

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EFFECTIVE  
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE OF ZAMBEZI  
REGIONAL COUNCIL**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Human resources are one of the most critical success factors of any organization or institution. Having employees feeling that they are part of the organization's big family can motivate them to perform their duties exceptionally well and in the long run make an organization more competitive. The performance of an employee is linked to the performance of the organization in the sense that if employees do not perform their duties diligently, the performance of the organization will also suffer, and consequently the organization will perform poorly. This study investigated the relationship between effective employee engagement and the performance of Zambezi Regional Council. The study used a random sampling technic to select the sample. A structured questionnaire was used in gathering data. A response rate of 92.5% was recorded. The data collected was recorded, coded and presented in Microsoft Excel. The collected data was presented by way of various graphs such as pie charts, bar graphs and line graphs. The main research finding was that most employees are not engaged fully in their work due to various reasons contained in this document and thereby impacting the organizational ultimate performance.

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated first and foremost to my parents Ms. Matildah Muswabile and my late father Mr. Davies Sobozi Maloboka for the good upbringing. It is also dedicated to my best friend, my advisor and my wife Chuma Simataa-Maloboka for keeping up with me during my studies. Lastly to my three beautiful daughters Kaungwe, Ndaya and Myeyini for they are the joy of my life.

## DECLARATION

I, Riscoh Muswabile Maloboka, hereby declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research and that this work or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher learning.

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Date

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY**

Zambezi Regional Council was established in 1992 in terms of the Regional Councils Act, 1992 (Act 22 of 1992) as provided in Article 103 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia. The region was delineated in terms of Article 106 (1) of the Constitution, by the Delimitation Commission that determined regional boundaries and constituencies.

The Regional Councils Act defines the rights, powers, duties and functions of Council as well as providing for incidental matters. The Act outlines the four distinct functions of the Regional Councils, namely to: ensure a sustainable socio-economic development and utilization of natural resources, facilitate infrastructural development and play an initiating role in identifying settlement areas as embryos for the establishment of local authorities, provide basic services to the people and planning, facilitation and coordination of regional development as well as to contribute and advice the general public of public policies within the unitary framework, and advice the President or any Minister on any matter referred to it by the President or any Minister as well as make recommendations to the Minister of Finance on matters relating to regions.

The Chief Regional Officer (CRO) is the administrative head of the Council whereas the Regional Governor, who is a Presidential appointee, is the political head of the



region. The CRO reports to the Management Committee comprised of Regional Councilors from the eight (8) constituencies of the region. Constituency Councilors are elected by majority ballot in their respective constituencies.

At the time of writing, the Council had a staff compliment of 99 against 116 staff compliment provided for in the approved structure. Given the lean structure of the Council, and despite few departmental arrangements as per the categorization of service alignment, there is no proper cohesion and unison between the various departments of the regional council. This is attributed by the lack of skills and inadequate employee engagement to foster commitment and value contribution as per their individual skills.

It is, therefore, imperative to determine, through this study, the extent of employee engagement to their full potential at the council and whether inadequate engagement could be a cause for the current labor turn over and poor service delivery, at the Zambezi Regional Council.

Harvard Business School (2013), records that employee full utilization or engagement is a topical issue in the human resources arena. When an employee is fully engaged, he or she is aware of his/her responsibilities in the business or organization in terms of achieving organizational goals to which he/she must fully commit and add value.

Given global market forces and competition for competent human capital, it is prudent to hire highly competent and motivated employees who demonstrate full

commitment to their work without necessarily having to be micro-managed and motivated. It is submitted that highly engaged employees increase innovation, productivity and bottom line performance and at the same time, mitigating against labor costs related to hiring and retention in highly competitive markets ( Ancona et al.,2009).

According to a report published by the Harvard Business Review (2013), it has been established that while most leaders understand the importance of employee engagement, three-quarters of those surveyed confirmed that most of the employees in organizations investigated are not highly engaged. Engaged employees go beyond the call of duty to perform their role excellently. There are various factors that can drive employee engagement. Robinson, Hooker and Hayday (2007), list these drivers as follows: job satisfaction, feeling valued and involved, equality of opportunities, health and safety, length of service, ethnicity communication and co-operation.

Swanepoel et al. (2012) also suggest that management leadership style has a great effect either positive or negative on the quality of work output and overall employee relations within an organization. The authors further state that management should focus on stimulating employee commitment and a sound working environment.

Many corporations are involved in training and retaining its competent and talented employees through the introduction of short and long-term incentives. A highly motivated and committed workforce yields desired productivity levels. This approach could be applied at the Zambezi Regional Council. This paper, seeks to

investigate whether or not inadequate or poor employee engagement has potential effects on the council performance.

## **1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The Zambezi Regional Council has experienced unprecedented labor turn-over; this has resulted to poor service delivery for lack of competent skills that are fully committed to deliver the council mandate. Schreuder (2009) suggests that employees can be motivated through compensation for them to be fully engaged in their work. The author submits that compensation in whatever form, whether intrinsic or extrinsic improves individual and organizational performance.

## **1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The main objective of this study is to investigate whether or not ineffective and / or poor employee engagement has the potential effect on the Zambezi Regional Council's performance and employee retention. The following are the sub objectives:

- a) to analyze the current state of employee engagement at the Zambezi Regional Council;
- b) to analyze the impact of ineffective employee engagement at the Zambezi Regional Council;
- c) to investigate whether or not poor employee engagement can lead to labour turnover at the Zambezi Regional Council; and
- d) to recommend remedial interventions that enhance effective employee engagement and retention.

#### **1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study is significant in that it is hoped that the Zambezi Regional Council will use the findings and recommendations to appreciate appropriate employee engagement based on the study outcomes to enhance productivity at the Council and ensure retention of competent human capital and thereby providing the appropriate remedy to the current labor turn-over being experienced. Further, the study will be used by other researchers on similar topics for academic purposes. This research has not been carried out before, at the Zambezi Regional Council, by other researchers hence its significance.

#### **1.5. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study is limited to the Zambezi Regional Council with specific constituency offices to be sampled for the purpose of the study. A further limitation is the inadequate resources availability in the region. However, online literature and the questionnaire are relied upon to arrive at the conclusion of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

It is submitted that Employee engagement is an engine for talent management drive and draws its relevance from the effectiveness of various factors from within and outside an organization. Strategic employee engagement initiatives support organizational branding and reputation among employees and other competing organizations. Kaliannan & Adjovu (2015).

Given the above view, the last two decades have witnessed the phase of transition from satisfied employees to committed employees (Avery et al, 2007) who are not predisposed to attrition, rather immersed in the realization of the goal and success of their organization and often serve as the force behind organizational success.

Additionally, Kaliannan & Adjovu (2015) submit that most executives view employee engagement from competitive point of view. It is considered that employees are the success catalysts that make the competitive firms and their absence could create a vacuum through which flourishing organizations sink into obscurity (Kaliannan & Adjovu, 2015).

A study of 50 firms over a period of one year found that organizations with high employee engagement had 19 percent increase in operating income and about 28 percent earnings per share (EPS) growth. Inversely, those with low employee

engagement levels experienced more than 32 percent drop in operating income and 11 percent decline in earnings per share (McConnell, 2011).

However, much more intriguing findings on the subject is the recent extensive study conducted by Harvard Business Review (HBR) which indicated that employee engagement is becoming the center of attraction among senior executive thereby describing 2014 as year of employees. Based on the data gathered all over the world from top firms, Harvard Business Review found that 71% of people are of the opinion that effective employee engagement is critical to the success of every organization.

The HBR among other findings, found that a highly engaged workforce inevitably result in reduction in hiring and retention costs, corporate growth, increase innovation, positively affect the bottom line, and increase levels of productivity. Given the potential for such extremely positive outcomes, it is no surprise that leaders across the globe are reconsidering other alternatives for reevaluation of business trends (Harvard Business Review).

Bedarkar & Panditta (2014) also emphasized that, employee engagement is a concept gaining significant importance in the past 10 years. Organizations today use engaged employees as a competitive human capital for strategic partnership in the business. The concept of employee engagement has now gained even more importance, since many drivers have been identified, which impact employee performance and well-being at workplace (Bedarkar & Panditta, 2014).

As companies across industries strive to survive and rise above the stiff competition, physical and mental well-being of employees will be one of the important aspects that human resources managers need to focus on. Hence, employee engagement is today seen as a powerful source of competitive advantage in the turbulent economic times, Bedarkar & Panditta (2014).

The above authors further states that, every organization knows the importance of engaging and motivating its people to perform and this has gained more prominence with time. But what is less commonly recognized is that employees want to be engaged in work where they feel that they are contributing in a positive way to something larger than themselves.

## **2.2. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

Macleod & Clarke (2009) defines employee engagement as a workplace approach resulting in the right conditions for all members of an organization to give of their best each day, committed to their organization's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organizational success, with an enhanced sense of their own well-being. The authors further allude that employee engagement is based on trust, integrity, two way commitment and communication between an organization and its members. The authors' further state that it is an approach that increases the chances of business success, contributing to the organizational and individual performance, productivity and well-being (Macleod & Clarke, 2009).

On the other hand Kruse (2012) asserts that employee engagement is the emotional commitment the employee has to the organization and its goals. This emotional

commitment means engaged employees actually care about their work and their company. They don't just work for a paycheck, or just for the next promotion, but work on behalf of the organization's goals.

In this respect, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Report (2009) provide that employee engagement focuses on the employment relationship as being at the heart of sustainable high performance. The report (CIPD) further recognizes that both the employer and employee have to make a genuine contribution to sustain and nurture their employment relationship.

The report (CIPD) further recognizes that employee engagement is a good tool to help organizations strive to gain competitive advantage over competitors. People management is one factor that cannot be made in duplicate or imitated by the competitors and is considered to be the most valuable asset in the organization if managed and engaged properly. The stability of the workforce can have a significant bearing on how well employees can contribute to the success of the company (CIPD, 2009).

Furthermore, Devi (2017) postulates that employee engagement theory is deemed as one of the most influential theories of management intervention. It has evolved from the concepts of job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior, but it is much broader than the concepts of commitment and motivation in the management literature. Employee engagement is generally seen as a two-way interaction between the employee and the organization for which the organization has the accountability to lead, Devi (2017).



Given the two way interaction involved in employee engagement, there are other numerous unique characteristics of an engaged workforce consist of loyalty, satisfaction and encouragement, an association with the organization's strategy, and the expression of discretionary effort on the part of the engaged employee. Also, engaged workers are full of life, are optimistically associated to their work and feel they are doing their jobs effectively (Leiter and Bakker, 2010). It is a constant and broad affective-cognitive state.

Moreover, Devi (2017) points out that a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption are motivators to employee engagement. This is further characterized by high levels of energy, the willingness to invest energy in one's work. On the other hand, dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance enthusiasm, and challenge. Absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work. In short, engaged employees have high levels of energy and are enthusiastic about their work. Moreover, they are often fully immersed in their work so that time flies (Schaufeli, 2013)

Employee engagement is critical to any organization. Berens (2013) differentiated between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Competence, autonomy, and psychological relatedness which are psychological needs, motivate the individual to initiate behavior essential for psychological health and well-being of an individual and if satisfied may lead to optimal function and growth (Berens, 2013). The basic

needs of satisfaction have been found to directly relate to dedication of employees (Vandenabeele, 2014).

In this respect, dedicated and meaningful work enables employees to realize how valuable they are within the organization and makes them engaged. Bolman and Deal (2014) suggested there is an opportunity for employees' autonomy when self-determinant theory is leveraged, and furthermore, employees can influence those around them. This influence transcends to the benefits of intrinsic rewards. Meaningful work will allow for an increase in employees' participation; however, it does not guarantee that the employee will be engaged. The need for autonomy, intrinsic rewards, and influence are required to achieve employee engagement (Bolman & Deal, 2014).

To this end, employee motivation is attributed to the concepts of the self-determinant theory. La Guardia (2009) suggested that psychological needs form a sense of development of identity by intrinsic motivation, which results in the outcomes of interest and engagement. Using potentials and commitment can influence an individual's value, behavior, and goals, which are healthy factors for an individual's identity (La Guardia, 2009).

Likewise, Fullagar and Mills (2008) found that there is a significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and flow experiences. Flow is the holistic sensation that employees feel when they are totally engaged within their work (Fullagar & Mills, 2008).

In the same way, assessing demographic characteristics as they relate to employee engagement provides knowledge of demographic trends within the labor force (Buttner, Lowe, & Billings-Harris, 2012). Business leaders can engage younger workers by monetary compensation. Younger workers leave their organizations for lack of monetary compensation even when the occupation is consistent with their needs and desires (Butler, Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashley, 2014).

