

An Investigation Exploring the Drivers of Employee Engagement: A United States Customs and Border Protection Perspective

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Abstract

This dissertation is investigating employee engagement in the context of the largest law enforcement agency in the United States, Customs and Border Protection (CBP). This study aims to explore drivers of employee engagement within CBP. The literature on employee engagement is examined to help identify key antecedents. These factors are explored using semi-structured interviews from the perspective of CBP employees. Following a thematic approach to analysis the research aims to discover if the same determinants discussed in the literature influence the engagement of CBP employees.

Broadly speaking the findings concur with the literature, however a key finding was identified relating to *media coverage* as a significant influencer of employee engagement. CBP has received a large amount of negative coverage in the media lately, due to issues on the Mexican border and the desire for the current U.S. administration to construct a wall with Mexico. When exploring this concept, the participants were asked if adverse media coverage influenced their engagement at work in a positive or negative way. The results showed that media coverage had an overriding influence on their level of engagement in the organisation. This research finds that this concept has a significant influence of employee engagement albeit in a negative manner. Interestingly the literature fails to address media coverage as a concept that may influence employee engagement in an organisation. This study recommends future research to address this knowledge deficiency particularly in a business environment where media is increasingly taking centre stage between the organisation and its employees.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Companies and organizations throughout all industries strive to have a productive and effective workforce in order to grow and increase productivity. It is believed that having an engaged employee is beneficial for these goals. It is important to study employee engagement and the benefits of having engaged employees working in an organization. It is also vital to understand what drives employees to be more engaged.

This dissertation will investigate employee engagement antecedents and benefits. It will do so in the context of a study about employee engagement in United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the largest law enforcement agency in the U.S.

CBP employees work in seaports and airports as well as on the Canadian and Mexican borders. This work can be very challenging and difficult (CNN, 2019). The researcher was unable to find any previous studies on employee engagement in CBP. As CBP is such a vital part of the security of the U.S. it seemed that the engagement of their employees would be a vital topic of study.

In addition, recent media reporting on CBP has portrayed the agency in a negative way (Guardian, 2019). The researcher wanted to investigate if this adverse media coverage had any effect on the engagement of CBP employees.

Initially, in the literature review, this thesis will introduce employee engagement as a concept and explore how it is defined. It will then investigate possible drivers of

engagement as well as examining the benefits of an engaged employee. It will also consider the objectives of the study.

A methodology chapter will discuss the research question, the objectives of the study and provide a justification for the study. Research philosophy will be considered, and a research method will be chosen and justified.

The research findings will then be presented and analysed in a discussion chapter. It will discuss the findings in light of the literature assessed about employee engagement.

1.1 Research Aims

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate the drivers of employee engagement in CBP.

How does the literature's assessment of employee engagement compare with the actual determinants of engagement for CBP employees?

1.2 Research Objectives

This study wanted to present themes that have been identified as drivers and determinants of employee engagement. It then wanted to explore how these themes relate to the drivers of employee engagement for CBP officers. The objectives were as follows:

1. To develop a conceptual model of that identifies the antecedents of employee engagement.
2. To define employee engagement in the context of Customs and Border Protection (CBP).
3. To explore and identify the benefits of an engaged employee.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review examines the theory of employee engagement. The chapter will examine concepts surrounding academic theories about employee engagement. It will explore peer-reviewed academic literature to place the topic into context. It will attempt to define employee engagement through various research theories, which have been presented in research literature. This chapter will also identify and assess potential drivers and determinants of employee engagement, which have also been the focus of studies within the academic journals. The drivers and determinants will be discussed and evaluated in relation to the effect that they have on employee engagement within an organization or workplace. These drivers and determinants will also be analysed in the context of the benefits that employee engagement has for an organization and its workforce.

2.2 Defining Employee Engagement

Employee engagement, as a vital human resources concept, has received increasingly more academic attention in recent years (Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot, 2016). A wide and varied understanding of employee engagement can help underpin a comprehensive and integrated human resource strategy (CIPD, 2018). Although the concept of employee engagement is an accepted human resource concept, it is defined in a variety of different ways (Saks, 2006). We see that the concept of employee engagement is a reoccurring subject of academic discourse (Barros, Costello, Beaman and Westover, 2015). In order to define employee engagement in a way that will truly conceptualize it's meaning it is

necessary to reference W.A. Kahn. The term employee engagement was first introduced by Kahn in 1990 (Barros et al, 2015). In Kahn's ground-breaking research, he was the first person to identify employee engagement as the "harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles" (Kahn, 1990, pp. 694). Employee engagement has been researched and theorized about by academics a great deal since it was originally posited as a concept (Bingham, 2016). In attempting to define employee engagement we also see that it has been described as the extent of dedication and participation that an employee has in their company or institution (Anitha, 2014). This is vital to an organization because we see that employees are the vital and indispensable drivers in a company (Jauhari and Sehgal, 3013).

The foundation of employee engagement was developed on the concept of an employee's commitment and satisfaction to their job (Markos and Sridevi, 2010). The concept of employee engagement has great significance because it highlights many ideas concerning the connection between employees and institutions (Elder and Vigoda-Gadot, 2017). The overriding academic consensus is that employee engagement is a significant element in attaining production in an organization (CIPD, 2012). While assessing employee engagement as a vital strand of human resource strategies and policies, it's necessary to understand why it's such a salient topic. Comprehending the concept of employee engagement is necessary for the success of an organization (Shahidan, Hamid, Kamil, Rani, Aziz and Hassan, 2016). Viewed in this light we see that when an employee is engaged, they "employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances" (Kahn, 1990, PP. 694). This seminal explanation of employee engagement is suggesting that an engaged employee is one who engages fully, tangibly

and intellectually, while participating in their employment role. We have seen from the literature that, while employee engagement is considered an important human resource concept, it can be defined in a myriad of ways. With these diverse views of employee engagement in mind it's important to assess how engagement is measured. We will also investigate drivers and benefits of employee engagement.

2.3 Measuring Employee Engagement

In the previous section we have seen that an engaged employee is beneficial to a company or organization. Many companies assess and evaluate the level of engagement of their workforce in an attempt to increase these levels for the overall benefit of the organization (Little and Little, 2016). It's vital for an organizations survival to measure engagement within a workforce (Van Rooy et al., 2011). By doing this the organization must attempt to comprehend and measure what the drivers and determinants of employee engagement are (Van Rooy et al., 2011). In order to reap the rewards of an engaged employee, organizations must fully comprehend the strategy that they have in place for employee engagement and assess how this approach is affecting its employees (Kumar and Pansari, 2015). When an organization measures employee engagement they can discover what aspects of an employee's development needs to be focused on (Kumar and Pansari, 2015).

It is essential to measure contemporary degree of employee engagement and survey the perspective of employees on important issues that exist in the workplace that effect engagement (Robertson and Cooper, 2010). In order to do this organizations, circulate surveys throughout the workforce that focuses on pertinent topics, perhaps augmenting this with data gleaned group sessions which focus on important aspects of the company (Robertson and Cooper, 2010). Although circulating surveys to a workforce, in order to

gauge workforce attitudes, was once the normal course of business it has now been claimed that this is not an effective way to measure employee engagement (Forbes, 2019). Because an organization and its workforce are continually ebbing and flowing, employee engagement is not a constant and unchanging entity (Forbes, 2019). Research has supported this hypothesis by demonstrating that it's a demanding endeavour to attempt to measure employee engagement because of the complicated and changing nature of a workforce (Macey and Schneider, 2008). Not only can engagement vary from one employee to the next, it can also change within an individual over a period of time (Sonnentag, 2003). Burke (cited in Macy et al.) declared that the way to gauge engagement is by assessing the satisfaction of an organization, it's management and work force (Macey and Schneider, 2008).

When analysing the concept of measuring employee engagement some research has declared that engagement is elucidated "as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption" (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma and Bakker, 2002, pp. 74). Instead of being a fleeting and distinct condition, it is suggested that engagement is a more tenacious omnipresent awareness which does not have as a focal point any specific item, incident, person or conduct (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Vigor is distinguished as an elevated amount of vitality and cognitive tenacity while at work and being willing to strive in one's efforts at work regardless of the difficulties that the employee encounters (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Dedication is discerned as possessing a sensation of substance, eagerness and fulfilment which being inspired and challenged (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Finally, we see that absorption is identified as someone possessing total attentiveness and being profoundly

captivated by their tasks in an employment setting (Schaufali et al., 2002). By identifying these three distinct characteristics of employee engagement Schaufali et al have sought to demonstrate that vigour, dedication and absorption are integral components of measuring employee engagement.

2.4 Drivers and Determinants of Employee Engagement

When investigating and analysing the human resource concept of employee engagement it's necessary to examine the driving force behind an employee who is perceived as being an engaged worker. This can be viewed as the drivers and determinant of an engaged employee. J. Anitha identified seven drivers of employee engagement (Anitha, J. 2014), five of which will be investigated here. Certain themes have been distinguished as drivers and determinants of an engaged employee within an institution or company. By identifying crucial determinants of employee engagement, organizations can strive to nurture them in an effort to encourage a workplace setting for engagement to thrive (Anitha, 2014). In addition, the antecedents of employee engagement determine an environment that is healthy for an organization's workforce (Anitha, 2014). The drivers and determinants of employee engagement, that have been identified in the academic literature, will be discussed in the following subsections.

2.4.1 Employee Commitment

Employee commitment, as a driver of employee engagement (Markos and Sridevi, 2010), is the first theme which will be addressed. Although workplace commitments can manifest themselves in a variety of ways, they can potentially have an impact on how effective an organization is, in addition to influencing the welfare of a company's workforce (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). An employee, regardless of the kind of

organization that they are employed at, are one of the most vital aspects of an organization (Motyka, 2018). As such it is vital to have these essential resources committed to their organization. Therefore, it's possible to deduce that employee commitment is an important aspect of employee engagement.

