

Saks (2006:605) Explains that an important aspect of safety originates from the amount of care and support employees perceive to be provided by their organisation as well as their direct supervisor. This is further explained in Kahn's (1992) as cited by Saks (2006:605) who defined psychological safety as involving a sense of being able to show and employ the self without negative consequences. Kahn (as cited by Saks, 2006) also found that supportive and trusting interpersonal relationships as well as supportive management promoted psychological safety.

Psychological safety promotes a free environment where employees know that making mistakes does not lead to rejection. Team experiences, efforts, appreciation and interest are expressed as opposed to highlighting mistakes and reprimanding.

Empirical research by (May *et al.*, 2004) shows that psychological safety promotes work engagement; furthermore, a work environment dominated by psychological safety plays an important role for individuals to feel secure and can play a pivotal role in changing employees' behaviour.

According to Edmondson and Lei (2014:24), psychological safety's central theme has always been that it facilitates the willing contribution of ideas and actions to a shared enterprise, speaks up suggestions for organisational improvements and takes initiative to develop new products and services.

Psychological safety has been researched at three levels: Firstly, psychological safety as an individual-level phenomenon, with data on experiences and outcomes attributable to individuals (Edmondson & Lei, 2014:26); secondly, psychological safety as an organisational-level phenomenon and measured as an average of interpersonal-climate experiences within an organisation (Edmondson & Lei, 2014:26); and thirdly psychological safety at the group level of analysis, which is the largest and most active of the three streams with the following results (Edmondson & Lei, 2014:26):

## **2.5 Psychological safety at individual level**

In role behaviour Edmondson and Lei (2014:26) as well as several other have conducted research that has examined relationships between individuals' perceived psychological safety and engagement in their work. A qualitative study by (Kahn, 1990) examined conditions that

have enabled people to personally engage or disengage at work; furthermore (Kark & Carmeli, 2009).argued that psychological safety induces feelings of vitality, which affect an individual's involvement in creative work. Gong *et al.* (2012) proposed that proactive employees seek information in exchanges with others; information exchange, in turn, fosters trusting relationships that provide psychological safety for employees' creative endeavours. (Siemsen *et al.*, 2009) argued that greater confidence reduces the strength of the relationship between psychological safety and knowledge sharing (Edmondson & Lei, 2014:26) .

Speaking up and voice, according to Edmondson and Lei (2014:27), are defined as upward directed, promoting verbal communication (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Premeaux & Bedeian, 2003). While challenging the status quo and suggesting improvement are important, studies have proven that people are proactive and avoid confrontational environments. This has prompted many researches to rather examine proactive behaviour and most of these studies have found that psychological safety mediates between antecedent variables and employee voice behaviour. Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009) Used a multilevel model in a study and found that ethical leadership influenced follower voice behaviour, a relationship that was partially mediated by followers' perceptions of psychological safety. Liang and colleagues (2012) examined psychological safety, obligation for constructive change, and organisation-based self-esteem as three unique, interacting variables to predict supervisory reports of promotive and prohibitive voice and found psychological safety to be strongly related to prohibitive voice (Edmondson & Lei, 2014:27).

## 2.6 Organisational level

Organisational performance: Edmondson and Lei (2014:28), based on research by Collins and Smith (2006) suggest that climates of trust, cooperation and shared codes were all significantly related to firm performance, and these relationships were partially mediated by the level of exchanges and combination of ideas and knowledge among knowledge workers. A survey by (Baer & Frese, 2003) linked psychological safety to firm performance, with process innovations as a mediating variable.

Organisational learning: Edmondson and Lei (2014:28), based on a study by Carmeli (2007) and Carmeli and Gittell (2009)) suggest that psychological safety mediated the relationship between failure-based learning and high-quality relationships.Cataldo *et al.* (2009) Related



organisational context and psychological safety to organisational change, arguing that autonomy and structure must be balanced during a change process to enable flexibility while maintaining employee cohesion.

## 2.7 Group level

Psychological safety as an antecedent: The research by Edmondson (1996; 1999) and Edmondson (2002; 2003) suggests that psychological safety is essentially a group-level phenomenon. This can be attributed to local manager or supervisor behaviours, which convey varying messages about the consequences of taking the interpersonal risks associated with behaviours such as admitting error, asking for help, or speaking up with ideas(Edmondson & Lei, 2014:32).

Psychological safety as a mediator: Studies by Faraj and Yan (2009) proposed that boundary work (boundary spanning, boundary buffering and boundary reinforcement) predicts psychological safety, which promotes better performance, with the relationship between psychological safety and performance moderated by task uncertainty pertaining to resource scarcity, (Edmondson, 1999) study further confirmed psychological safety mediates between organisational factors and team learning(Edmondson & Lei, 2014:32).

Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) study showed that role-based status in healthcare teams was positively associated with psychological safety, which, in turn, predicted involvement in learning and quality improvement activities and further showed that leadership inclusiveness moderated (reduced) the effect of status on psychological safety(Edmondson & Lei, 2014:32).

(Bunderson & Boumgarden, 2010) study found that team structure encouraged internal and external team learning behaviour by promoting psychological safety; team structure also moderated the relationship between organisational structure and autonomy when enabling learning(Edmondson & Lei, 2014:32).

(Chandrasekaran & Mishra, 2012) showed that greater team autonomy was associated with greater psychological safety. Schaubroeck *et al.* (2011); Hirak *et al.* (2012) found that leader behaviour influenced trust, leading to potency, psychological safety and team performance. (Roussin, 2008:225) argued that leaders who use exploratory discussion sessions among

team members and leaders promoted trust, psychological safety and team performance (Edmondson & Lei, 2014:32).

With regard to psychological safety as an antecedent,(Edmondson, 1999) states that “psychological safety has been shown to correlate with performance, with team learning behaviours usually mediating the relationship”.(Huang *et al.*, 2008) suggest that psychological safety promotes team performance, with team learning mediating the relationship, and supports the idea that ability to communicate openly through experimentation, discussion, and decision-making is a determinant of successful team performance. Tucker *et al.* (2007) research further confirmed that psychological safety was associated with obtaining insight to understand the how part of things, which mediated the relationship between psychological safety and the implementation of success.Choo *et al.* (2007) research furthermore found that psychological safety influenced knowledge created, but not learning behaviours, in turn, affecting quality improvement.Mu and Gnyawali (2003) Study further argues that task conflict negatively affected synergistic knowledge development and that psychological safety moderated these negative effects. Tjosvold *et al.* (2004) study found that cooperation within a team promotes a problem-solving orientation, which, in turn, allows team members and leaders to discuss errors and learn from mistakes (Edmondson & Lei, 2014:30).

Psychological safety as an outcome: The study by (Edmondson & Mogelof, 2006) found that psychological safety differed significantly across teams within the same organisation and also differed across organisations, and the only personality variable associated with psychological safety and neuroticism was only relevant variable to psychological safety. Individuals with higher neuroticism reported lower psychological safety.

Psychological safety as a moderator: Martins *et al.*'s (2013) study cited by Edmondson and Lei (2014:34) explains that during times when a team's psychological safety was low, the relationship between expertise diversity and team performance was negative, suggesting the harmful effect of lower psychological safety with high expertise diversity. Leroy and colleagues' (2012 ) study as cited by Edmondson and Lei (2014:34) further explains the relationship between team priority and safety, and the number of errors was stronger for higher levels of team psychological safety, suggesting that adherence to safety procedures reflects a genuine concern for safety when employees feel safe to speak up about errors. Bradley *et al.* (2012) cited by Edmondson and Lei (2014:34) further clarify that safety helps exploit task conflict to

improve team performance, enabling creative ideas and critical discussion, without embarrassment or excessive personal conflict between team members .