### **2.3. ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

Organizations have an important role in people's daily lives and therefore, successful organizations represent a key ingredient for developing nations. Continuous performance is the focus determinants of organizational performance of any organization because only through performance organizations are able to grow and progress.

Thus, organizational performance is one of the most important variables in the management research and arguably the most important indicator of the organizational performance, Devi (2017). Furthermore, the author submits that an organization can be successful when it accomplishes its goals (effectiveness) using minimum of resources (efficiency).

### **2.4. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

Employee engagement is a critical ingredient of individual and organizational success. It predicts employee outcomes, organizational success, and financial performance. The impact of engagement (or disengagement) can manifest itself

through productivity and organizational performance, outcomes for customers of the organization, employee retention rates, organizational culture, and advocacy of the organization and its external image (Bakker and Schaufeli 2008).

In this context, employee engagement is seen as powerful driver that organizations can utilize to improve many of their business functions, including safety performance (Bakker and Schaufeli 2008). Some of the ways that employees can become involved in addressing the safety of the work in which they are going to be engaged may include participating in production goal assessment, having input into planning the work, assessing the risk, evaluating the procedures, suggesting possible practice methods, addressing logistics, selecting risk mitigation techniques and having the right information, etc (Devi, 2017).

The above will require that the workforce be capable, skillful, knowledgeable, and motivated. Devi (2017), states that organization must select the right workers as well as supervisors who are knowledgeable of the operational functions, and have a deep understanding of human nature. There has to be robust and open communication, fair treatment, and feedback as well as opportunity for growth and development. The degree to which these aspects are implemented and function seamlessly will determine the level of engagement and the outcomes that drive the organization's success (Devi, 2017).

In other words, the failing global economy has created a huge shift in the way business takes place (McCuiston & De Lucenay, 2010). Employee engagement matters to both the employee as well as the organization. Employees can utilize

contract agreement provisions to impede the attainment of the organizational goals and objectives. Management's capability to leverage employee engagement strategies is essential in an organization.

In a broader perspective, Cooper-Thomas, Paterson, Stadler, and Saks (2014) asserts that high levels of expectations and frequent performance reviews can increase employee participation and cooperation. The scarcity of resources has led organizations to think more about reducing costs and increasing productivity and efficiency.

In addition, reduced variation in processes can reduce cost over time as it relates to process improvement (Emrouznejad, Anouze, & Thanassoulis, 2010). However, an organization must continue to incorporate processes that enhance employee engagement. McCuiston and DeLucenay (2010) opine that short-term cost cutting processes are not uniformly successful.

Employee engagement has emerged as one of the greatest challenges in today's workplace. With complexities and stringent regulations in many organizations, employee engagement will continue to challenge organizations in the future (Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014). This aspect challenges management because engagement is a critical element in maintaining the organization's vitality, survival, and profitability (Albercht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015; Breevaart et al., 2013; Farndale & Murrer, 2015).

Thus, organizations that have highly engaged employees have greater profits than those that do not (Society for Human Resource Management [SHRM], 2014). Organizations with highly engaged employees experience increased customer satisfaction, profits, and employee productivity (Ahmetoglu, Harding, Akhtar, & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2015; Carter, 2015; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2014; Vandenabeele, 2014).

## **2.5. DRIVERS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

The drive for an engaged workforce is good people management and effective policies as well as the support of line managers. Employees need to understand how their work contributes to the overall organizational outcome. There is no shortcut to building and maintaining employee engagement, but the time, effort, motivation and resource required will be amply repaid by the performance benefits (CIPD, 2009).

Daft and Marcic (2011) refer to motivation as one of the forces either within or external to a person that arouse enthusiasm and persistence to pursue a certain course of action. Employee motivation affects productivity, and part of a manager's job is to channel motivation toward the accomplishment of organizational goals (Daft and Marcic, 2011).

Further, Schreuder (2009), submits that employees can be motivated through compensation for them to be fully engaged in the work. Compensation improves individual and organizational performance.

Owing to this, George and Jones (2012) states that there are many ways that an organization can help employees who are at different levels in the Maslow hierarchy to satisfy their needs while at the same time also help the organization achieve its goals and competitive advantages. McMinn (2017) identified some secrets for better employee engagement. He mentioned at least six of these drivers.

First, McMinn (2017) talks about effective leadership. Engagement comes from the top, so it is important to coach managers on how to implement an engagement plan into the office and how to track its performance. No employee is going to stay engaged if the manager is not engaged also, so managers and company executives must set an example of the behaviors in which you want your employees to display.

Effective leadership involves being accessible and approachable.

In other words, don't lock management away in a secret part of the office away where employees cannot easily find them, with the only form of communication over emails. Instead, to avoid an "us versus them" mentality, offer guidance and commendation and support to employees, and publicly recognize their achievements either at staff meetings or via your company's intranet (McMinn, 2017).

Second, McMinn (2004) and Markey (2014) mentions of open dialogue. One strategy for building employee engagement is by using an effective employee survey. An appropriate survey encourages open and honest communication between the employees and management. Use specific and relevant questions that create actionable responses. Don't fall into the trap of simply collecting a large amount of data that gets no response no-one likes their feedback to be ignored!

McMinn (2017) continues to state that, make engagement a priority by discussing the results of a recent survey at meetings and keep them up to date with future improvements that can be made within the company or the team. It's vital to keep employees involved in the process so they can see their voice is being heard. By involving employees in decision-making and taking the time to listen to their suggestions they feel that they have a say in the company's operations. The result in most cases, they will become more personally invested in their work – which is exactly what you are after (Markey, 2014 and McMinn, 2017).

Then, Opportunity for growth. Employees who are left to their day-to-day activities day on end or left to fend for themselves when it comes to training and development are likely to fast become disengaged employees who may end up resenting their workplace. On the other hand, employees who are being continuously challenged and are given opportunities to further their learning and grow in their chosen career field are more likely to show higher levels of commitment to the company and to their job tasks (Markey, 2014 and McMinn, 2017).

The author (McMinn, 2017) continues to assert that managers should be encouraged to talk to their employees often about their career plans and where they feel the gaps are, or alternatively, what new skills they want to learn and how the company can make this possible. Ultimately, this shows that the company cares about helping the employee maintain job satisfaction and that they are a valued asset to the company.

Supportive Environment is the fourth driver that McMinn (2017) mentions in his paper. The New York Times shared that employees are 67% more engaged when



their supervisors take an active interest in supporting the employee with their roles and future opportunities. By creating an appreciative atmosphere, employees feel more compelled to complete their roles to a higher standard because they know their work is appreciated by management. Employees also feel safe to go to their manager for guidance with a particular task that they are unsure about. Overall, a supportive atmosphere creates trust, restores strained relationships, develops pride and dissolved frustration (Markey, 2014 and McMinn, 2017).

The next driver is improved communication (McMinn, 2017). Communication is key within any environment, and, as has already become clear through the other secrets to increasing employee engagement, it is something that needs to increase across the board. Improving communication to increasing employee engagement has become one of the central purposes for implementing tools such as an intranet within a company (McMinn, 2017). Intranets are an excellent solution to the lack of engagement with employees, as they offer tools that foster communication, collaboration and participation across all departments and employees within a company.

There are a number of features a company can include when developing an intranet such as forums for open informal communication, calendars detailing events and meetings, feedback surveys to connect employees with managers, and a company newsfeed to keep employees informed of updates and employee achievements. Overall, these communication features enable a business to better connect with its employees and employees to better connect with other employees – leading to a productive and engaged workforce (McMinn, 2017).

Finally, meaningful work. McMinn (2017) states that when employees believe that their work is important and has value to the company, they are more likely to be more engaged. One of a manager's responsibilities is to frequently reinforce the importance of an employee's contributions and reward them for their outstanding work. When employees feel as though they are making positive and meaningful contributions to the company, they start taking pride in the results of their efforts and productivity soars.

McMinn (2017) and Markey (2014), furthermore, indicate that the direct communication between employees and managers about their work efforts and other responsibilities creates a connection between an employee's task and the company's success – where even the smallest task has some positive effect.

## **2.6. BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

Despite the arguments above for successful employee engagement, there are key barriers identified by Kingston Business School, Chartered Institute Personnel and Development (2009) and these include:

- a) Reactive decision making that does not pick up problems before it is too late.
- b) Inconsistent management style based on the attitudes of individual managers, which leads to perceptions of unfairness.
- c) Low level of advocacy, which carry the risk of creating a downward spiral of employee resentment and disengagement.
- d) Lack of fluidity in communication and knowledge-sharing due to rigid communication channels or cultural norms.
- e) Poor work-life balance due to long-hours working culture.

- f) Low perception of senior management visibility and quality of downward communication.

According to the Chartered Institute Personnel and Development (2009), attitudes of senior managers are often quite negative. The evidence is that only a third of employees have confidence in or trusts their senior management team while only two in five say their directors and senior managers treat employees with respect they deserve.

## **2.7. EMPLOYEE TURNOVER**

The barriers of employee engagement mentioned above can result in employee turnover which certainly affect the organization. One of the sub objectives of this paper is to investigate whether or not poor employee engagement can lead to labor turnover at Zambezi Regional Council.

Employee turnover refers to the proportion of employees who leave an organization over a set period expressed as a percentage of total workforce numbers (CIPD, 2014). Armstrong (2012) defines employees turnover as the rate of people leaving an organization, he assert that turnover can be disruptive and costly to the organization. A low rate of employee turnover is inevitable even when service conditions are almost perfect because some employees have to retire, move onto another organization, or leave for other reasons such as ill health, death, and personal reasons amongst others (Allen, Bryant and Vardaman 2010). This level of turnover is, however, not adverse to the organization.

On the contrary, a high turnover rate impacts negatively on both the employees and the employers. For instance, high turnover of employees can cause the pool of entry-level employees to shrink, force the use of temporary employees, impact negatively on productivity and competitiveness, and impede skills development (Long, Perumal, and Ajagbe, 2012).

Employee turnover can certainly be problematic and in some cases devastating for organizations, however, developing and implementing effective evidence base guidelines for managing turnover requires that the parties involved e.g., the Human Resources Manager need to understand the impact of turnover on the organization and how to manage employee turnover (Allen, Bryant and Vardaman 2010). Even when voluntary turnover rate drops due to unfavorable labor markets it would be short-sighted to ignore retention management for example there is evidence that high unemployment rates have little or no impact on the turnover of highly skilled employees or those in a demand skill set.

Allen, Bryant and Vardaman 2010 suggest that the following are some of the reasons why employees leave the organization. Firstly, employees feel the job or workplace is not what they expected, secondly, there is a mismatch between the job and person, third, there is too little coaching and feedback, fourth, there are too few growth and advancement opportunities, fifth, employees feel devalued and unrecognized and lastly, employees feel stress from overwork and have a work/life imbalance. There is a loss of trust and confidence in senior leaders.

Hence, when employees leaves the organization its costs the organization time and money to replace them, the total cost of which sometimes range from the 90%-200% of the annual salary for the position advertised. In addition to the obvious direct costs, there are a wide range of other direct and indirect costs associated with turnover, and organizations must attempt to avoid these costs at all times (Allen, Bryant and Vardaman 2010).

## **2.8. CONCLUSION**

From the arguments advanced above, it clear that employees are the most important assets of any institution or organization. Where employees feel that their efforts are valued, they will offer their best of their abilities towards the achievement of the organizational goals and objectives. Opportunities should be created for employees to excel in their work, by so doing they will feel that they are part of the organizational family.

When employees are not engaged, the results can be employee turnover which is very catastrophic to the survival of the organization. It is important that managers in any given organizational set up should be able to know and meet the needs of employee at all times and keep track of every employee's performance.

The next chapter discusses the methodology adopted by the study to collect the required data.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the research design that was used to collect data, the sampling methods and techniques that were followed. The chapter also describes the research instruments and data analysis tools and methods used in compiling the report.

#### **3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study adopted a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is important to gather information such as employees' preferences, opinions and suggestions. Qualitative method provides better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and the problem can be understood within the context such as employee engagement. The qualitative method was used, because the approach helps gain understanding on how employee engagement and employee performance affect the Zambezi Regional Council. The advantages of this approach are that the findings have greater validity and less artificiality. Using qualitative approach makes it easier to collect more information because affected employees tend to show their dissatisfaction through complaints, incompetency and unproductiveness.

#### **3.3. POPULATION**

The Zambezi Regional Council has a staff compliment of about eighty nine (99) according to the approved structure. The study focused or targeted this population group as respondents for the purpose of this research. Since the purpose of this study was to gain better understanding on how employee engagement affects employees,

the research was partly exploratory. At the same time the research was partly descriptive because more information was obtained.