There is an important correlation between commitment and engagement (Ibrahim and Al Falasi, 2014). Companies that strive to perform to an outstanding level regard vigorous commitment to the organization and a high level of work engagement to be critical components towards reaching this goal (Cesario and Chambel, 2017). Employee commitment is a vital element to influencing the success of an organization (Ibrahim and Al Falasi, 2014). We see that encouraging employee commitment could potentially bring about benefits to an organization. Studies have suggested that when there is a lack of engagement in an organization, an employee's commitment can be adversely affected (Hanaysha, 2016). Commitment of an employee is inherent in an employee's engagement and therefore a sought-after organizational goal (Macey and Schneider, 2008). It has been theorized that commitment is a motivational impetus that motivate an employee's behavior (Meyer, Becker and Vandenberghe, 2004). Two different aspects of employee commitment have been identified; employee commitment to their superiors as distinct from commitment to their institution or company (Becker, Billings, Eveleth and Gilbert, 1996). A different perspective has suggested that an employee that feels more engaged will consequently experience greater commitment in their organization (Albdour and Altarawneh, 2014).

An analysis of the above referenced literature reveals that employee commitment and employee engagement appear to be inter-connected. The concept of engagement in

tandem with commitment has the potential to influence the important performance of an employee as well as a company's efficacy (Cesario and Chambel, 2017). We can see from the academic literature explored here, that there is a consensus that employee commitment is a significant driver for employee engagement. The next driver and determinant of employee engagement which will be appraised is leadership.

2.4.2 Leadership

What is leadership? Leadership has been defined as “a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal” (Forbes, 2013). Leadership is an elemental component which contributes to employee engagement (Anitha, 2014). The role of leadership as a driver of employee engagement must therefore be considered in relation to this study. Employee engagement needs committed leadership which establishes unambiguous inspiration, ethics and goals (Markos and Sridevi). Leadership has been identified in the literature as contributing a vital role to determining employee engagement (Robertson-Smith and Markwick, 2009; Alfes et al, 2013). Most drivers of employee engagement are not financially based and consequently a company that has dedicated leadership can obtain the necessary level of engagement with little financial output (Markos and Sridevi, 2010). Leadership is perceived as so important that it is now the critical motivation behind organizations encouraging engagement in their employees (Popli and Rizvi, 2016).

Leadership has a consequential effect on employee engagement by encouraging employee to be motivated (Mehrzi and Singh, 2016). A variety of leadership actions can have a significant effect, directly and indirectly, on an employee's engagement (Breevaart, Bakker, Hetland, Demerouti, Olsen and Espevik, 2014). The type of

leadership demonstrated by an organization can have beneficial consequences on the staff by creating trust in the workforce (Robertson-Smith and Markwick, 2009). This is supported in the proposal that organizational leadership styles can directly impact the perspective, job performance and way in which an employee conducts themselves within an employment setting (Popli and Rizvi, 2015). We see that leadership can have a positive impact on the condition of a relationship between an organization and its staff members which can, in turn, have an effect on the engagement of employees and their perception of the organization (Men, 2015). It has been proposed that superiors within an organization should convey to the employees that their endeavours contribute significantly to the overall organizational accomplishments (Anitha, 2014). When leaders identify the importance of an employee's efforts the engagement of the employee will rise (Anitha, 2014). Also, the style of leadership has an immediate impact on engagement and that perceived transformational leadership contributes to engaging employees to a higher degree (Popli and Rizvi, 2015).

In the context of this study, we see that law enforcement officers that perceive support from their organization, experience higher levels of engagement (Gillet, Huart, Colombat and Fouquereau, 2013). In addition, a leader's moderating support in the context of law enforcement officers has a positive effect on the engagement of the officers (Li, Cheung and Sun, 2019). The research that has been examined here has argued that leadership is a vital driver in raising employee engagement. The next important driver that we will explore is the effect that co-worker relationships have on employee engagement.

2.4.3 Co-Worker Relationships

The quality and characteristics of an employee are the foundational antecedents of behaviour within a company or institution (Schneider, 1987). That “the people make the place” (Schneider, 1987, pp. 437). If we accept this assertion to be true, we must examine the importance of co-worker relationships within an organization. The relationship between co-workers in an organization has been identified as an important determinant in employee engagement (Anitha, 2014). A relationship with a co-worker can have a consequential effect on how engaged a person is in an organization (Soldati, 2007). We see that co-worker relationships appreciably broadens the extent of employee engagement in an organization (Mehta and Mehta, 2013). It’s thought that constructing a good relationship between co-workers is of paramount importance, particularly one between a worker and their supervisor (Robinson-Smith and Markwick, 2009). We see that building reciprocal trust and confidence amongst employees and their managers is viewed as critical to allowing individuals to engage with their company (Robinson-Smith and Markwick, 2009). Also, a relationship driven by a supervisor can dictate an employee’s empathy and perspective about their organization (Deci and Ryan, 1987).

Relationships between both co-workers and management, in the context of employee engagement, is seen as vital. If a person has a good relationship with the people that they work with, it is anticipated that that the employee will have a high level of employee engagement (Anitha, 2014). Beneficial co-worker relationships contribute positively to high levels of employee engagement. In supporting this theory, we have been told that “Kahn (1990) found that supportive and trusting interpersonal relationships, as well as a supportive team, promote employee engagement” (Anitha, 2014, pp. 311). The standard

of a relationship between an individual and their company can have a beneficial influence on their engagement within the organization (Men, 2015). Another perspective views co-worker relationships from the viewpoint of conflict. Conflict amongst employees can have damaging consequences for an organization (Liu, Nauta, Yang, and Spector, 2018). The research that has been evaluated in this section has emphasized the significance of co-worker relationships has a significant driver and determinant of employee engagement.

2.4.4. Employee Work Environment

Employee work environment has been identified as one of the key determinants in measuring the extent of employee engagement in an institution (Shahidan et al., 2016; Anitha, 2014). We see that the work environment of an employee can have an effect on their engagement at work (Macey and Schneider, 2008). It has been suggested that the perception of support from an employee's company as well as their management team is important for employee engagement (Saks, 2006). An employee's engagement can increase as a result of being in a work environment that is encouraging (Shahidan et al, 2016). Also n employee's perception of support will contribute to a feeling that they are connected to their work. By feeling this association at work, it has been contended that an employee's engagement will strengthen (Shahidan et al., 2016).

A secure work environment, which is supportive, will also contribute to encouraging employee engagement (Saks, 2006). This theory has considered that the relationship initiated by an employee's manager can affect the employee's perceptions about their work environment (Deci and Ryan, 1987). There is also the idea that an accessible and encouraging work environment is crucial for an individual to experience security in an

organization, and therefore allowing the employee to have the ability to engage more fully with their job function (Anitha, 2014). It's thought that companies should consider the workplace when addressing employee engagement within an organization (Glenn, 2006). In addition, the formulation of a congenial environment, which encourages development, can guide employee engagement, thereby improving an organizations probability of recruiting and keeping important employees (Motyka, 2018). Overall there appears to be a consensus that a welcoming workplace environment is a contributing factor to outstanding performance by an organization (Gelade and Ivery, 2003). In a critical examination of the above academic literature we see that the concept of an employee's work environment is thought to be a key driver of employee engagement.

2.4.5. Compensation and Work-Life Balance

Research has suggested that compensation is the cement that holds a workforce and an organization together (Milgo, Namusonge, Kanali and Makokha, 2013). Compensation, which a company bestows upon its workforce, indicates the dedication and resolve that an organization has for its employee and is viewed as a cogent rationale for an employee to remain with their company (Haider, Rasli, Akhtar, Yusoff, Malik, Aamir, Naveed and Tariq, 2015). We see that compensation should be recognized as an essential driver for the fulfilment of employee engagement within an organization (Saks, 2006). It has been theorized that compensation can have a vital impact on the standard and efficacy of the workforce of an organization (Gupta and Shaw, 2014). With regards to employee engagement it's thought that compensation inspires an individual to strive for achievement thereby concentrating on work tasks in addition to individual growth (Anitha, 2014). There is also the view that if the compensation is seen as unfair, not

equitable and incongruent, the engagement of an employee will not be achieved (Milgo, Namusonge, Kanali and Mokokha, 2014). Furthermore, it's thought that unequitable and unfair compensation will dissuade individuals from being motivated thereby stifling employee engagement (Milgo et al., 2014).

It has been reasoned that an organization that compensates an employee in a way that reflects admiration and consideration for that employee ,will be more likely to retain their workforce (Al Mamun and Hasan, 2017). An additional link between employee engagement and compensation sees compensation as a significant inducement to strengthen financial production of an organization (Gill, Dugger and Norton, 2014). Some research has theorized that that it is crucial for an organization to offer a sustainable amount of recompense to staff members if they want their employees to be highly engaged (Anitha, 2014). There is also the assertion that compensation may be a vital contributing factor in engaging an employee (Saks, 2006). It has been contended that employees are not solely satisfied with secure employment anymore but that a pleasing remuneration package are of more importance to encouraging engagement (Joshi and Sodhi, 2011).

Work-life balance can promote happiness, health and success for an individual (Soomro, Breiteneker and Shah, 2018). It has also been shown to be an important catalyst of employee engagement (Jaharuddin and Zainol, 2019). An effective work-life balance can be beneficial for work life and home life (Arif and Farooqi, 2014). We see that a company that has an open and adaptable work-life strategy can influence employee engagement in a positive way (Richman, Civian, Shannon, Hill and Brennan, 2008).

It would appear from the literature that compensation and work-life balance are two key determinants of employee engagement.