Boundary conditions of psychological safety: According to(Edmondson & Lei, 2014:35) , psychological safety alone may not lead to team learning and performance, but rather requires the presence of conditions that call for learning and communication. Bozionelos' (2011) study cited by Edmondson and Lei (2014:35) found that psychological safety promoted exploratory and exploitative learning and team performance, an effect that was enhanced by task conflict. (Edmondson, 2004) further suggested that psychological safety varies on team contextual characteristics, which consist of size, presence and complexity. Moreover, psychological safety may not help teams learn when certain conditions supporting teamwork, such as task interdependence, are missing (Edmondson & Lei, 2014:35).

Psychological safety can be defined as a feeling of empowerment and freedom to freely express ones views with no fear of being victimised or prejudiced, which gives confidence that the environment in which one operates offers the opportunity to express one's views and initiatives while bearing in mind there is the possibility to fail, which is treated as learning.

According to Rothmann and Rothmann Jr (2010:2), "Psychological safety entails feeling able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career. A safe environment creates understanding of boundaries of acceptable behaviours amongst employees. Psychological safety might lead to engagement, because it reflects one's belief that persons can employ themselves without fear of negative consequences"(Rothmann & Rothmann Jr, 2010:2).

## **2.8 Work engagement**

Rothman, Saks, Khann and Schaufeli are still regarded as work engagement experts.

Engagement in laymen terms refer to involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, absorption, focused effort, zeal, dedication and energy. The (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2016) describes the state of being engaged as "emotional involvement or commitment" and as "being in gear" (Schaufeli, 2013:1).

According to Schaufeli (2013:1), employee engagement and work engagement are usually used interchangeably; however, their meaning might differ: “Work engagement refers to the relationship of the employee with his or her work, whereas employee engagement may also include the relationship with the organisation.”

Engagement can be defined “as a blend of three existing concepts (1) job satisfaction; (2) commitment to the organisation; and (3) extra-role behaviour, i.e. discretionary effort to go beyond the job description ” (Schaufeli, 2013:5).

According to Rothmann and Rothmann Jr (2010:1) Happiness is regarded as important goal of psychology, engagement has three routes to happiness, alongside pleasure and meaning. Engagement within happiness context , involves individuals focus to maximise gratification by deploying their strengths (Rothmann & Rothmann Jr, 2010:1).

To stay competitive globally employees need to be emotionally and cognitively committed to their work, customers and company. Interest in engagement stem from company need to sweat their employees to get maximum output from them (Rothmann & Rothmann Jr, 2010:1).

According to Rothmann and Rothmann Jr (2010:1-2) “Employee engagement predicts positive organisational outcomes, including productivity, job satisfaction, motivation, commitment, low turnover intention, customer satisfaction, return on assets, profits and shareholder value”.

The study attempts to assess employee engagement post-restructuring to see whether they are still emotionally and cognitively committed to their company and their work

Rothmann and Rothmann Jr (2010:2) State that “employees who are engaged put much effort into their work because they identify with it”.

Employee engagement is defined by (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002) as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption”.

Vigour is explained as high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, and the willingness to invest effort in one’s work, while dedication is “deriving a sense of significance from one’s work, by feeling enthusiastic and proud about one’s job, and by feeling inspired and challenged by it” (Rothmann & Rothmann Jr, 2010:2). Absorption is “characterized by being totally and happily immersed in one’s work and having difficulty detaching oneself from it” (Rothmann & Rothmann Jr, 2010:2).

According to Kahn (1990) and Schaufeli *et al.* (2002) “employee engagement comprises three dimensions, namely a physical component (being physically involved in a task and showing vigour and a positive affective state), a cognitive component (being alert at work and experiencing absorption and involvement), and an emotional component (being connected to one’s job/others while working, and showing dedication and commitment)” (Rothmann & Rothmann Jr, 2010:2).

Engagement is important because it helps managers to understand the key factors central to workers’ lack of commitment and motivation being alienation or disengagement (May *et al.*, 2004:13).

Engagement is important due to its distinctive addressing of job-related attitudes, job behaviours and behavioural intentions, as well as certain aspects of employee health and well-being and personality:

- **Job-related attitudes:** Engagement is positively related to work-related attitudes such as job satisfaction, job involvement and organisational commitment; it nevertheless seems to be a distinct concept that is more strongly related to job performance(Schaufeli, 2013:9-14).
- **Job behaviour and behavioural intentions:** The more resourceful the job, the higher the levels of engagement will be, and the more personal initiative is shown by employees(Schaufeli, 2013:9-14).
- **Health and well-being:** “Employees who experience mainly negative emotions may suffer from burnout, boredom or workaholism, whereas employees who experience mainly positive emotions may feel satisfied or engaged. In addition, employees may either feel activated, as in workaholism and engagement, or deactivated as in burnout, boredom and satisfaction”(Schaufeli, 2013:9-14).
- **Personality:** “Engagement is a psychological state rather than a dispositional trait”(Schaufeli, 2013:9-14).

I shall now define work engagement and its importance to individual or work performance.

Work engagement can be defined as a construct that is made up of a person's cognitive, behavioural and emotional mix, which is associated with individual role performance (Saks, 2006:602).

According to Saks (2006:602), on research conducted (Kahn, 1990) Kahn (1990), there are three psychological conditions that are associated with engagement or disengagement at work, i.e. meaningfulness, safety and availability, which simply means workers were more engaged at work in situations that offered them more psychological meaningfulness and psychological safety, and when they were more psychologically available .

Saks (2006:602) Further explains the only study to empirically test (Kahn, 1990) model was by May *et al.* (2004) who found that meaningfulness, safety and availability were significantly related to engagement. The study also found that job enrichment and role fit were positive predictors of meaningfulness; rewarding co-worker and supportive supervisor relations were positive predictors of safety, while adherence to co-worker norms and self-consciousness were negative predictors; and resources available were a positive predictor of psychological availability, while participation in outside activities was a negative predictor.

Saks (2006:603), from literature on burnout, defines job engagement as associated with a sustainable workload, feelings of choice and control, appropriate recognition and reward, a supportive work community, fairness and justice, and meaningful and valued work. Engagement is expected to mediate the link between the abovementioned six work-life factors and various work outcomes.

Engagement was defined by (Rich *et al.*, 2010) as the active full performance of a person's cognitive, emotional and physical energies (Shuck & Herd, 2012:5). There are three dimensions to engagement that highlight the motivational element, which are defined as follows:

- **Cognitive engagement** refers to employees' interpretation of whether their work is meaningful, safe (physically, emotionally and psychologically), and whether they have adequate resources (tangible and intangible) to complete their work. At the heart of cognitive engagement is the answer to the question "does it matter?", as explained by (Kahn, 2010) Employees express themselves when they feel like they can "make a difference, change minds and directions, add value" or join something larger than

themselves (Shuck & Herd, 2012:6). According to Shuck and Reio (2013:47), “cognitively engaged employees would answer positively to questions such as “The work I do makes a contribution to the organisation”, “I feel safe at work; no one will make fun of me here,” and “I have the resources to do my job at the level expected of me””.

- **Emotional engagement** stems from the investment and willingness of an employee to involve personal resources. This will be motivated by the emotional bond created when employees, on a very personal level, have made the decision to cognitively engage and express willingness to give of themselves and identify emotionally with a given task; therefore, employees who are emotionally engaged with their organisation have “a sense of belonging and identification that increases involvement in the organisation’s activities” (Rhoades *et al.*, 2001:825). Emotional engagement stems from beliefs that determine how behavioural engagement is formed, influenced and directed outward (Shuck & Herd, 2012:6). Shuck and Reio (2013:47) State that “employees who are emotionally engaged in their work answer affirmatively to questions such as “I feel a strong sense of belonging and identify with my organisation” and “I am proud to work to work here.””
- **Behavioural engagement** is a natural reaction or gesture towards a positive cognitive appraisal and a willingness to invest personal resources. This is also known as the physical demonstration of cognitive and emotional engagement. Behavioural engagement can be understood as what we actually observe as employees’ actions. Engaged employees bring their full selves to work and allow “the full range of senses to inform their work” (Shuck & Herd, 2012:6). Shuck and Reio (2013:47) State that “employees who are behaviourally engaged answer positively to questions such as “When I work, I really push myself beyond what is expected of me” and “I work harder than is expected to help my organisation be successful.”

