

TITLE: A MEASUREMENT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT USING
THE GALLUP Q¹²[®] WORKPLACE AUDIT

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ABSTRACT

The term ‘employee engagement’ is relatively new with the concept introduced by Kahn in 1990 as ‘personal engagement’ and ‘personal disengagement’. Despite increasing interest (Frauenheim, 2009; Kular et al, 2008; Robertson-Smith and Markwick, 2009; Saks, 2006; Shuck and Wollard, 2010) there is still no clear definition of the term and little academic research has been carried out (Saks, 2006).

Numerous professional firms such as Gallup, Towers Perrin, BlessingWhite, ASTD and the Conference Board have carried out studies of employee engagement over the past number of years. Research by these firms has shown a correlation between employee engagement and profit (Harter et al, 2002; Harter et al, 2009; Towers Perrin, 2008). Towers Perrin’s 2007-2008 global workforce study showed that operating income increased by 19% over one year in firms with high employee engagement (Towers Perrin, 2008).

The purpose of this research is to measure levels of employee engagement and to add to the existing knowledge pool of academic research on the topic of employee engagement.

A quantitative questionnaire replication of the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit was selected for the purpose of data collection for this review given its validity and reliability (Harter et al, 2009).

Gallup’s Q¹²[®] workplace audit states that only highly engaged employees will respond in strong agreement to each of twelve statements (Forbringer, 2002). The findings did not

demonstrate a higher level of engagement to what was anticipated based on Towers Perrin's 2007-2008 Global Workforce Study where engagement levels provided were at 21%. The engagement levels found in this research report were at 18.3%, just below that level. Towers Perrin categorises employees as 'enrolled' where they are capable but not fully engaged (Towers Perrin, 2008). This category represented 32.7% of respondents to the online survey. The remainder, the 'disenchanted' or disengaged made up 46.4% of respondents.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the concept of employee engagement (section 1.2) and outlines why it is a topic of concern (section 1.3). Previous research will be discussed briefly in section 1.4 and elaborated on and critically analysed in chapter two. The strategies employed by previous researchers are discussed in section 1.5 and the intended outcome of the present research is summarised in section 1.6. Sections 1.7 and 1.8 set out the limitations and delimitations of the present research respectively. Finally, the structure of the remainder of the report is set out in section 1.9.

1.2 What exactly is employee engagement?

The term ‘employee engagement’ is relatively new with the concept introduced by Kahn in 1990 as ‘personal engagement’ and ‘personal disengagement’. Despite increasing interest in employee engagement (Frauenheim, 2009; Kular et al, 2008; Robertson-Smith and Markwick, 2009; Saks, 2006; Shuck and Wollard, 2010) there is still no clear definition of the term and little academic research has been carried out (Saks, 2006). A Google search on the definition yields over 650,000 results. Robertson-Smith and Markwick (2009) set out a number of definitions of employee engagement given by organisations including Vodafone, Johnson and Johnson, BT, Dell and Nokia Siemens Networks with the common theme that employee engagement goes beyond satisfaction and motivation; engaged employees give of their best and have a contagious enthusiasm; are advocates of their company, and invest extra effort to go above and beyond their given role. Academic literature has also failed to provide consensus on a concise definition of employee engagement.

1.3 Why be concerned with employee engagement?

Although there is little academic literature on employee engagement there is a great deal of interest in the subject (Frauenheim, 2009; Kular et al, 2008; Robertson-Smith and Markwick, 2009; Saks, 2006; Shuck and Wollard, 2010) and a number of professional firms have been researching the topic. Consultancy organisations such as Gallup, Towers Perrin (now Towers Watson), BlessingWhite, ASTD and the Conference Board have been carrying out studies of employee engagement for a number of years. These firms have also investigated the correlation of employee engagement to profit. Towers Perrin's 2007-2008 global workforce study showed that operating income increased by 19% over one year in firms with high employee engagement (Towers Perrin, 2008). The study also showed a decreased operating income of 32% in one year for firms with low employee engagement. Researchers on job burnout are also discussing employee engagement and recognise that it is the positive antithesis to burnout (Maslach et al, 2001; Schaufeli et al, 2008) and that firms are increasingly interested in the correlation of increased levels of engagement to increased profit.

1.4 Previous research on employee engagement

Previous research has been carried out by Kahn in 1990, which was then tested by May et al in 2004 and found to still be of relevance. Maslach et al carried out conceptual research on engagement as the positive antithesis to burnout in 2001. This was revisited by Schaufeli et al in 2008 who argued against Maslach et al's stance that engagement could be asserted by scoring positively on a range of core areas to assess burnout. Schaufeli et al instead presented their own scoring system for assessing engagement and reiterated its importance as a separate

concept (Schaufeli et al, 2008). Harter et al (2002) conducted an empirical analysis across more than 7,000 business units in multiple industries and were among the first to set out the link between profit and engagement. Further empirical research was carried out by Saks in 2006. Saks' research represented the first academic research to test the consequences to employee engagement.

1.5 Research strategies used to date

To date, a number of consultancy firms have researched the topic of employee engagement by carrying out surveys as well as correlating levels of engagement to profitability but little academic research has been carried out (Saks, 2006). Five empirical reviews and three conceptual reviews were identified by Shuck and Wollard (2010) as having posed a major contribution to the field of Human Resource Development. Each defined employee engagement differently although there is a common theme among them of going beyond satisfaction and presenting a positive attitude and enthusiasm (Shuck and Wollard, 2010).

1.6 Intended outcome of this research

The intended outcome of the current research is to add to the knowledge creation process already in existence in the field of employee engagement and to the level of academic research on the topic.

1.7 Limitations

The initial research location for this report was a Dublin-based firm due to lack of access to employees in other companies. The survey was initially sent to 52 employees within the firm. In order to widen the participant pool, given the number of Ireland-based employees, the

survey questionnaire used in the research was also made available via three Internet locations. Due to the relatively low number of people surveyed (the survey was made available to 860 people out of an employee population in Ireland of almost two million (Central Statistics Office, 2010), the results of this research may not be directly applicable to all Ireland-based employees or companies. Given the usage of the Internet as a source of data collection, the survey was also available to employees working outside of Ireland. As such, the results may further be inapplicable to Ireland-based companies.

1.8 Delimitations

The research undertaken for the purpose of this report was restricted to workers. Those who were previously in employment were not asked to complete the survey although their feedback may have proved useful in terms of gaining a better understanding into the reasons behind their current unemployment status (redundancy or natural attrition, student, person outside the labour force (e.g. home-maker)).

1.9 Structure of the report

This chapter introduced the topic of the research report and outlined its importance, previous researchers, research strategies used to date in understanding the topic and the limitations and delimitations of the current research. An outline of the research methodology was put forward as was the intended outcome of the report. Chapter two provides a detailed review of the guiding literature consulted for the purpose of this research. Chapter three outlines the methodology. Chapter four sets out the results of the current research which are discussed in detail in chapter five. Chapter six provides a conclusion to the research report and is followed by a bibliography and appendices relevant to the current research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Although there is little academic literature on employee engagement there is a great deal of interest in the subject (Kular et al, 2008) and a number of professional firms such as Gallup, Towers Perrin, BlessingWhite, ASTD and the Conference Board have carried out studies of employee engagement over the past number of years. Research by these firms has shown a correlation between employee engagement and profit (Harter et al, 2002; Harter et al, 2009; Towers Perrin, 2008). Towers Perrin's 2007-2008 global workforce study showed that operating income increased by 19% over one year in firms with high employee engagement (Towers Perrin, 2008). The study also showed a decreased operating income of 32% in one year for firms with low employee engagement.

Despite the interest of professional firms, there is a paucity of academic research available on the topic of engagement (Shuck and Wollard, 2010). Five empirical reviews and three conceptual reviews were identified by Shuck and Wollard (2010) as having posed a major contribution to the field of Human Resource Development. Each defined employee engagement differently although there is a common theme among them of going beyond satisfaction and presenting a positive attitude and enthusiasm (Shuck and Wollard, 2010).

2.2 Definition(s) of employee engagement

The term 'employee engagement' is relatively new with the concept introduced by Kahn in 1990 as 'personal engagement' and 'personal disengagement' during a study into the psychological conditions associated with the degree to which people engage or disengage

themselves in their roles. Despite increasing interest in employee engagement (Frauenheim, 2009; Kular et al, 2008; Robertson-Smith and Markwick, 2009; Saks, 2006; Shuck and Wollard, 2010) there is no clear definition of the term. A Google search on the definition yields over 650,000 results. Robertson-Smith and Markwick (2009) set out a number of definitions of employee engagement given by organisations including Vodafone, Johnson and Johnson, BT, Dell and Nokia Siemens Networks. The common theme among these definitions was that employee engagement goes beyond satisfaction and motivation; that engaged employees give of their best and have a contagious enthusiasm; they are advocates of their company, investing extra effort to go above and beyond their given role. The companies reviewed by Robertson-Smith and Markwick also stated that engaged employees remain longer with the company, add value and help increase and sustain productivity. The companies focused on the beneficial outcomes of employee engagement to the organisation but did not suggest any drivers for such engagement. Academic literature has also failed to provide consensus on a concise definition of employee engagement.

2.3 Researchers of employee engagement

Research on employee engagement commenced with Kahn in 1990 and his findings were then tested by May et al in 2004 and found to still be of relevance. Maslach et al carried out conceptual research on engagement as the positive antithesis to burnout in 2001. This was revisited by Schaufeli et al in 2008 who argued against Maslach et al's stance that engagement could be asserted by scoring positively on a range of core areas to assess burnout. Schaufeli et al instead presented their own scoring system for assessing engagement and reiterated its importance as a separate concept (Schaufeli et al, 2008). Harter et al (2002) conducted an empirical analysis across more than 7,000 business units in multiple industries

and were among the first to set out the link between profit and engagement. Further empirical research was carried out by Saks in 2006. Saks' research represented the first academic research to test the consequences to employee engagement.

Kahn (1990) introduced the concept of employee engagement as a standalone concept and conducted empirical research with 16 summer camp counsellors and 16 employees of an architecture firm. This was the first empirical research carried out in the field on the topic of employee engagement. Kahn introduced the first definition of employee engagement, or personal engagement, as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles” (Kahn, 1990) and described how engaged employees “employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally” in their work. Disengagement was also introduced by Kahn who defined it as “the uncoupling of selves from work roles” whereby employees set back and rather than express themselves they “defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally” in the work (Kahn, 1990). Kahn found that there were three psychological conditions which influenced both engagement and disengagement: meaningfulness, safety, and availability. The Gallup Organisation’s Q¹² workplace audit looks at similar conditions of employee’s needs (safety); their understanding of what is expected and thought of them (safety); their fit to the organisation (meaningfulness); and their opportunity for self-development (availability). May, Gilson & Harter (2004) carried out the first empirical study to test Kahn’s 1990 concepts of employee engagement through an empirical survey of almost 200 employees in a US insurance company and found that all three of the psychological conditions Kahn outlined “were important in determining one’s engagement at work” (May, Gilson & Harter, 2004; Shuck & Wollard, 2010).

Harter, Schmidt & Hayes (2002) examined the correlation between profit and engagement through an empirical meta-analysis across 7,939 business units in 36 companies. This empirical research has been replicated and has continued to show a correlation between increased profit and high levels of employee engagement. Following this, an empirical research study was carried out by the American Society for Training and Development ('ASTD') and conducted by Czarnowsky (2008) to investigate how organisations are addressing employee engagement. The research identified work strategies which have higher levels of influence on employee engagement and emphasised the role of learning as one such influence.

Saks (2006) introduced the first research in academic literature by conducting an empirical survey of 102 employees across a variety of roles in Toronto, Canada and found a difference between job engagement and organisation engagement as well as predictors for both types of engagement.

2.4 Opposing views from 'burnout' researchers

Converse views on employee engagement may be found in literature on 'job burnout' which describes engagement as the "positive antithesis to job burnout" (Maslach et al, 2001). Maslach et al argue that burnout arises when there is a mismatch within the six core areas of "workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values" and that engaged employees should therefore score positively against these six areas. Maslach et al outline empirical support for this theory carried out by Maslach & Leiter in 1997. Schaufeli (2008) agreed that engagement was the positive antithesis of burnout but disagreed that engagement should be assessed on the basis of scoring positively against the six areas of workload, control, reward,

community, fairness, and values on the Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual. Schaufeli et al instead developed a separate scale of three measurements to assess engagement: “vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli, 2008).

2.5 Conclusion

Despite the volume of research from professional firms, there remains a paucity of academic research into employee engagement and no agreed definition. It has been shown by Robertson-Smith & Markwick (2009) that definitions provided by organisations have commonalities such as:

- employee engagement goes beyond satisfaction and motivation;
- engaged employees give of their best and have a contagious enthusiasm;
- engaged employees are advocates of their company,
- engaged employees invest extra effort to go above and beyond their given role

The five empirical and three conceptual reviews identified by Shuck and Wollard (2010) as having posed a major contribution to the field of Human Resource Development also had a common theme in their definitions of employee engagement as going beyond satisfaction and presenting a positive attitude and enthusiasm (Shuck and Wollard, 2010).

Correlation between engagement and heightened profitability and retention levels was shown by Harter et al, 2002; Harter et al, 2009 at the individual business unit level during research carried out on the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology used and explains the process of the research: how the sample was selected, how the analysis was collected and analysed. The data is displayed graphically and explained in chapter five. Initial findings are provided in chapter four and discussed both within the context of their correlation to each other and to the literature research conducted in chapter five. The reason for selecting the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit questionnaire is presented and it is broken down into four sections described by Forbringer (2002) which will be used for data analysis in chapter five.

3.2 Paradigm Assessment and statement

The research paradigm assumption was based on the ontological assumption outlined by Sargent in 2010 that “there is a reality that can be apprehended. We can determine “the way things are” and, often, discover the cause effect relations behind social reality. At the least, we can find meaningful indicators of what is “really” happening”. This is consistent with a positivistic approach using a quantitative questionnaire to collate data for analysis.

3.3 Methodological strategy

Having selected the research paradigm, the methodological strategy to carry out the research will now be presented. Firstly, the varying types of research applicable will be examined and a strategy will be developed according to the philosophical paradigm with reference to the research topic and the sample chosen for this research.

3.3.1 Research purpose

The purpose of this research is to measure levels of employee engagement and to add to the existing knowledge pool of academic research on the topic of employee engagement.