2.4.6. Training and Development

Anitha (2014) has identified training and development as a driver for employee engagement. We have been told that training and development is an additional way to engage a workforce into obtaining and maintaining maximum performance within an organization (Sanneh and Taj, 2015). Studies have stressed the importance of equal opportunities for professional advancement, growth and education amongst employees as this will facilitate employee engagement within the company (Robertson-Smith and Markwick, 2009). It's thought that when an employee receives training, they become more knowledgeable about their job which in turn makes them more committed and engaged in their position (Markos and Sridevi, 2010). It has also been suggested that, when given the opportunity to develop oneself within an organization, an employee becomes stronger, more effective and more positive, which all help in raising employee engagement within an organization (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008). In addition, it's felt that if an individual participates in a program of development and training, that person becomes more self-assured in the subject matter that they have trained in, therefore encouraging them to become a more engaged employee in their organization (Anitha, 2014). In the context of employee engagement, we see that training has the ability to allow individuals to experience more security in their capacity to execute their work duties, by making them less anxious (Gruman and Saks, 2011). Research has also suggested that employees need to acquire the appropriate expertise and perspective in order to encourage engagement within an organization (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008).

The prevailing notion is that training and development of employees within an organization is a key driver of employee engagement.

2.5 Employee Engagement in the Public Sector and Law Enforcement

When differentiating between privately run companies and public sector organizations it is thought that employees in the public sector are different than people employed in private sector organizations (Houston, 2000). One example of this is the assertion that people who are employed in the public sector work for the public that they serve (Agyemang and Ofei, 2013). There is a perception that public sector workers are distinguished by a desire to be a servant for the public, thereby having a different motivation than employees in private companies and organizations (Houston, 2000). It is also thought that employees in public organizations place more value in the job at hand and less emphasis on greater pay than those in the private sector (Houston, 2000). It has been theorized however, that employee engagement in public sector organizations is lower than that in private companies (Agyemang and Ofei, 2013). Regardless of this, studies have indicated that the same drivers and determinants that affect employee engagement in private sector institutions also influence engagement in public sector organizations (Sanneh and Taj, 2015). It has been suggested that employee engagement in the context of the public sector have suggested that employee engagement is absolutely necessary for an organization to remain viable and accomplish its goals (Al Mehrzi and Singh, 2016).

In the context of this study it is important to examine employee engagement in law enforcement careers. We have been told that it is important to study the engagement of

law enforcement officers because of what their work entails (Gillet, et al., 2013). Law enforcement is commonly considered a difficult and stressful occupation (Richardsen, Burke and Maurtinussen, 2006). That, as part of their everyday work routine, law enforcement officers encounter difficult issues and complicated situations (Gocke, 1945). Because of the nature of law enforcement work, the aggressive situations and violent encounters, it has been suggested that employee engagement is a salient topic for investigation (Gillet et al., 2013). It is vital for law enforcement officers to comprehend the components that influence employee engagement positively, because this recognition will strengthen personal well-being as well as organizational commitment (Richardsen et al., 2006).

Employee engagement amongst federal public sector workers in the United States has been such an important issue that in 2014 the U.S. Congress requested the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to investigate what actions could be implemented to improve employee engagement in federal workers (Committee on Oversight and Reform, 2014). In its report to U.S. Congress the GAO found that employee engagement is vital in the federal workforce because these employees can have an impact on the general public in a variety of ways including safety at national borders and airports (GAO, 2015). This is important in the context of this thesis. While the literature contains studies on employee engagement in the public sector there is a paucity of academic material investigating engagement of employees in law enforcement officials. This study hopes to explore this apparently under researched topic.

Having assessed the theorized drivers and determinants of employee engagement it's important to investigate the benefits.

2.6 Benefits of Employee Engagement

In the previous section we have assessed what the concept of employee engagement is. It is now necessary to investigate what the benefits of an engaged employee are. In other words, does an organization or company benefit from having engaged employees and if so, what are the advantages of having an engaged employee? Quite simply it has been professed that a company that has engaged employees has a more prolific workforce (Van Rooy, Whitman, Hart and Calao, 2011). That employee engagement is a significant business barometer for the success of an organization (Sundaray and Vihar, 2011). It has been suggested that the best barometer of an engaged employee is the performance of an employee (Kumar and Pansari, 2015). This study argues that a company that has employees who have low morale results in decreased productivity can impact negatively the behaviour of employees and organization's core operations (Kumar and Pansari, 2015).

The link between employee engagement and organizational success materializes when an organization witnesses a high rate of engagement amongst its employees, the results of this contribute to greater productivity and higher profitability (Mehta and Mehta, 2013). This is clearly the desired goal of a vast variety of companies and organizations, accomplishing success in all aspects of its operations would benefit them immeasurably. An employee who is engaged can also be seen to be someone who has an inner belief in themselves. This theory considers that when an employee is engaged, they think and understand that they can be important to an organization (Seijts and Crim, 2006). Another benefit of employee engagement is the concept of employee turnover. It has been suggested that an increase in the engagement of employees can be correlated in a decrease

of staff turnover in an organization (Robinson, Perryman and Hayday, 2004). Taking this into consideration it would appear that an engaged employee is potentially more likely to remain with their company than a disengaged employee. Lower staff turnover within an organization, as a by-product of employee engagement, is an appreciable benefit to an organization. As well as the idea that employee engagement can contribute to a decrease in staff turnover is the perception that an employee who is engaged can assist an organization to be a safer, more productive and more customer-service oriented establishment (Little and Little, 2006).

Over-all we have assessed a comprehensive volume of academic literature attesting to the benefits of employee engagement. Some studies we assessed have deduced that when employee engagement is at a high level, the result can be better dedication and participation in an individual's role. This would create a group of employees that are more motivated and therefore work more closely to attain the routine objectives of the company (Mehta and Mehta, 2013). We also see that that organizations that have a high percentage of engaged employees are more effective and financially successful than companies with a lower degree of engaged employees (Mehta and Mehta, 2013). It has been thought that strategies, process, structure and formation of an organization can dictate how engaged employees are within an organization (Anitha, 2014).

A comprehensive employee engagement strategy can empower a company to develop and maintain competitive advantage (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey and Saks, 2015). In addition to the overall business benefits of pursuing a strategy of attaining a high level of employee engagement, some research has asserted that it's also the humane course of action (Xu and Thomas-Cooper, 2011). Finally, some research has theorized that there is

a linear link that correlates between performance and job fulfilment or gratification (Babin and Boles, 1996). Further to this it has been claimed that there is a consequential link between an engaged employee and the employee's production (Ayub and Islam, 2018).

The benefits of employee engagement are potentially so vital that some academics have suggested that it is essential that employee engagement become a natural part of the human resource strategy of a company in order to attain dominance competitively (Albrecht et al., 2015). That the answer to accomplishing an exceptional employee engagement strategy is to recognize the benefits at its inception so that it has an effective focal point and its progression is observed and tracked to ensure a successful implementation (Robertson and Cooper, 2010). Supporting this it has been theorized that a company that institutes and encourages an employee engagement strategy might be appealing to prospective employees (Salanova, Agut and Peiro, 2005). If we accept the academic assertions that have been presented above, it would appear to be the prudent course of action for companies and organizations to aggressively address the concept of employee engagement. By doing so the holistic benefits that might be obtained are potentially immeasurable.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter we have identified, defined and assessed the human resource concept of employee engagement. The literature that has been referenced here has demonstrated that there are different views on the importance of employee engagement in addition to a variety of definitions. The overwhelming view is that employee engagement is an important topic which needs to be addressed. That an engaged employee is beneficial to

themselves and to their organizations. We have also investigated drivers and determinants that are alleged to promote employee engagement. While each of these drivers have distinctive characteristics, studies have demonstrated that they each contribute to employee engagement in a variety of ways. In addition, we looked at the process of measuring employee engagement and the different The literature reviewed in chapter 2 highlighted certain themes which have emerged from the study of employee engagement. Through an analysis of these topics it has been possible to develop objectives to be investigated in the context of USCBP. Chapter 3 will initially pose the research question and state the objectives for the project. It will also attempt to give a justification for the query. The author will reveal the methodology that has been chosen and will then defend the choice of methodological approach for the study while critically assessing the method that was rejected. The chapter will explore the different methods used to acquire and analyse information and It will compare and contrast them while explaining the rationale of using one instead of the other. We will also address the ethical considerations that need to be considered when approaching such a study.

concepts surrounding this topic. Importantly we also explored employee engagement as it relates to employees in the public sector and specifically how it impacts law enforcement officials. After a considerable review of the literature it is now possible to attempt a study of employee engagement in U.S. Federal law enforcement. The aim is to investigate the drivers of employee engagement in the context of United States Customs and Border Protection (USCBP).

The objectives of the study are:

1. Develop a conceptual model that identifies the antecedents of employee engagement.
2. To define employee engagement in the context of CBP
3. To explore and identify the benefits of an engaged employee.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The literature reviewed in chapter 2 highlighted certain themes which have emerged from the study of employee engagement. Through an analysis of these topics it has been possible to develop objectives to be investigated in the context of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Chapter 3 will initially pose the research question and state the objectives for the project. It will also attempt to give a justification for the query. It will then discuss the philosophical underpinnings that need to be considered before undertaking a research project. The author will reveal the methodology that has been chosen and will then defend the choice of methodological approach for the study while critically assessing the method that was rejected. The chapter will explore the different methods used to acquire and analyze information and It will compare and contrast them while explaining the rationale of using one instead of the other. We will also address the ethical considerations that need to be considered when approaching such a study.

3.2 Research Question

This dissertation aims to explore employee engagement in USCBP. It poses the question, what are the drivers of employee engagement for USCBP officers? Given the topical nature of the U.S. immigration and border issues that are reported daily in the news media, it appears to be timely for such a study to be undertaken. We have seen the media publishing a photograph of a deceased migrant father and daughter who were attempting to cross the U.S. border with Mexico (Guardian, 2019). We have also witnessed in recent

days the resignation of the Acting Commissioner for USCBP over the alleged mistreatment of migrant children attempting to enter the U.S. over the border from Mexico (CBS, 2019). Does this coverage have any effect on CBP officers? If the answer is yes, then how does it affect their engagement? What are the factors that are involved in determining a CBP officer's engagement at work?