According to Marais *et al.* (2013:13), engagement is believed to be a two-way relationship between the employer and employees that creates positive organisational performance (Markos & Sridevi, 2010) and also refers to the emotional, rational and motivational connection that people have with their organisation (Davenport & Harding, 2010)

Marais *et al.* (2013:13) Research findings have made scholars to believe that that organisations with high levels of employee engagement have positive organisational outcomes (Kular *et al.*, 2008; Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Marais *et al.* (2013:14) believe that employees who are engaged are emotionally attached, highly involved in their jobs, show great enthusiasm and are willing to go the extra mile (Markos & Sridevi, 2010) . (Fernandez, 2007) argues that employee satisfaction is not the same as employee engagement, because managers cannot necessarily rely on employee satisfaction to help them retain the best and the brightest people.

Robinson *et al.* (2004) Describe employee engagement as a positive attitude towards the organisation and its values, awareness of the business context, and a willingness to coordinate with colleagues to improve performance for the benefit of the organisation. This is, however, achieved by the organisation's nurturing of engagement to strengthen the two-way relationship between employer and employee (Marais *et al.*, 2013:14).

According to the Global Workforce Study (Davenport & Harding, 2010), "employees' engagement levels can be based on their responses to questions that measure their connections to the organisation across three dimensions "(Marais *et al.*, 2013:14):

- Rational: How well employees understand their roles and responsibilities (the 'thinking' part of the equation);
- Emotional: How much passion and energy they bring to their work (the 'feeling' part of the equation)
- Motivational: How well they perform in their roles (the 'acting' part of the equation).

Employee engagement in an organisation can be affected by many factors, as described by (Lockwood 2007), who explains that factors range from workplace culture, organisational communication, trust, respect, leadership and company reputation (Marais *et al.*, 2013:14).

Work engagement has been researched as mediator by different scholars and the results were as follows:

Xanthopoulou *et al.* (2008) research study to test whether fluctuations in colleague support as a typical job resource on a daily basis predict day-to-day levels of job performance through work engagement and self-efficacy has found that work engagement partially mediated the relationship between self-efficacy and in-role performance and fully mediated the relationship



between self-efficacy and extra-role performance, and colleague support had an indirect impact on in-role performance through work engagement (Kim *et al.*, 2012:10).

Chughtai and Buckley (2009) investigated the mediating role of work engagement on the relationship between trust in school principals and teachers' performance. Participants' findings found that work engagement fully mediated the relationship between trust in the school principal and teachers' in-role performance and partially mediated the relationship between trust in the school principal and organisational citizenship behaviour (Kim *et al.*, 2012:10).

Xanthopoulou *et al.* (2009) as cited by Kim *et al.* (2012:11) adapted financial performance using objective data and conducted a study to investigate how daily variations in job and personal resources were related to work engagement and financial (job) performance. The results found that day-level work engagement partially mediated the relationship between day-level coaching and daily financial performance and also that there was a positive lagged effect of coaching on work engagement and financial returns on a daily basis (Kim *et al.*, 2012:11).

Rich *et al.* (2010) conducted a study to examine the role of engagement in explaining relationships among organisational factors, individual characteristics, and two job performance dimensions. The results found that work engagement mediated relationships between value congruence, perceived organisational support, core self-evaluations and two dimensions of job performance (Kim *et al.*, 2012:11).

Salanova *et al.* (2011) examined the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between transformational leadership of supervisors and self-efficacy and extra-role performance. The findings suggest that work engagement fully mediated the impact of transformational leadership and self-efficacy on extra-role performance (Kim *et al.*, 2012:12).

Leung *et al.* (2011) investigated the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between workplace ostracism and service performance. The study found that the relationship between workplace ostracism and service performance was mediated by work engagement (Kim *et al.*, 2012:12).

(Karatepe, 2011) examined the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between procedural justice and job outcomes. The results found that work engagement fully mediated

the relationship between procedural justice and job performance and extra-role customer service (Kim *et al.*, 2012:12).

(Karatepe & Ngeche, 2012) examined the mediating role of job embeddedness in the relationship between work engagement and job outcomes, including job performance, and indicated that the relationship between work engagement and job performance was partially mediated by job embeddedness (Kim *et al.*, 2012:13).

Kim *et al.* (2012:13) found that work engagement mediates the relationship between performance and other factors. The UWES scale of work engagement was used consistently as the preferred questionnaire for work engagement, which emphasises its use as preferred questionnaire to get results for any study on work engagement association or relation with any other factors.

Studies (both internationally and in South Africa) have shown that engagement can be measured in a valid and reliable way using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Rothmann & Rothmann Jr, 2010:2). To date, most academic research on engagement has made use of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), a brief, valid and reliable questionnaire that is based on the definition of work engagement as a combination of vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli, 2013:6).

(Perrin, 2007) concludes that “engagement is the extent to which employees “go the extra mile” and put unrestricted effort into their work – contributing more of their energy, creativity and passion on the job” (Marais *et al.*, 2013:14).

## **2.9 Organisational outcomes of engagement**

There are three kinds of approaches to examine the organisational outcomes of engagement: Firstly, engagement levels of individual employees to individual outcomes that are relevant to organisations, e.g. job performance, sickness and absence; secondly, average engagement levels of business units or entire organisations to business level outcomes, such as profit and productivity, and finally, employee engagement levels to particular organisational outcomes (Schaufeli, 2013:21).

According to Schaufeli (2013:21), academic studies make a strong case that work engagement leads to positive outcomes for the organisation, both at individual level and at team level; however, circumstantial evidence exists that suggests that work engagement might be related to business success; this, however, is not conclusive and further research needs to be conducted to substantiate this.

## 2.10 Restructuring

Companies are facing fierce competition in order to survive in a competitive global economy and are consequently reliant on their ability to satisfy customer or global market needs without compromising quality, flexibility, innovation and organisational responsibility through the commitment and co-operation of employees (Olivier, 2006:v).

The market's volatility forces organisations to attempt to move towards flexibility by expanding capacity or shrinking their capacity, accompanied by job losses and job insecurity (Olivier, 2006:v).

As a result, many organisations have been going through restructuring processes to streamline business as best they can to secure sustainability. The reality is that every organisation, when it goes through financial difficulties, opts for restructuring in some or other form in order to redefine and realign to its operation strategy. This often results in seemingly endless processes of restructuring, consultations and headcount reduction proposals, employee benefits restructuring, positions and teams dismantling and so on, in order to come up with new structures that are aligned with the new strategy (Olivier, 2006:v; Olivier & Rothmann, 2007:49).

Marais *et al.* (2013:11) State that the ever-changing business environment and competitive pressures to stay afloat require many companies to restructure themselves from rigid bureaucracies to leaner, more flexible designs. Companies are also forced to re-examine their human resource management (HRM) practices to ensure organisational success (Brewster *et al.*, 2005). According to Marais *et al.* (2013:11), the more competitive markets force greater demands on cost control for each organisation or business to implement cost-cutting through downsizing, reorganising divisions, streamlining operations, and closing down unprofitable divisions to stay efficiently competitive. Nag and Pathak (2009) are of the opinion that restructuring is a multidimensional process. This is an on-going process that includes coming up with projects that realise improvements in efficiency and management, a reduction in staff

and wages, cleaning lazy balance sheet and enhanced marketing efforts, all with the expectation of higher profitability. Corporate restructuring is achieved by changing how things are done and in any organisation these changes include corporate restructuring, including financial structuring and the optimisation of resources (Marais *et al.*, 2013:11).