**Table: Population Distribution**

<b>Population Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Top Management Staff	8	8.08
Middle Level Management	11	11.11
Lower Management	80	80.81
<b>Total</b>	99	100

### **3.4. SAMPLE**

Studying the entire population identified in paragraph 3.3 may be unattainable hence in order to get good participation from the sampled employees, the research used simple random sampling method. The sample was chosen according to a difference in background, age group, and employment status and employee experience. Sampling is the process of selecting a fractional part of the whole relevant group or population.

The basic idea is that by selecting some of the elements in a group and focusing research on this finite group, the researcher may apply the findings of the study to the whole organization. The researcher took samples from all hierarchy of the regional council structure. Each of the population in all levels had an equal chance of being included into the sample. 45 questionnaires were distributed to employees who participated in the study.

**Table: Sampling Distribution**

<b>Sampling Category</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Top Management Staff	2
Middle Level Management	5
Lower Management	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>

### **3.5. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

A questionnaire was developed and used to collect the required data. The questionnaire comprised of short and long questions which sought to solicit the envisaged responses.

### **3.6. PROCEDURES**

A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to elicit information and to get feedback from employees of the Zambezi Regional Council. The questionnaire was hand delivered to employees both at the regional office and at different constituency offices. Primary data was used because the researcher obtained information from employees through the questionnaire. The information obtained was first hand. The data was qualified by condensing the material in some systematic way to make it more manageable so that collected data is meaningful to the researcher.

The data is structured in terms of themes and pie charts. The questions are simplified for ease of comprehension, and based on the objectives set out in the introductory chapter. The participants who took part in research all voluntarily participated and



no one was coerced to participate in the study. Participation was anonymous and confidential. All participants were required to give express consent.

The research results may be shared with participants on approval by the examiner and the University. The participants were under no obligation to participate in the investigation thus they could withdraw from the research at any given time.

### **3.7. DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and narrative explanations presented in the study.

### **3.8. RESEARCH ETHICS**

The University of Namibia ethics guidelines were adhered to. Prior to data collection all necessary approvals for data collections were obtained from Zambezi Regional Council. Furthermore, individuals were notified of the purpose and the nature of the study and participation was done on a voluntary basis. Assurance was given to respondents that only information authorized by the stakeholders will be published if the need arises.

### **3.9. CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a detailed account of the research methodology adapted for this study, data collection methods and instrument, the population and sample size, the procedures involved and the data collection processes and analysis of the data collected. In the next chapter, the data collected will be analyzed and explained.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter analyses and discusses the questionnaire result using graphs and charts to illustrate the outcomes and responses thereto.

#### **4.2. RESPONSE RATE**

A sample that consisted of 40 potential respondents from the planning directorate and administration were randomly selected from a population of 89 Zambezi Regional Council employees. This sample consisted of employees from the Regional Council headquarter and constituencies. Out of this sample, a total number of 37 respondents took part in the survey, representing a response rate of 92.5%.

#### **4.3. PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS**

The questionnaire was divided into two sections, namely, Section A that dealt with the demographic information of the respondents and Section B which dealt with activities related to employees' commitment and motivation.

The data is presented using Microsoft Excel and summarized and tabulated. Tabulated data is used to present the findings in graphs and charts. The coding is presented as follows:

- Question 1: An answer indicating male is assigned code 1 while that which indicated female is assigned code 2.

- Question 2: The answers for respondents who selected the age group less than 25 years old is assigned code 1, between 26 and 44 was assigned code 2 and those greater than 45 is assigned code 3.
- Question 3: The responses from employees who possess less than 5 years working experience are coded 1, those between 6 to 14 were coded 2, while those who have a working experience above 15 are coded 3.
- Question 4: Answers indicating Permanent employment was coded 1 and those on contract as coded 2.
- Question 5: There were four possible answers to this question, namely, finance, administration, planning and human resources and these are coded 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively.
- Question 6: This question had five possible answers and these are management, official, IT technician, general worker and driver. These are coded 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.
- Question 7: This part had six answers which the respondent could choose from, namely, grade 10 certificates, grade 12 certificates, a certificate, diploma, degree and post graduate and these were coded as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- Question 8: There are five possible answers; single, married divorced/separated living with partner and widowed. They are coded as 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
- Questions 9 to 26: These questions are based on the Likert scale whereby the answers of those who indicated strongly agree with a particular question were given a code of 1, code 2 for agree, code 3 for neutral, code 4 for disagree, code 5 for strongly disagree and code 6 for don't know.

A table is presented from the resulting data by noting how many respondents gave similar answers. The resulting data are graphically represented and discussed in the section 4.4.

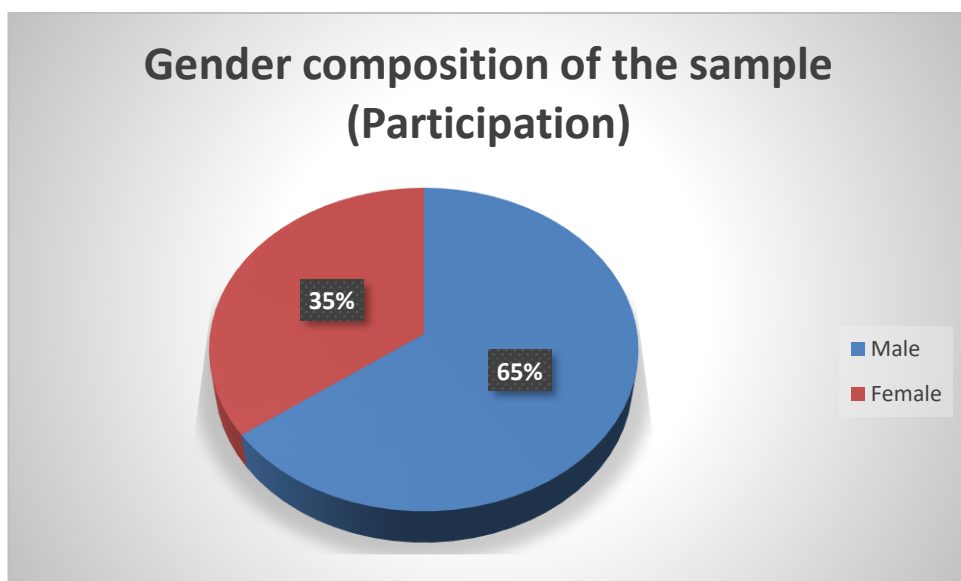
#### **4.4. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS**

This section summarizes the results of the primary data collected for the research study. It is divided into two sub-sections, namely, the demographic information section and the responses from the Likert scale questions.

##### **4.4.1. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

The demographic information collection section consists of eight (8) questions. These questions are aimed at establishing the gender of the respondents, their age, working experience, job type, business unit or department, job position, education qualifications and their marital status. The results are presented using different graphs bellow.

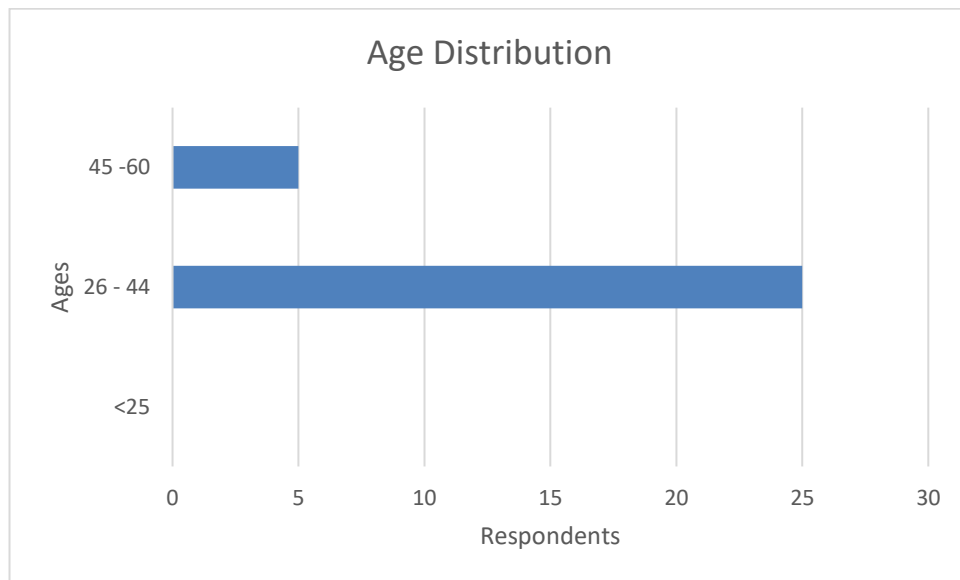
##### **4.4.1.1. GENDER DISTRIBUTION**



**Figure 1: The gender composition of the sample (N = 37)**

The research includes the gender of the respondents in order to establish the number of each sex group at ZRC. The gender composition of the sample indicates or shows that 35% of the respondents are female while 65% of the sample are male (figure 1). This shows that Zambezi regional Council is dominated by male employees as compared to the female employees. Hence, the outcome is predominately male influenced.

**4.4.1.2.AGE GROUP DISTRIBUTION**

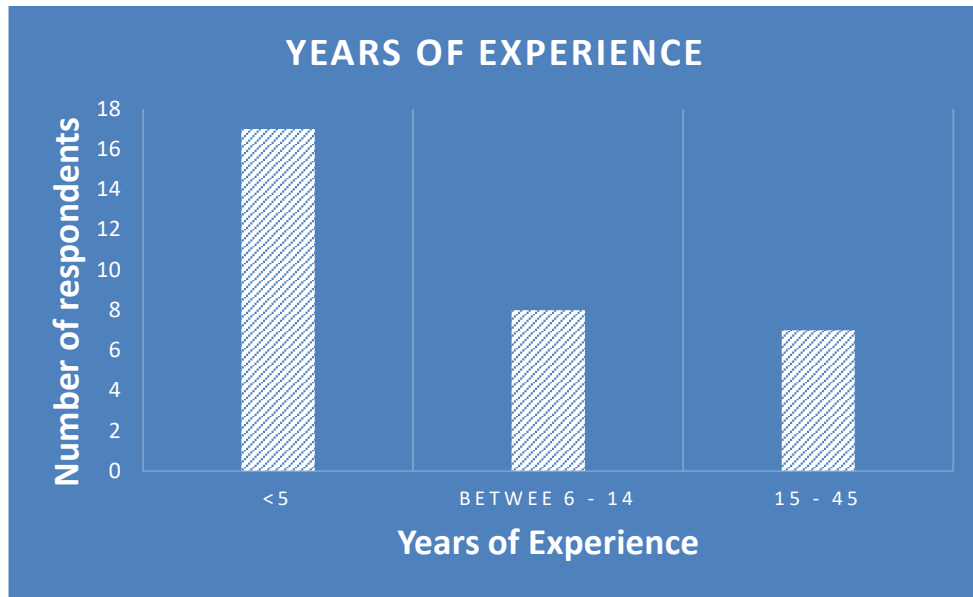


**Figure 2: Age distribution (N = 30)**

NOTE: Seven respondents did not respond to this question

According to figure 2, the number of respondents aged 26 to 44 years are the majority making up 83% of the total sample while those above 45 years old makes up only 17%. This indicates a youthful, educated and capable workforce that would have more high performers given the right tools and resources, to influence commitment and motivation.

#### 4.4.1.3. YEARS OF EXPERIENCE DISTRIBUTION

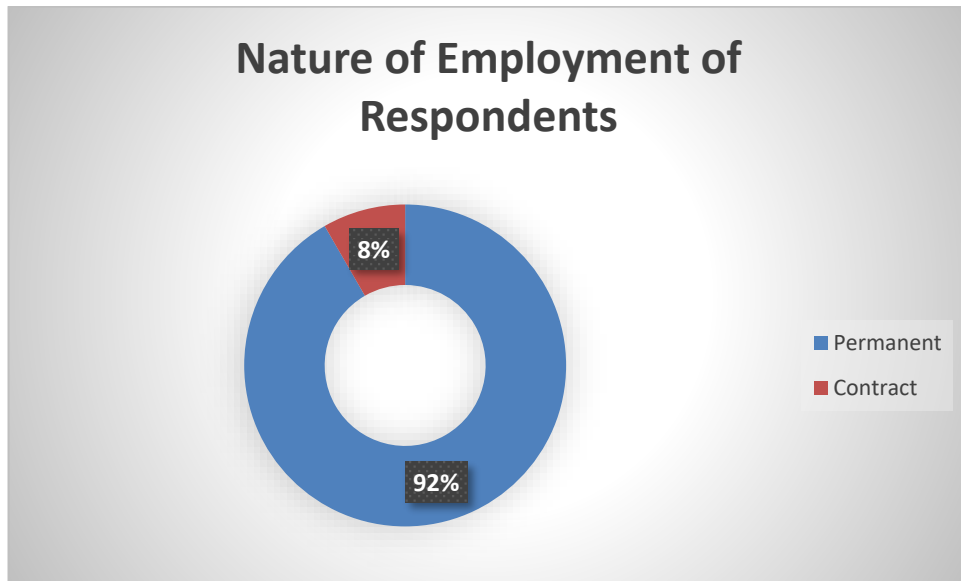


**Figure 3: Years of experience distribution (N = 32)**

NOTE: It should be noted that 5 respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 3 illustrates that the majority of the employees, 17 (53%), have plus/minus 5 years of working experience and 15 (47%) have more work experience. This indicates a work force that is balanced. Those with less experience will learn from those with more years of work experience, although they are few.