3.2.1. Research objectives

The objectives of this research project will be to develop a conceptual model that identifies the antecedents of employee engagement. It will also attempt to identify and explore the benefits of an engaged employee. This study will also endeavour to explore what drives employee engagement in the context of CBP.

3.2.2. Justification for the Study

As was previously stated, the topic of illegal immigration into the United States is dominating the media headlines throughout the world. The CBP officers who enforce U.S. immigration laws daily, work under difficult and demanding conditions. The task that they have undertaken is vital to the national security interests of the U.S. The engagement of these officers is of paramount importance to the furthering the objectives of CBP. While investigating the topic of employee engagement the author discovered a paucity of academic literature relating to employee engagement in law enforcement organizations. This study proposes to identify drivers of employee engagement in CBP which is the largest law enforcement organization in the United States. It is vital to investigate what engages a CBP officer to accomplish their goals successfully. In addition, given the current media coverage, a study of employee engagement in relation to USCBP appears to be a relevant topic for investigation.

3.3. Research Philosophy

Research is an integral part of any academic study. The more straightforward the motives and objectives are, the more effective the research will be (Jankowicz, 2005). Silverman has presented models of research called ontology and epistemology which he says supply a way of viewing reality (Silverman, 2014). Ontology informs us of reality and what it consists of and epistemology asks what the components of knowledge are (Silverman, 2014). Another view tells us that ontology identifies with “the nature of being and reality” while epistemology “relates to the to the nature of knowledge, to what is known, and to how we know what we know” (Quinlan, 2011, pp. 292). In the process of evaluating the research approach of this project, Saunders research onion has been assessed (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2000). Saunders et al. argue that there are layers in the research onion that need to be removed and assessed in order to determine the proper approach towards one’s research (Saunders, et al., 2005). Removing the layers of the onion help to determine the philosophy and approach of the research as well as the strategy, method of data collection and timeline (Saunders, et al., 2005).

3.4 Positivism and Phenomenology

Saunders et al. have identified two research philosophies, positivism and phenomenology, both of which are part of the research onion (Saunders, et al., 2005). The researcher that adopts the positivism outlook, objectively analyses data in a disconnected manner that has been gathered in an approach that is free of judgement (Saunders, et al. 2005). It considers social values or cultural norms as “existing independently of the activities of both participants and researchers” (Silverman, 2013, pp. 86). Positivism implicates a

realist view that makes the assumption that a real world exists completely independently, regardless of the way in which it is studied by the researcher (Silverman, 2014). The goal of the positivist is to precipitate dependable and well- grounded data that is unfettered by the research location (Silverman, 2014). The researcher that adopts the positivist perspective will then embrace the quantitative method of research (Crossan, 2003).

Abayomi Alase tells us that phenomenology has been developed and theorized by many eminent scholars but that, with regards to qualitative research, it was first conceived and developed as a theory in 1931 by Husserl as a means of comprehending the life experiences of the people participating in a research study, and explaining what these actual experiences mean (Alase, 2017). A researcher who adopts the phenomenological approach believes that circumstances are constantly changing and that the current climate may be dramatically different a few months from now (Saunders et al, 2005). The researcher embracing phenomenology also has the responsible duty of exploring and clarifying the influence of the issues covered of the life-experiences of the people participating in the research project (Alase, 2017). They strive to understand the substance of the life experiences of the research participant (Flynn and Korcuska, 2018). A researcher that espouses a phenomenological point of view will view the quantitative philosophy has the most effective way of gathering research data (Saunders, et al. 2005).

3.5 Research Design: Inductive Approach

We have examined the significance of the philosophical underpinnings of a research study. The next key aspect is the research design which necessitates examining the deductive and inductive approaches. The deductive method entails designing a research plan around the postulation of a theory while the inductive approach develops a theory

after the data collection and analysis. has been completed (Saunders, et al., 2005). The deductive approach is more closely associated with positivism while an inductive method is aligned with phenomenology (Saunders et al, 2005). The inductive approach sees the researcher assessing the research situation without having any preconceived ideas about what they are studying (Patton, 1990). This study is taking an inductive approach which is more closely associated with qualitative research (Thomas, 2006).

3.5.1 Benefits of Qualitative Research and Interviews

There are two differing methods for collecting data for a research project which have been identified as the quantitative and qualitative methods (Saunders et al. 2005). Although each approach is different, one is not considered to be more effective than the other as they both have advantages and disadvantages (Carr, 1994). In fact, although qualitative and quantitative methods are commonly viewed as conflicting and disparate, they are often used together (Crossan, 2003). The simple differentiation between the two methods is that quantitative research deals with numbers and the qualitative method does not, although some qualitative data can use numerals for coding the acquired research data (Quinlan, 2011). A successful quantitative research project generally needs to have a large pool of people to survey and sometimes a substantial project of this size is not possible to undertake because of a deficiency in resources (Choy, 2014). Because of the size of CBP and the difficulty of access the method that has been chosen for this research project is qualitative. It has been suggested that the qualitative method of research can shed light on what is happening in the environment that is being investigated by studying what individuals do rather than asking them to give an opinion (Silverman, 2014). In addition, it has been asserted that qualitative research can provide the researcher with an

advantage to their research abilities which are required to analyse and evaluate their research project (Alase, 2017). A researcher who is subjective and has good communication skills can benefit from utilizing the qualitative research method (Alase, 2017). The seminal study of employee engagement by W. A. Kahn used a variety of qualitative methods to assess his research including “observation, document analysis, self-reflection and in-depth interviewing” (Kahn, 1990, pp. 696). Michael Quinn Patton has told us that one of the methods used in a qualitative study is an interview which can be open-ended or in-depth (Patton, 1990). It has been theorized that interviews are the most frequently used procedure to collect data when utilizing the qualitative research method (Ryan, Coughlan and Cronin, 2007). We see that an interview is a practical way for a researcher to study a topic through someone else's perspective (Qu and Dumay, 2011). We have also been told that by interviewing someone it is possible to obtain information which is dependable and well-grounded (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2000).

This study proposes to adopt a similar approach based on Kahn’s research project, by conducting interviews with CBP officers. Although the context is different, as Kahn’s study was in a children’s camp in the United States, it is felt that the interview process is the best way to investigate the drivers of employee engagement in CBP. These interviews will be semi-structured which allows flexibility for the interviewee to respond to questions in an open-ended manner (Bryman, 2012). Semi –structured interviews allow the researcher to focus on the main structure of the research project while offering the respondent an opportunity to shed light on other variables that may not have been addressed (Galletta, 2013). The goal of the interview, with regard to qualitative research,

is to investigate the point of view of the respondents and give them the freedom to openly reveal their ideas and perspectives on the topic that is being investigated (Quinlan, 2011).

3.6 Respondents

Often in a research project the number of people in an organization can be quite large making it necessary for the researcher to select a small sample group to study (Quinlan, 2011). The respondents that participated in this research project were chosen through personal connections because the researcher is a former employee of CBP. The CBP Officers that were selected were stationed at different locations, one in Ireland and the remaining respondents in locations throughout the United States. The Officer working in Ireland participated in a face to face semi structured interview while the remaining Officers were interviewed via Skype. There were two supervisors interviewed for the study. Two of the Officers interviewed are involved in administrative work while the other four work enforcing U.S. Customs, Immigration and Agricultural laws every day. The interviews included two females and four males. There was a wide range in the number of years that each Officer had served ranging from eight years to twenty-four years. This wide variety of locations, work duties and different levels of experience allowed a wide diversity of perspectives to be expressed in the context of the study. Two were in management positions and the remaining four were officer grade.

3.7 Data Collection

As stated previously the chosen method of collecting data for this study was semi-structured interviews. As the researcher had a prior working relationship with all of the respondents, he was able to create an easy and friendly rapport from the beginning of each interview. Although the interviews had specific themes and topics to be covered,

some additional, follow-up questions were asked in some instances. This was to allow each respondent to be able to express their views fully. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer will have certain themes to cover but may exclude or change some questions depending on what direction the interview is progressing (Saunders et al., 2000). The interviews for this study were recorded on a digital dictation device and subsequently transcribed onto a word document which could not be accessed by anyone except the researcher. The interviewees were advised about what the project was investigating, told about the scope of the interviews and informed that the interviews were being taped. A consent form was read to each interviewee and they verbally agreed to their respective involvement.

3.8 Ethics

Ethics in a research project is applying the concept of ethics to the research (Quinlan, 2011). When undertaking a research project, the researcher must have consideration for the people that are involved and include them in the study, while treating them ethically (Quinlan, 2011). CBP Officers deal with sensitive issues daily. They undergo a thorough FBI background investigation every five years in order to remain employed as Officers. In some instances, they confront life and death situations by dealing with dangerous criminals and terrorists. It is of paramount importance, therefore, to keep the identities of the respondents in this study confidential. They were all informed that access to their names would only be available to the researcher and his supervisor. Informed consent allows participants to freely agree to participate in a study knowing that they don't have to participate and that they are welcome to cease their involvement at any time throughout

the course of the project (Diener and Crandall, 1978). This principle of informed consent was applied to the CBP Officers that were interviewed.

3.9 Methodological Limitations

It is accepted that a sampling size of six people, when studying the largest law enforcement agency in the U.S., has its limitations. CBP Officers deal with highly sensitive information and are generally averse to discussing their employment with people outside of the agency. Finding six officers who were willing to discuss the themes that have been covered in the study can be viewed as a successful outcome. During one of the interviews a degree of responder bias was revealed. Responder bias is when an interviewee answers the same way to every question, wants to please the interviewer with their responses or wants to provide an answer that they feel is the most socially acceptable (Quinlan, 2011). This manifested itself in this project through one interviewee who mostly took the position that nothing influenced his engagement. His opinion was that he could adapt to any situation regardless of outside influences. It is felt, however that the wealth of opinions provided by the other respondents compensated for the responder bias that materialized.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter posed the research question that will be investigated. It discussed the objectives and justification for the study. It addressed research philosophy and design and chose a data collecting method for the project. It also provided an overview of the respondents and explored the ethical considerations surrounding their participation. Finally, the methodological limitations were addressed.