Restructuring comes with a great deal of uncertainty, Marks (2007) cited by Marais *et al.* (2013:14) explains the importance of engaging employees during restructuring to understand the business strategy and the support of organisational transitions becomes critical, as this is where employees typically experience a lack of control over their future. De Jong and Elfring (2010) as cited by Edmondson and Lei (2014:30) conclude that trust positively influenced team effort and team monitoring, leading to team effectiveness .

All these factors are applicable to mines and the corporate office under investigation.

## **2.11 Chapter Summary**

Chapter reviewed literature under the following: headings Psychological safety, work engagement and organisational restructuring.

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **Methods**

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives guidance on research practices followed in the data collection process and interpretation of research statistics.

## 3.2 Research approach and design

This research study is a cross-sectional study that utilises a quantitative research approach to address research objectives. This study includes a total of 266 participants. Participants were recruited from Rustenburg mine complex, under different job grades including the C-band, D-band, E-band and F-band. Men and women from various ethnicities (black, white, Asian and coloured) were included in this study.

## 3.3 Materials and methods

### 3.3.1 Recruitment

A permission letter (Appendix A) including the aim of the study and content of the questionnaires were sent to the general manager and human resources head of human development to conduct research at the Rustenburg mine complex. Once permission was acquired, questionnaires (Appendix B) were handed to the general manager of Rustenburg mine complex together with letters (Appendix A) used to guarantee the confidentiality and anonymity of participants' information. The Rustenburg Mine complex general manager distributed questionnaires among employees to independently complete them on their own. Completed questionnaires were collected from the mine after a period of two weeks.

3.3.2 The following ethical considerations quoted directly from (Babbie, 2010:65) were applied in this study

- Participation should be voluntary and not compulsory;
- The research should not injure or harm any of the participants – whether physically or emotionally;
- The protection of participants' identity, i.e. anonymity and confidentiality;
- There must be no deception by the researcher during the research process. If so, proper debriefing must be executed; and
- Research should be analysed and reported – even the shortcomings and mistakes.

To adhere to the above ethical considerations, participants were informed of their voluntary participation and they were provided with clarity on the research. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality throughout the process, the questionnaires of respondents were identified with a unique participant number and not the participants' names. The questionnaire handed to the participants included an introductory letter confirming anonymity and confidentiality of results as well as contact details of the researcher should participants have any queries.

The participants participated freely with no exposure to risk or harm from research method employed.

## 3.4 Measuring instruments

### 3.4.1 Questionnaires

A self-administered questionnaire, which consisted of a biographical section and selected questions from existing measuring instruments, was used to collect data. The instruments utilised in this questionnaire included the Organisational Restructuring (5 items) (Marais *et al.*, 2013:23), Organisational Restructuring(8 items) (author), Psychological Safety (3 items) (May *et al.*, 2004:36), Psychological Safety (13 items) (author) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Survey (UWES) (9 items ) (Schaufeli, 2013) The measurement instruments are outlined below:

#### 3.4.1.1 Organisational Restructuring

**(Marais *et al.*, 2013:33)** Organisational Restructuring was measured with the measuring instrument developed by Marais *et al.* (2013) and comprises five (5) items. An example of one such item is: "Restructuring affected each department in a fair way".

These items make use of the Likert response scale, ranging from "1" (strongly disagree) to "6" (*strongly agree*). (Babbie, 2010:179) states that the value of a Likert scale lies in the "unambiguous ordinality of response categories".

#### 3.4.1.2 Organisational restructuring (author)

This measuring instrument implemented by the author aimed to understand how employees experienced organisational restructuring and whether they thought it was open and transparent. These items make use of the Likert-format scale, ranging from “1” (strongly agree) to “5” (strongly disagree). An example item is: “Restructuring process was not open and transparent”.

#### 3.4.1.3 Psychological safety (May *et al.*, 2004:36)

Psychological safety was measured with the measuring instrument developed by May *et al.* (2004:23) with Cronbach alpha of 0.71, which set reliability and consistently above accepted standards and comprises three (3) items including:

- I am not afraid to be myself at work.
- I am afraid to express my opinions at work. (r).
- There is a threatening environment at work. (r).

These items make use of the Likert-format scale, ranging from “1” (strongly disagree) to “5” (strongly agree).

#### 3.4.1.4 Psychological safety (author)

This measuring instrument implemented by the author aimed to investigate whether employees felt free to express themselves at work without fear of reprisal. These items make use of the Likert-format scale, ranging from “1” (strongly agree) to “5” (strongly disagree). An example item is: “I am not afraid to make mistakes at work and learn from my mistakes.”

#### 3.4.1.5 Utrecht Work Engagement Survey

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) is a measuring instrument widely used in measuring engagement, developed by Schaufeli *et al.* (2006:2). The UWES is a self-report questionnaire that includes the three aspects of work engagement: vigour, dedication and absorption. UWES comprises nine (9) items including: “At my work, I feel bursting with energy” (Vigour, item 1).



(Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003:14) established a Cronbach alpha of 0.86, which indicated reliability consistently above accepted standards. The results from psychometric analysis of the UWES indicate the following:

- Factoral validity: the three-factor structure of the UWES is superior to the one-factor model;
- Inter-correlations: correlations between the three scales exceed 0.65 and correlations between the latent variables range from 0.80 to 0.90;
- Internal consistency: values of Cronbach alphas are equal to or exceed the value of 0.70.

I used shortened version of UWES scale due to time constraints and limit scale to be consisted with other scales to avoid confusion to respondents.

### **3.5 Statistical analyses**

Statistical analyses were performed using the IBM® SPSS®, Version 23 software (IBM Corporation, Armonk, New York) with assistance from an independent statistician. All variables were tested for normality by visual inspection of histograms and also reviewing the coefficients of skewness and kurtosis.

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted in order to determine the factor structure of the instruments. Factor analysis may be defined as “statistical techniques aiming at simplifying complex data and usually applied to correlations of variables” (Kline, 2014:3). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of sphericity were used to assess the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The KMO statistic shows a discrepancy between 0 and 1. When the value is 0, this indicates diffusion in the pattern of correlations and that factor analysis is therefore inappropriate. A KMO value close to 1 indicates that patterns of correlations are relatively compact and therefore a factor analysis will produce reliable factors. A principal component analysis extraction method and direct oblimin rotation were employed to extract the factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0.

The internal consistency reliability of the items within each construct was calculated to determine the extent to which the items in each scale measure the same underlying attribute. The Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient was used to measure internal consistency of each of the

constructs. According to Bonett and Wright (2015:3), Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient can be defined as a scale reliability or consistency measure in organisational and social sciences. Cronbach's alpha values range between 0 to 1, where values close to 1 indicate high reliability of the scale, and values close to 0 indicate low reliability (Stander & Rothmann, 2010:6). Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) Nunnally and Bernstein view that the Cronbach's coefficient reliability desired scale should at least be above 0.70 as guidance of acceptable internal consistencies of a measuring instrument, Spreitzer (1995:1453) states that Cronbach's coefficient alpha values of 0.62 can be seen as acceptable.

In addition, the following guidelines were used as measuring instruments to interpret results:

### **Reliability and validity:**

According to Bonett and Wright (2015:3), Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient is a scale reliability or consistency measure in organisational and social sciences. Stander and Rothman (2010:6) cited by (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), view that the Cornbrash's coefficient reliability desired scale should at least be above 0.70 as guidance of acceptable internal consistencies of a measuring instrument. Spreitzer (1995:1453) states that Cronbach's coefficient alpha values of 0.62 can be seen as acceptable.

The reliability and validity of any study measure are a partial indication of confidence level yielded by research design (Page & Meyer, 1999:84). (Sarantakos, 2012:107) states that, collectively, reliability and validity are used as a measure of quality of research instruments, but one is not a predictor of the other. Table 1.2 in chapter 1 shows the reliability and validity criteria.