A quantitative questionnaire was selected as the research type and transmitted via electronic survey. The questionnaire is a replication of the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit. The use of an online quantitative questionnaire seemed the most efficient method of collecting data and a valid and reliable option. The Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit has proven to be a valid measurement instrument of employee engagement (Harter et al, 2009)

3.3.2 Process

The epistemological position of positivism was used through a deductive approach of a quantitative questionnaire administered electronically (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The approach is detailed hereafter and covers population, sampling, and appropriate methods. Analysis of the quantitative data collected was also performed to validate or disprove the research questions. The questionnaire used was that developed by the Gallup Organisation over a period of decades (Forbringer, 2001; Harter et al, 2009). The quantitative data sought by the questionnaire is ranked on a five-point scale where 1 represents 'Strongly agree' and 5 represents 'Strongly disagree'. A sixth option of 'Don't know / Does not apply' receives no score (Harter et al, 2009). The Gallup survey has been vigorously tested over a number of decades and refined to a limited twelve statements on employee engagement. The inclusion of the extreme statement of 'Strongly agree' and 'Strongly disagree' is intentional as research conducted by Gallup has shown correlation between employees who strongly agree to the statements and higher productivity, profit and retention in those employees' business units

(Forbringer, 2002). Forbringer also indicated that the statements were whittled down to twelve on the basis that they were the items to which the most engaged employees responded positively – other employees answered neutrally or negatively to them.

3.3.3 Site and population

The questionnaire was originally targeted via email at a population of 58 Dublin-based employees. It was subsequently released to a wider population via three Internet locations together capturing a potential population of 802 people, not all of whom are employed or working in Ireland.

3.3.4 Sampling

Due to the lack of control over the participant group, it was not possible to provide a breakdown of the population sample. The sample population is not representative of the overall population as there are over one million employees in Ireland alone and the survey was targeted as just 860 – not all of whom work in Ireland. The decision to increase the sample from the initial 58 was to ensure that the participants did not form part of one single organisation and that a more representative sample of employees could be accessed.

The average age of respondents was 30-39 (47.6%) and 57.8% were female. The average length of service was evenly distributed between 3-4 years (27.1%) and 5-10 years (27.1%).

3.3.5 Research strategy

The research strategy adopted was the use of a quantitative questionnaire. Each participant was separately contacted via telephone and asked for permission to include them on the

survey. An email was subsequently sent to the 58 initial participant group (see Appendix 1) containing a link to the online survey. Participants were assured of the confidential nature of the survey, which was distributed via SurveyMonkey to ensure that no email or participant names would be collected.

The questionnaire contains an introductory section setting out the purpose of the questionnaire and the estimated length of time it would take to complete the entire survey. It also assured participants of the confidential nature of the survey. As previously discussed, the researcher was unable to identify any participants as neither their name nor email address was collected. A series of six questions was included in the introductory section so that responses could later be cross-tabulated to enable an understanding of employee engagement across genders, age groups and length of service. A seventh open question was included in this introductory section for those whose role type was not listed in question four.

The main section of the questionnaire contains the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit statements. These consist of a series of twelve statements preceded by an overall assessment of the participant's satisfaction with their organisation. An additional question was posed in this survey to ask participants to comment on whether their overall satisfaction levels with their organisation have changed since they joined and if so, how. This additional question was not measured by the researcher but provided an interesting additional context to the overall responses.

Participants were reassured before and after the data collection that their privacy is guaranteed and that their organisation name would not be divulged. Participants were informed that they may be identified as a group in terms of age, gender and length of service.

3.3.6 Logic

Logic refers to whether the research is inductive or deductive. “Deductive reasoning works from the more general to the more specific. Sometimes this is informally called a "top-down" approach” (Trochim (2006). Trochim continues by explaining inductive reasoning as working in the opposite direction, “moving from specific observations to broader generalizations and theories. Informally, we sometimes call this a "bottom up" approach”.

Inductive logic was used by starting with a theory about levels of employee engagement, testing the theory by asking a series of quantitative questions via the online survey, and then analysing the data to validate/invalidate the hypothesis.

3.3.7 Outcome

It is anticipated that the outcome of the research will add to the knowledge pool of academic research on levels of employee engagement at the particular time that the research was conducted. As the research is immediately out of date, it is reassuring that the quality of the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit questionnaire is of sufficient quality and validity to be of continued worth.

3.4 Data collection methods

The research used was a quantitative questionnaire with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91 at business unit level and of approximately 0.70 at the true-score broader value (Harter et al, 2009). Although 0.80 is an acceptable level of internal reliability, 0.70 has been considered acceptable by Schutte et al in terms of a replicated burnout scale (Bryman and Bell, 2007). As burnout is often linked to employee engagement (Maslach et al, 2001; Schaufeli et al, 2008), a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 was considered acceptable for the purpose of this research report.

3.5 Trust

Participants' trust was gained for the initial target sample by clearly outlining the purpose of the study to the participants. On request the questionnaire was treated confidentially and to ensure this an online survey tool (SurveyMonkey) was used. SurveyMonkey provides an option to not record any personal data, including participants' IP addresses. The report will be made available to the National College of Ireland for the purpose of grading and for retention in the college library.

3.6 Bias (and solution)

Given the quantitative positivistic approach of using the questionnaire, it is anticipated that bias will be reduced. Bias will be further reduced as the questionnaire was devised by and has been thoroughly tested over the course of a number of decades by Gallup.

3.7 Ethics

The endeavours to protect any organisation's and individual participant's identity suggest that due ethical consideration was given in the approach to and compilation of the research data.

3.8 Data analysis

58 surveys were sent out to Dublin-based employees. The survey was then released to a further population of 802. 166 surveys were returned giving a return rate of 19.3%. Of 166 who commenced the survey, 152 fully completed it (91.6%). Two people skipped question 5 on corporate title from the introductory section; four people skipped question 6 from the introductory section on job location. Five people skipped the rating question on overall satisfaction and seven skipped the open question on whether their overall satisfaction has changed since they joined their organisation. Twelve people skipped questions in the main Q^{12®} rating section and 137 people did not make any remark in the final optional additional comments section. The reasons for partial completion are unclear as the author was unable to approach the participants who did not fully complete the online questionnaire due to the inability to identify them.

3.9 Analysis strategy

The analysis strategy adopted by the author is that of a positivistic quantitative questionnaire. Data analysis was provided both in tabular and graphical format firstly covering the introductory section of gender; age; length of service; role type; corporate title; and job location. The main section's findings, the Gallup Q^{12®} workplace audit statements, are also presented both graphically and in tabular format. These findings were also cross-tabulated against the gender, age and length of service categories from the introductory section to

examine responses across a range of groupings. Findings for each question are discussed in chapter five. This approach provided clearly presented findings which are easily understood and accessible but is limited due to the small sample size of the overall population.

3.10 Reason for selection the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit

The Q¹²[®] workplace audit was developed over a number of decades commencing in the 1950s with a study into the factors contributing positively to work and learning environments (Harter et al, 2009). Through a series of studies continuing through the 1980s, the survey was reduced from 100-200 items to just thirteen statements, known as the Gallup Workplace Audit or Q¹². The Q¹² measures actionable management issues through a measurement of engagement levels or conditions (Harter et al, 2009). Given the proven reliability and validity of the Q¹² across 169 countries worldwide it was selected as an appropriate survey to test in an Irish setting.

3.11 Design of the Q¹² survey

The survey opens with a rating of overall satisfaction with the participant's organisation. This is the only statement in the survey to use a separate rating scale from 'Extremely satisfied' to 'Extremely dissatisfied'. The remaining 12 statements use a rating scale from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree' and set out the employee's needs (statements one and two); their understanding of what is expected and thought of them (statements three to six); their fit to the organisation (statements seven to ten); and their opportunity for self-development (statements eleven and twelve). Forbringer (2002) sets out these four elements as stages on a metaphorical mountain climb and further analysis of the application of his research questions will be conducted in chapter five.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the sample population surveyed for this research report as well as the related return and completion rates. Initial findings from the survey are then presented in the form of both tabular and graphical format. Following the initial findings, responses to the Gallup Q¹²[®] statements are set out. The responses were then cross-tabulated across age group, length of service and gender. Findings to this cross-tabulation exercise are presented in section 4.7 and are discussed in the next chapter.

4.2 Sample population

The survey was made available to a population of 860 people both in Ireland and overseas via direct email (Ireland – 58 employed people) and the Internet (the remaining 802 people, both employed and unemployed; living in Ireland and overseas). Of the 802 people it was made available to on the Internet, some are not in employment and therefore would not have been eligible to complete the survey. This figure of ineligible people is currently unknown and the return rate, discussed in the next section, assumes all 860 people to be eligible.

The sample population is not representative of the overall population of employees in Ireland. Rather, it represents less than 1% of the overall labour force of 1.8 million (Central Statistics Office, 2010). Compounding this small sample size is the usage of the Internet as a source of data collection. This ensured that the survey was available not only to employees working in Ireland but also to those outside of Ireland. As such, despite the validity of the results it

cannot be asserted that they are representative of Ireland-based employees and companies but rather are representative of a minute percentage (0.4%) of targeted employees.

4.3 Return rate

Of a total population of 860, 166 surveys were returned giving a return rate of 19.3%. Although it is known that a section of the total population was ineligible due to either living overseas or to being unemployed, the exact percentage is not known and the return rate was therefore calculated based on the total population rather than on an uncertain lower figure.

4.4 Completion rate

Of 166 who commenced the survey, 152 fully completed it (91.6%). Two people skipped question 5 on corporate title from the introductory section; four people skipped question 6 from the introductory section on job location. Five people skipped the rating question on overall satisfaction and seven skipped the open question on whether their overall satisfaction has changed since they joined their organisation. Twelve people skipped questions in the main Q^{12®} rating section and 137 people did not make any remark in the final optional additional comments section.

4.5 Initial findings

The findings to the individual questions are set out below in sections 4.5.1 through to 4.5.3. The results were also cross-tabulated and the findings of this further analysis are set out in section 4.6.

4.5.1 Introductory section of the survey questionnaire

The introductory section of the survey questionnaire sets out the purpose of the questionnaire and the estimated length of time it would take to complete the entire survey. It also assured participants of the confidential nature of the survey. The researcher was unable to identify any participants as neither their name nor email address was collected. A series of six questions was included in the introductory section so that responses could later be cross-tabulated to enable an understanding of employee engagement across genders, age groups and length of service. A seventh open question was included in this introductory section for those whose role type was not listed in question four. The findings of the introductory section are set out below.

4.5.1.(a) Question one: Gender

This question was asked in order to enable cross-tabulation of results against the Gallup Q¹²® statements.

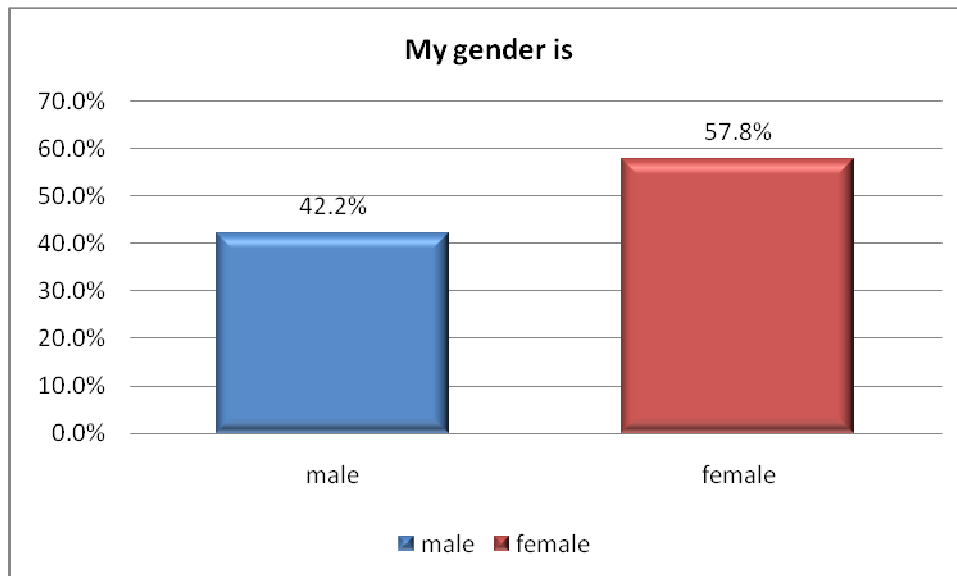


Figure 4:1 – Question one: Gender

My gender is		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	42.2%	70
Female	57.8%	96
<i>answered question</i>		166
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Table 4:1 – Question one: Gender

4.5.1.(b) Question two: Age group

This question was asked in order to enable cross-tabulation of results against the Gallup Q¹²[®] statements.

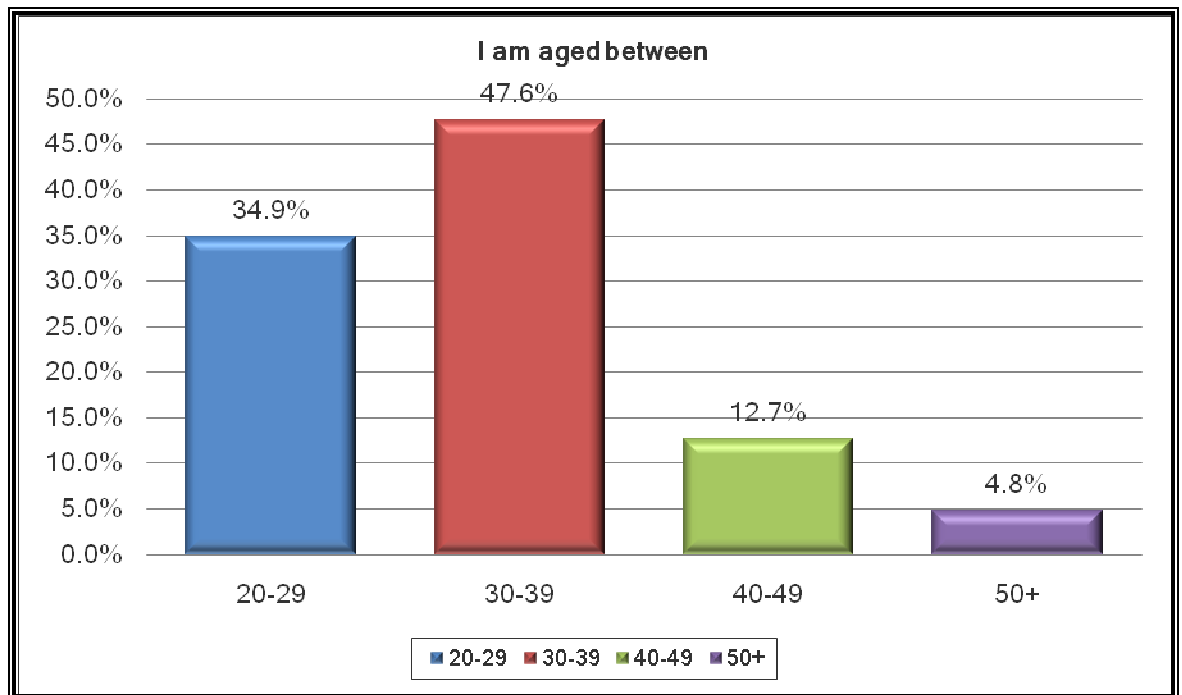


Figure 4:2 – Question two: Age group

I am aged between		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
20-29	34.9%	58
30-39	47.6%	79
40-49	12.7%	21
50+	4.8%	8
<i>answered question</i>		166
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Table 4:2 – Question two: Age group

4.5.1.(c) Question three: Length of service

This question was asked in order to enable cross-tabulation of results against the Gallup Q¹² statements.