Chapter Four: Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present a summary of the research findings which were obtained through the interview process. The six Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers that agreed to be interviewed were apprised about what the project was about. They were told that the study was focused on employee engagement in CBP. The researcher reiterated that involvement by the officers was completely voluntary and confidential. Each interviewee was then offered the opportunity to withdraw from participating in the study. They were also assured that confidentiality was of paramount consideration and importance.

As highlighted in section 3.2 the over-arching research question of this dissertation aims to uncover the key drivers of employee engagement. The following sections discuss the findings related to the key objectives.

4.2 Qualitative Themes and Interview Questions

At the outset of each interview the researcher obtained some general background information about each participant by asking three contextual questions. They were asked what their position was, what that entailed and how many years of service each of them had with CBP. Four of the interviewees were at the journeyman officer grade while two were supervisors. The work duties varied with two working in an airport, two working in a seaport and two working in administrative positions one in an office and one from home. The number of years of service that the employees had with CBP were 11, two with 12, 15, 19 and 24. During these initial questions all the officers appeared to be at ease and fully willing to participate in the interview process. After establishing background

information about the participants, they were asked a general question about what their perception of employee engagement was. This question was aimed at understanding if there was a consensus about employee engagement among the interviewees or if any additional insight could be explored. Words such as “pride”, “happy”, “satisfied” and “involved” were mentioned by four of the respondents. One respondent said that she viewed an engaged employee as someone who “cares about the work they are doing”. Another interviewee said an engaged person is “somebody who is motivated. Someone who feels part of a team”. A common perception of engagement from three of the interviewees was a sense of belonging and feeling part of a group or team. The overall perception of an engaged employee in the responses were positive and productive concepts that reflected the definition of employee engagement that was provided in the literature review.

4.2.1 Work Environment

The respondents of this study were asked if they felt that work environment would affect their engagement. Five out of six felt that the environment did influence their engagement at work. There was a difference of opinion about which environment encouraged better engagement. One of the respondents said that a cargo port environment was different than an airport environment because at a port “there is not a constant pressure like at an airport”. This was because “containers can wait. They will be examined eventually”. One of the interviewees who works in an office said “I think my engagement can be affected by the environment. When I worked in an airport, I feel like I was more engaged”. Another respondent said that he worked in a bad work environment that was created by his boss who didn’t want to talk to the officers. This interviewee said, “she did not see

the value of it [talking to officers] and it really had a devastating impact on our operation”. One of the respondents answered the question by looking at it from the point of view of co-workers by saying “yeah, I think so. I think the people you work with, you know for good or bad, it can make a big difference”. The responses generally supported the theories about work environment being a driver of employee engagement.

4.2.2. Co-Workers

When questioned about what effect work colleagues have on their engagement five of the respondents expressed the view that co-workers could influence their engagement. Four of the interviewees alluded to good and bad work relationships influencing their engagement. There was an overall view from the responses that good work relationships encouraged more engagement while negativity from co-workers could cause their engagement at work to diminish. This was supported by an interviewee who said, “the more you develop a relationship with your co-workers, you probably enjoy work more”. One respondent offered the view that one negative person in work would have more effect on him than three positive people. He said, “you could have two or three really positive people, really happy people and it’s not going to counteract with the negative people”. Another respondent said, “Tension or negativity from fellow officers can definitely affect my engagement”. The overall response was that work colleagues can affect engagement.

4.2.3 Leadership

The interviewees were then asked about leadership and management’s influence on engagement. They were also asked if leadership could be motivational. Anitha identified leadership as a key antecedent of employee engagement (Anitha, 2014). Two of the respondents, when asked about leadership, said that leadership could be motivational. One said that motivational leadership encouraged engagement while the other

interviewee offered the view, in the context of motivational leadership, that “leadership is a way to get people to complete goals.....if you do it in a positive way then you’re going to get co-operation each time”. Another respondent felt that a leader that was supportive and recognized the good work of an employee could be beneficial for engagement. This ties in with opinion of another respondent who mentioned “feedback” and the benefits of having a manager or supervisor listen to their employees.

One of the interviewees offered another view about managers that “they need to gain respect and you have to think that they’re worthy of being a supervisor”. While another respondent said that he feels “most engaged when I trust the talent of my supervisor”. The view was also expressed that “your form of management can make or break a working environment”. From the answers provided by the respondents, leadership has a very strong effect on employee engagement.

As a follow-up to the leadership question the interviewees were asked what the leaders in CBP could do to encourage stronger engagement. One respondent accepted that, apart from doubling the number of employees, there was nothing that leadership could do. Another respondent said that CBP management should encourage more positive communication. This ties in with another interviewee who said that leadership should know what's going on with their employee. Providing a better work-life balance was also mentioned. Finally, one of the respondents put it quite succinctly when she said, “I think timely recognition of well-done work is a critical component that CBP is missing”.

4.2.4 Training and Development

When an employee secures opportunities for training, they are more engaged which is mirrored in the standard of their work output (Kumar and Pansari, 2015). Five out of the

six respondents said that training and development influences their engagement. The overriding consensus was that training opportunities had a positive influence on their engagement at work. In the context of development, one respondent said that if you are engaged as a result of training your opportunities will increase within CBP. Another respondent, when talking about development said, “right now there is none” although they still claimed that training would positively engage them. Another point of view came from an interviewee who said that the effect that training and development had on his engagement was negative because of the content and presentation in its present form. He used as an example a recent training course that he had attended where he felt he had learned nothing useful. He was away from home for three weeks and felt that it was a complete waste of time. This had a detrimental effect on his engagement.

4.2.5. Compensation and Work-Life Balance

Compensation was the next theme that was discussed. The literature highlighted compensation as another key factor in influencing employee engagement. Regardless of this there was clear evidence that a basic salary does not significantly influence the level of engagement of the respondents interviewed for this study. Five of the interviewees claimed that their salary did not influence engagement. One respondent said, “no, money doesn’t make me any more or less engaged at work”. Another interviewee said, “I wouldn’t be more engaged because of my salary”. While a third person said “100 per cent no, does not affect engagement at all”. Only one of the five respondents stated that compensation is a driver of employee engagement. She said, “monetary rewards make me feel like I’ve done something good and therefore I am willing to become more engaged”. In CBP there are different forms of compensation. There is the basic salary,

overtime, cash-awards and time-off awards. Two of the respondents who said that compensation was not a factor of engagement then mentioned cash-awards as a motivator. One said, “that kind of thing would definitely affect my engagement” while the other said that in relation to cash awards “it gives you something to aspire to”.

4.2.6. Work-Life Balance

Next the respondents were asked if work-life balance was a stronger motivator than compensation. This was the first issue that was covered in the interviews in which the respondents were in 100 per cent agreement. They all felt strongly that work-life balance is a strong motivator for engagement. One of the issues that was mentioned by one of the interviewees as being a good motivator for engagement was a good work schedule. This respondent expressed the view that “some people can work four, ten-hour days, and then have three days off a week. That can be a good motivator”. Another person mentioned that they would prefer a time-off award over a monetary award. The adage “I don’t live to work; I work to live” was mentioned by one of the respondents. This respondent also said that money didn’t drive him. He stated that if CBP “said they’ll give you 1 20 percent raise but you have to work 20 percent more hours, I would say no.” Another interviewee said that it’s “not about money, it’s about what life experiences people are missing”. Overall there was a vigorous consensus expressed by the whole group about the benefits that a good work-life balance has on engagement.

4.2.7. Commitment

The respondents were next asked if they considered themselves to be committed employees. If they perceived themselves to be committed, they were asked how they felt they demonstrated commitment. Five out of the six respondents had a perception that they were committed to CBP. The one employee who didn’t feel committed mentioned the

negative media attention that CBP has been receiving in the media. This person went so far as to say that they were questioning their employment. She also said that she didn't trust management "I am less motivated to meet expectations". One interviewee said that they were loyal to CBP while another respondent said, "I believe in what we do". In contrast to the person who mentioned the negative media coverage as a reason for not being committed, another respondent said that he was committed "despite the negative press and some of the political nonsense that goes with our job". The ways that the committed employee demonstrated their commitment ranged from claims of "doing a good job" to "doing job 100 percent". One respondent offered an example of an instance when he spent a lot of extra time helping an immigrant to the U.S. solve a problem that she was having with her visa application. Helping passengers was his way of demonstrating commitment, and it helped him to feel more engaged. He commented about the passenger that he helped, "she benefited, and I felt good about that. I try to focus on that to stay engaged".

4.2.8. Relationship Between Commitment and Engagement

After getting their thoughts about commitment, the respondents were next asked if there was a relationship between commitment and engagement. One respondent dissented from the general view that there was a relationship between the two. This respondent said, "not in my opinion, I do believe I am committed to this career because of the many years I have invested, but my engagement could improve". Two of the interviewees expressed the opinion that commitment and relationship must go together, that the two concepts "work arm in arm". Another interviewee took another view, turning it around, by saying, "I think if you have good engagement, then you'll have better commitment". One of the

respondents brought management into the equation by saying “employees that are committed to the mission and management is committed to the goals of the unit they should all be engaged”. Overall five out of six of the respondents expressed a view that there was a relationship between commitment and engagement.

4.2.9 Engagement

After covering the themes that were discussed in the literature review, the interview participants were then asked if they felt that they were engaged at work. Five out of the six respondents expressed the view that they were engaged at work. The interviewee who said that she wasn't engaged said that she would like “actual feedback regarding the work I am doing.” Another respondent said that she felt like she was engaged because of the positive interaction that she had with her colleagues. She said, “my interaction with my co-workers is very positive, I get along with everybody”. One of the interviewees, who holds the position of supervisor, said that caring about his employee made him feel more engaged. About his employees he said, “if maybe something is a little off with one of them, I would like to think I am engaged enough to notice.” A person who said that he was engaged qualified his answer by stating “I would say I am engaged, just not challenged.” That he didn't feel as engaged as he had at other points in his career because he didn't feel challenged.