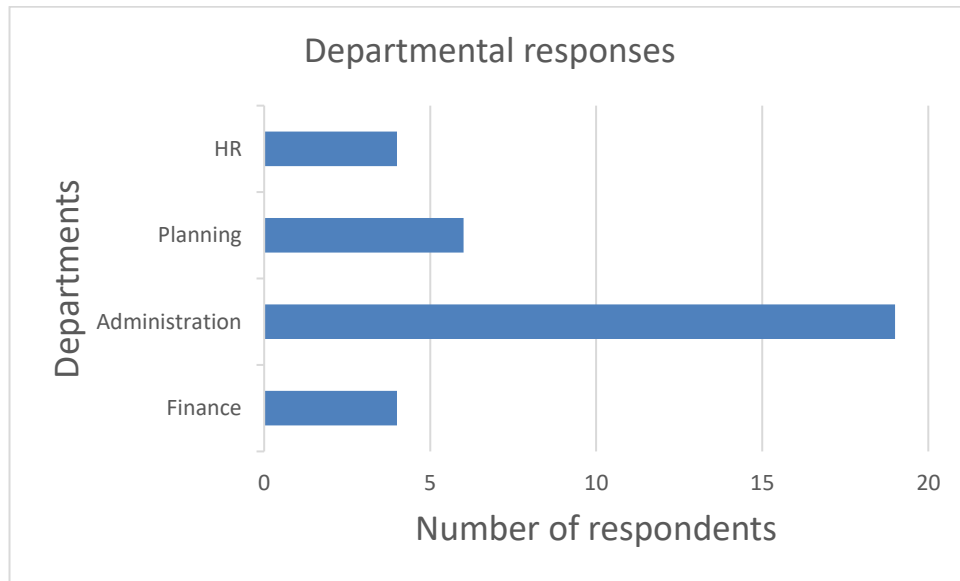
#### 4.4.1.4.JOB TYPE DISTRIBUTION



**Figure 4: The nature of employment (N = 37)**

Figure 4, clearly indicates that 92% of the workforce of ZRC are employed permanently and only 8% are on fixed terms contracts. This also shows that employees will have the benefits that they need to make sure that they perform their tasks diligently influenced by job security as compared to those on limited contracts.

#### 4.4.1.5. DEPARTMENTAL DISTRIBUTION

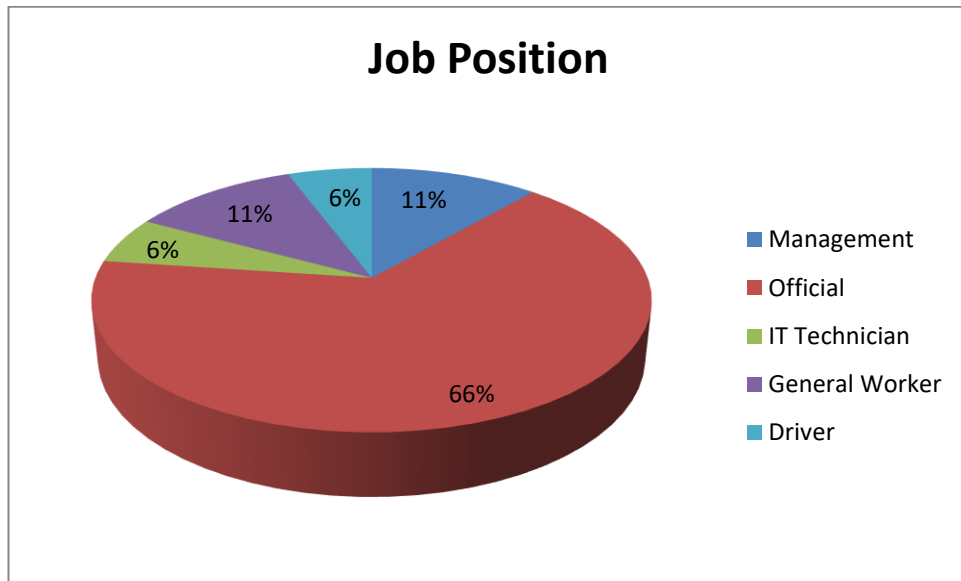


**Figure 5: Departmental Responses (N = 33)**

Figure 5 illustrates that the majority of the workforce interviewed belong to the administration department. 58% employees from administration were interviewed. This is followed by the planning directorate with a staff compliment of 6 (18%) employees, the finance and HR departments stood at 4 (12%) employees each. This can be attributed to that fact that ZRC is an organization that is administratively based, thus the majority of the workforce is in the administration department.



#### 4.4.1.6. DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO POSITIONS

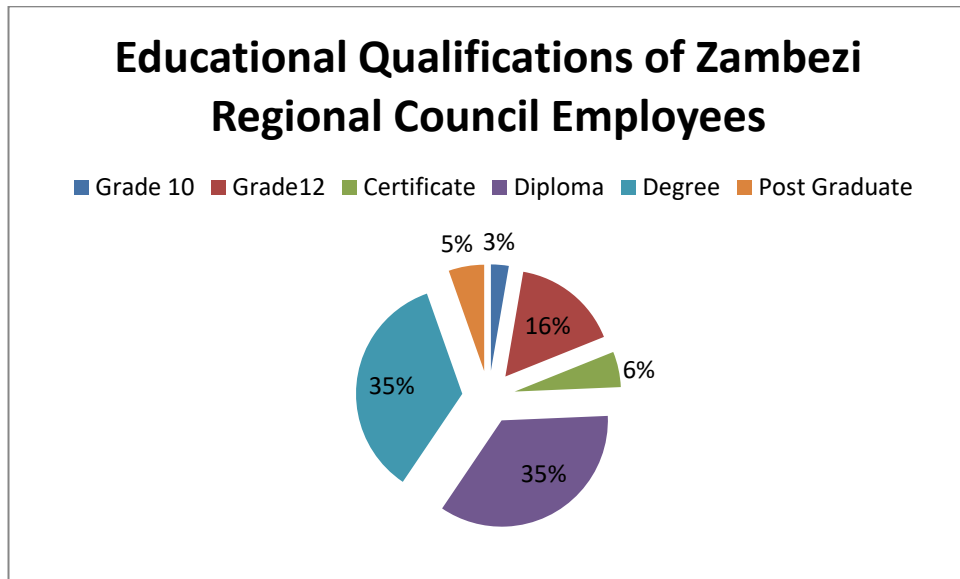


**Figure 6: Distribution of respondents according to positions (N = 35)**

NB: Two respondents did not respond to this question.

Figure 6 shows that 4 (11%) from management respondents to the survey, 23 (66%) are from officials ranking from administrative assistants to control administrative officers. Two (6%) from the IT section which falls under administration, 4 (11%) represent general workers which includes laborers and cleaners and another 2 (6%) represents the drivers. This also indicates that more responses were received from officials.

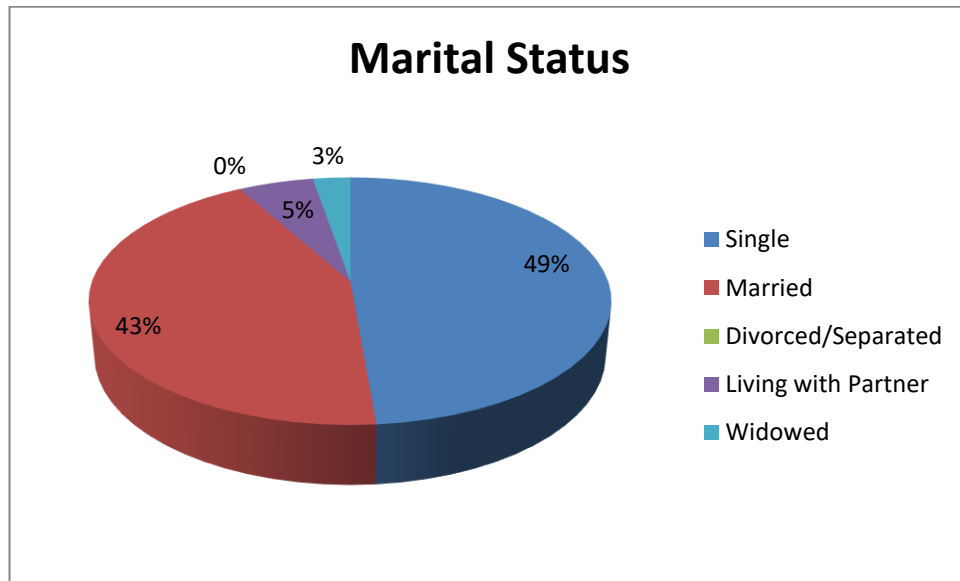
#### 4.4.1.7.DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS



**Figure 7: Distribution according to educational qualifications (N = 37)**

Figure 7, the workforce of ZRC comprises of academic and professional qualifications of employees. As shown on figure 7, 40% of the workforce of ZRC are degree holders of which 5% out of the 40% hold post graduate degrees. Thirty five percent (35%) are diploma holders and 6% have certificates in different fields of studies. Sixteen (16%) of the employees have grade 12 certificates and 3% are holders of grade 10 certificates. From the above, it is noticeable that 81% of ZRC workforce is equipped with the necessary training to perform their duties. Educational background is helpful in aiding commitment to work.

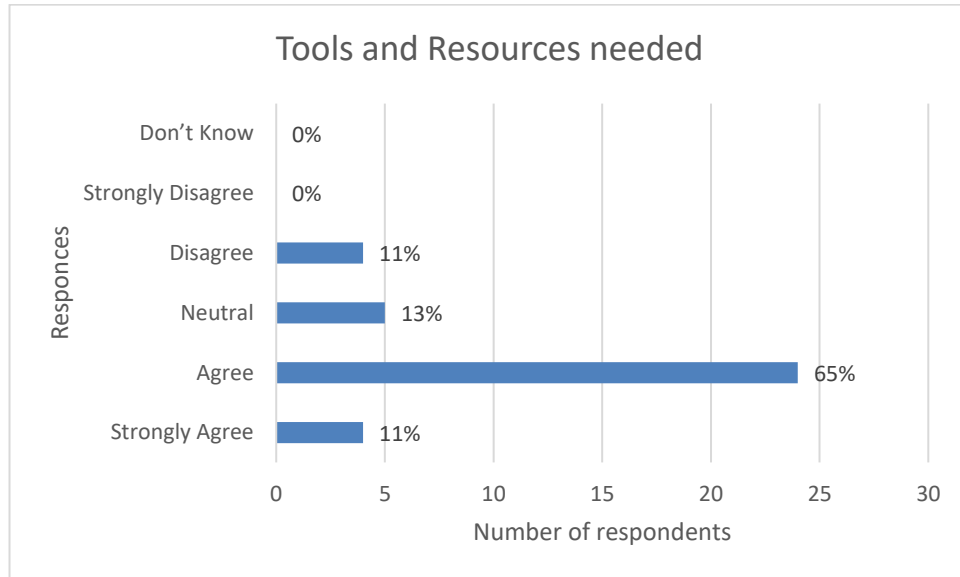
#### 4.4.1.8. DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO MARITAL STATUS



**Figure 8: Distribution according to marital status (N = 37)**

The findings in figure 8 show that 49% of employees of ZRC are single while 43% are married, 3% are widowed and 5% are living with partners. This shows that given all the necessary tools to use, Zambezi Regional Council's performance can significantly increase because 49% of the workforce do not have family commitments, therefore, they will devote most of their time in the activities they do at work.