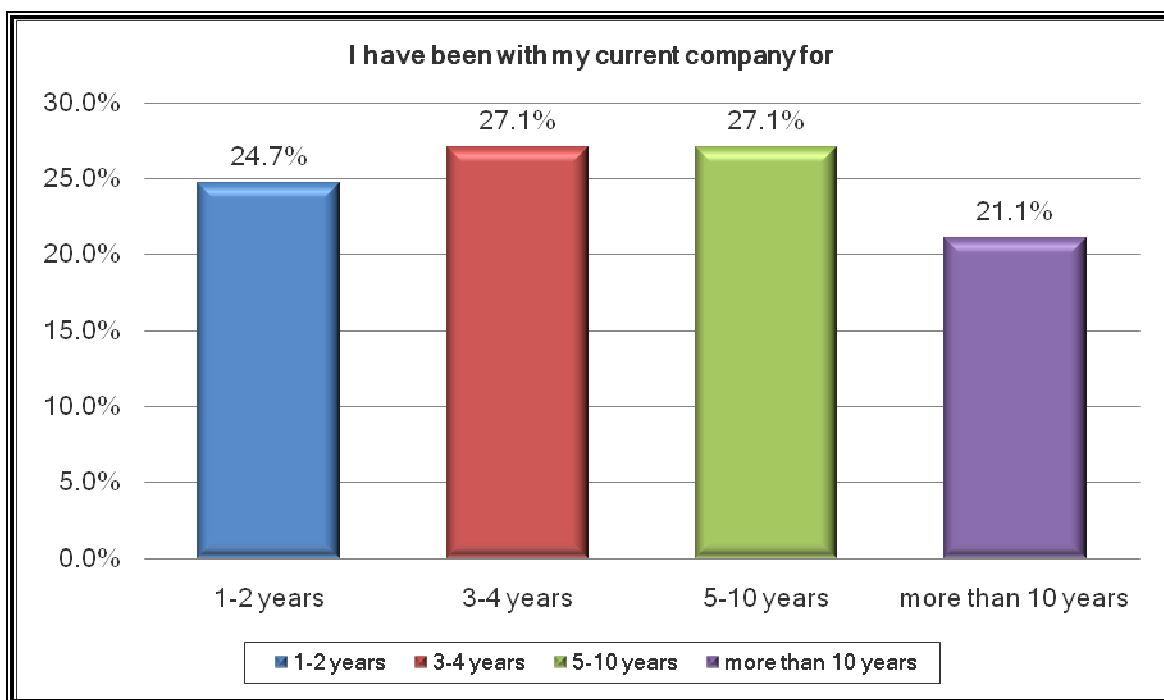


Figure 4:3 – Question three: Length of service

I have been with my current company for		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1-2 years	24.7%	41
3-4 years	27.1%	45
5-10 years	27.1%	45
more than 10 years	21.1%	35
<i>answered question</i>		166
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Table 4:3 – Question three: Length of service

4.5.1.(d) Question four: Role type

This question was asked in order to provide a picture of the roles of the respondents. Those respondents to whom no category was relevant, i.e. those who selected ‘Other’, were prompted to answer a further open question to provide their role and the nature of their organisation. The responses to this further question were not analysed for this research report.

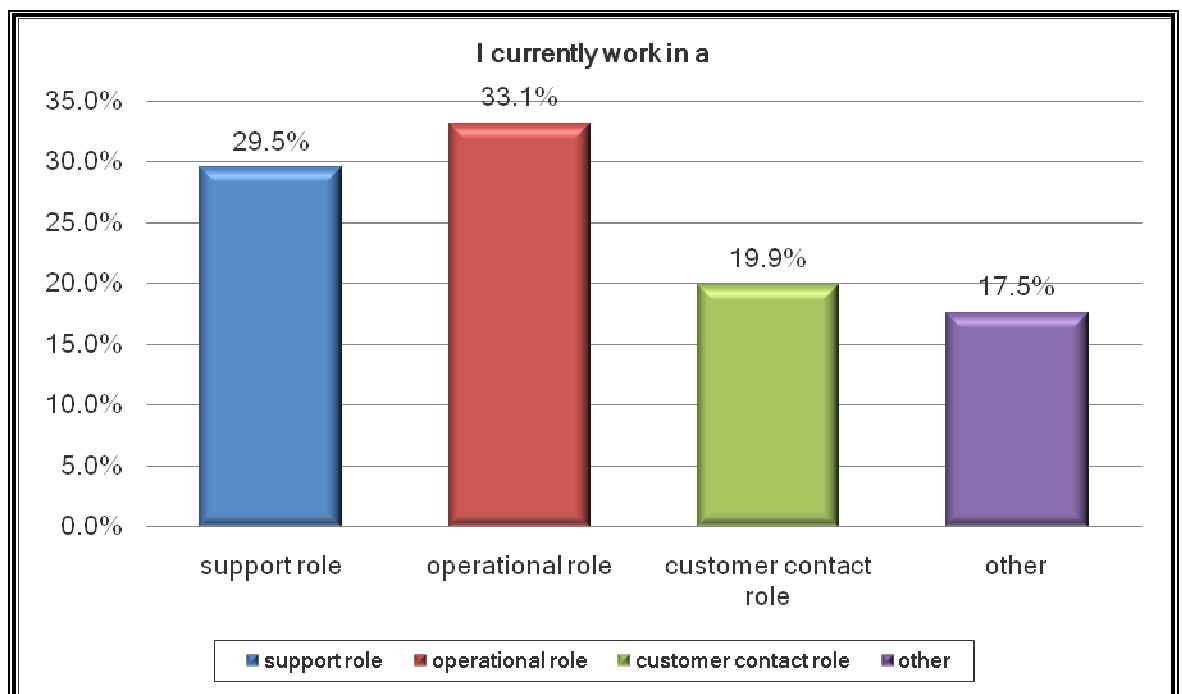


Figure 4:4 – Question four: Role type

I currently work in a		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
support role	29.5%	49
operational role	33.1%	55
customer contact role	19.9%	33
Other	17.5%	29
<i>answered question</i>		166
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Table 4:4 – Question four: Role type

4.5.1.(e) Question five: Corporate title

This question allowed respondents to enter free text into the survey rather than select a response from a series of options as was the case with the measurable questions. The purpose of allowing free text was to provide the researcher with a more comprehensive picture of the respondents. Question five was not included in the measurable statistics as responses were gathered in the form of a free-text box.

My corporate title is (for example, Officer, Manager, Head of Department, etc)	
Answer Options	Response Count
	164
<i>answered question</i>	164
<i>skipped question</i>	2

Table 4:5 – Question five: Corporate title

4.5.1.(f) Question six: Job location

This question allowed respondents to enter free text into the survey rather than select a response from a series of options as was the case with the measurable questions. The purpose

of allowing free text was to provide the researcher with a more comprehensive picture of the respondents. Question six was not included in the measurable statistics as responses were gathered in the form of a free-text box.

Please state the city and country in which your job is located (for example, Dublin, Ireland)	
Answer Options	Response Count
	162
<i>answered question</i>	162
<i>skipped question</i>	4

Table 4:6 – Question six: Job location

4.5.1.(g) Question seven: ‘Other’ role type

This question, for those whose role type was not included in Q4 above, allowed respondents to enter free text into the survey rather than select a response from a series of options as was the case with the measurable questions. The purpose of allowing free text was to provide the researcher with a more comprehensive picture of the respondents. Question seven was not included in the measurable statistics as responses were gathered in the form of a free-text box.

Please describe your current occupation and the nature of your organisation	
Answer Options	Response Count
	27
<i>answered question</i>	27
<i>skipped question</i>	139

Table 4:7 – Question seven: ‘Other’ role type

4.6 Gallup Q¹²[®] statements

The Gallup Q¹²[®] statements consist of a series of twelve statements preceded by an overall assessment of the participant's satisfaction with their organisation. An additional question was posed in this survey to ask participants to comment on whether their overall satisfaction levels with their organisation have changed since they joined and if so, how. This additional question was not measured by the researcher but provided an interesting additional context to the overall responses.

4.6.1 Overall satisfaction

This was the first statement of the Gallup Q¹²[®] questionnaire. An open question was also asked on whether respondents' satisfaction level with their organisation has changed since they joined. This open question was not included in the measurement of employee engagement.

4.6.1.(a) Question eight: Overall satisfaction section

In the final part of the introductory section, respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with their company on a rating scale, where "5" represented extremely satisfied and "1" represented extremely dissatisfied: The responses are set out in the following graph and table. The table overleaf shows that five participants skipped this question.

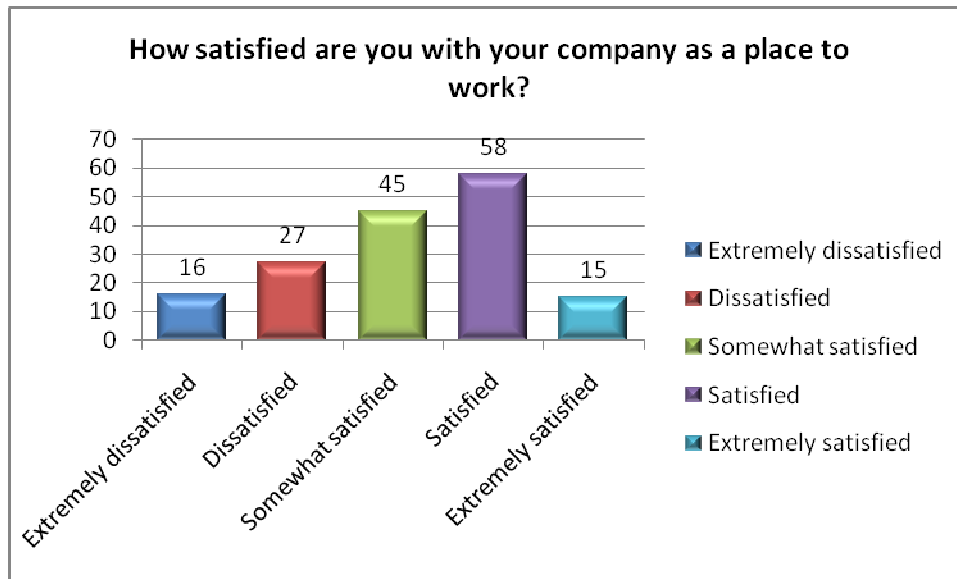


Figure 4:5 – Question eight: Satisfaction with company

Please answer the below question on a five-point scale, where "5" is extremely satisfied and "1" is extremely dissatisfied					
Answer Options	Extremely dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Satisfied	Extremely satisfied
How satisfied are you with your company as a place to work?	16	27	45	58	15
<i>answered question</i>					161
<i>skipped question</i>					5

Table 4:8 – Question eight: Satisfaction with company

4.6.2 Question nine: Change in satisfaction

This question allowed respondents to enter free text into the survey on whether their level of satisfaction with their organisation has changed since they joined and if so, in what way. The purpose of allowing free text was to provide the researcher with a more comprehensive picture of the respondents. Question nine was not included in the measurable statistics as responses were gathered in the form of a free-text box but did provide an interesting additional context to the overall responses.

4.6.3 The twelve Gallup Q¹²[®] statements

Respondents were asked to rate the below twelve statements using six response options from 5 = 'Strongly agree' to 1 = 'Strongly disagree' and 0 = 'Don't know / Does not apply'

4.6.3.(a) Statement 1: I know what is expected of me at work

The majority of respondents answered positively to this statement as is demonstrated in the graph below.

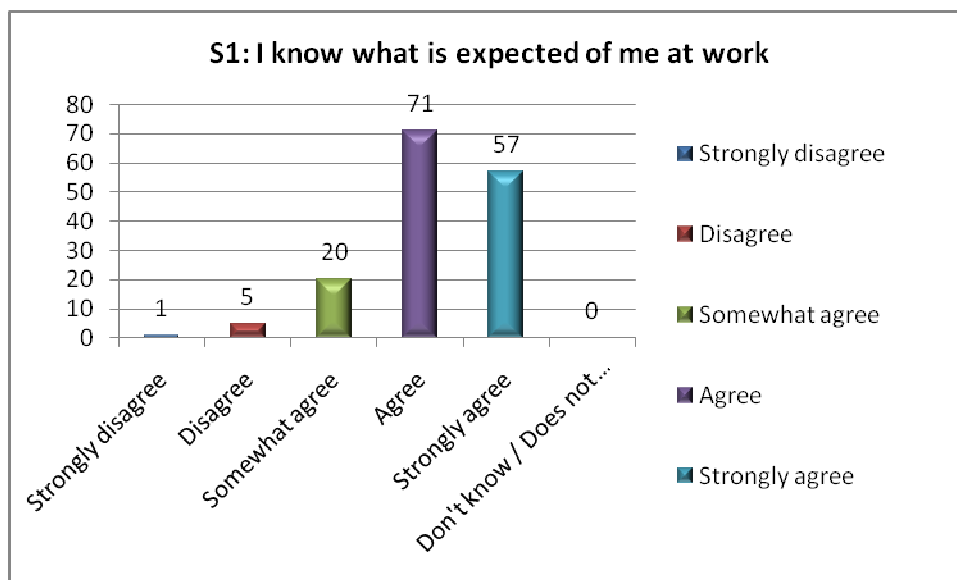


Figure 4:6 – S1: Expectation at work

4.6.3.(b) Statement 2: I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right

Again, a majority responded in the affirmative to this statement.