4.3. Key Factors of Engagement

To sum up the themes of drivers of employee engagement that were covered in the interviews, the respondents were asked what they considered to be the most important and what they thought were of least importance to their engagement. The work environment wasn't mentioned by three, while two of the interviewees rated it among the

least important engagement determinant. At the other end of the spectrum, four of the respondents rated leadership and management as the most important factors in encouraging their engagement. Compensation as an important engagement factor was viewed as the most important by one respondent who said, “the one thing that matters right now is that I need money”. and least important by another who commented “I think we are paid very well, personally, for what we do”. One of the people interviewed, said about compensation, that it would also be the least important because “you’re going to get paid anyway”. Another interviewee said that compensation was the second most important engagement factor for him saying that “nobody works for free”.

4.3.1. Media Coverage

As was referenced in section 3.2 CBP has been portrayed negatively in the media a great deal in recent months. Much of this coverage is negative and presents CBP and its employees in a damaging way. This has to do with a perception that there is a constant stream of illegal immigrants crossing the southern border of the U.S. and the perceived need of a border wall. Because of the topical nature of this the researcher felt that he would be remiss in addressing this issue. The interviewees were asked if this media coverage had an effect on their engagement at work. Two of the respondents said that the coverage didn’t influence their engagement while the other four said it did. One of the interviewees that claimed that the media coverage had no effect on his engagement said “I just keep doing my job anyway while the other respondent said that what goes on at the border has no effect on him. One of the people said that the adverse media reporting has affected the “atmosphere at work” because CBP employees also had opposing views on the issues. She said that the coverage was strengthening her engagement because in

her opinion, CBP officers have to “show ourselves to have integrity and do the best job we can”. Another respondent stated that “a lot of stuff is demoralizing and makes you less engaged. While media coverage did not affect the engagement of some of the respondents', it apparently had a large effect on others.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This chapter will discuss the findings from the interviews that were assessed in the previous chapter. It will explore the answers given by the interviewees in the context of the themes that were identified as drivers of employee engagement in the literature review. (1) It will analyse the responses in the context of the literature and discuss the findings of employee engagement determinants in CBP.

5.1 Defining Engagement

In the literature review we saw employee engagement defined in a myriad of ways that suggest “involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort and energy (Macey, W.H. and Schneider, B. 2008, pp. 4). These concepts were comparable to the ideas of engagement that were expressed by the respondents in this study. The interviewees had strong opinions about the concept of engagement and appeared eager to offer their own definitions of what it meant to them. They spoke about being “part of a team”, “part of a group”, a sense of “belonging” and being “involved”. These ideas support Anitha’s ideas about the dedication and loyalty that a worker has for their company (Anitha, 2014). The respondents viewed engagement in a positive way which we also saw in the literature.

5.2 Environment

In the literature review chapter, we saw that a work environment can contribute to how an employee’s engagement can change depending on differing situations (Macey and Schneider, 2008) The participants in this study overwhelmingly supported this assertion

by expressing the view that a work environment can affect an employee's engagement. The respondents spoke about both the physical work environment as well the atmosphere in a workplace that is created by other employees. They contrasted different work environments saying that some could encourage good engagement while others may cause disengagement. This supported what we saw in the literature. There was general agreement with Shahidan et al. (2016) and Anitha (2014) that a work environment was a driver of employee engagement.

5.3 Work Colleagues

Most of the respondents of this study revealed that co-workers have an on impact their engagement at work. This supports the concept proffered in chapter 2 that relationships with work colleagues can influence employee engagement (Rothmann, S. Rothmann Jr., S., 2010). The interviewees contrasted good relationships and bad relationships as affecting engagement in different ways. Positive relations were considered to be beneficial to engagement while the respondents felt that "tension and negativity" could have an adverse effect on engagement. There was a definite feeling that work colleagues could have a profound effect on engagement at work. The participants of this project supported the literature on co-workers impacting engagement.

5.4 Leadership

According to Mehrzi and Kumar (2016) leadership can encourage employees to be motivated, thereby influencing engagement. Importantly, in the context of law enforcement, Li et al. (2019) identified leadership as a vital determinant of engagement. The research here found that this view was supported by the opinions of five out of six of the respondents in the study. One of the interviewees said that leadership can be

motivational which correlates with the literature. Another respondent supported the literature when he said that the trust of a supervisor encouraged engagement. The respondents contrasted the effect that positive and negative leadership can have in being a determinant for engagement. A few of them offered examples of poor management during their respective careers, that caused them to disengage. The opinions expressed in the interviews strongly supported Anitha's (2014) identification of leadership as a driver for employee engagement.

5.5 Training

An assessment of the research findings has revealed that most of the CBP officers that were interviewed expressed a view that training and development was indeed a factor of engagement. This reinforces the literature which has highlighted the importance of training as a way to encourage engagement in a company (Bakker, A. B. and Demerouti, E. 2008). Most of the respondents expressed a desire to have more training opportunities. A few of the interviewees supported the literature by actually stating the opinion that training made them more engaged. One of the respondents concurred with the literature but felt that CBP's training was not effective and therefore did not engage him in its present form. This did not change his overall view, however, of training being a determinant of engagement.

5.6 Compensation

The research into compensation in this study appears to initially contradict what was presented in the literature. While compensation has been identified as an essential driver in engagement (Saks, 2006) the overwhelming response from the participants in this project, when asked specifically about compensation, expressed the view that

compensation would not be a determinant of engagement. They were all unequivocal in this opinion. There was a sole dissenting voice in this regard who stated that the money that she earned made her more engaged. When asked about compensation, one of the respondents mentioned extra pay that CBP officers can receive called cash-awards. These are allocated to officers who are perceived to have gone beyond the call of duty. The interviewee that mentioned that while his salary was not a driver of engagement, a cash award might have the ability to affect his engagement.

5.7 Work-Life Balance

Jaharuddin and Zainol (2019) developed the importance of the link between work-life balance and employee engagement. The question about work-life balance was the only one to receive full concurrence from the respondents. They all agreed that a good balance between work and their homelife influenced their engagement at work. The response from the interviewees fully supported the data presented in the literature review. The respondents agreed with the literature by saying that more time off work, as well as better work schedules, would have a positive effect on their engagement at work.

5.8 New Findings

While this research explored the factors that influence employee engagement as informed by the literature review, the data shows two additional factors that highlighted the importance of ‘commitment’ and ‘media coverage’ as drivers of employee engagement. The following section discusses these new findings and presents the conceptual model with the new factors included.

5.8.1 Commitment and Engagement

Although Anitha (2014) did not identify commitment as a driver of engagement research suggests that engagement can generally be explained as being gauged by the degree of commitment that exists (Markos and Sridevi, 2010). The respondents in this study, for the most part, felt that they were committed employees of CBP. Importantly, they also were able to articulate a positive link between commitment and engagement. That is, the more committed they felt to CBP, the more engaged they believed they were to their role in the organization. The research found that the respondents recognized a strong link between commitment and engagement as illustrated by the interviewee who said, “If you are committed, you’re going to do the job and then you are going to be engaged.”

Additionally, Ibrahim and Al Falasi (2014) found a correlation between commitment and loyalty. This was supported by the respondent who expressed her commitment by saying, “I’m loyal to CBP.” Overall the respondents in this study spoke about the importance of commitment as a determinant of employee engagement. While Anitha 2014 recognizes the importance of commitment within an organization, her study positions commitment as a kind of engagement. That is Anitha’s study defines commitment as employee engagement and not as a determinant of it. This study shows that commitment is a driver of employee engagement in the context of a large organization.

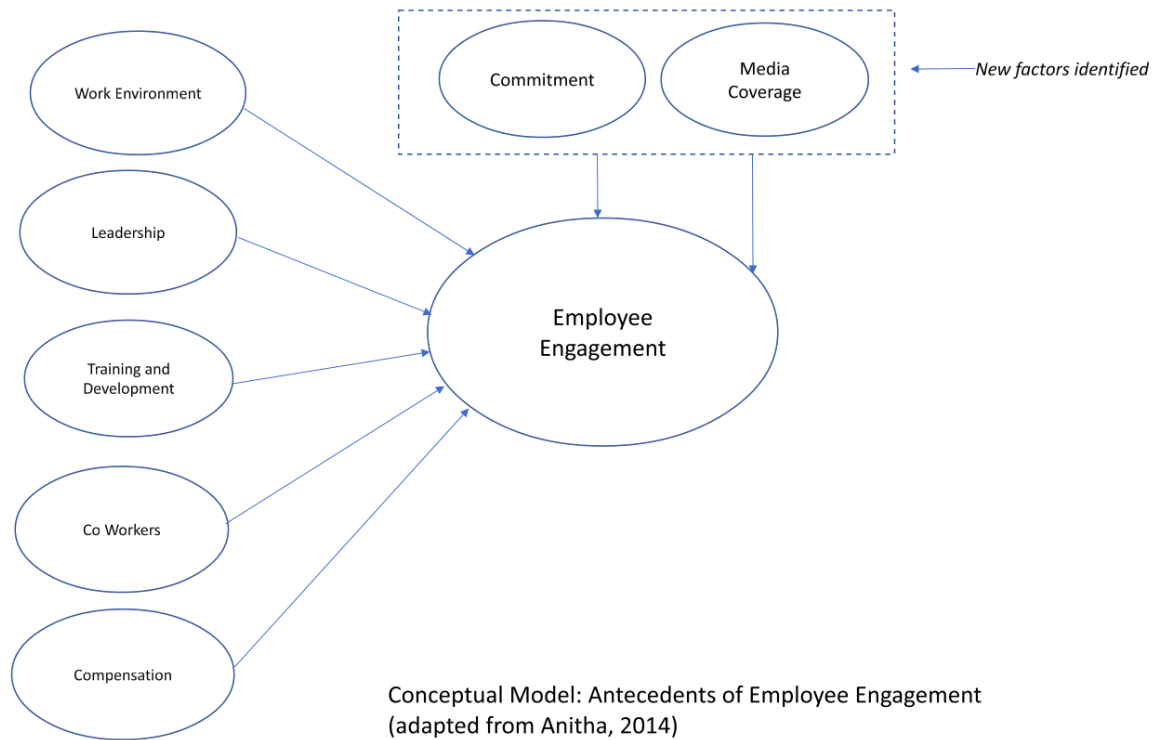
5.8.2. Media Coverage as a Determinant of Engagement

Media coverage of CBP is a regular occurrence. This was mentioned in Section 3.2. There is continuous news coverage of illegal border crossings over the southern U.S. border with Mexico and news stories about the detention of undocumented children (Washington Post, 2019). The U.S. Administration's desire to construct a wall on the southern border is also covered regularly in the media. The researcher was unable to find any literature

which has examined the effect that media coverage has on employee engagement. Regardless, it was felt that such a topical issue could not be ignored and needed to be investigated. Two of the respondents said that the coverage had no effect on their engagement whatsoever. It should be mentioned, however, that one of these people was the participant who demonstrated a degree of responder bias, as was previously mentioned.