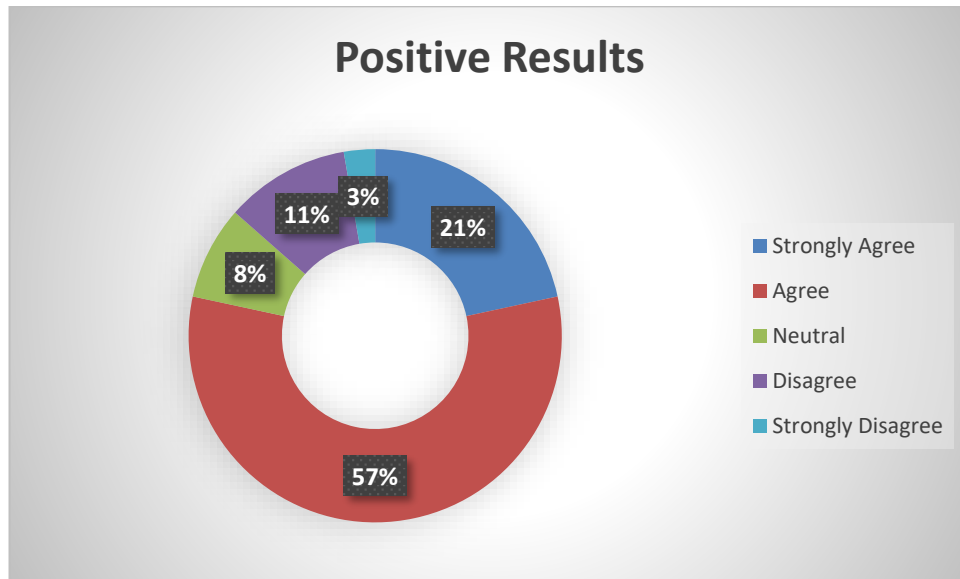
**4.4.2. LIKERT SCALE QUESTIONS RESPONSES**  
**4.4.2.1.WHETHER EMPLOYEES HAVE THE TOOLS AND**  
**RESOURCES NEEDED TO DO THEIR JOB**



**Figure 9: Response to whether or not employees have the tools and resources needed to do their job (N = 37)**

Figure 9 indicates that there is a high percentage (65%) of employees who agree that they have the resources and the tools they need to perform their duties. It also shows that there are other employees who are neutral (13%) and others disagree (11%) that they do not have the necessary tools and resources they need to do their tasks. Eleven percent (11%) of the respondents shows that they agree that they all have the resources they need.

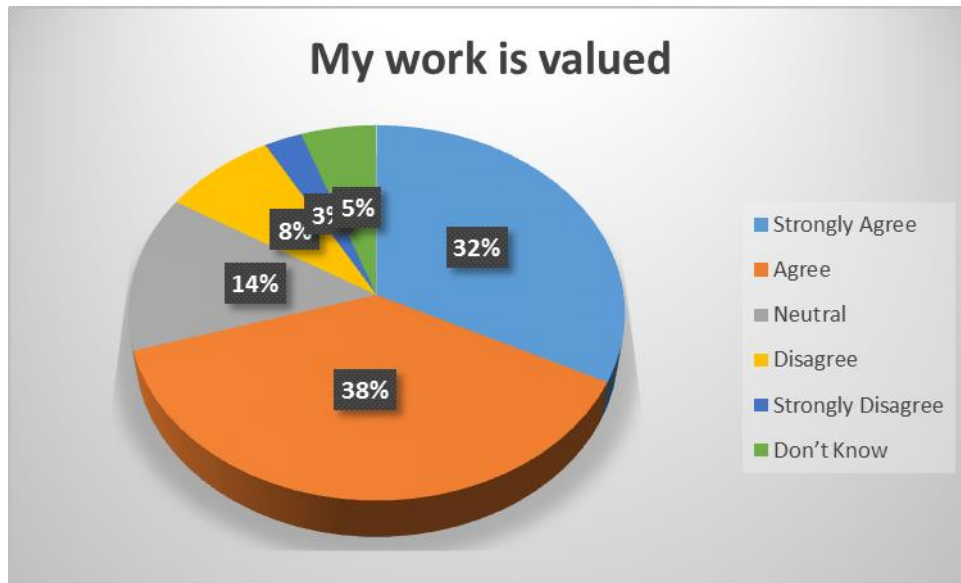
**4.4.2.2. QUESTION ON WHETHER EMPLOYEES SEE POSITIVE RESULTS BECAUSE OF THEIR WORK**



**Figure 10: Whether or not employees see positive results because of their work (N = 37)**

From figure 10 above, it can be deduced that 57% of the employees of ZRC see positive results taking place in the organization because of their efforts. This can help employees to be more committed to their work because they would want to continue seeing this positive result all the time. Another good indicator is that 21% of employees strongly believe that they see changes and results all the time. Here 8% of employees are neutral, 3% strongly disagree and 11% totally disagree in the strongest terms.

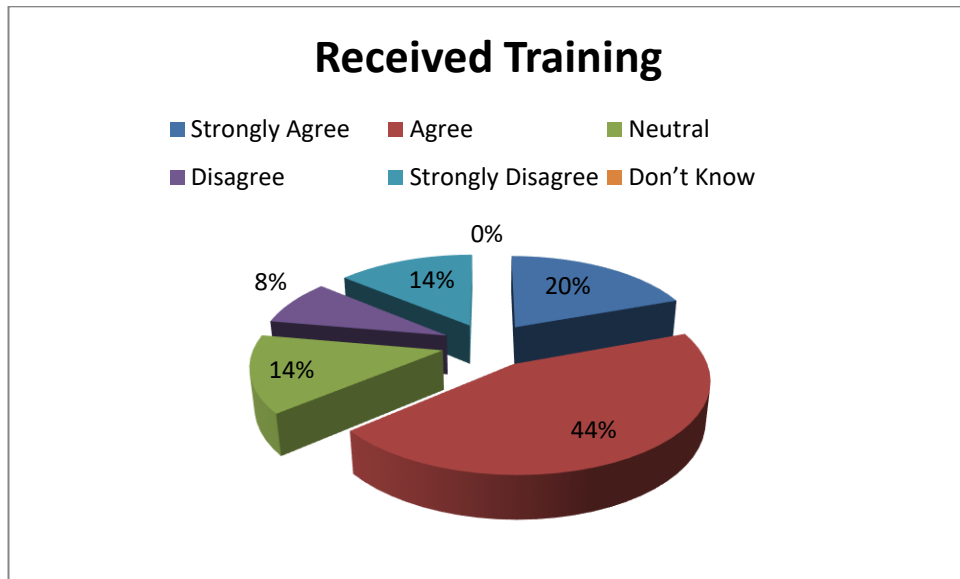
**4.4.2.3. QUESTION ON WHETHER THE WORK OF THE EMPLOYEES  
IS VALUED BY THE ORGANIZATION**



**Figure 11: Whether or not the work of the employees is valued by the organization (N = 37)**

Figure 11 above shows that out of the 37 respondents, 14 (38%) agree that ZRC value their contributions or their work. It also shows that 12 (32%) of the respondents strongly agree that indeed their work is being valued by ZRC. Five (5) (14%) were neutral, in other words, they do not know whether their contribution is valued or not. About 16% feel that their work and contribution to ZRC is not noticed or valued at all.

**4.4.2.4. QUESTION ON WHETHER EMPLOYEES HAVE RECEIVED TRAINING THEY NEED TO DO THEIR JOB WELL**

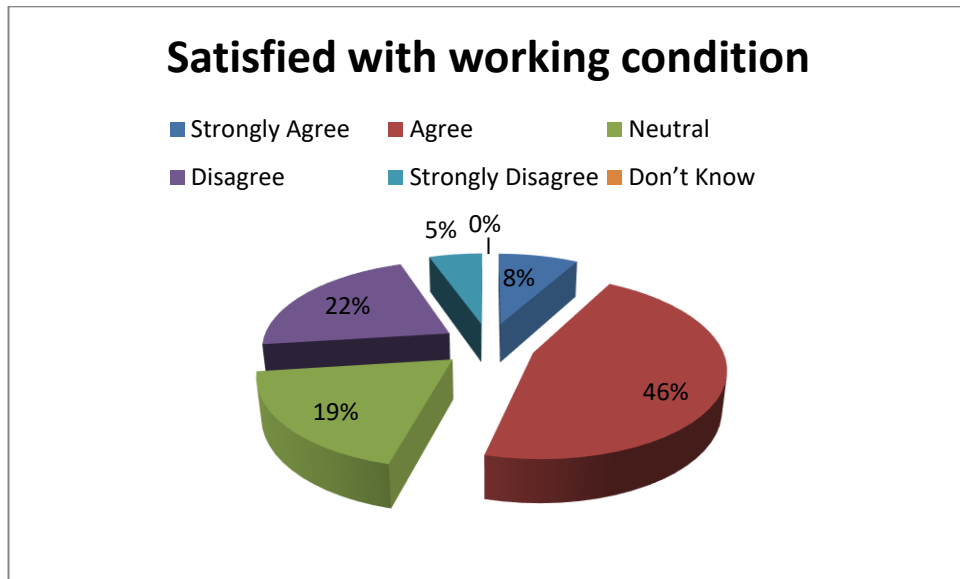


**Figure 12: Whether or not employees have received training needed to perform their job well (N = 36)**

NOTE: One respondent did not respond to this question.

Figure 12 indicates that 20% of the respondents strongly agree that they received training. Forty four (44%) also agree that they were trained. Therefore, a combination of the two shows that 64% of employees of ZRC were trained or equipped with necessary skills to perform their duties. About 14% of the respondents were neutral on whether they received training or not. This percentage coupled together with those who responded that they disagree 8% and 14% strongly disagree should be taken into account. This represents 36% of ZRC workforce that has not been sent for training. These form part of the employees who can get disengaged in the long run. According to Khan (2012), training is one of the tools that equip employees to improve their job performance.

#### 4.4.2.5. QUESTION ON WHETHER EMPLOYEES ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR CURRENT WORKING CONDITIONS

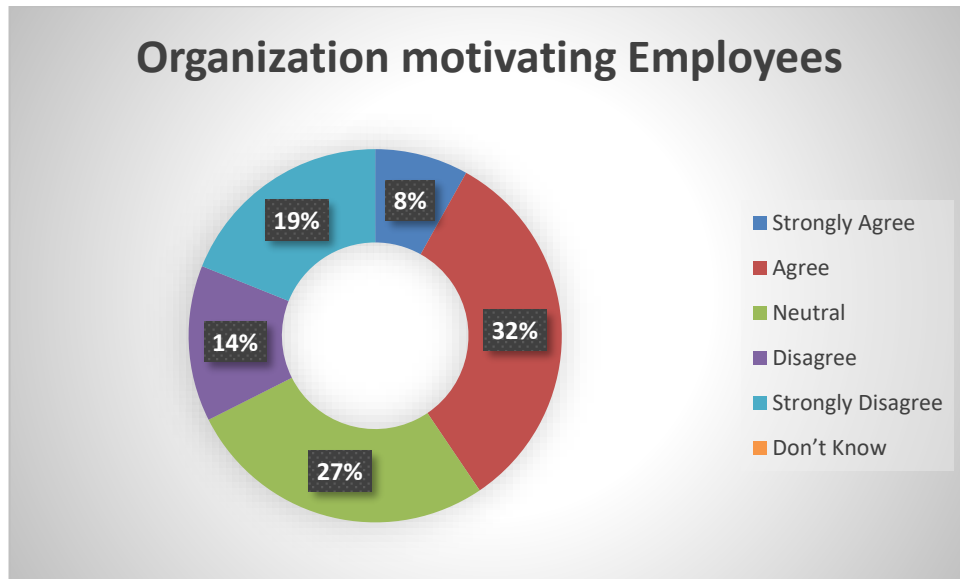


**Figure 13: Whether or not employees are satisfied with their current working conditions (N = 37)**

Figure 13 informs us that among the 37 respondents who were part of the survey, 54% (strongly agree 8% and 46% agree) are in agreement that they are well satisfied with their current working conditions. An alarming percentage of 46% (neutral 19%, disagree 22% and 5% strongly disagree) shows that some employees are not satisfied with their working conditions. This percentage can bring devastating effects to the organization if not given attention. Employees will start looking for greener pasture somewhere else leaving ZRC with a high turnover of employees.