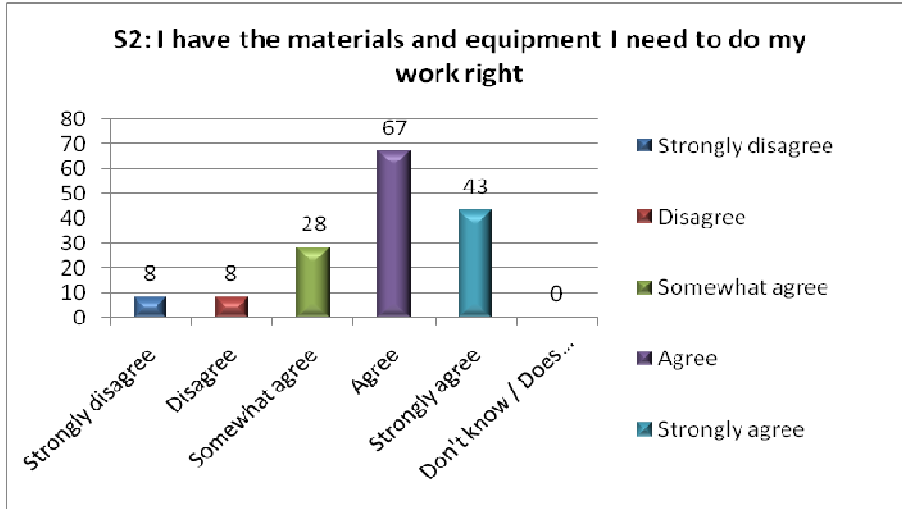


Figure 4:7 – S2: Necessary materials and equipment

4.6.3.(c) Statement 3: At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day

Agreement with the statement is still the majority but a number of participants only somewhat agreed or disagreed with the statement.

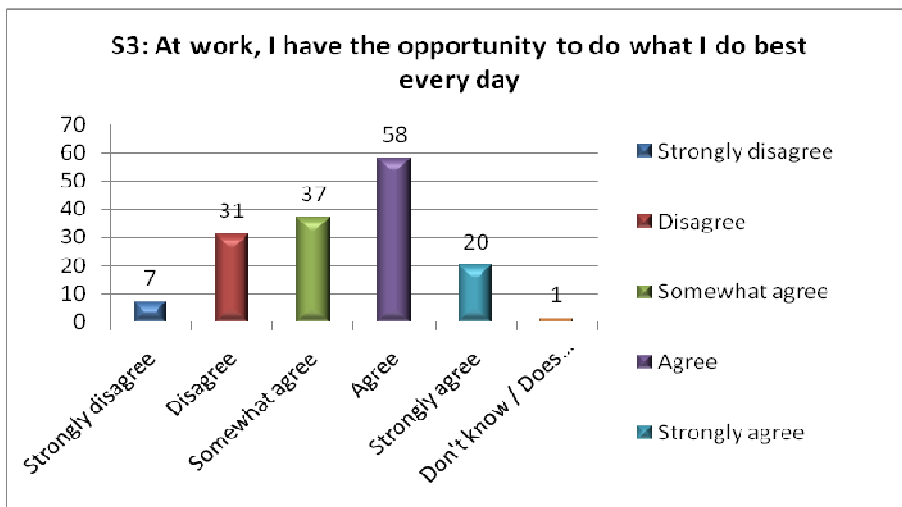


Figure 4:8 – S3: Opportunity to do your best

4.6.3.(d) Statement 4: In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work

The majority of responses to this statement were negative.

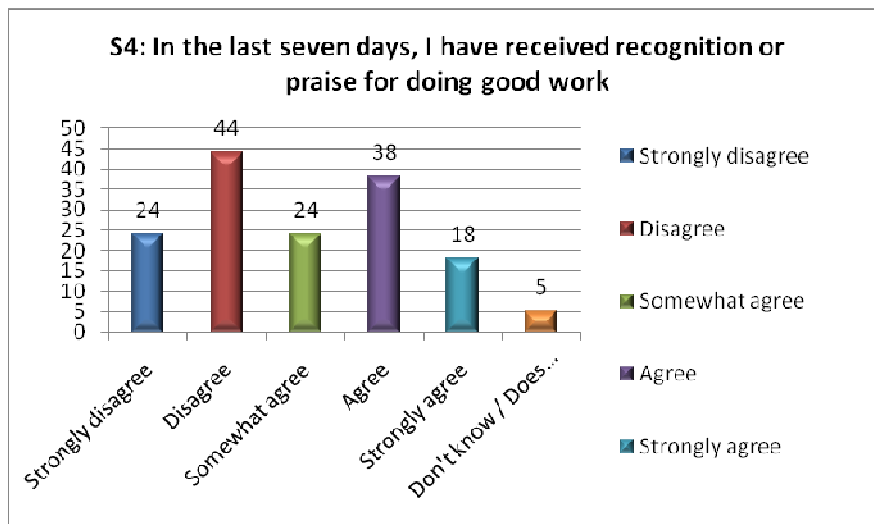


Figure 4:9 – S4: Recognition or praise received

4.6.3.(e) Statement 5: My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person

Most respondents agreed to this statement.

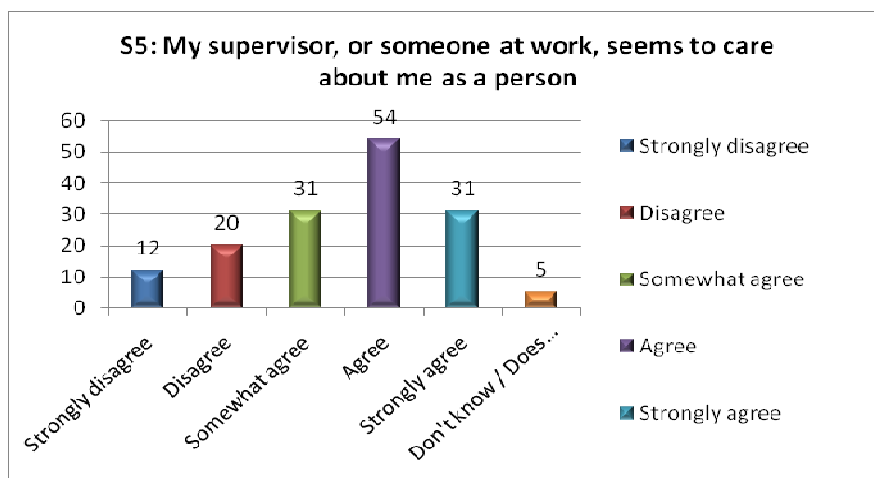


Figure 4:10 – S5: Caring

4.6.3.(f) Statement 6: There is someone at work who encourages my development

The majority of respondents agreed to this statement on receiving encouragement in relation to their development.

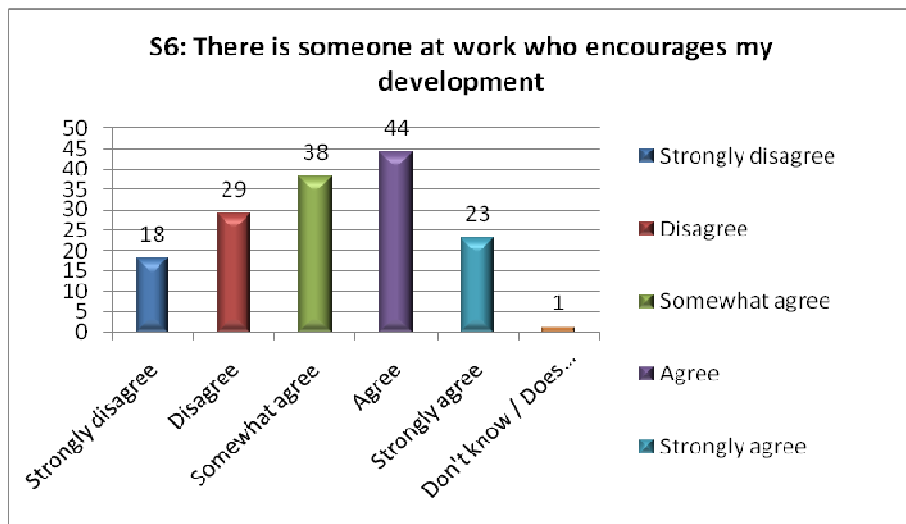


Figure 4:11 – S6: Encouragement

4.6.3.(g) Statement 7: At work, my opinions seem to count

Most respondents agreed that their opinion seems to count in work.

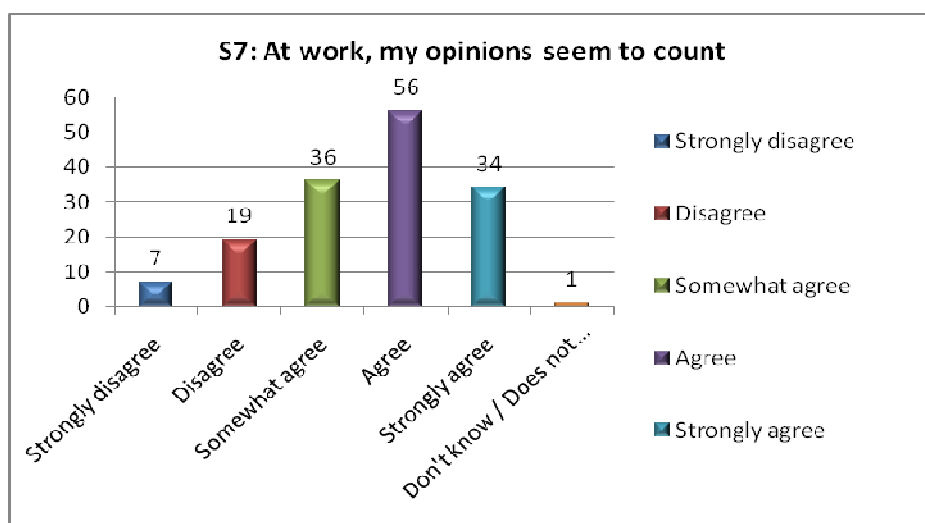


Figure 4:12 – S7: My opinion is counted

4.6.3.(h) Statement 8: The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important

Responses to this statements were fairly evenly distributed between disagreement and agreement with more of a bias towards disagreement.

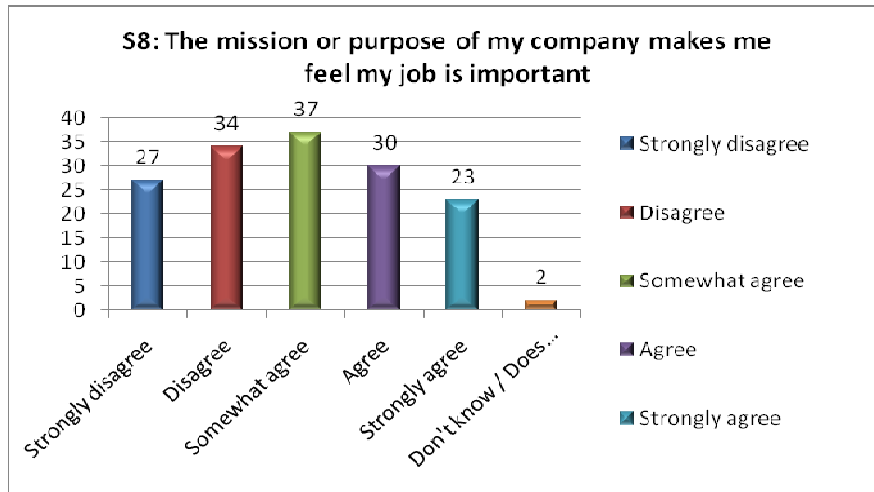


Figure 4:13 – S8: Company mission impact on role

4.6.3.(i) Statement 9: My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work

There was a strong response in favour of agreement with this statement.

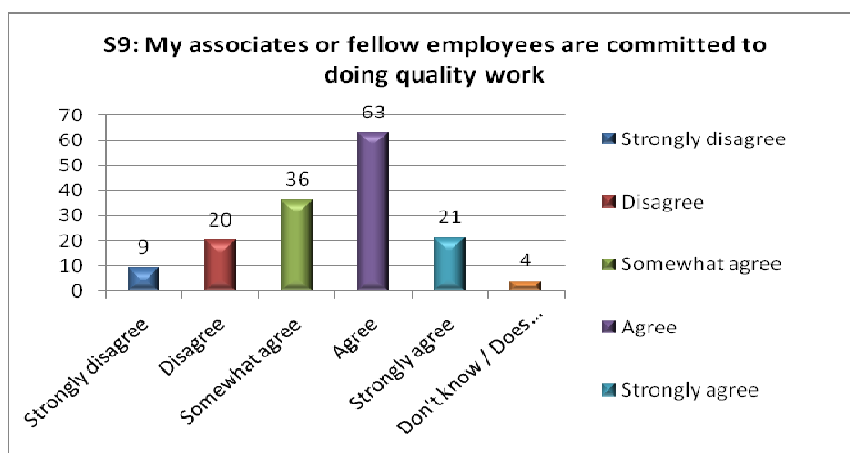


Figure 4:14 – S9: Colleagues' commitment

4.6.3.(j) Statement 10: I have a best friend at work

This statement provoked quite a bit of feedback from respondents who felt that the term best friend was quite American and did not sit well with them. Emails and telephone calls received from participants demonstrated a preference for the term ‘good friend’ or ‘trusted colleague’ on this side of the Atlantic.

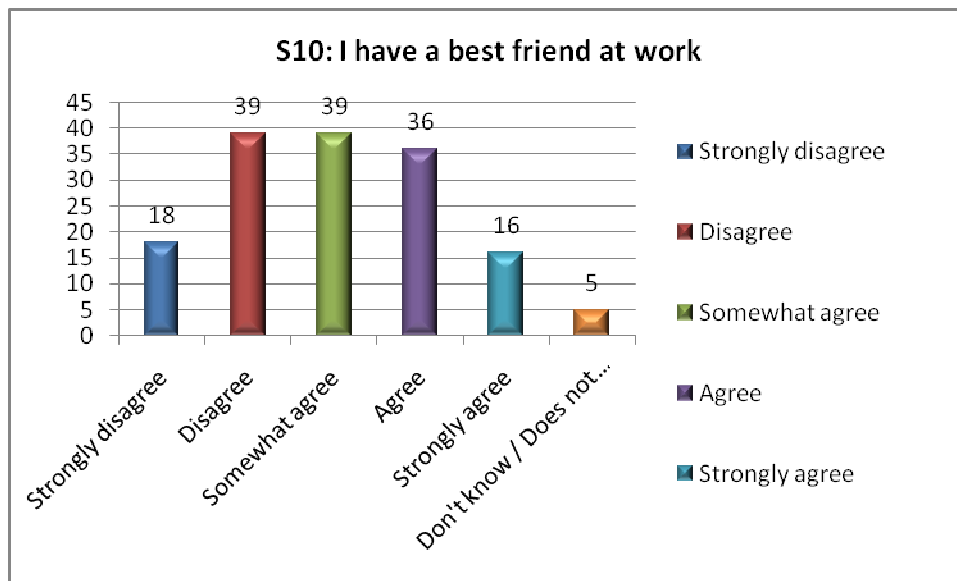


Figure 4:15 – S10: Best friend at work

4.6.3.(k) Statement 11: In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress

Most were in agreement that their progress had been discussed recently at work.