### **Cronbach alpha:**

The Cronbach alpha coefficient was used as a measuring instrument to measure the reliability of the study. Cronbach's alpha values range between 0 and 1, where values close to 1 indicate high reliability of the scale, and values close to 0 indicate low reliability. Walker and Almond (2010:81) used the following guidelines to interpret results, as indicated in Table 3.1: Cronbach coefficient values:

Table 3.1: Cronbach alpha coefficient values

Cronbach alpha coefficient value, $\alpha$	Interpretation
0.8+	good
0.7-0.79	fairly good
0.6-0.69	just acceptable
<0.6	unacceptable

Correlation Coefficient (r) (Walker & Almond, 2010:81).

According to Walker and Almond (2010:154), Spearman's correlation coefficient (r) is popular and generally used as non-parametric test of correlation and the following guidelines are acceptable for interpretation of the correlation coefficient:

Correlation coefficient can produce a number between -1 and +1. Negative values indicate a negative correlation and positive values indicate a positive correlation:

- 0.6-1: strong relationship.
- 0.3-0.59: moderate to fairly strong relationship.
- 0.15-0.3: weak relationship.
- 0 to 0.14: little or no association.

### 3.6 Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the overview of what key statistical analysis topics will be addressed in the following chapter and their meaning to data. The focus of the chapter was on research approach and design, recruitment, measuring instruments, ethical consideration and statistical analyses.

# **CHAPTER 4**

## **Results**

## 4. Empirical study: Results and conclusion

In this chapter, the statistical analysis of the data is presented. Firstly, a brief outline of the demographic profile of the sample will be provided, followed by the reliability of the constructs established in the study. Furthermore, the results of the correlation analyses among the constructs will be discussed.

### 4.1 Results

#### 4.1.1 Response rate

A total of 266 questionnaires were distributed, accompanied by a letter emphasising the confidentiality and anonymity of responses. A total of 266 questionnaires were returned (overall response rate = 100%).

### 4.2 Demographic information

Besides for the Paterson job grades (Figure 4.3), the participants comprised a diverse demographically characteristic composition, including gender (Figure 4.1), race (Figure 4.2) and participants' work experience (Figure 4.4).

#### 4.2.1 Gender

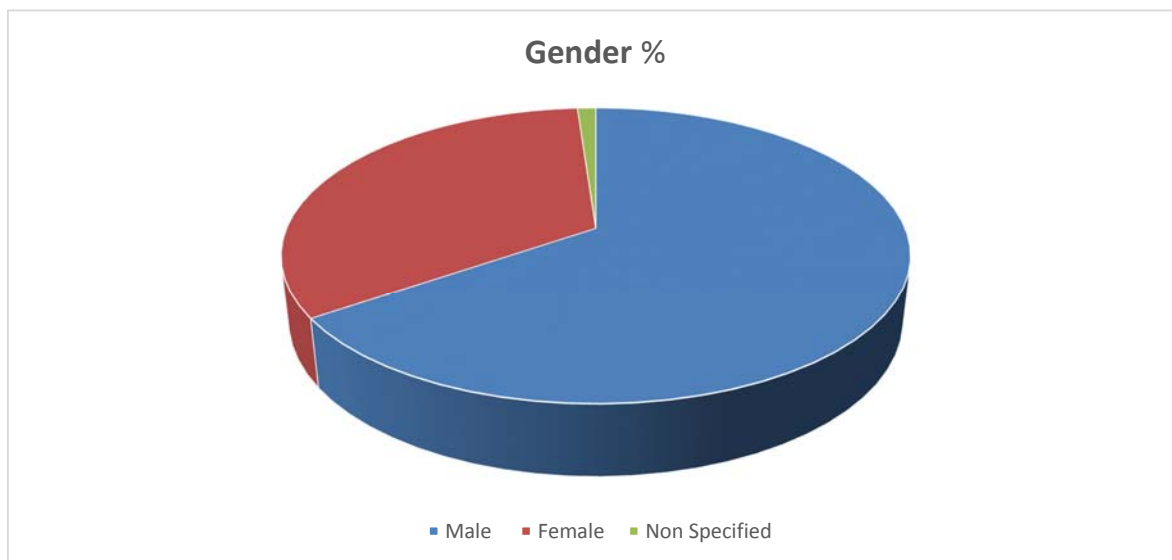


Figure 4.1: Participation by gender

Figure 4.1 presents the gender distribution of participants in this survey. The predominant number of participants was males (65%), with the remainder of the participants being females (34%). Approximately 1% of the participants did not specify their gender.

### 4.2.2 Race

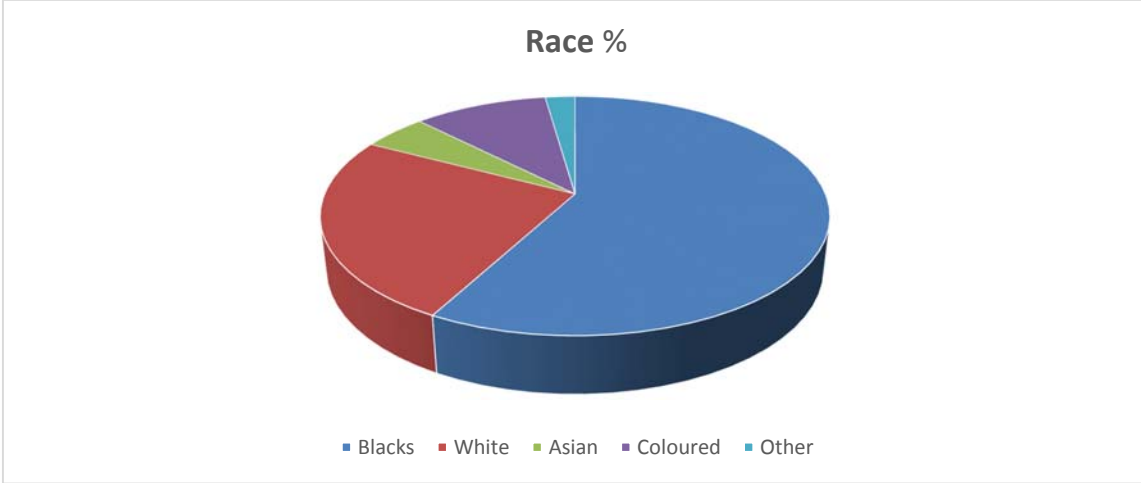


Figure 4.2 Participants by race

Figure 4.2 shows the race distribution of the participants in the survey. 57% of the participants were black, 25 % white, 5% Asian, 11% coloured and 2% of the respondents did not mention their race.

### 4.2.3 Participation by designation

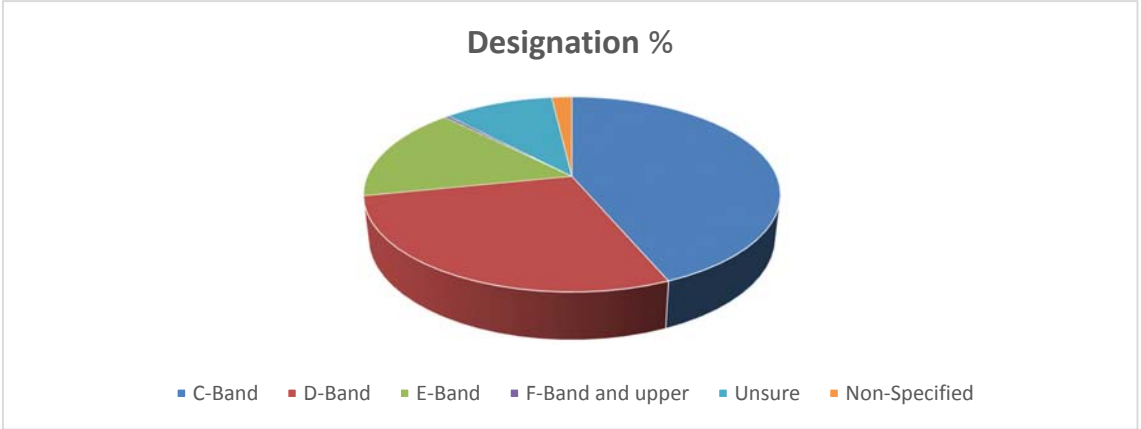


Figure 4.3 Participants by designation

The designation of participants, as shown in Figure 4.3, was represented as follows: 44 % C-bands, 28% D-bands, 16 % E-band, 0% F-band and Upper, 10% unsure and 2% non-specified.