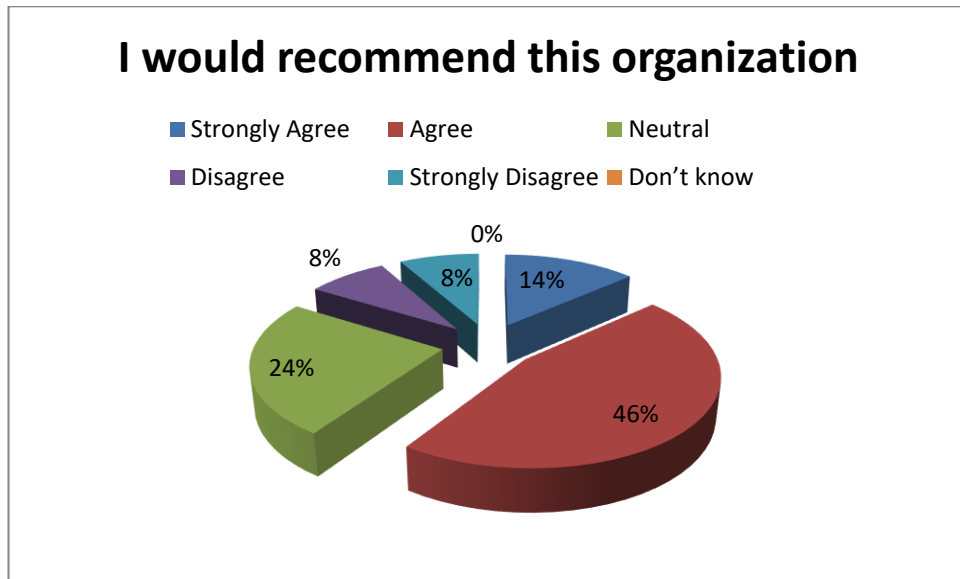
**4.4.2.6. QUESTION ON WHETHER ZRC MOTIVATES ITS EMPLOYEES TO GO ABOVE AND BEYOND THEIR ROLES.**



**Figure 14: Whether ZRC motivates its employees to go above and beyond their roles (N = 37)**

Figure 14 shows that a combined 40% strongly agree and also the same percentage agree suggesting that employees are motivated or they are factors of motivation in place to motivate employees to do best in their roles. On the other hand, 60% are not in agreement and this raises a serious concern that really needs to be looked at and worked upon by the regional council, otherwise like it is stated in figure 13, employees will start leaving the council one by one.

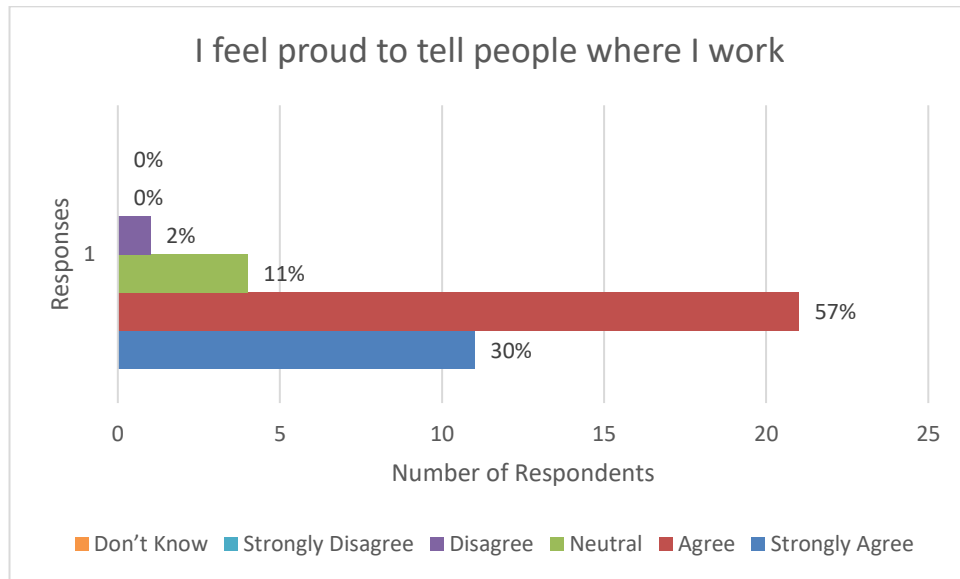
**4.4.2.7. QUESTION ON WHETHER EMPLOYEES WOULD RECOMMEND ZRC TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY**



**Figure 15: Whether or not employees would recommend ZRC to friends and family (N = 37)**

This question was posed to find out on how they value their organization. Figure 15 shows that 60% of those respondents said they would recommend ZRC to their friends and families while 40% said that they would not recommend ZRC to friends and families. Again this is a high number and requires attention in order to attract the right staff and they retain competent employees.

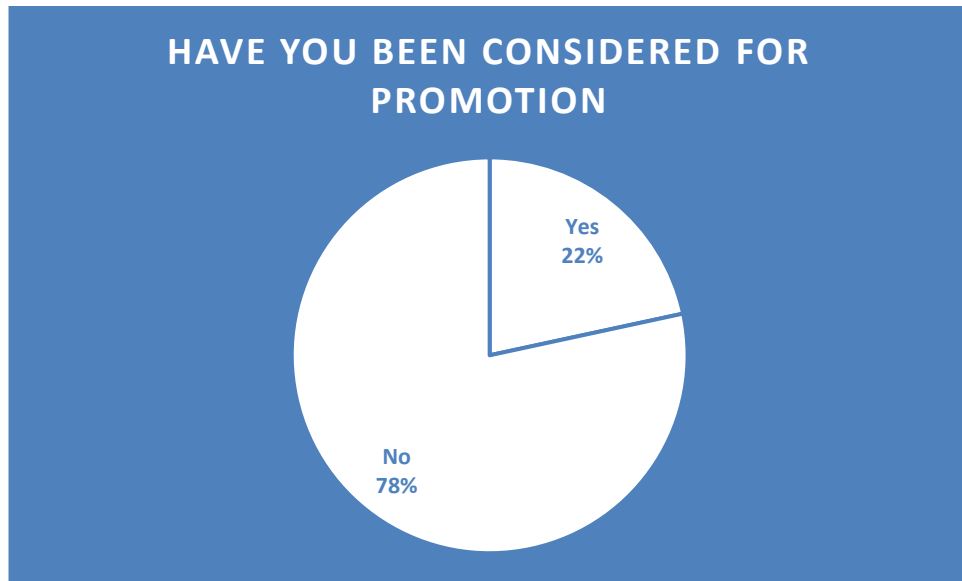
**4.4.2.8.RESPONDENTS WERE ASKED WHETHER THEY FEEL PROUD TO TELL PEOPLE WHERE THEY WORK**



**Figure 16: Respondents were asked whether they feel proud to tell people where they work (N = 37)**

Figure 16 shows that 87% (57% & 30%) of the workforce of ZRC feel proud to tell people where they work while only 13% (11% & 2%) don't usually feel proud to tell people where they work. From here, one can deduce that Zambezi Regional Council employees are happy with the organization.

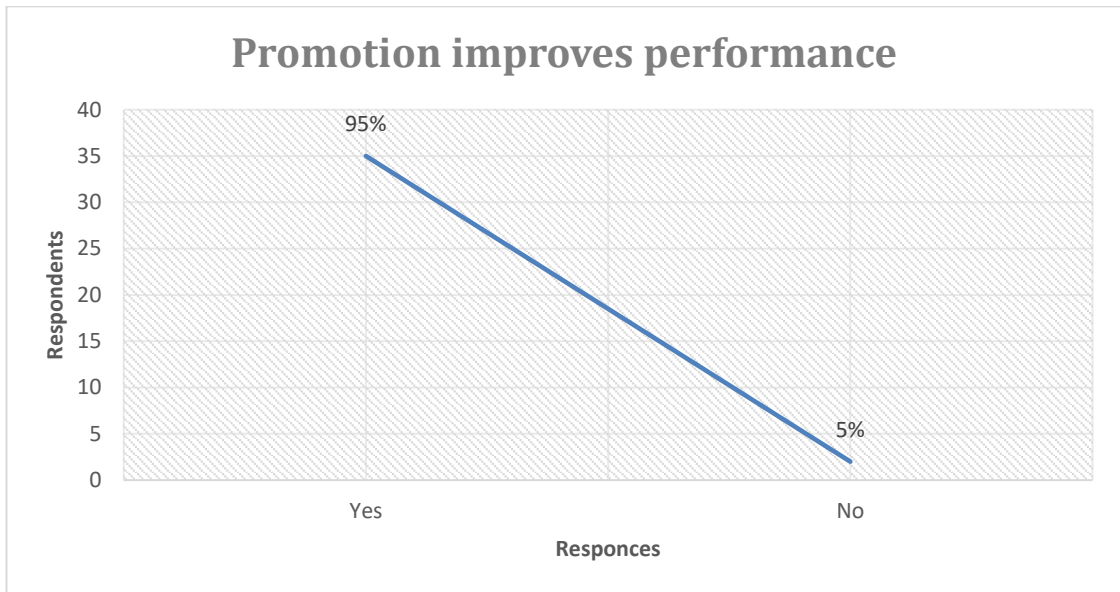
**4.4.2.9.THIS QUESTION WAS ASKED TO ESTABLISH WHETHER THE RESPONDENT WAS CONSIDERED FOR PROMOTION**



**Figure 17: Have you been considered for promotion (N = 37)**

Only 22% of the respondents have been considered for promotion at ZRC, figure 17, shows that 78% have not been considered for promotion. This can cause mixed feelings among employees, in that they will start to feel that they are not wanted in the organization. This will demotivate most employees to the extent that they will start considering leaving the organization.

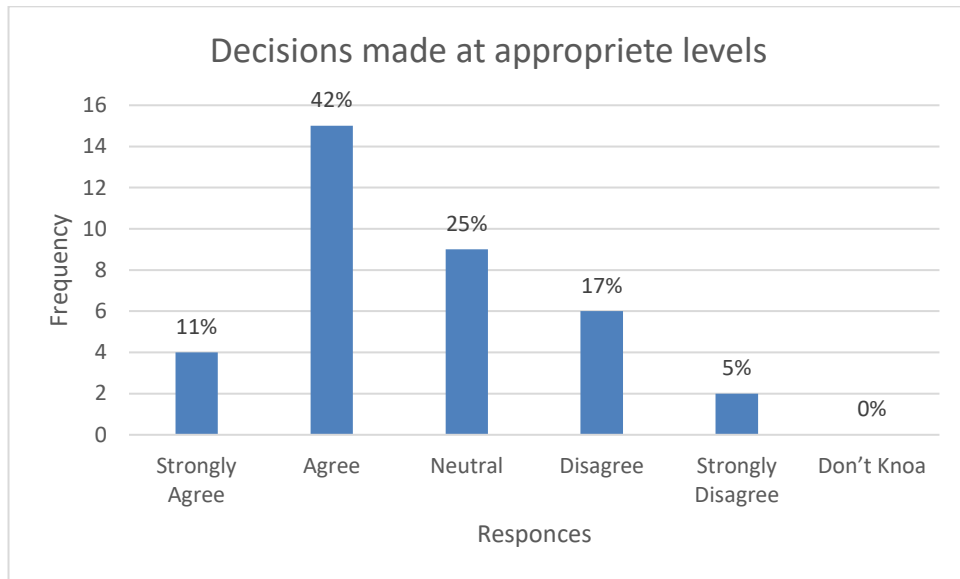
**4.4.2.10. DO YOU THINK PROMOTION IMPROVES PERFORMANCE?**



**Figure 18: Promotion improves performance (N = 37)**

Figure 18 indicates that the majority of the employees, 95%, believe that promotion improves their job performance.

#### 4.4.2.11. DECISIONS MADE AT APPROPRIATE LEVELS IN THE ORGANIZATION

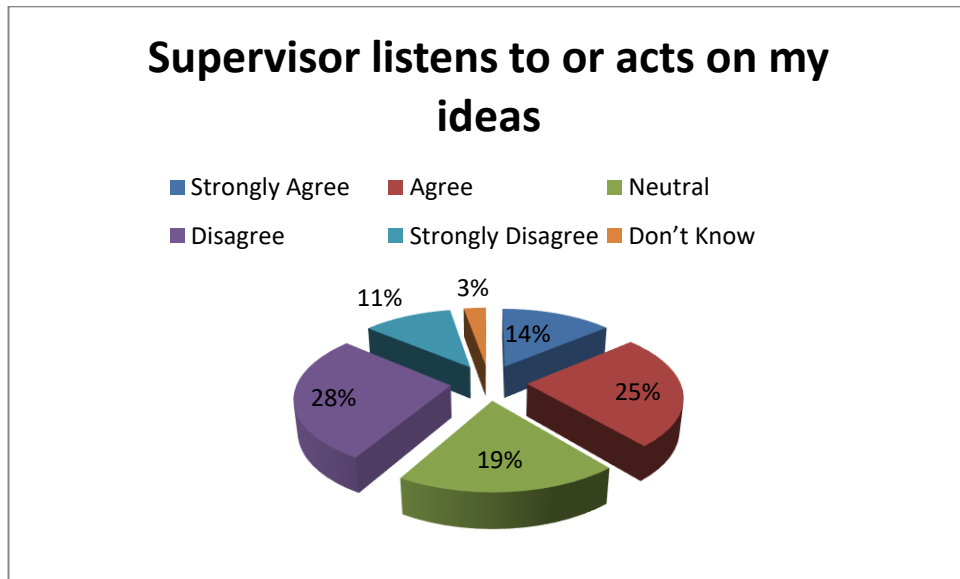


**Figure: 19: Whether or not decisions are made at appropriate levels in the organization (N = 36)**

NOTE: One respondent did not answer this question.