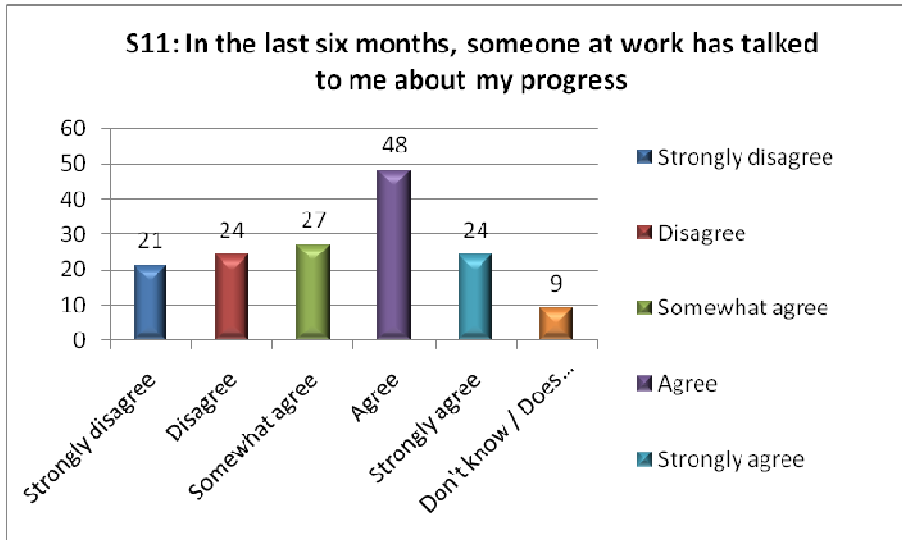


Figure 4:16 – S11: Progress review

4.6.3.(l) Statement 12: This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow

Again, a mixed response but the balance favoured disagreement with the statement.

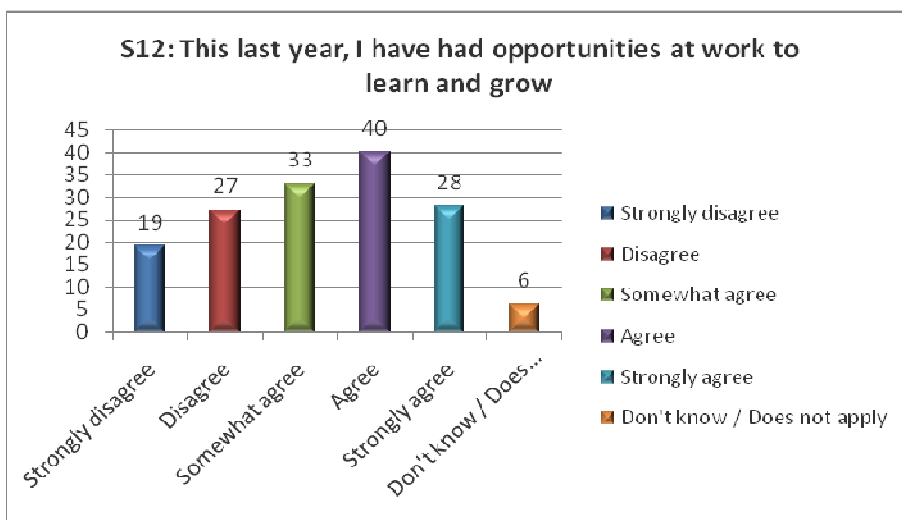


Figure 4:17 – S12: Opportunities to learn and grow

4.7 Cross-tabulated responses

Responses from the 166 participants were cross-tabulated across genders, age groups and length of service to provide a more comprehensive view of employee engagement within these categories. The findings are set out hereafter.

The breakdown of participants within each age group was as follows:

Age group	Number of participants	Total participants
20-29	58	166
30-39	79	166
40-49	21	166
50+	8	166

Table 4:9 – Participant number within age groups

The breakdown of participants within the length of service category was as follows:

Length of service	Number of participants	Total participants
1-2 years	41	166
3-4 years	45	166
5-10 years	45	166
10+ years	35	166

Table 4:10– Participant number against length of service

The breakdown of participants within each gender group was as follows:

Gender	Number of participants	Total participants
Male	70	166
Female	96	166

Table 4:11 – Participant number within gender

4.7.1 Cross-tabulation across gender

All twelve statements from the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit questionnaire were cross-tabulated against both male and female participants. There were 70 male and 96 female participants.

4.7.1.(a) Cross-tabulation of male participants

A total of 70 males participated in the survey but four did not complete the twelve statements.

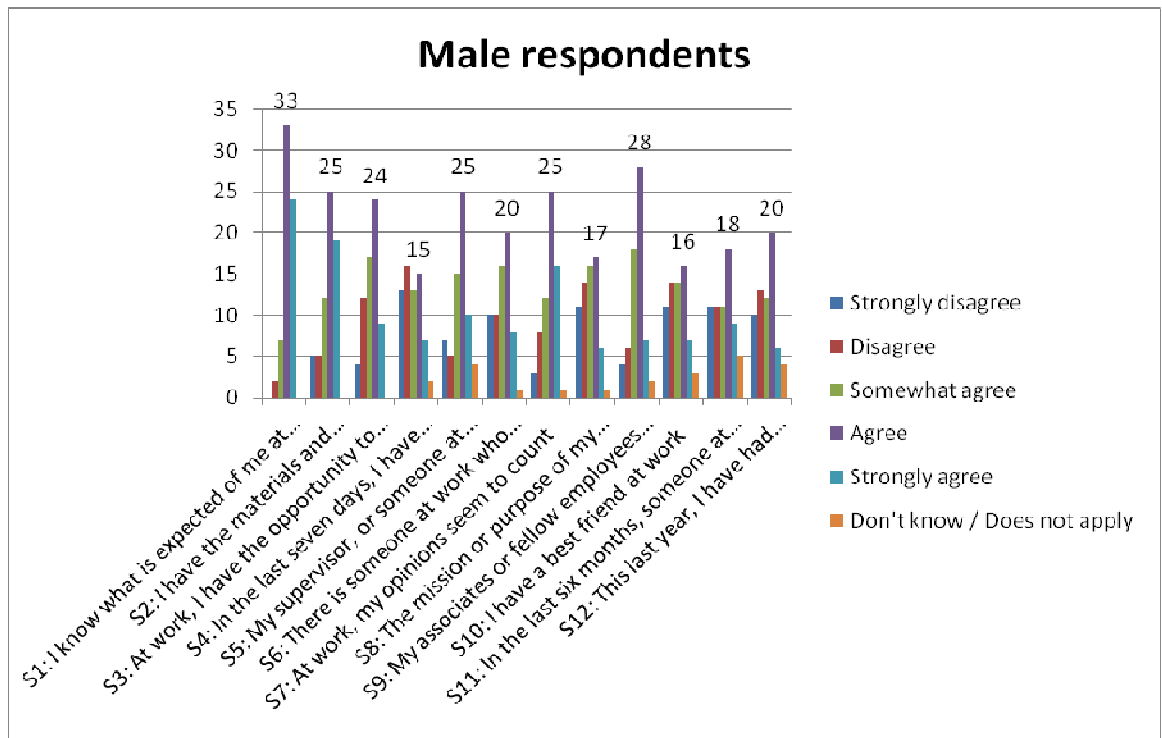


Figure 4:18 – Cross-tabulation of male respondents

Male respondents	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Does not apply
S1: I know what is expected of me at work	0	2	7	33	24	0
S2: I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right	5	5	12	25	19	0
S3: At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day	4	12	17	24	9	0
S4: In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work	13	16	13	15	7	2
S5: My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person	7	5	15	25	10	4
S6: There is someone at work who encourages my development	10	10	16	20	8	1
S7: At work, my opinions seem to count	3	8	12	25	16	1
S8: The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important	11	14	16	17	6	1
S9: My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work	4	6	18	28	7	2
S10: I have a best friend at work	11	14	14	16	7	3
S11: In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress	11	11	11	18	9	5
S12: This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow	10	13	12	20	6	4

Table 4:12 – Cross-tabulation of male participants

4.7.1.(b) Cross-tabulation of female participants

A total of 96 females participated in the survey but eight did not complete the twelve statement section.

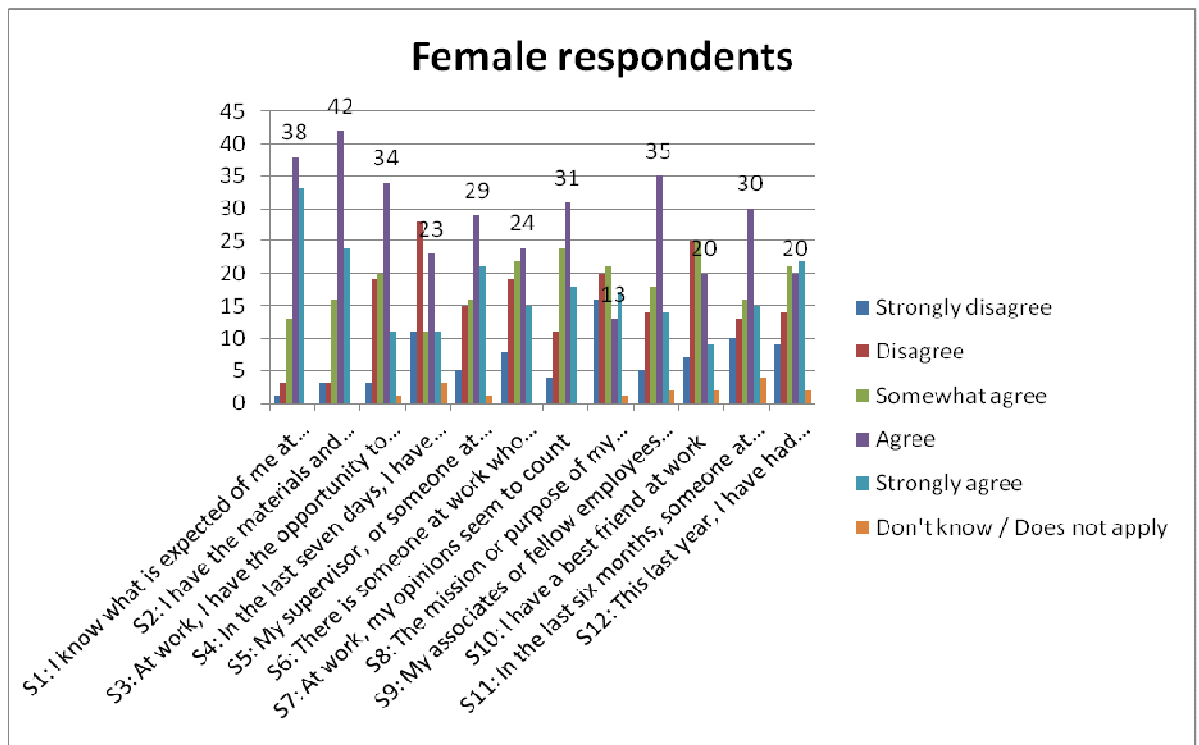


Figure 4:19 – Cross-tabulation of female respondents

Female respondents	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Does not apply
S1: I know what is expected of me at work	1	3	13	38	33	0
S2: I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right	3	3	16	42	24	0
S3: At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day	3	19	20	34	11	1
S4: In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work	11	28	11	23	11	3
S5: My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person	5	15	16	29	21	1
S6: There is someone at work who encourages my development	8	19	22	24	15	0
S7: At work, my opinions seem to count	4	11	24	31	18	0
S8: The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important	16	20	21	13	17	1
S9: My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work	5	14	18	35	14	2
S10: I have a best friend at work	7	25	25	20	9	2
S11: In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress	10	13	16	30	15	4
S12: This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow	9	14	21	20	22	2

Table 4:13 – Cross-tabulation of female respondents

4.7.2 Cross-tabulation of age groups

All twelve statements from the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit questionnaire were cross-tabulated against the age groups 20-29 years old; 30-39 years old; 40-49 years old; and 50+ years old.

4.7.2.(a) Cross-tabulation of age group 20-29

All twelve statements from the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit questionnaire were cross-tabulated against the 20-29 year old age category. There were 58 participants within this age group but eight did not complete the twelve statements section. This age group was generally in agreement with each of the twelve statements with the exception of statements four and eight, although in statement eight the combined number of respondents who somewhat agreed and agreed outweighed the respondents who disagreed with the statement. Statement four related to receiving praise or recognition in the seven days prior to completion of the survey. Statement eight questioned whether the respondent's company mission made the respondent feel that their job was important.

Graph and table for this category are presented on the following pages.