#### 4.2.4 Participants' work experience

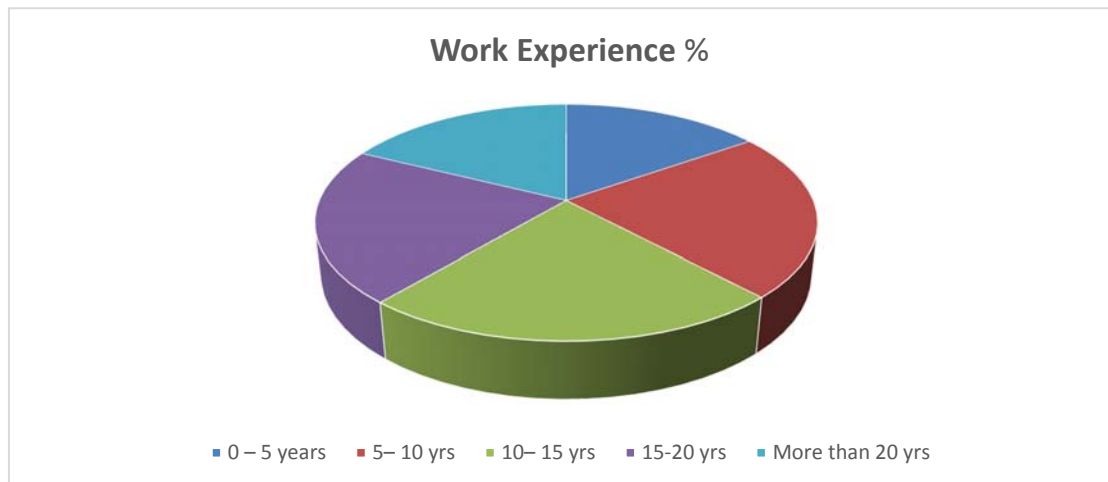


Figure 4.4 Participants' work experience

Figure 4.4 shows the distribution of work experience of the participants in the survey. The pie diagram indicates that 67% of the respondents have between five to 20 years' experience.

### 4.3 Factor analysis of organisational restructuring scale

The results of the factor analysis for organisational restructuring scale are shown in Table 4.1. The KMO was 0.88 and the associated Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant as  $p \leq 0.000$ . Two factors were extracted and they accounted for approximately 63.3% of total variance. The extracted factors were OR\_F1 (Organisational Restructuring scale by Marais *et al.* (2013:33) and OR\_F2 (Organisational restructuring process author developed scale). OR\_F1 (Organisational Restructuring scale by Marais *et al.* (2013:33) had Cronbach's alphas of 0.85 and OR\_F2 had Cronbach's alphas of 0.81. In addition, OR\_F2 (Organisational restructuring process author developed scale) had the highest mean.

However in subsequent analysis, a composite mean factor of the two factors extracted will be used, for interpretation purpose cut-off between agree will be:

- 2 to 2.5 = Agree
- 2.5 to 2.9= Neither Agree or Disagree

Table 4.1 indicates that, on average using factor 1 by Marais *et al.* (2013:33) , the respondents agree (mean = 2.49; SD = .97) that organisational restructuring fairly affects each department and its impact was felt by everyone in the organisation, and the objectives and purpose of restructuring were clearly explained through effective leadership.

On average using factor 2 author developed, respondents neither agree nor disagree (mean = 2.6; SD = .98) that the restructuring process allowed freedom of expression and motivated their work engagement and the feedback on restructuring process was freely available at all times during the process.



Table 4.1: Factor analysis of organisational restructuring scale.

Questionnaire statements	• OR_F1	• OR_F2
Restructuring affected each department in a fair way	.874	
The pain of restructuring efforts was fairly shared among everyone in the organisation	.837	
The outcomes of the change efforts were objectively evaluated	.753	
We had an effective project leadership for the change efforts	.605	
The purpose and overall goals of the restructuring were clearly explained.	.592	
Restructuring process aided freedom to voice my opinions		.824
During restructuring process we received adequate feedback at all times		.818
Restructuring process feedback flow was open and effective		.771
Restructuring process motivated me to be more engaged at work.		.680
Cronbach alpha	.85	.81
Mean & Std. deviation	2.49 ± .97	2.60 ± .98

Extraction method: Principal component analysis. Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalisation. Abbreviations: OR\_F1 (Organisational Restructuring; OR\_F2 (Organisational restructuring process author developed scale).

#### 4.4 Factor analysis of psychological safety scale

Results of the factor analysis for the psychological safety scale are shown in Table 4.2. The KMO of the identified factor was 0.94. The associated Bartlett's test of sphericity in this case is significant ( $p = 0.000$ ). Only one factor was extracted and it accounted for 53.5% of total variance. The mean of the scale for the respondents was 2.19 and Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.93, which was highly satisfactory. Furthermore, Table 4.2 also indicates that on average, respondents agree (Mean = 2.19; SD = .76) that they felt free to express themselves without fear of victimisation or reprisal and felt free to challenge the status quo and learn from their mistakes due to an environment that encourages freedom of expression without fear; this was also highlighted by Rothmann and Rothmann Jr (2010:2) study that explains psychological safety as being able to fearlessly express oneself with less regard to negative consequences to self-image, status or career.

Results of the factor analysis for the Work Engagement Scale are indicated in Table 4.3. The KMO of the identified factor was 0.87. The associated Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $p \leq 0.000$ ). Only one factor was extracted and it accounted for 54.2% of total variance. The mean of the scale for the respondents was 2.04 and Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .89, which was satisfactory. On average, respondents agree (mean = 2.04; SD = .79) that they are or felt engaged with their work, which suggests employees are happy with the work they do and happiness, as explained by Rothmann and Rothmann Jr (2010:1), is a key goal of psychology and engagement because engaged employees maximise gratification by going all out in expressing their strengths at work.

Table 4.2: Factor analysis of psychological safety scale

Questionnaire statements	Psychological safety
My freedom and safety at work encourage me to work harder	.827
At work there is enough support to make me feel safe and free at all times	.817
I feel safe to bring ideas during team meetings and team activities at work	.814
I feel safe to perform optimally at work	.792
I am at peace at work and feel enthusiastic about my job	.782
I am free to engage management at all times	.776
I feel safe to speak against ideas I don't agree with at work	.735
At work we are encouraged to freely open up suggestions without fear reprisal	.721
Constructive debates and arguments are regarded as normal in my working environment	.719
I feel safe at work to forget anything around me when I am working	.716
At work, resources are equally available at all employee disposal	.660
I am not afraid to be myself at work	.615
I feel safe at work to extend that I am not bothered by organisational restructuring	.611
I am not afraid to make mistakes at work and learn from my mistakes	.600
Cronbach alpha	.93
Mean & Std. deviation	2.19 ± .76

Extraction method: Principal component analysis

## 4.5 Factor analysis of work engagement scale

Table 4.3 shows the results of the factor analysis for the Work Engagement Scale. The KMO of the identified factor was 0.87. The associated Bartlett's test of sphericity was found in this case to be statistically significant, as  $p \leq 000$ . Only one factor was extracted and it accounted for 54.2% of total variance. The mean of the scale for the respondents was 2.04 and Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.89, which was satisfactory.

Looking at Table 4.3, on average, respondents agree (Mean= 2.04) that they are or felt engaged with their work, which suggests employees are happy with the work they do and happiness, as explained by Rothmann and Rothmann Jr (2010:1), is a key goal of psychology

and engagement because engaged employees maximise gratification by going all out in expressing their strengths at work.