The remaining four respondents expressed a clear opinion that the media coverage influenced their engagement. Two of them were adversely affected, using words like “ashamed” and “demoralizing”. One of the respondents said that the current coverage “disengages you”. Another said it affected the “atmosphere at work”. Therefore, it can be said that the media coverage is impacting the work environment, which is an identified determinant of employee engagement (Anitha, 2014). The research has shown that media coverage appears to be a determinant of employee engagement for these CBP officers.

Figure one: Conceptual Model



One of the key objectives of this study was to develop a conceptual model identifying the factors that influence employee engagement. The study was informed by Anitha's (2014) paper that highlighted the antecedents of employee engagement in the context of small firms. This study took a large law enforcement organizational perspective in the context of CBP. Anitha (2014) identified engagement antecedents of work environment, leadership, training and development, co-worker and compensation were studied for this research. However, commitment and media coverage were also considered as part of the study. While the data concurs with Anitha's model this research also finds, as discussed

above, commitment and media coverage to be key influencers of employee engagement as illustrated in figure one.

5.9 Key Factors of Engagement

In the literature review chapter, we identified a conceptual model of the key antecedents of employee engagement as being employee commitment (Markos and Sridevi, 2010), leadership (Anitha, 2014), co-worker relationships (Schneider, 1987; Anitha, 2014), working environment (Shadidan et al., 2016; Anitha, 2014), compensation (Milgo et al., 2013; Anitha, 2014), and training and development (Anitha, 2014). The research found that, for the most part, all of these were drivers of engagement for the CBP officers that were interviewed. The one conspicuous discrepancy was compensation which, except for one interviewee, was not found to be a driver of engagement for the participants of this study. Otherwise there was a general consensus that the engagement drivers that were mentioned in the literature did influence the engagement of the respondents.

The new data about media as a determinant of engagement was an important development, considering the lack of material relating to it. While it was expected that the current media coverage might have some effect on the engagement of CBP officers, the strong reactions and opinions expressed were not anticipated. Clearly the adverse opinions expressed in some media outlets are negatively affecting the engagement of some CBP officers at work.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

Employee engagement is an important human resource concept that was initially articulated by W.A. Kahn (Barros et al., 2015). This research project was developed around a conceptual model of the antecedents of employee engagement. Drivers of an engaged employee were identified, and these themes were assessed in relation to the literature. The benefits of having an engaged employee was explored as well. Through a qualitative study, employee engagement was investigated in the context of CBP employees. Anitha (2014) identified five of the seven engagement antecedents that have been investigated in this study. The two additional themes that have been revealed as drivers of employee engagement are commitment and media coverage. Although Anitha mentions commitment in her study, she does not identify it as a driver of engagement. The data here reveals commitment and media coverage as being drivers of engagement for CBP employees.

6.2 Research Limitations

Overall this examination of drivers of employee engagement yielded interesting results. The study investigated drivers of employee engagement through a qualitative method of semi-structured interviews. Six CBP officers were interviewed in order to gain their view of engagement. The questions chosen for the interviews were based on perceived drivers of engagement that had been identified in the literature. Although there was a degree of respondent bias from one of the participants, the general response was enthusiastic and helpful. The limited number of participants was due to difficulties of access to CBP

employees. There was also a time limitation for obtaining the necessary data for such an undertaking. The study was also limited to one law enforcement agency. In spite of these limitations, it was still possible to obtain a wealth of data relating to the study of employee engagement.

6.3 Future Research Directions

Employee engagement is a topic that all companies and organizations need to address regardless of their size or the kind of industry that they're involved in. We see from the literature and the data presented here, that employee engagement is important for the health of a company and its workers. The findings in this study about the effect that media coverage has on engagement is exciting and potentially important. It would be interesting to test this new variable in the context of another large organization that receives media coverage. A larger qualitative study might unearth further information that could potentially be useful. Perhaps exploring a quantitative study to further examine media coverage could yield additional results. It would also be intriguing to do a cross-cultural study between CBP and other European border control agencies.

Media coverage as an antecedent for employee engagement is a key finding of this study. Considering the lack of academic material on this topic, it would appear to warrant further investigation. The research here demonstrated that the adverse media coverage of CBP had a negative effect on some of the participants engagement. This is an important finding and needs to be examined further.

6.4 Recommendations and Implications of Findings

The researcher recommends that CBP address the issues of work-life balance, leadership and media coverage. Work-life balance was an important issue for the participants in this

study. Work schedules that are conducive to a beneficial work-life balance should be available to all the employees. It's clear from the research that a positive work-life balance would benefit employee engagement in CBP. Instituting new work schedules should not cost anything and therefore will not affect CBP's budget.

The research shows that leadership is an important driver of engagement for these CBP officers. The benefits of having positive leadership is immeasurable. It would therefore be in CBP's interest to revamp their leadership training programs to address the importance of employee engagement and its relation to leadership. Leadership training programs already exist in CBP so there should be no additional cost to adding in a new training module that stresses the importance of having an engaged employee.

By addressing work-life balance issues and the need for positive leadership, other employee engagement determinants may be influenced as a by-product. Employees that have a positive outlook as a result of a beneficial work schedule, and positive leadership, could both benefit co-worker relationships and the work environment. Both determinants of employee engagement.

Addressing the issue of media coverage as a determinant of employee engagement is a more difficult proposition than the previous two recommendations. The negativity that was reflected in some of the research may need to be dealt with through counseling. CBP has an internal support service that may be beneficial to helping employees who are demoralized as a result of the media coverage. The key here is that the leadership of CBP should be aware of this issue and help support the employees who have become

disengaged as a result. As the internal support system is already in operation, there should be no additional cost to CBP in addressing this important issue.

By addressing the three issues that have been outlined above, CBP would be taking a step towards confronting the lack of engagement that presently exists in the agency. The implications could potentially have a very large and positive effect on employee engagement in CBP.

6.5 CIPD Personal Learning Statement

Investigating the determinants of employee engagement in CBP was a valuable and satisfying experience. As a former employee of CBP it was a rewarding experience to interview my former colleagues and have them speak candidly to me about their thoughts, feelings and experiences of employee engagement in CBP. Obtaining and evaluating the research data was also challenging but it brought great personal rewards. I was fascinated by the completely different responses that I received from identical interview questions. Some of the respondents expressed ideas and views that I had never considered. The different perspectives that were offered in the research data was compelling. The research on media coverage was an important part of this dissertation and an issue that I felt was important to highlight.

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Appendix 1: Interview Themes and Questions

Interview Framework:

The following interview questions made up the thematic structure of the interviews. In light of the semi-structured interview process used in this qualitative study, not all of the same questions were asked to every participant, although all of the same employee engagement themes were covered.

Interview Questions:

Opening questions 1-3

1. What is your position in CBP?
2. What does that entail?
3. How many years of service do you have with CBP?

Thematic questions 4-15

4. What is your perception of what an engaged employee is? (EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT CONCEPT)
5. Does the work environment that you work in affect your engagement? (WORK ENVIRONMENT)
6. Does the relationship that you have with your work colleagues impact your engagement? (CO WORKERS)
7. Is your engagement influenced by the leadership of your upper management? (LEADERSHIP)
8. What could the leaders of your organization do to encourage stronger engagement? (LEADERSHIP)

9. Do training and development opportunities affect your level of engagement?
(TRAINING)
10. Does the compensation that you receive influence how engaged you are at work?
(COMPENSATION)
11. Do you perceive yourself as being a committed employee? (COMMITMENT)
12. How does this affect your engagement at work? (COMMITMENT)
13. Overall, do you think that you are engaged at work? (EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT)
14. If yes, why do you perceive yourself to be engaged? If no, what would help you
to become engaged? (EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT)
15. In your opinion what are the key aspects of your employment that encourage you
to engage in work? (EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT)
16. Do you think that your engagement at work is affected by the media coverage of
the current issues? The Mexican border, the wall, concentration camps. Does this
coverage have an effect on your engagement at work presently? (MEDIA)