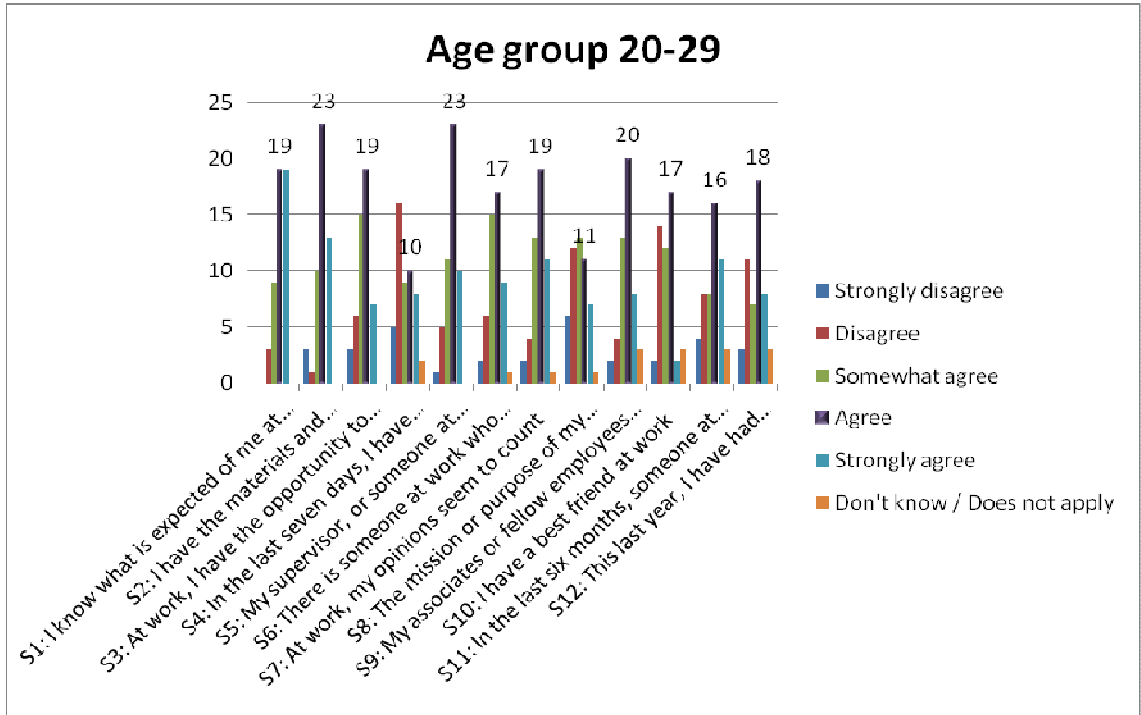


Figure 4:20 – Cross-tabulation of age group 20-29

Age group: 20-29	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Does not apply
S1: I know what is expected of me at work	0	3	9	19	19	0
S2: I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right	3	1	10	23	13	0
S3: At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day	3	6	15	19	7	0
S4: In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work	5	16	9	10	8	2
S5: My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person	1	5	11	23	10	0
S6: There is someone at work who encourages my development	2	6	15	17	9	1
S7: At work, my opinions seem to count	2	4	13	19	11	1
S8: The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important	6	12	13	11	7	1
S9: My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work	2	4	13	20	8	3
S10: I have a best friend at work	2	14	12	17	2	3
S11: In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress	4	8	8	16	11	3
S12: This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow	3	11	7	18	8	3

Table 4:14 – Cross-tabulation of age group 20-29

4.7.2.(b) Cross-tabulation of age group 30-39

All twelve statements from the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit questionnaire were cross-tabulated against the 30-39 year old age category. There were 79 participants in this age category but four did not complete the twelve statements section. Similar to the 20-29 year group, this age group also disagreed with statement four. In contrast to the younger age group, the 30-39 year old group also disagreed with statements six and ten which related respectively to whether there is someone at work who encourages the respondent’s development and whether the respondent considered they had a best friend at work.

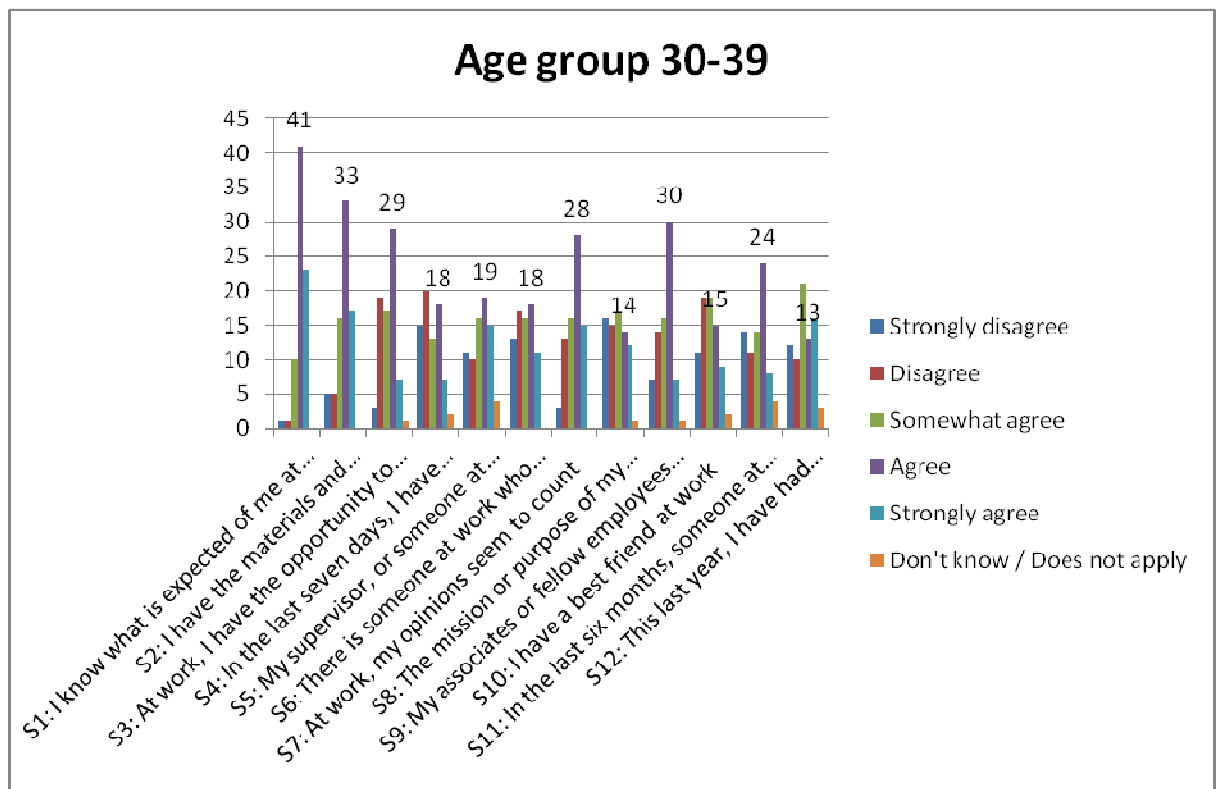


Figure 4:21 – Cross-tabulation of age group 30-39

Age group: 30-39	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Does not apply
S1: I know what is expected of me at work	1	1	10	41	23	0
S2: I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right	5	5	16	33	17	0
S3: At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day	3	19	17	29	7	1
S4: In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work	15	20	13	18	7	2
S5: My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person	11	10	16	19	15	4
S6: There is someone at work who encourages my development	13	17	16	18	11	0
S7: At work, my opinions seem to count	3	13	16	28	15	0
S8: The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important	16	15	17	14	12	1
S9: My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work	7	14	16	30	7	1
S10: I have a best friend at work	11	19	19	15	9	2
S11: In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress	14	11	14	24	8	4
S12: This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow	12	10	21	13	16	3

Table 4:15 – Cross-tabulation of age group 30-39

4.7.2.(c) Cross-tabulation of age group 40-49

All twelve statements from the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit questionnaire were cross-tabulated against the 40-49 year old age category. There were 21 participants in this age category and all responded to each of the 12 statements. Similar to the 20-29 year group, this age group also disagreed with statement four. In contrast to both younger age groups, the 40-49 year old group agreed or somewhat agreed with every statement.

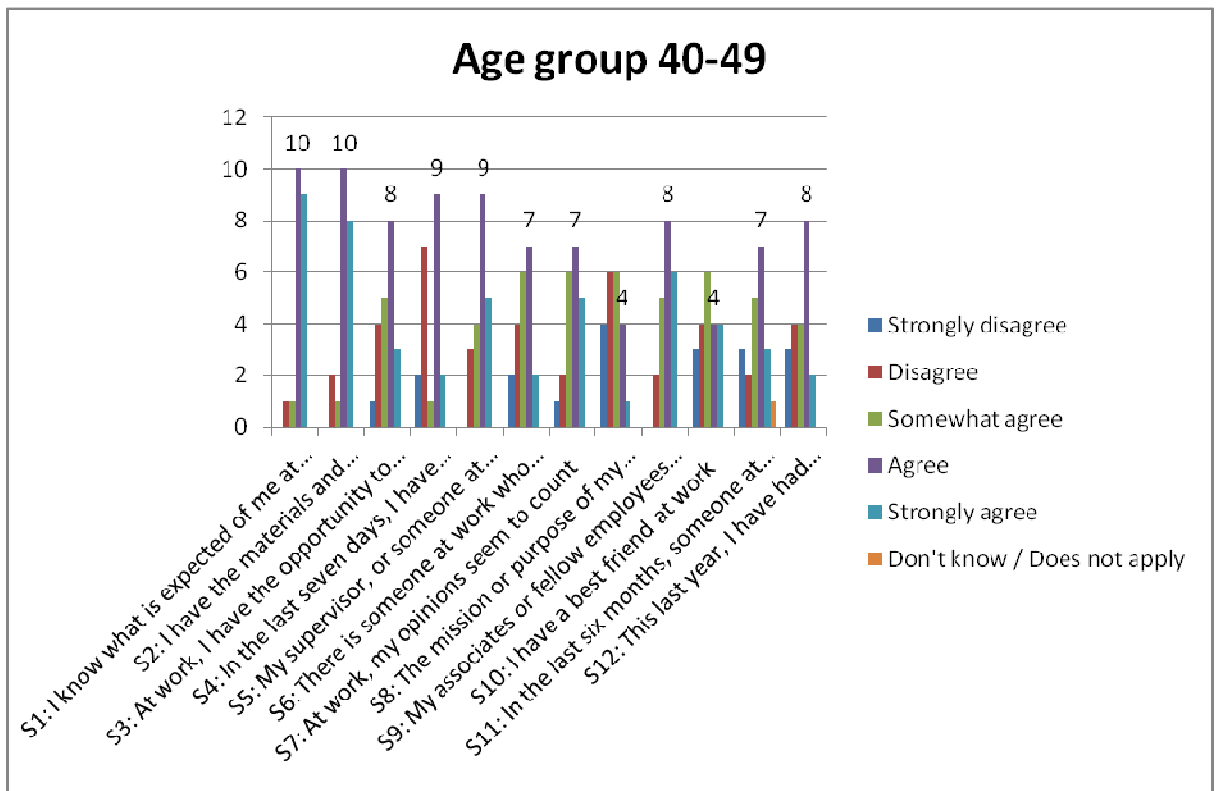


Figure 4:22 – Cross-tabulation of age group 40-49

Age group: 40-49	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Does not apply
S1: I know what is expected of me at work	0	1	1	10	9	0
S2: I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right	0	2	1	10	8	0
S3: At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day	1	4	5	8	3	0
S4: In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work	2	7	1	9	2	0
S5: My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person	0	3	4	9	5	0
S6: There is someone at work who encourages my development	2	4	6	7	2	0
S7: At work, my opinions seem to count	1	2	6	7	5	0
S8: The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important	4	6	6	4	1	0
S9: My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work	0	2	5	8	6	0
S10: I have a best friend at work	3	4	6	4	4	0
S11: In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress	3	2	5	7	3	1
S12: This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow	3	4	4	8	2	0

Table 4:16 – Cross-tabulation of age group 40-49

4.7.2.(d) Cross-tabulation of age group 50+

All twelve statements from the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit questionnaire were cross-tabulated against the 50+ year old age category. There were eight participants in this age category but one did not complete the twelve statements section. Responses in the 50+ age group were distributed across the scale unlike any of the other age groups.

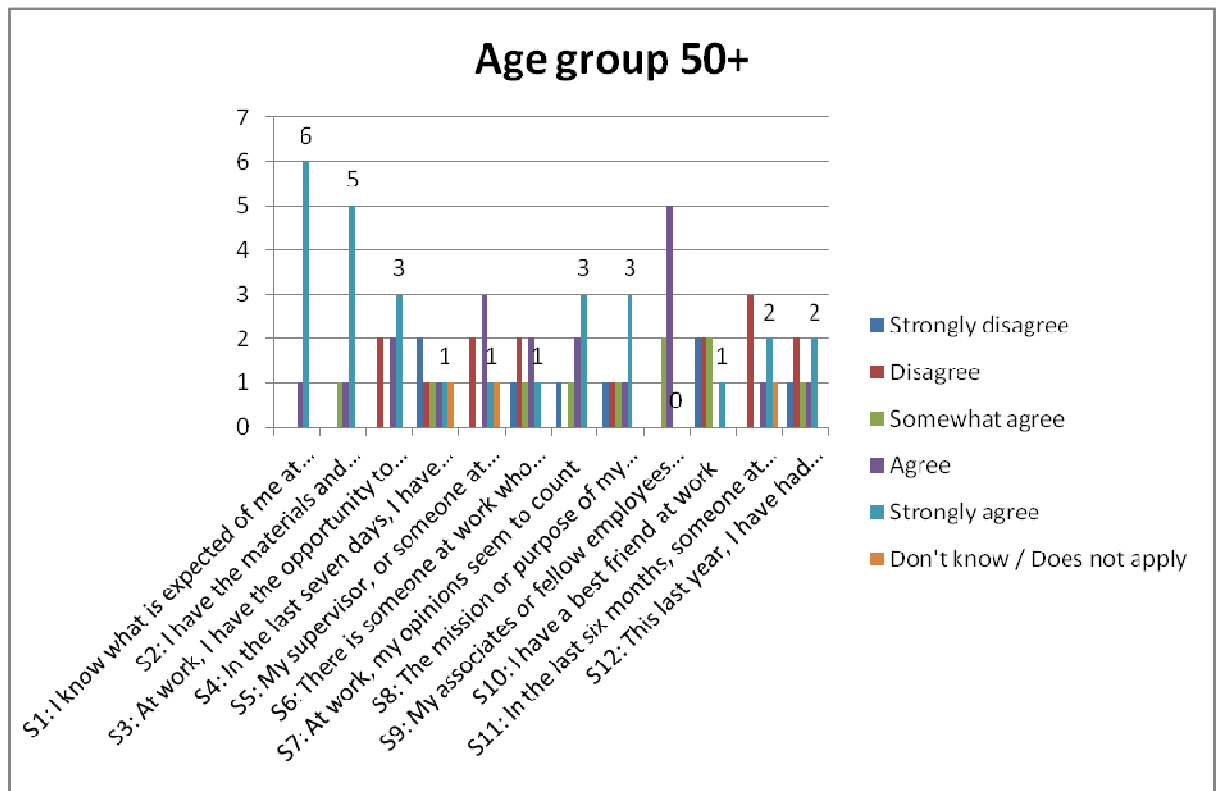


Figure 4:23 – Cross-tabulation of age group 50+

Age group: 50+	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Does not apply
S1: I know what is expected of me at work	0	0	0	1	6	0
S2: I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right	0	0	1	1	5	0
S3: At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day	0	2	0	2	3	0
S4: In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work	2	1	1	1	1	1
S5: My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person	0	2	0	3	1	1
S6: There is someone at work who encourages my development	1	2	1	2	1	0
S7: At work, my opinions seem to count	1	0	1	2	3	0
S8: The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important	1	1	1	1	3	0
S9: My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work	0	0	2	5	0	0
S10: I have a best friend at work	2	2	2	0	1	0
S11: In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress	0	3	0	1	2	1
S12: This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow	1	2	1	1	2	0

Table 4:17 – Cross-tabulation of age group 50+

4.7.3 Cross-tabulation against length of service

All twelve statements from the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit questionnaire were cross-tabulated against length of service in each of the following categories: 1-2 years; 3-4 years; 5-10 years; and more than 10 years.