Fifty three (53%) (11% & 42%) of the respondents agree that decisions are always made at appropriate levels in the organization, as shown in figure 19. On the other hand, 47% (25%, 17% & 5%) disagree that decisions are made at appropriate levels within ZRC.

**4.4.2.12. MY SUPERVISORS LISTEN TO OR ACT ON EMPLOYEES' IDEAS**

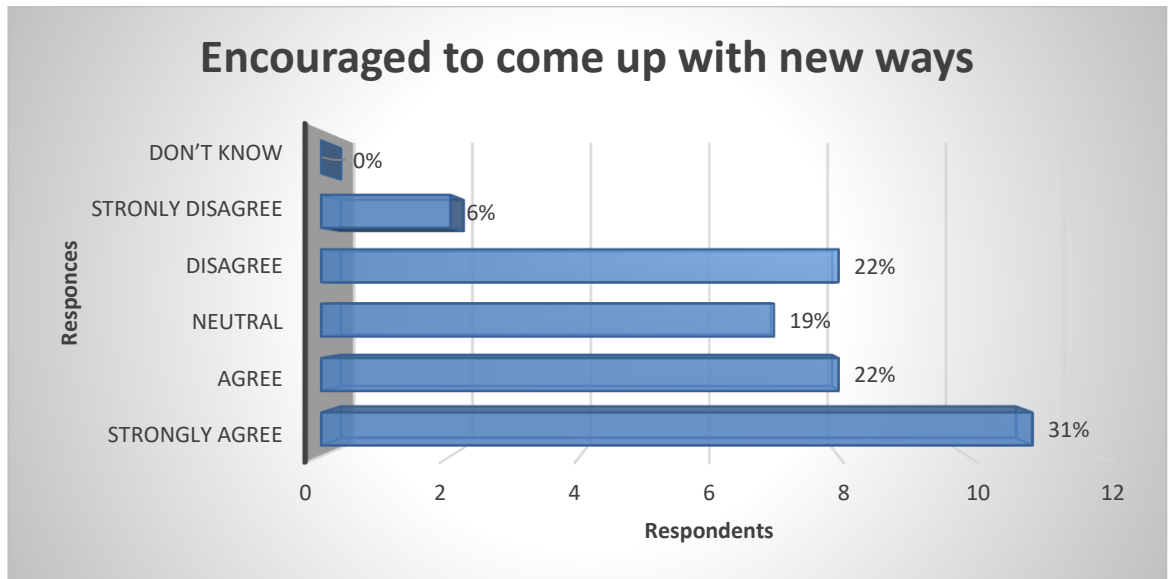


**Figure 20: Whether or not supervisors listen to and act on employees' ideas (N = 36)**

NOTE: One respondent did no answer this question.

A total number of number of 22 (61%) respondents disagreed that their supervisors listen to their suggestion when it comes to other activities in the organization. In contrast to that, 14 (39%) agree that their supervisors listen to them. This is worrisome because a great number of ZRC employees are not in good working relations with their supervisors and this can lead them not doing other tasks that may be assigned to them by their superiors.

**4.4.2.13. ARE EMPLOYEES ENCOURAGED TO COME UP WITH NEW WAYS OF DOING THINGS IN THEIR ROLES?**



**Figure 21: Encouraged to come up with new ways (N = 36)**

NOTE: Only one person did not respond to this question.

According to figure 21, more respondents agreed (53%) in comparison to those that disagreed (47%) that they are encouraged to come up with new ways of doing things in their roles. The number of those who disagreed cannot just be left without notice because it is a huge percentage.



**4.4.2.14. I AM GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE INVOLVED IN  
DECISION MAKING**

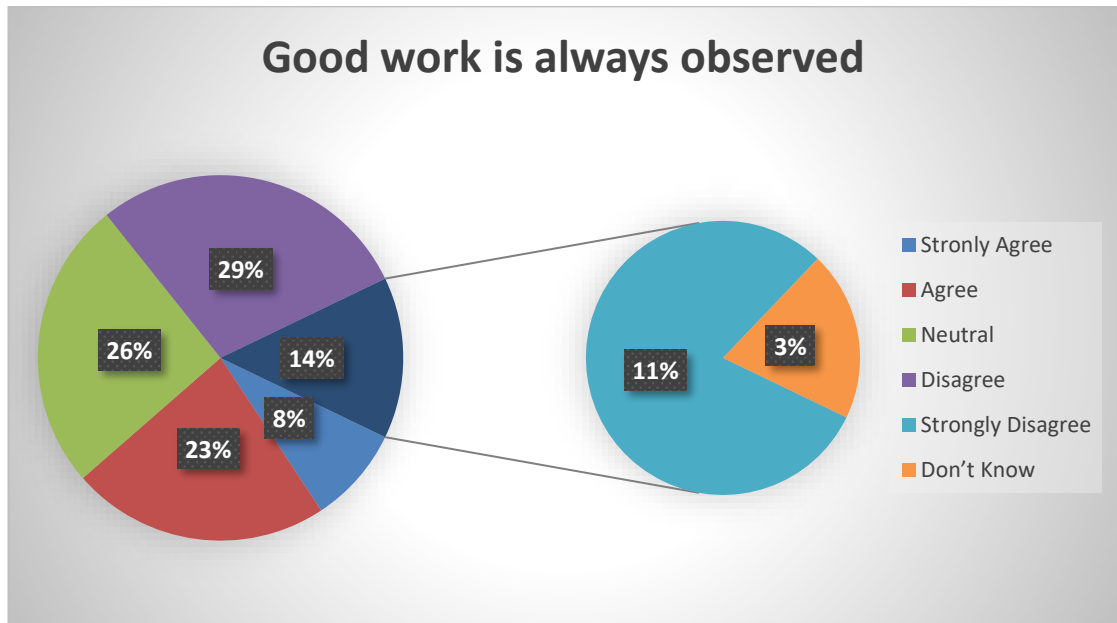


**Figure 22: Opportunity to be involved in decision making (N = 36)**

NOTE: Only one respondent did not reply to this question.

The summary of the results of this question reveals that 28% of the respondents agree that they are given the opportunity to be involved in the decision making process, as opposed to 72% who disagree that they are not involved in the decision making process.

**4.4.2.15. GOOD WORK IS ALWAYS OBSERVED AND SPECIAL CARE IS TAKEN TO APPRECIATE IT**

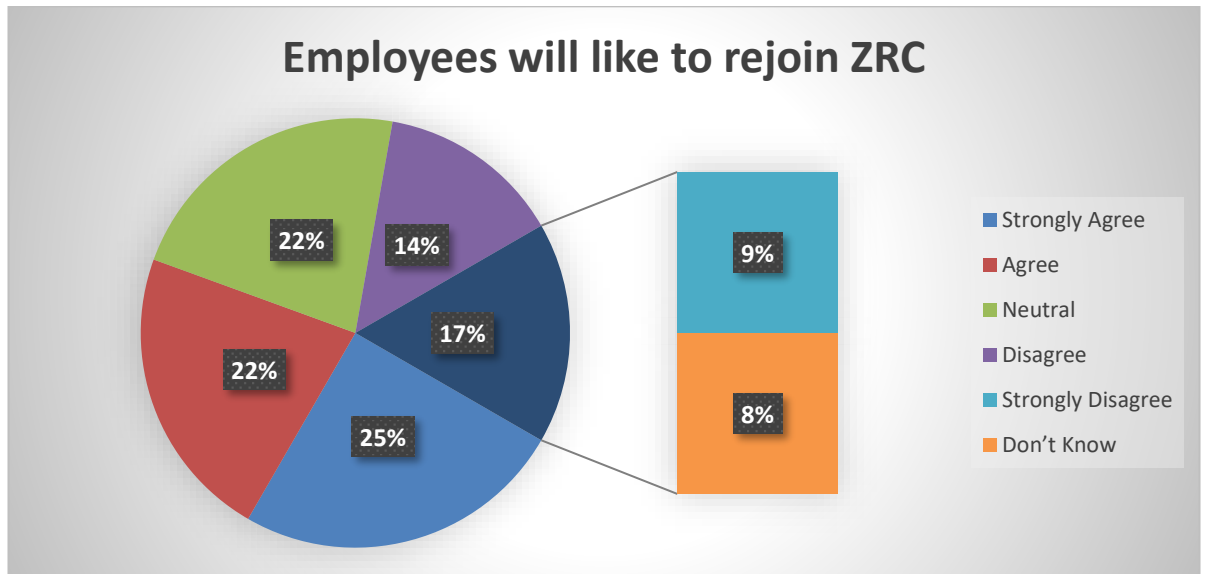


**Figure 23: Whether good work is always observed or not (N = 35)**

NOTE: Two respondents did not answer this question.

From figure 23, it can be seen that a significant number (26%) were undecided on whether good work is always observed and appreciated. When that number is combined with those that disagree, it goes up to 69% of people not agreeing that good work is always observed. Gollu and Kayi (2014) found that there is a strong positive relationship between training and employee motivation. Thus, the results in Figure 23 show that employees are not motivated to do a better job.

**4.4.2.16. GIVEN THE OPTION, EMPLOYEES WILL LIKE TO REJOIN AND WORK FOR ZRC**

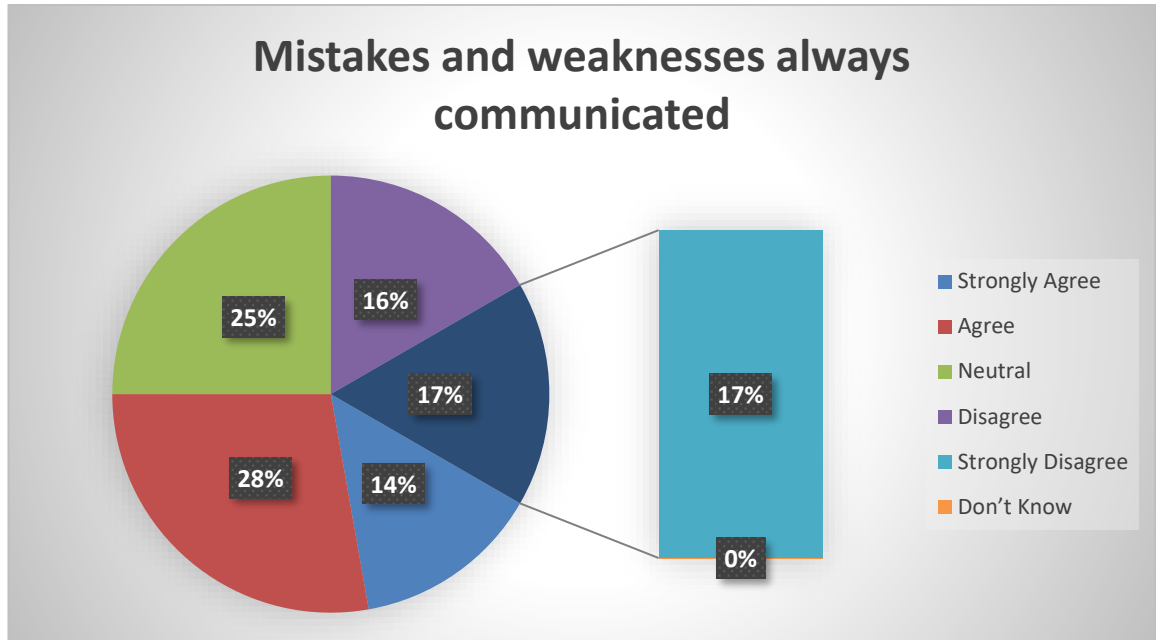


**Figure 24: Employees will rejoin ZRC (N = 36)**

NOTE: One respondent did not reply to this question.

Figure 24 shows that more respondents (53%) did not agree with rejoining ZRC given the choice. Forty seven (47%) of respondents are the ones that indicated that they would rejoin ZRC.