Table 4.3: Factor analysis of Work Engagement Scale

Questionnaire statements	Work engagement
I feel happy when I am working intensely	.830
I am enthusiastic about my job	.819
My job inspires me	.800
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	.788
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	.778
I am immersed in my work	.701
I am proud on the work that I do	.674
At my work, I feel bursting with energy	.644
I get carried away when I'm working	.541
Cronbach alpha	.89
Mean & Std. deviation	2.04 ± .79

Extraction method: Principal component analysis

From Table 4.1 and Table 4.3, it can be seen that on average employees were in agreement with organisational restructuring and its objectives were clearly explained under effective leadership, which shows that employees believed in organisational restructuring and their leadership, which, in turn, aided happiness among them, which was witnessed through feelings of engagement to their work as shown by their response to work engagement.

**4.6 Correlation results**

Pearson correlations were used to test the hypothesised relationships between the respective variables in this study. Values closer to +1 are indicative of a strong positive correlation and values closer to -1 are indicative of a strong negative correlation. The results of the respective hypotheses are outlined below.

**Correlations**

		OrgRestr	PS_F1	WE_F1
OrgRestr	Pearson Correlation	1	.538**	.368**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	265	261	263
PS_F1	Pearson Correlation	.538**	1	.630**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	261	261	260
WE_F1	Pearson Correlation	.368**	.630**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	263	260	263

*Table 4.4: Correlation analysis*

## 4.7 Testing the relationship between organisational restructuring and work engagement

Results indicating the relationship between organisational restructuring and work engagement are presented in Figure 4.5. A positive correlation was found between these two variables ( $r = 0.37$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This confirms my hypothesis H1.1 that there is positive relationship between organisational restructuring and work engagement.

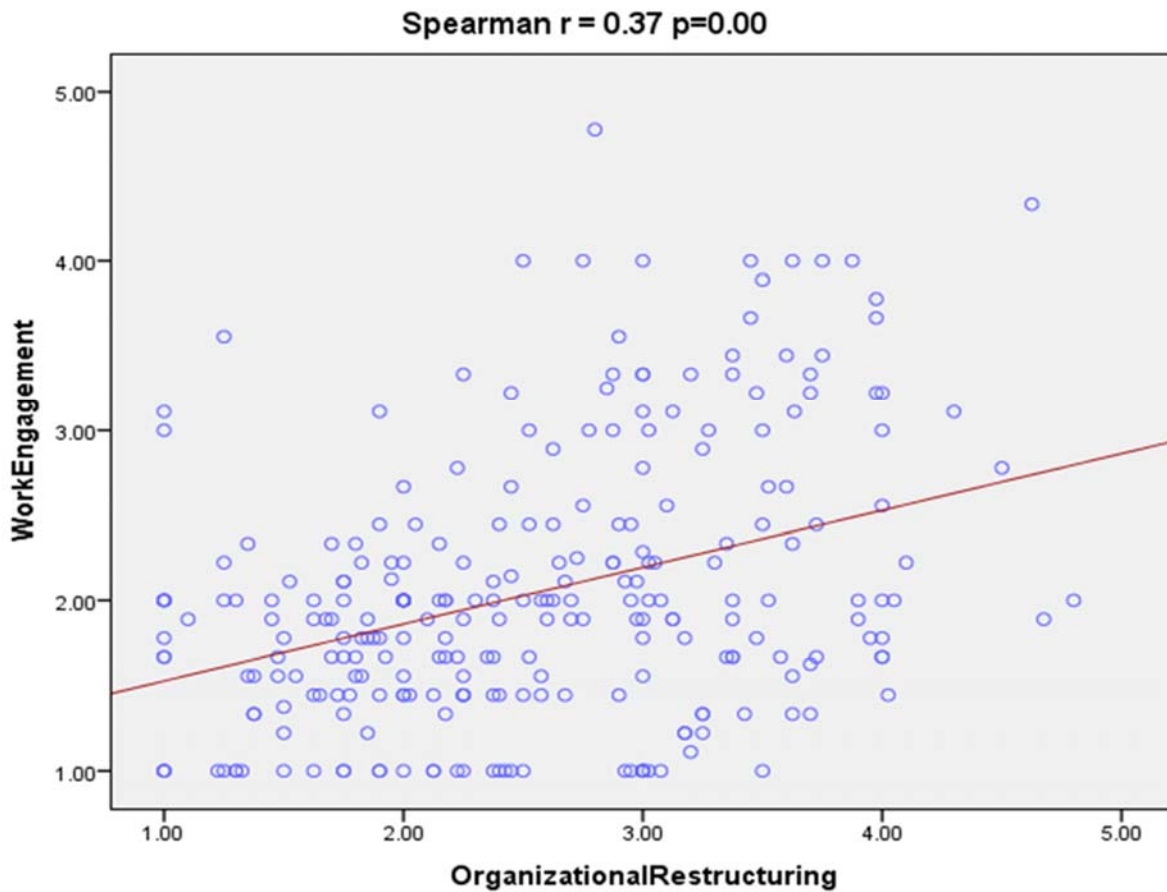
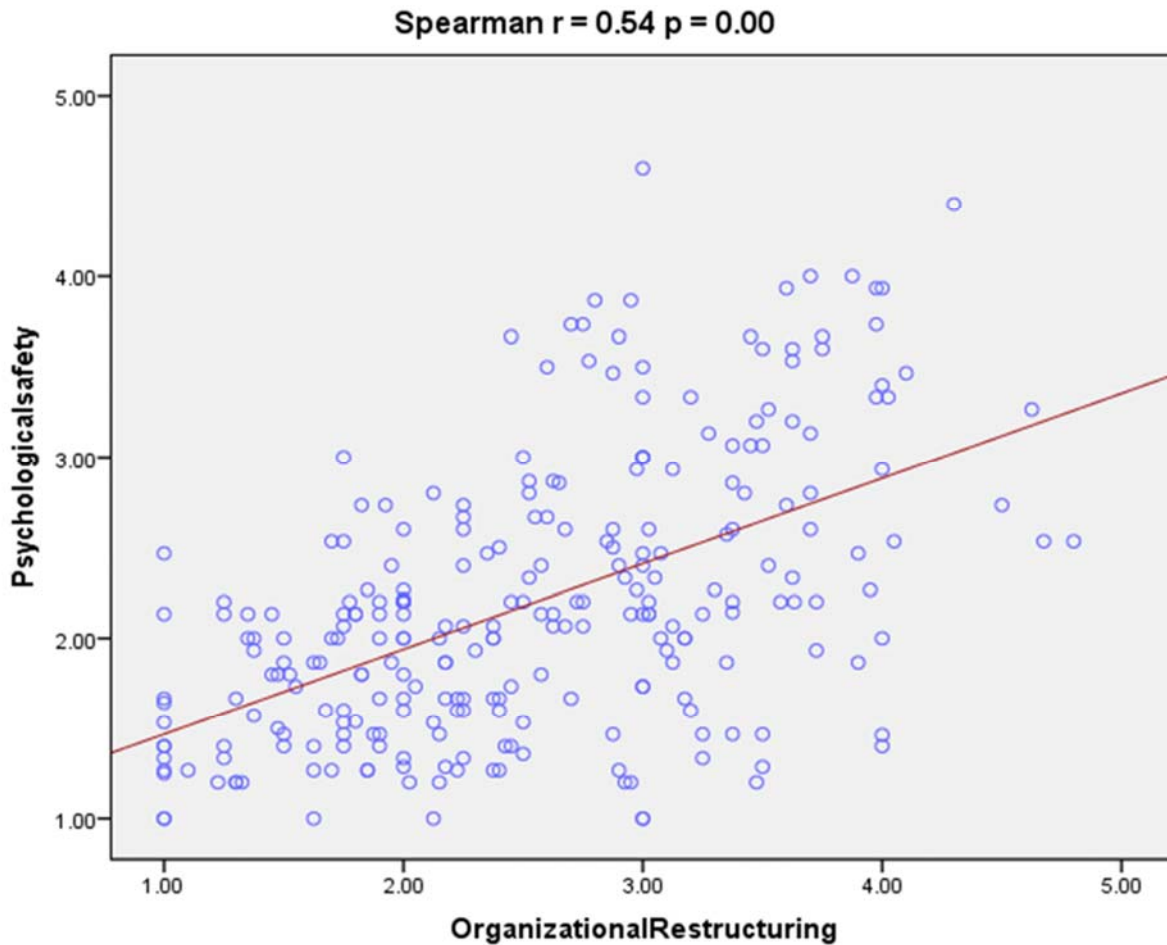