4.7.3.(a) 1-2 years length of service

All twelve statements from the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit questionnaire were cross-tabulated against the 1-2 years of service category. There were 41 participants in this category but eight did not complete the twelve statements section.

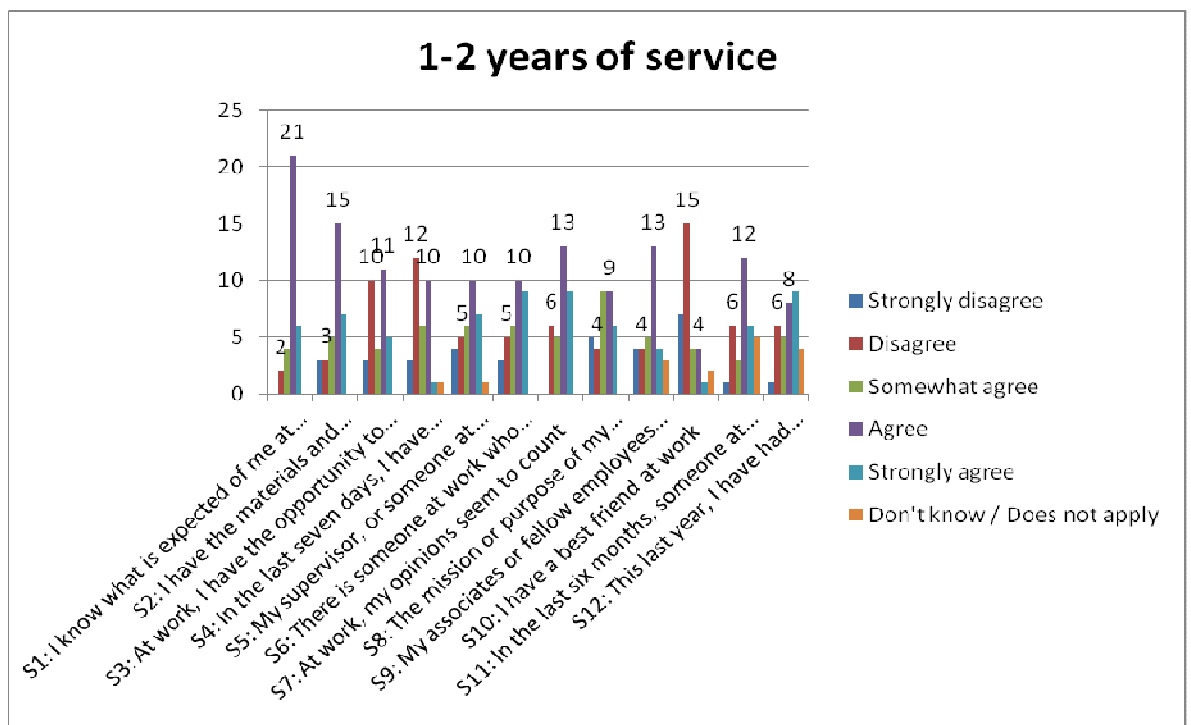


Figure 4:24 – Cross-tabulation of 1-2 yrs service

1-2 yrs service	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Does not apply
S1: I know what is expected of me at work	0	2	4	21	6	0
S2: I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right	3	3	5	15	7	0
S3: At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day	3	10	4	11	5	0
S4: In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work	3	12	6	10	1	1
S5: My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person	4	5	6	10	7	1
S6: There is someone at work who encourages my development	3	5	6	10	9	0
S7: At work, my opinions seem to count	0	6	5	13	9	0
S8: The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important	5	4	9	9	6	0
S9: My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work	4	4	5	13	4	3
S10: I have a best friend at work	7	15	4	4	1	2
S11: In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress	1	6	3	12	6	5
S12: This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow	1	6	5	8	9	4

Table 4:18 – Cross-tabulation of 1-2 yrs service

4.7.3.(b) 3-4 years length of service

All twelve statements from the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit questionnaire were cross-tabulated against the 3-4 years of service category. There were 45 participants in this category but one did not complete the twelve statements section.

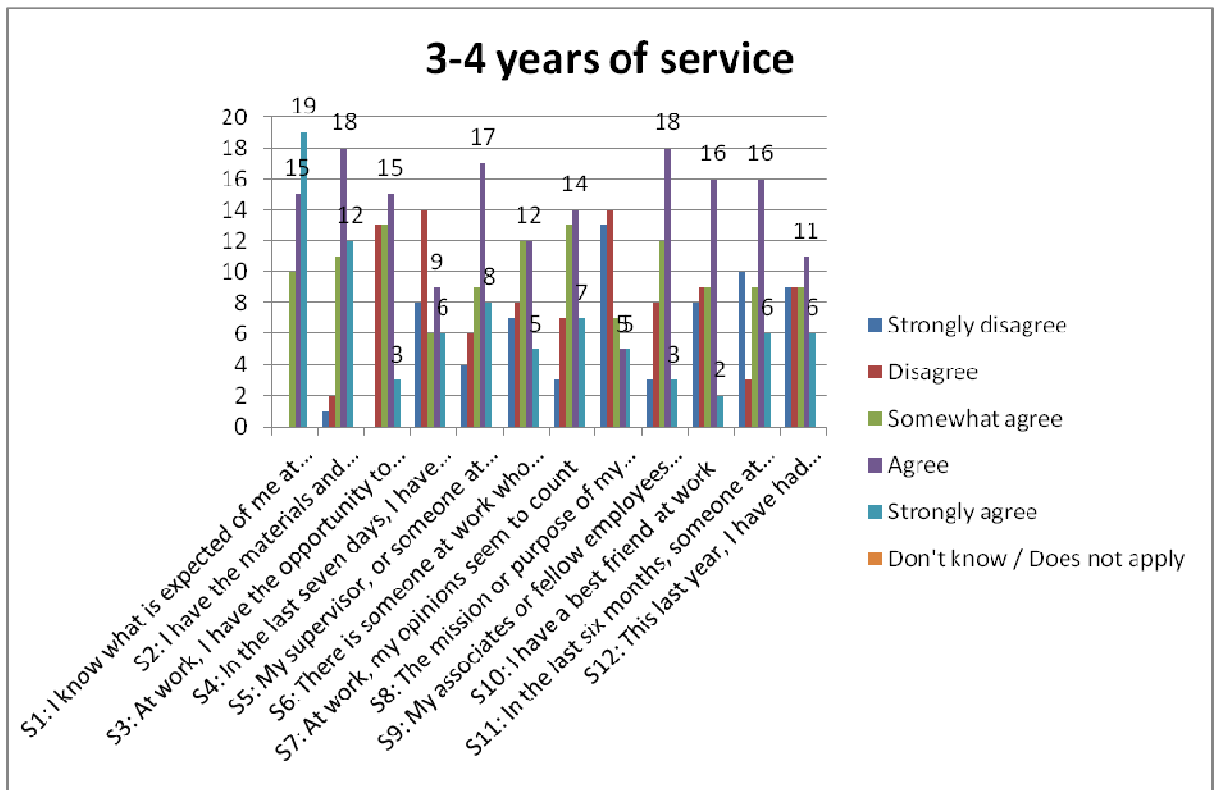


Figure 4:25 – Cross-tabulation of 3-4 yrs service

3-4 yrs service	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Does not apply
S1: I know what is expected of me at work	0	0	10	15	19	0
S2: I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right	1	2	11	18	12	0
S3: At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day	0	13	13	15	3	0
S4: In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work	8	14	6	9	6	0
S5: My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person	4	6	9	17	8	0
S6: There is someone at work who encourages my development	7	8	12	12	5	0
S7: At work, my opinions seem to count	3	7	13	14	7	0
S8: The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important	13	14	7	5	5	0
S9: My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work	3	8	12	18	3	0
S10: I have a best friend at work	8	9	9	16	2	0
S11: In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress	10	3	9	16	6	0
S12: This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow	9	9	9	11	6	0

Table 4:19 – Cross-tabulation of 3-4 yrs service

4.7.3.(c) 5-10 years length of service

All twelve statements from the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit questionnaire were cross-tabulated against the 5-10 years of service category. There were 45 participants in this category but one did not complete the twelve statements section.

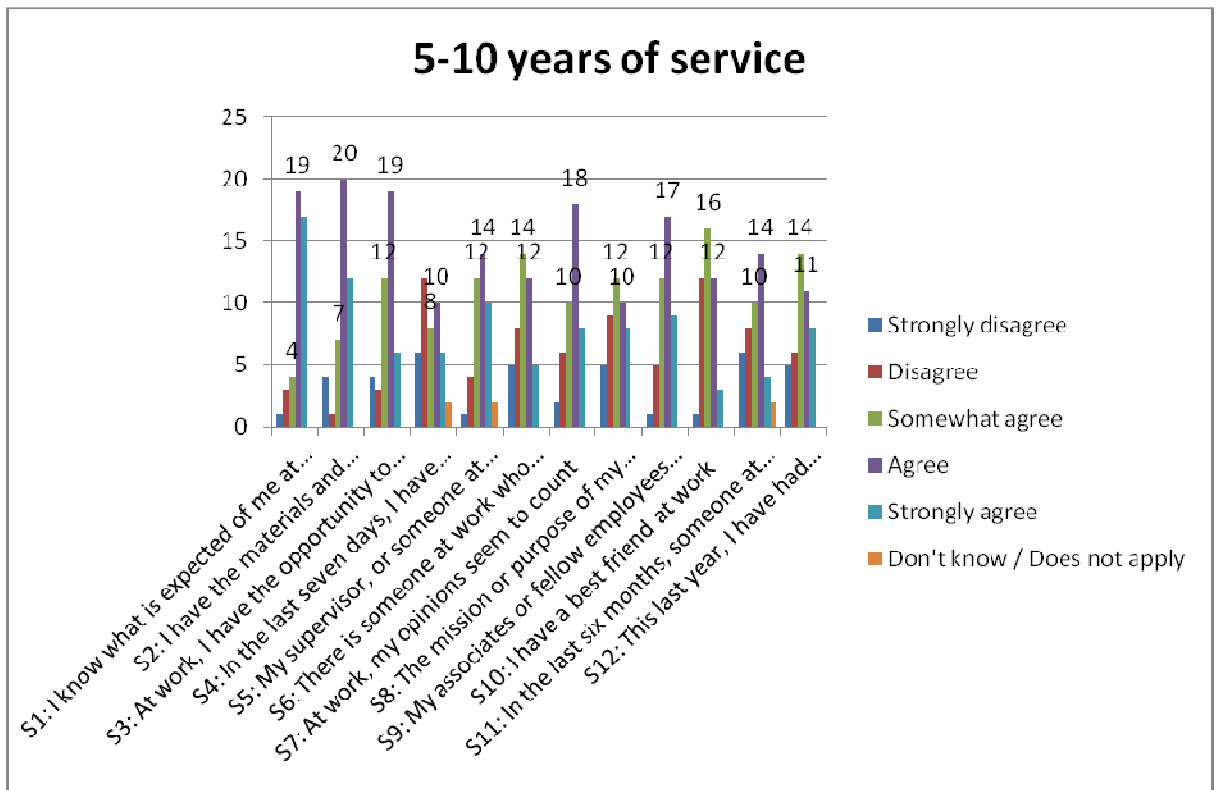


Figure 4:26 – Cross-tabulation of 5-10 yrs service

5-10 yrs service	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Does not apply
S1: I know what is expected of me at work	1	3	4	19	17	0
S2: I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right	4	1	7	20	12	0
S3: At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day	4	3	12	19	6	0
S4: In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work	6	12	8	10	6	2
S5: My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person	1	4	12	14	10	2
S6: There is someone at work who encourages my development	5	8	14	12	5	0
S7: At work, my opinions seem to count	2	6	10	18	8	0
S8: The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important	5	9	12	10	8	0
S9: My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work	1	5	12	17	9	0
S10: I have a best friend at work	1	12	16	12	3	0
S11: In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress	6	8	10	14	4	2
S12: This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow	5	6	14	11	8	0

Table 4:20 – Cross-tabulation of 5-10 yrs service

4.7.3.(d) 10+ years length of service

All twelve statements from the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit questionnaire were cross-tabulated against those who have more than 10 years of service. There were 35 participants in this category but two did not complete the twelve statements section.