Appendix 2: Thematic Analysis

Themes	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4	Respondent 5	Respondent 6
Environment		“Absolutely affects...out here there are 250 people a day per flight...you are engaged for that hour, hour and a half.”	“At the moment I feel engaged because I love working from home.”	“I think my engagement can be affected by the environment...I feel less engaged in an office...when I worked on an airport, I felt more engaged.”	“Yes, very much so...the benefits of working in a place like a cargo port...we don't have the operational pressures that an airport has.”	“We would have conditions... where you are forced to work as a team, engage in a team environment...I think that kind of promotes employee engagement.”
Co-Workers	“I tend to get along with most people.”	“The more you develop relationship with your co-workers, you probably enjoy work more...it absolutely affects your engagement.”	“The negative attitudes my colleagues had affected the quality of my work.”	“If there is a nice work environment it makes you more engaged, you're more likely to interact with your fellow officers.”	“Absolutely...it's been hard to develop good relationships...the port director previously was a divisive person...she did not encourage us to be a cohesive unit.”	“I think a few people with a negative attitude can sour a whole workplace.”
Leadership	“Good leadership can be motivational.”	“You have to understand that your employees are people...your form of management can	“If I know I'm being supported and recognized for good work I am willing to produce more, If leadership is	“Some supervisors manage in a positive way and others are very negative.”	“I would say the senior leadership at the port is very motivational.”	“I feel more engaged when I trust the talent of my supervisor.”

		make or break a working environment.”	lacking I don't feel like engaging at work.”			
T&D	“Things are always changing...you need to adapt...in that case training definitely helps engagement at work.”	“Positively, I want to do training.”		“I don't thin that it [T&D] affects my engagement.”	“There is not a lot of support when it comes to learning your job...so it does make you a little less engaged.”	“Yes...you have a far better chance of becoming an engaged employee.”
Comp.	“Well like awards...that kind of thing would definitely affect my engagement.”	“Compensation is not a major factor of employee engagement.”	“Monetary rewards also make me feel like I've done something good and therefore I am willing to become more engaged.”	“I wouldn't be more engaged because of my salary.”	“When it comes to your base compensation, I'd say no.”	“No, 100% no, it does not affect engagement at all...throwing money in our palm never seems to work.”
Commit.	“If you're committed, you're going to do your job and then you are going to be engaged.”			“If you're committed you have to be engaged in your job.”	“I think having the internal commitment...helps you be more engaged.”	“I think if you have good engagement you should have better commitment.”
Media	“If I was working on the Mexican border it might, but no.”	“Yeah, totally...it affects us...I would say there are going to be	“Negative media attention is really making me	“With so much media attention being given to the southern	“It makes you question, sometimes, what you're doing.”	“The stuff going on now with the border...is

		people that are going to disengage.””	question my employment.””	border...you're more inclined to want to do a better job.”		isolated...it does not affect us.”
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Appendix 3 Sample Interview

Due to word limitations only one interview was reproduced for this study. The other five are available on request.

Q. What is your position in CBP?

A. I'm a CBP Officer

Q. What does that entail?

A. Well presently I am working in an administrative role. It's a desk job so I'm not out enforcing Immigration and customs laws which most other CP officers do. I'm an admin officer so I have to take care of people's leave, sick leave and annual leave.

Q. How many years have you been with CBP?

A. 18 uh 19 years.

Q. Have there been any key points along your career trajectory that you can think of? Do you have any examples of key moments in your career?

A. Going to the CBP Academy in 2005 and leaving Dublin in 2016 after 15 years.

Q. How did these events influence you?

A. The academy I suppose was a very positive experience. That made me feel more part of CBP. And moving back to the States, again was a very positive experience. Initially a little fearful but ultimately it all worked out. It was a good experience and a positive experience and I think it re-engaged me with CBP in a certain way.

Q. What is your perception of what an engaged employee is?

A. Somebody who's motivated. Somebody who feels part of a team. Someone who is respected by supervisors, and feels like an integral part of something, you know, something important that's going on at work. You're in tune with the job.

Q. Does the work environment that you work in affect your engagement?

A. Not in a negative way. I feel engaged in a positive way. Um....work environment? I don't think that affects my engagement at all. I wouldn't think so.

Q. Do you feel more engaged in an office as opposed to an airport? Or vice versa?

A. Less engaged in an office.

Q. So do you think the environment does affect your engagement then?

A. Oh I see what you mean....uh yes. It would. I think my engagement can be affected by the environment. When I worked in an airport I feel like I was more engaged. When you work in an office you're a little less engaged with each other. There's more engagement in an airport environment I would say.

Q. Does the relationship that you have with your co-workers affect your engagement?

A. Yes....for sure.

Q. How

A. Well if there is a nice working environment it makes you feel more engaged, you're more inclined to interact with your fellow officers. Tension or negativity from fellow officers can definitely affect my engagement I would say.

Q. How does relationships with your supervisors affect your engagement?

A.

Q. Is your engagement affected by the style of management?

A. I would say yes, very much.

Q. How?

A. Well some supervisors seem to manage in a positive way and others are very negative. Again it's like working with negative officers. If a supervisor is negative my engagement goes down. When you have a positive supervisor I think my engagement goes up.

Q. Do you feel that leadership can be motivational?

A. Yes definitely.

Q. Do you have any example of that?

A. Well if you have good leadership and you have somebody who you feel is competent and a good supervisor um and they're kind of leading a team or just making positive moves you just feel like you're more engaged with them and it's more motivational if you respect them. I feel that if you got good supervisors um....I just know that there are certain supervisors and managers that will get more out of us because they have a different

way of dealing with situations. Good ones want feedback, they listen to you as opposed to pushing things on you and having you do just what they tell you.

Q. Do you think that your engagement is influenced by the style of management?

A. Very much.

Q. In what way?

A. Well, if I respected a supervisor or I think that a supervisor is smart I'll work better under those conditions but if I feel that a supervisor is disrespectful and not treating me as somebody that has opinions then you kind of don't have the same engagement....you have less engagement because you're not being listened to or you're not being respected.

Q. What do you think that your organization can do to encourage engagement amongst the officers? Are there key behaviors or actions that they can adopt to encourage stronger engagement?

A. Show themselves to be worthy to be a supervisor. Some of the supervisors are not um, shouldn't be a supervisor because they're like inept, they don't carry on like supervisors, they carry on like kids, some of them. Like they spend all their time joking around or fooling around. I think they should carry themselves in a certain kind of manner. When you're a supervisor you have to have people look up to you...they need to gain respect and you have to think that they are worthy of being a supervisor. They need certain attributes to make them worthy of being a supervisor.

Q. Are there key behaviors or actions that your organization can adopt to encourage stronger engagement?

A. Um...More teamwork. I guess management can be more open to their officers opinions. Their opinions of how things can be improved in the workplace. Perhaps more positive communication.

Q. How do feel about training and development?

A. Well there's a lot of training and development....there is. It's purposeful, it's important. You have to be on top of everything that's changing. You have to move with the times. Everything's changing all the time and so I guess you have to keep up with the training and development and there is a lot on offer. I think it does engage officers, um, going on courses all the time. Going all over America for different training courses.

Q. Does training and development affect your engagement?

A. I don't really opt to go on these courses. So it really doesn't affect me. Although it's open to me. It's offered, it's there and it's encouraged. So I don't think, personally, that it affects my engagement. Um, it doesn't engage me.

Q. Does the compensation that you receive influence how engaged you are?

A. In terms of monetary terms? My pay-check? No, I wouldn't think so. I wouldn't be more engaged because of my salary.

Q. What about other kinds of compensation like cash awards. Would those influence your engagement?

A. No, I don't think so.

Q. Is work-life balance a stronger motivator than compensation?

A. Yes.

Q. In what way, can you provide an example?

A. Well I would appreciate a time off award more than money.

Q. What is a time off award?

A. It means that you can get a time off award like, um, I can take time off and you don't have to use your annual leave. I would prefer that to monetary compensation.

Q. Do you perceive yourself being a committed employee?

A. Yes.

Q. How do you demonstrate that commitment?

A. Well I'm punctual, very punctual. And I do a good job when I'm there. I do everything that's expected of me. I'm loyal to CBP. I uh, I've given so many years to CBP I do think that I'm a committed employee.

Q. Do you think that there is a relationship between commitment and engagement and what would that look like?

A. Well yes, if you're committed you have to be engaged in your job because if you're not engaged you're not going to be productive. You're not going to be giving your best. The two have to go together. I mean if you're committed then you have to be engaged. I don't think that you can have one without the other.

Q. So does commitment influence engagement?

A. Yes I think a committed employee has to be engaged so it has to influence it.

Q. On balance do you think that you are engaged at work?

A. Yes I am.

Q. How does this manifest itself?

A. Well my interaction with my co-workers is very positive, I get along with everybody. I'm very well respected. I have to help people with their leave and um....yes It shows by how well I get on with the other officers at work. So, uh, yes I definitely think that I'm engaged.

Q. In Summary and in order of importance of the different themes that we have covered, compensation, leadership, management style, co-workers and training and development, which are the ones that engage you more at work and which ones engage you the least? Most important to least important?

A. Leadership, co-workers and management style. Um....then compensation and then the least important would be training and development.

Q. Do you think that your engagement at work is affected by the current issues that are being portrayed in the media? The Mexican border, the wall, the concentration camps. Does any of that have an effect on your engagement at work presently?

A. Yes to an extent it does, yes. To a large extent yes. It's talked about ad nauseum at work. Politics, the way that the country is divided, Um I think that it affects morale. I think that it has affected the atmosphere.

Q. Affected it positively or negatively?

A. Negatively. Ultimately negatively. Just like the country there are people in the office who have opposing views as well.

Q. Do you think that affects your engagement at work?

A. Yes to an extent because you're more aware of what's out there. And it probably encourages you to look harder at certain aspects of what we do. I think it affects my engagement positively...um, I think that I'm more engaged because of it.

Q. Why?

A. Because with so much media attention being given to the southern border and so much going on, and, you just feel that you're more inclined to want to do a better job. Given what's going on. You want to double check every aspect of what you're doing. You just want to make sure that everything is done properly. Because of the media attention that CBP is getting management has spoken to us about our conduct and how we're supposed to behave with regards to being an ambassador for CBP. We have to show ourselves to have integrity and be doing the best job that we can under these conditions. So yes, I think that it's making me more engaged.