Figure 4.5: Scatterplot of the relationship between organisational restructuring and work engagement

#### 4.8 Testing the relationship between organisational restructuring and psychological safety

Figure 4.6 presents the results of the statistical analysis of the relationship between organisational restructuring and psychological safety. It was found that there is a positive correlation between these two variables ( $r = 0.54, p < 0.01$ ). This confirms my hypothesis H2.1 that there is positive relationship between organisational restructuring and psychological safety.



*Figure 4.6: Scatterplot of the relationship between organisational restructuring and psychological safety*

On average, as shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, respondents agreed to having freedom of expressing themselves without fear of consequences to their career, reputation and status; they also agree to fairness of the organisational restructuring under their leadership who demonstrated fairness and effectiveness while making it easier for all to clearly understand what organisational restructuring was all about and its objectives explained.

## 4.9 Results of the regression analysis

Results of regression analysis, which sought to explore whether organisational restructuring predicts work engagement, are presented in Table 4.4. Organisational restructuring ( $p = 0.00$ ) is a significant predictor of work engagement, with a 95% confidence interval of [0.23; 0.44]. The unstandardised beta coefficient is positive, which furthermore indicates that there is a positive correlation between work engagement and organisational restructuring. This confirms my hypothesis H3.1 that organisational restructuring predicts work engagement.

Table 4.4: Coefficient for the regression model (with work engagement as dependent variable)

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.191	.141		8.464	.000	.914	1.468
	OrganizationalRestructuring	.334	.052	.368	6.398	.000	.231	.437

a. Dependent Variable: WorkEngagement

Table 4.5: Model summary

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.368 <sup>a</sup>	.136	.132	.73443	.136	40.930	1	261	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), OrganizationalRestructuring

b. Dependent Variable: WorkEngagement

As observed from Table 4.5, the correlation between the two variables is 0.37 and the R-square value is 0.14. The effect size of the model is 0.16, which indicates small effects. A possible reason for the low explanatory power in the model may be because organisational restructuring has a low prediction of work engagement.



## 4.10 Discussion

The aim of this research study is to explore existence of relationship between organisational restructuring, work engagement (employee level) and psychological safety. A positive relation between organisational restructuring and work engagement was confirmed in this study. This may be due to the involvement of employees from the beginning of the restructuring process in order to have a positive impact on work engagement. It was previously reported by (Edmondson & Lei, 2014:30) [adapted from De Jong and Elfring (2010) that trust positively influences team effort and team monitoring, leading to team effectiveness. Furthermore, a study conducted by Camgoz *et al.* (2016) indicated that work engagement is a partial mediator of job insecurity brought by organisational restructuring. Job insecurity might have high an effect on staff turnover intention, but less significance to work engagement.

According to previous research, job insecurity brought by organisational restructurings has an adverse impact on employee wellbeing and psychological safety (Vander Elst *et al.*, 2012:252-271). However, this study confirmed a positive correlation was found between organisational restructuring and psychological safety. The positive relationship may be influenced by the involvement of employees, by the employer during the process of restructuring. This suggestion may be supported by a study conducted by (Budros, 2000:301), which reported that a strong psychological contract demonstrated between an employer and employees during corporate downsizing and restructuring does not have a negative impact on the psychological wellbeing of employees.

## 4.11 Chapter summary

My study confirmed the existence of positive relations between organisational restructuring, psychological safety and work engagement. The study further confirmed that organisational restructuring predicts work engagement and previous studies reported types of relation but not much has been researched on the impact or extent of these relations, which leaves room for future studies to expand research on this topic to test the power of this prediction.

## **CHAPTER 5**

# **Conclusion and Recommendations**

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

The previous chapter focused on the statistical results and interpretation. The interpretation of results covered participants' characteristics, descriptive statistics, factor analysis, reliability and relationship between measured variables; and this chapter will focus on conclusions pertaining to study research objectives and recommendations to the management of the company under study, based on research findings, pointing out the limitations of this study and future research considerations.

### 5.1 Conclusion

The study objective was to empirically explore the existence of a relationship between organisational restructuring, work engagement and psychological safety and to explore whether organisational restructuring predicts work engagement.

The study by Pahkin *et al.* (2014:1) highlights the that positive change can be destroyed by negative appraisal and affect motivational aspects of employee well-being. This is important to offer employees the opportunity to participate in the planning of changes. This inclusive approach helps to get employee input in changes related to their work to aid positive change appraisal.

My study found that on an average sample-sized study, respondents agreed to have been fully aware of objectives of organisational restructuring and leadership, which were inclusive throughout the processes and neither agree nor disagree that restructuring feedback was flowing freely and motivated work engagement, but on average they agree to feeling psychologically safe to express themselves without fear, while they remained engaged in their work beside going through restructuring.

Learning from this study, companies should make sure that employees are placed in fulfilling roles that aid job engagement through a harmonious working environment. A consistent, fair and inclusive management style to reduce the fear of facing restructuring is needed, and they should also see restructuring as an open and free process to realign company processes to its revised strategic objectives.

The inclusive management approach tends to defuse what could have been a disruptive work environment due to organisational restructuring by allowing employee participation and maintaining consistent feedback flow through every step of the restructuring process.

## 5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

Management should engage employees in planning any organisational restructuring that will affect employees' work from the start. A study conducted by Harter (2009) as cited by Palo and Rothmann (2016:227) emphasised that daily interaction of management with employees enforces the work engagement of co-workers at local and workgroup level.

Management should use restructuring to align employees to the right job fit and not victimisation by being upfront about objectives of restructuring and encourage freedom of expression and make restructuring communication freely available for all employees to access at any time. This is supported by a study that was conducted by Palo and Rothmann (2016:227), which found that employees become highly engaged in jobs that they participate in from beginning to end and if they believe their tasks are to benefit the welfare of others.

My research was done at one mine and a handful of head office employees within Platinum mine, and it should be expanded to other mines to have proper generalised feedback for the entire company.

Future research should focus on studying the impact and extent of positive relations between organisational restructuring, psychological safety and work engagement on remaining employees, as this will help with an understanding of these relations and their impact on remaining employees.

Future studies should focus on expanding research around the extent (power) to which organisational restructuring predicts work engagement and the impact of that prediction on remaining employees post-restructuring.

Further studies should look at testing if restructuring predicts psychological safety, questionnaires.

The scales used to explore organisational restructuring, work engagement and psychological safety are reliable and valid to prove the existence of a relationship and the ability to predict each other; however, they are not adequate to test the extent and impact on the scale relationship and ability to predict one another, and therefore further studies should look at

coming with questions or scales to be used with my study scales to test the extent and depth of impact as well as the ability to predict each other.

### 5.3 Study limitations

This study was conducted at only one mine in Anglo American Platinum and only a handful of head office employees were used for this research. This might not be full representation of the company as a whole, or platinum mines in the whole of South Africa. It is important for the reader to exercise caution not to generalise the study results as a full representation of the platinum sector.

### 5.4 Chapter summary

The conclusions and recommendations to management and future research were made based on study findings and literature and limitations were outlined and necessary caution highlighted; therefore, the research objectives were met.

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