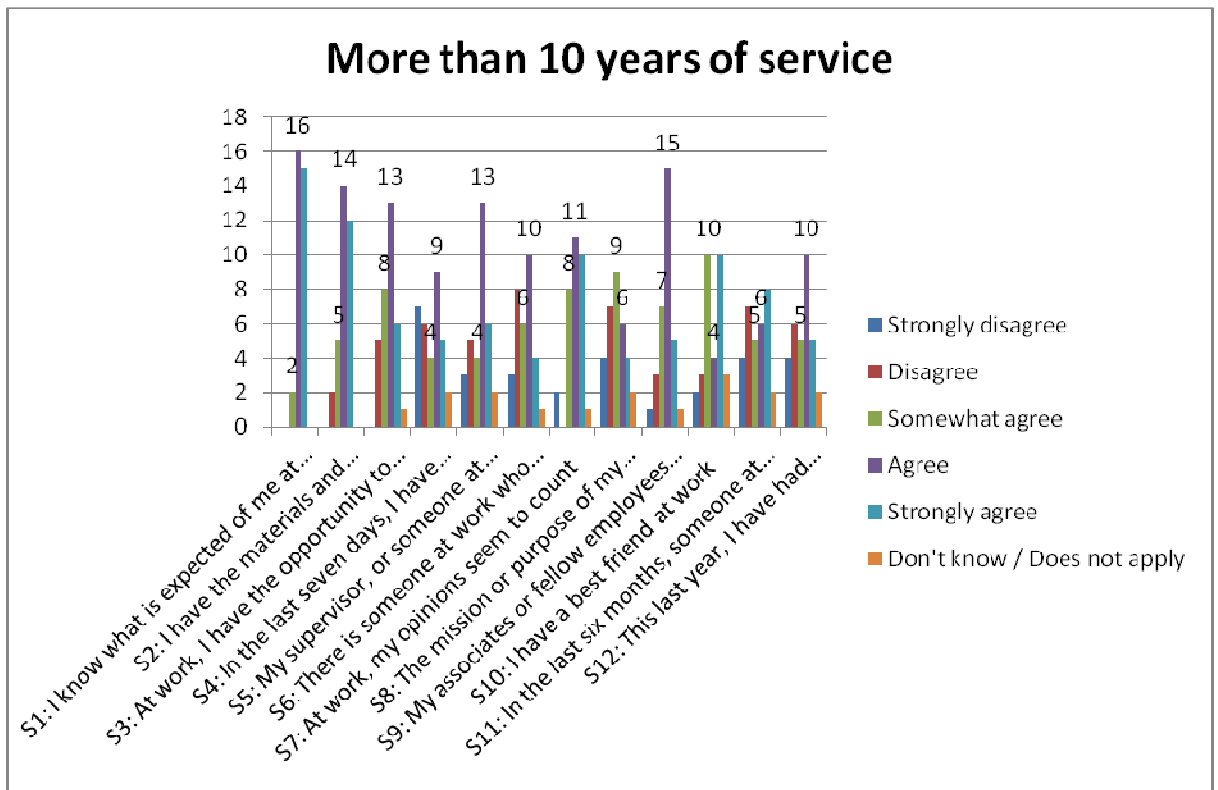


Figure 4:27 – Cross-tabulation of 10+ yrs service

10+ yrs service	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Does not apply
S1: I know what is expected of me at work	0	0	2	16	15	0
S2: I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right	0	2	5	14	12	0
S3: At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day	0	5	8	13	6	1
S4: In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work	7	6	4	9	5	2
S5: My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person	3	5	4	13	6	2
S6: There is someone at work who encourages my development	3	8	6	10	4	1
S7: At work, my opinions seem to count	2	0	8	11	10	1
S8: The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important	4	7	9	6	4	2
S9: My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work	1	3	7	15	5	1
S10: I have a best friend at work	2	3	10	4	10	3
S11: In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress	4	7	5	6	8	2
S12: This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow	4	6	5	10	5	2

Table 4:21 – Cross-tabulation of 10+ yrs service

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The findings set out in the previous chapter will now be analysed with reference to Forbringer's four levels of grouping the Gallup Q¹²[®] statements into four separate stages where the previous stage must be achieved before the next can be successfully attempted as well as to the literature reviewed in chapter two. Possible shortcomings to the research will be set out as well as the research limitations and possible directions for future research.

5.2 Analysis of findings against Forbringer's 4 levels

Forbringer (2002) grouped the Gallup Q¹²[®] statements into four separate levels where the previous level had to be achieved before the next level could be successfully attempted. He provided the analogy of climbing a metaphorical mountain to describe the levels. The four levels introduced by Forbringer are: Level 1: "What do I get?"; Level 2: "What do I give?"; Level 3: "Do I belong here?"; and Level 4: "How can we all grow?".

5.2.1 Level 1: "What do I get?"

The first two Gallup Q¹²[®] statements, relating to knowing what is expected of one at work and whether the necessary materials and equipment are available, are included in Forbringer's Level 1 which is concerned with satisfying basic needs. Once these needs are met, other issues can become the locus of focus.

5.2.1.(a) S1 of the Gallup Q^{12®}

46.1% of respondents agreed and 37% strongly agreed to the statement demonstrating that most respondents are confident that they know what is expected of them in their organisation and can move their focus to the next statement.

5.2.1.(b) S2 of the Gallup Q^{12®}

43.5% of respondents agreed and 27.9% strongly agreed to the statement indicating that most respondents are confident that they have the appropriate materials and equipment they need to do their work right.

With high levels of agreement to the two first statements, respondents are well placed to move to Level 2 and focus on what they give to the organisation.

5.2.2 Level 2: “What do I give?”

Statements three through six of the Gallup Q^{12®} statements, relating to the opportunity to do one’s best daily; receiving recognition within the last seven days; having a colleague who cares; and having someone at work who encourages one’s development, are included in Forbringer’s Level 2 which is concerned with individual levels of contribution as well as other people’s perception of same.

5.2.2.(a) S3 of the Gallup Q^{12®}

37.7% of respondents agreed, 13% strongly agreed, and a further 24% to the statement demonstrating that over 70% of the respondents are confident that they have the opportunity to do what they do best daily.

5.2.2.(b) S4 of the Gallup Q¹²®

24.8% agreed, 11.8% strongly agreed, and a further 15.7% somewhat agreed to the statement on receiving recognition or praise within the last seven days for doing good work. The combined agreement rates of 52.3% outweighed those in disagreement (44.5%) by less than 10%.

5.2.2.(c) S5 of the Gallup Q¹²®

35.3% of respondents agreed, 20.3% strongly agreed, and a further 20.3% somewhat agreed to the statement on having someone at work who seems to care about them as a person. 75.9% of respondents agreed to the statement in contrast to 20.9% who disagreed or strongly disagreed to it.

5.2.2.(d) S6 of the Gallup Q¹²®

28.8% of respondents agreed, 15% strongly agreed, and a further 24.8% somewhat agreed to the statement on having someone at work who encourages their development. The combined 68.6% outweighed those in disagreement (30.8%) by over 30%.

With response levels ranging from 11%-20%, those in strong agreement with the four statements in this section are in a position to move forward to Level 3.

5.2.3 Level 3: “Do I belong here?”

Statements seven through ten of the Gallup Q¹²® statements, relating to whether one’s opinions seems to count at work; whether the mission of the company makes one feel one’s

job is important; and whether one's colleagues are committed to doing quality work, are included in Forbringer's Level 3 which is concerned with the widened perception of individual fit within the organisation.

5.2.3.(a) S7 of the Gallup Q¹²®

36.6% of respondents agreed, 22.2% strongly agreed, and a further 23.5% somewhat agreed to the statement that their opinions seem to count in work.

5.2.3.(b) S8 of the Gallup Q¹²®

24.2% of respondents somewhat agreed, 19.6% agreed and 15% strongly agreed to the statement that the mission of the company makes them feel their job is important. The combined 58.8% of positive responses outweighed those in disagreement (39.8%) by 20%.

5.2.3.(c) S9 of the Gallup Q¹²®

41.2% of respondents agreed, 13.7% strongly agreed, and a further 23.5% somewhat agreed to the statement that their colleagues are committed to doing quality work. 19% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

5.2.3.(d) S10 of the Gallup Q¹²®

25.5% of respondents somewhat agreed, 23.5% agreed, and a further 10.5% strongly agreed to the statement that they have a best friend in work. 37.3% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Only those who strongly agree to the statements should move forward to Level 4 and this represents between 13.7% and 23.5% of respondents.

5.2.4 Level 4: “How can we all grow?”

Statements eleven and twelve of the Gallup Q^{12®} statements, relating to being approached by someone in work to talk about one’s progress; and having had the opportunities to learn and grow in the past year, are included in Forbringer’s Level 4 which is concerned with self- and team-development. This is the final stage and if reached it may not last for long as circumstances change and people adapt to new situations.

5.2.4.(a) S11 of the Gallup Q^{12®}

31.4% of respondents agreed, 17.6% somewhat agreed, and a further 15.7% strongly agreed to the statement that someone in work had spoken to them about their progress in the past six months. 29.4% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

5.2.4.(b) S12 of the Gallup Q^{12®}

26.1% of respondents agreed, 21.6% somewhat agreed, and a further 18.3% strongly agreed to the statement that they have had opportunities at work to learn and grow in the past year. 30% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Those in strong agreement represent 15.7% to 18.3% of respondents and are at the summit of the metaphorical mountain described by Forbringer. Their challenge is to maintain a balance and their manager’s focus should be on ensuring that the employment needs set out in levels one and two are met so that more employees can be brought up the engagement mountain.

5.3 Correlation of findings to engagement

The analysis of the findings shows that a small percentage of respondents are highly engaged within their department or organisation. With a mean average of 18.3% respondents showing high levels of engagement, the results are short of Towers Perrin's 21% found during its 2007-2008 Global Workforce Study.

Mean % averages across the 12 statements				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
9.3%	16.2%	20.9%	32.7%	18.3%

Table 5:1 – Mean % average for 12 statements

5.4 Analysis of findings against research

Kahn (1990) set out three psychological conditions: meaningfulness, safety and availability and stated that if these three conditions were satisfied that individuals would be more likely to become engaged. Kahn's three conditions are transferable to the Gallup Q¹²[®] statements by breaking them down using Forbringer's four levels: employee's needs (safety); their understanding of what is expected and thought of them (safety); their fit to the organisation (meaningfulness); and their opportunity for self-development (availability).

Psychological meaningfulness is addressed in statements seven through ten which are more heavily weighted in a positive response than a negative one and the findings therefore show that the majority of respondents have found psychological meaningfulness in their role.

Safety is addressed in statements one through six. Again, the statements are weighted towards an overall positive response showing that the majority of respondents have found psychological safety in their role.

Availability is addressed through statements eleven and twelve. Again, the statements are weighted towards an overall positive response showing that the majority of respondents have found psychological availability in their role.

Maslach et al (2001) set out six areas to measure job 'burnout' and reasoned that positive responses would indicate employee engagement. Although this was later argued by Schaufeli, the six areas are set out below and assessed against the results of the survey.

Area 1: Workload

There is not a clear statement that fits this area but statement six in relation to encouraging development was selected to assess workload. The average response was positive for this statement demonstrating that there is not an overloading workload on respondents.

Area 2: Control

Selecting statements two on availability of materials and equipment; statement three on opportunity to do one's best; and statement seven on one's opinions being counted, the average response was positive for this area showing that respondents feel they exercise a degree of control in their organisational setting.

Area 3: Reward

Statements four on recognition; six on being encouraged to develop; and eleven on progress may be applicable to this area. Disagreement on statement four indicates low levels of employee engagement despite positive responses to statements six and eleven.

Area 4: Community

Statements five; seven; nine; and ten may be applicable to this area. Positive responses outweighed negatives for all the above statements in this area.

Area 5: Fairness

Statements one; three; seven; nine; and twelve were selected for this area. Again, positive responses indicate engagement within this area.

Area 6: Values

Statements eight; nine; eleven; and twelve were selected for measurement of this area. Statement eight was almost evenly distributed across positive and negative responses; the remaining statements were weighted positively.

The mainly positive findings set out for the above six areas demonstrate that job burnout is not an issue for the respondents.

5.5 Possible shortcomings to the research

The research survey was made available to 860 individuals. This sample was not representative of Dublin-based employees nor of European employees although the recipients fit into both categories. A more select target population would have been preferential despite the interesting open questions returned by foreign-based respondents.

5.6 Research limitations

Limitations in the research include the lack of identifiable business units. Respondents were asked to outline their corporate title rather than business unit and therefore the research was unable to identify participants by business unit as has been the case for a number of Gallup meta-analyses. Cross-referencing the results against Maslach et al's six areas was also limiting as they previously stated "the importance of looking at the person in context, in terms of his or her fit with the key domains of worklife" (Maslach et al, 2001). This was not possible for the purpose of this research report.

5.7 Possible directions for future research

The results of this study suggest that employee engagement is currently a trending issue. Given the lack of an agreed definition, future academic research would be well served by a comprehensive review of current definitions with a view to introducing a concise, understandable definition for future usage both by organisations and researchers. Within the current economic environment it would be understandable for firms to ignore engagement as they focus on fire-fighting but once the economic climate settles, disengaged employees may well flee in their droves leaving knowledge gaps in their previous organisation. Future research might be better served by combining interviews with quantitative survey tools in order to look at the individual in context. Saks (2006) suggested studying antecedents or predictors to employee engagement such as varying human resources practices. Another area for academic research may be to investigate the correlation of engagement levels to profitability to prove or disprove independently the claims of various consultancy firms.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

Having set out the purpose of the review in chapter one, reviewed the literature in chapter two and outlined the methodology in chapter three, the findings described in chapter four were not surprising in that engagement levels across the respondent participants were overall negative with only 18.3% highly engaged.

6.2 Engagement levels of respondents

Gallup's Q¹²[®] workplace audit states that only highly engaged employees will respond in strong agreement to each of twelve statements (Forbringer, 2002). The findings did not demonstrate a higher level of engagement to what was anticipated based on Towers Perrin's 2007-2008 Global Workforce Study where engagement levels provided were at 21%. The engagement levels found in this research report were at 18.3%, just below that level. Towers Perrin categorises employees as 'enrolled' where they are capable but not fully engaged (Towers Perrin, 2008). This category represented 32.7% of respondents to the online survey. The remainder, the 'disenchanted' or disengaged made up 46.4% of respondents.

6.3 Future focus for managers

As discussed, managers' focus should be on satisfying employee needs at levels one and two of Forbringer's four stages to ensure engagement and correlating profitability (Harter et al, 2002).

6.4 Future focus for research

Given the lack of an agreed definition of employee engagement, future academic research would be well served by a comprehensive review of current definitions with a view to introducing a concise, understandable definition for future usage both by organisations and researchers. Future research might also be better served by combining interviews with quantitative survey tools in order to look at the individual in context. Another area for academic research may be to investigate the correlation of engagement levels to profitability to prove or disprove independently the claims of various consultancy firms.

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CHAPTER 8: APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1: Communication to participants

The below email was sent to the initial target population of 58 Dublin-based employees.

Hi [Name],

I am conducting a survey questionnaire for my thesis on employee engagement and would be very grateful if you could take 5 minutes to respond to it. The survey will be available for completion until Friday this week.

The aim is to collect data for the purpose of analysing levels of employee engagement within Irish organisations. Specifically I am targeting my own colleagues but should be grateful if you would share the link with any of your working friends or colleagues who are willing to participate in the study.

Here is a link to the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FionaVale>

The data collected will be treated confidentially and neither your email nor IP address will be stored on SurveyMonkey once you have completed the questionnaire.

If you have any questions or comments, please let me know.

Thanks in advance,

Fiona

8.2 Appendix 2: Survey questionnaire

A copy of the engagement survey sent electronically is on the following pages.

8.3 Appendix 3: Copy of responses

A copy of all measurable responses received is on the following pages. It should be noted that questions six, seven, nine and eleven are not included as these were open-ended questions not featured on the Gallup Q¹²[®] workplace audit questionnaire and were not used for measuring engagement levels.