**4.4.2.17. MISTAKES AND WEAKNESSES ARE COMMUNICATED TO JUNIORS BY SENIORS IN A POLITE AND NON THREATENING WAYS**

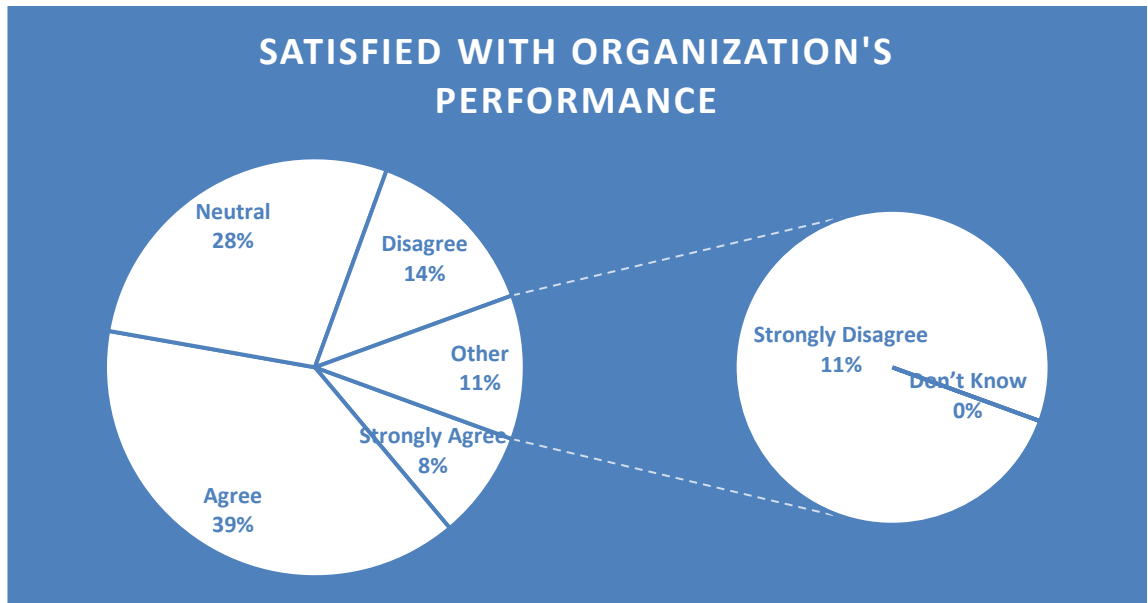


**Figure 25: Mistakes and weaknesses are communicated (N = 36)**

NOTE: One respondent did not respond to this question.

From the pie chart above, it can be noted that 42% of the respondents agreed that mistakes and weaknesses are always communicated to them in a polite way; in contrast, a significant number of 58% shows that they do not agree to the question that was asked.

**4.4.2.18. THE QUESTION ASKED WHETHER EMPLOYEES WERE SATISFIED WITH THE ORGANIZATION'S PERFORMANCE**



**Figure 26: Satisfied with organization's performance (N = 36)**

NOTE: One respondent did not answer to this question.

Figure 26 shows that 47% of the respondents are satisfied with performance of ZRC while 53% of the respondents show that they are not happy or rather satisfied with the performance of ZRC. This is a significant number and special attention should be given to it. This will lead to employees not getting engaged in their work and may decide that as long as they are getting a salary then it is well with them. In the process the organization may suffer because it will not be able to meet its objectives as planned.

#### **4.4.3. QUESTIONS 27 AND 28 WANTED THE EMPLOYEES TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES IN FEW LINES**

##### **4.4.3.1. IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT DO YOU THINK CAN ENHANCE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ORGANIZATION?**

Employees of ZRC indicated that there are no motivations interventions put in place that can motivate them to do their job better. Motivational factors such as performance appraisals came out strongly as one of the factors that can give employees the zeal to perform better in their different tasks as assigned by supervisors. Training was another factor. Employees feel that there is little being done by the council in terms of capacitating them through training. They need to be trained and equipped with necessary skills that would enhance their performance.

Communication breakdown is another issue that came out strongly. Channels of communication are not been followed, in the end there is too much confusion taking place which hampers the performance of other employees. There was another concern that not all the workforce of ZRC knows and understands the strategic plan of the organization. This in turn will cause workers to work contrary to the objectives of the organization. The strategic plan should be spelled out correctly so that everyone understands what the organization intends to achieve and where it is going or heading to.

Some employees felt that there is a serious deficiency in implementing resolutions that are always passed in the council meeting. Progress will be affected because it will be moving on a slow pace as opposed to when these resolutions are implemented

fast. Employees want to feel that they are part of the organization by participating in decision making that affects them. Council should also make sure that it makes funds available for those staff members who still want to further their studies to enhance proper service delivery.

**4.4.3.2. ARE THERE ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE ABOUT EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND THE PERFORMANCE OF ZRC WHICH ARE NOT COVERED IN THE QUESTIONS ABOVE?**

Team work is the best tool that can be used to get employees engaged in the organization. ZRC can put employees in clusters according to their departments. That way they will be able to learn from each other and work or pull together in the same direction without feeling that someone's services are not appreciated by the council. A good number of the respondents stated that promotion can motivate an employee to work harder. Employees felt that exchange or working visits can also help them learn how other regional councils engage and motivate their employees in their quest for effective service delivery.

**4.5. CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the outcome of the collective primary data collected. A brief analysis of the findings was done. It was established that a significant number of ZRC employees are not fully engaged. It was found that employees feel that their work is not being valued by ZRC.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the conclusions and recommendations of the study. It is therefore useful to reflect on the purpose and objectives of the study. The main objective of the study was to investigate whether or not ineffective and / or poor employee engagement has the potential effect on the Zambezi Regional Council's performance and employee retention.

A self-administered questionnaire was sent to sampled employees. The literature review provided a scope and theoretical perspective of the subject matter. Findings and conclusions have been deduced from the literature review and the questionnaire outcomes as presented in chapter 4.

This study was designed to answer the following sub-objectives:

- a) to analyze the current state of employee engagement at the Zambezi Regional Council
- b) to analyze the impact of ineffective employee engagement at the Zambezi Regional Council;
- c) to investigate whether or not poor employee engagement can lead to labour turnover at the Zambezi Regional Council; and
- d) to recommend remedial interventions that enhance effective employee engagement and retention.



## 5.2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

- a) Employee Satisfaction is directly linked to employee engagement. It has been found, through the study that the current state of employee engagement at Zambezi Regional Council is above average, 57% of employees are engaged and 43% are not engaged. The study found that for as long as employees come to work and receive their salaries at the end of the month that is enough for them. But no commitment or the desire for work due to lack of other motivational initiatives.

The study further found that only 57% of the workforce of the Zambezi Regional Council appreciate the positive results of the council's performance in service delivery. In their view, this is attributed to by the council having to recognize their efforts.

- b) Ineffective employee engagement at Zambezi Regional Council will lead to the organization not attaining its stated goal and objectives. Only 47% of employees expressed their discontentment in terms of employee engagements. Ineffective employee engagement does impact negatively on the performance of the council.
- c) Poor employee engagement can lead to labor turnover. There are factors that will motivate people to stay or leave the organization. When asked whether given the option, employee will like to rejoin and work for Zambezi Regional Council, 53% of employees indicated that they would not rejoined the

council. This indicates that if conditions are not improved, there is a possibility of 53% of employees leaving the organization.

### **5.3. CONCLUSION**

Based on the above findings, it is concluded that the majority of the Zambezi Regional Council employees are not happy with the organization and that had caused frustration in many employees hence their exits from the council employment. There are no motivating factors which are put in place to motivate employees as mentioned by McMinn (2017) in the literature review. Further, it has equally been established that employees are not involved at all in decision making including decisions that have bearing on their working life. This could be potentially so because the council is not a unionized environment and employees have opted not to be members of trade unions. Even so, the employer should have the courtesy to involve workers directly.

The Zambezi Regional Council has the potential to provide the best service to the public given available skills and expertise that are underutilized. The council could leverage on available skills and competencies to its advantage. Most employees of the council are educated with tertiary qualifications and vast experiences in service provision.

This study found mixed feelings among employees, some are happy with how ZRC operates and some are not. Definite measures need to be put in place so that all employees will pull in the same direction and be motivated to remain committed and

dedicate their skills to the council which will ultimately improve the service delivery expected of the council and to retain critical skills required for the council.

#### **5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Give the findings of the study, the following the remedial interventions are recommended to enhance effective employee engagement and retention based on the research findings:

- a) Employee involvement and communication is critical to stimulate employee participation and commitment to their work. In this respect, it is recommended that management at all levels should involve and have regards to the employees in decision making, particularly in decisions that affect their working lives.
- b) To ensure full employee engagement and commitment to their work, the ZRC must periodically conduct individual performance evaluation to determine value addition and extent of meeting performance targets. Those found lagging behind should be helped through in service training courses or further development in areas that need improvements. Such training will help equip them with necessary skills in order to remedy the situation of employees leaving the council for greener pastures. This will ultimately promote and encourage employee engagement and commitment.
- c) A reward system can also be introduced, in doing so, ZRC employees will be challenged to perform better in order for them to receive rewards at the end of each review period or financial year as it may be practical possible.
- d) Employees need to understand how their work contributes to the overall organizational outcome. Therefore development performance interventions

that aid employee appreciating their work and see their contribution to the organization ultimate service delivery is vital.

- e) This study if considered by ZRC will help improve the current disengagement at the ZRC and effectively improve retention and job satisfaction and ultimately improve service delivery.

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# APPENDIX - QUESTIONNAIRE

## AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND THE PERFORMANCE OF ZAMBEZI REGIONAL COUNCIL.

### Dear respondents

My name is Riscoh Muswabile Maloboka, I'm working as a Personal Assistant in the Office of the Governor in Zambezi Region. I'm a final year student, studying towards my Master Degree in Business Administration majoring in Management Strategy at Namibia Business School, University of Namibia. I have completed the course work part of the program and I am working on the research project in order to obtain my MBA degree.

This questionnaire contains a subset of research based anchor questions that are designed to measure the overall engagement factors that drive employee engagement and the performance of an organization.

Thank you in advance for your time and willingness to share your views on the relationship between employee engagement and the performance of Zambezi Regional Council. Please know that your anonymity is guaranteed. No one will be able to view your responses and the results will not include data that could identify individuals. The demographic profile seeks to learn whether staffs from different backgrounds and characteristics view rewards and performance differently.

### Part 1

#### Demographic Information

1. **Sex:** Male  Female
2. **Age:**
3. **How many years have you been**  **working?**
4. **Job type** Permanent  Contract
5. **Please indicate your department**  
Aministration  Planning  HR
6. **Please indicate your position**  
Managemnt  Official  IT Technician   
General Worker  Driver
7. **What is your highest educational qualification you hold?**  
Grade 10 Certificate  Diploma   
Grade 12 Certificate  Degree   
Certificate  Post Graduate Degree
8. **Marital status**  
Single  Living with partner   
Married  Widowed   
Divorced/Separated

**Part 2**

The following statements describe activities that make an employee to become committed to his/her work. Please respond to each of the items in this section by ticking the column that clearly represents your opinion.

**Strongly agree -1    Agree -2    undecided -3    Disagree -4    Strongly disagree-5**

**9. I have the tools and resources I need to do my job**

Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree			<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**10. Most days I see positive results because of my work**

Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree			<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**11. My work is valued by this organization**

Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree			<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**12. I have received the training I need to do my job well**

Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree			<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**13. I am satisfied with my current working condition**

Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree			<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**14. The organization motivates me to go above and beyond my role**

Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree			<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**15. I would recommend this organization to my friends and family**

Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree			<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**16. I feel proud to tell people where I work**

Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Disagree  Strongly Disagree   
 Don't know

**17. Have you been considered for promotion?**

Yes  No

**18. Do you think promotion improves personal performance?**

Yes  No

**Part 3**

**Please respond to each of the items in this section by ticking the column that clearly represent your opinion.**

**Strongly agree - 1    Agree - 2    Neutral - 3    Disagree - 4    Strongly disagree - 5    Don't know - 6**

<b>Employee empowerment</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>19.</b> Decisions are made at appropriate levels in this organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>20.</b> My supervisor listens to or acts on my ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>21.</b> I'm encouraged to come up with new ways of doing things in my role	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>22.</b> I'm given the opportunity to be involved in decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>23.</b> Good work is always observed and special care is taken to appreciate it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>24.</b> Given the option, employees will like to rejoin and work for ZRC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>25.</b> Mistakes and weaknesses are communicated to juniors by seniors in a polite and non-threatening way	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>26.</b> I'm satisfied with the organization's performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**27.** In your opinion what do you think can enhance the performance of the organization?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**28.** Are there any other comments you would like to make about employee engagement and performance of ZRC which are not covered in the questions above?.....

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**Note! Please make sure you have answered all the parts. Your input is greatly appreciated**