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ΘΕΜΑ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΣ:

"Operations of Human Resources Engagement"

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Abstract

This current study, attempts to shed light on the relationship between HR Operations and employee engagement by testing the relationship empirically. More specifically, it looks at how employee engagement could be embedded into day-to-day human resources operations.

Employee engagement is a topic that is repeatedly being discussed in most of the HR forums, articles and journals in the recent past. Employers recognize that truly engage and motivate employee's produce impressive levels of innovation, productivity and performance. Indisputably, an essential factor for an organization success is its employees. Employees are the pillar of an organization (Kharkov, 2013) that represent the most valuable contribution to the production process and should receive more attention of employers and from the other levels of administration.

On the other way, HR Operations oversee and handle a variety of HR -related transactions such as, HR policies and programs, recruiting, a new hire on-boarding, transfers, information system database, benefits, termination of employment etc., looking after for the tactical and day-to-day running of a simpler HR function. As such, the challenge for HR professional's is to provide the following: Operational efficiency into daily needs of the business, in a way that directly supports the implementation of the firm's strategy and increasing employee engagement by focusing on job satisfaction and employee commitment.

The purpose of this study, is to argue that, to increase employee engagement, it needs engagement to be explicitly embedded within effective and efficient HR Operations, that offer high quality and cost-effective solutions to business and therefore individual psychological and motivational factors to employees (Albrecht et I., 2015).

Introduction

Chapter 1 starts with an introduction to the field of HR operations, explaining their meaning, analyzing their contribution to the organization process, exploring the significant role HR Operations manager play in nurturing operational excellence and consequently and examining how HR Operations operating efficiently around outsourcing, reengineering, automation and TQM projects.

Then in Chapter 2, it is discussed in further detail, the operational functions of human resources management, by focusing on HR practices, policies and systems that influence employee's behavior, attitude and performance (Arslan et al., 2013) using APQC Process Classification Framework^{SM} (PCF). Consequently, it is described the Ulrich three-legged stool model, to help explain how HR operations are currently structured to deliver its services.

Chapter 3, focus on the definition of employee engagement, its evolution through a review of the literature, the measurement of engagement at work and therefore is analyzed the three types of engagement-engaged, not engaged, actively disengaged. Consequently, is presented the top global drivers of engagement that motivates people to go to the extra mile and therefore contribute to creating and sustaining a competitive advantage. Additionally, is addressed how HR Operations can drive engagement.

Finally, Chapter 4, is identify the overall condition of HR operational Activities and Employee Engagement Activities of Skroutz. Specifically, this section provides a view of Skroutz HR Operations, its employee engagement activities, company's history, mission, structure and current situation. Moreover, is assessed the results of the survey of employee engagement among the employees of the Skroutz.

Chapter 1 Human resource operations Management, Definition, roles and objectives

1.1 What is Human Resources (HR) Operations Management

HR Operations Management is a set of activities that creates **value**[1] in an organization by delivering **efficient**[2] and **effective**[3] HR services, that explicitly focused on **HR' s customers**[4] and business needs. More specifically, HR Operations Management, designing, overseeing, controlling and delivering a complete, seamless, customer focused HR service by utilized productive activities, needed to face the business the major future challenges roles at global scale. On the whole, is the context that supports and moderates the management of short term operational projects and ensures the accurate processing of all day-to-day personnel actions (e.g hr planning, recruitment and selection, development and counseling, reward and retaining, redeploying and retiring and employee information) in a timely and costly manner.

1. HR value created by both transformational and transactional HR services. Transactional HR services creates value by being cheaper, quickly and accurate, whereas transformational drives value through the development and implementation of plans and policies which bolster employee motivation and retention (Meijerink et al., 2013, Longoni and Cagliano, 2015).

2. Efficient means doing the job well with the most cost effective manner (cost to hire, cost to train, time to fill, etc.)

3. Effective means doing the right things, which indicates the quality of required outcomes such as staff quality, on-time compliant payroll production, the enhancement of performance, employee capability etc.)

4. HR's customers list includes the leadership, the organization's customers, the shareholders and the employees.

Virtually, on the top of the priority ***of HR Operations Management, is to improve speed, innovation, flexibility, value, quality, service and cost.*** As such, HR team and

professionals must demonstrate their efforts to support and meet these key business drivers, thereby make HR processes more effective and efficient (Kaufmann and Choo, 2008).

1.2 The Role of HR Operations Management

 HR Operations Management is a vital part of any type of organization success (Slack et al., 2013). No organization can survive if it cannot operate its functions effectively. And this is exactly what human resource operations management do- designing, delivering and executing numerous and several types of HR projects that improve the processes and practices of HR functions and satisfy customer demands (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2005).

Table 1 HR Projects

HR Function	HR Projects
Staffing Plans	- How the staff will be acquired - How long the staff will be needed - What specific skills, knowledge and abilities required - What training is needed
Development and Redeploy	Development of talent and full performance management program including goal setting, career development and performance management.
Information Systems	- Installation of HRIS (SAP, SCAN) - Management decisions for the effectiveness and efficiency of the systems that house this data and the workflow with other corporate groups - The successful implementation and

Reward	on-going effectiveness of a new HRIS. • New pay systems • Performance related payments

The HR Operations primary role is to oversee and manage the operations and human resources needs. Additionally, oversees all Human Resources business development, quality assurance and quality control practices, customer satisfaction measurement processes, resourcing of projects, and data management processes, implementation of new systems that create significant efficiencies and quality, as well as day-to-day office management. The HR Operation team members, work with the CEO and other Supervisors Department, to continue to improve the organization by formulating improved processes, policies and procedures which guide the organization in maintaining and improving its competitive positions and the profitability. As such, the Operations team and HR Operations Manager will be heavily involved in improving business operations across all aspects of the company.

Another essential role of operations is to implement strategy (Slack et al., 2013). Every organization has a strategic plan, but it is the responsibility of operations to put it into practice. This means that the operational role requires HR professionals to implement human resources strategic plans and policies rather than being deeply involved in developing those strategic plans. For example, if a company has a strategy of deploying employees, its human resource 'operation' must organize and execute appropriate promotions activities.

1.3 HR Operations Manager Role: Planning, Controlling, Staffing, Leading,

An HR operations manager is someone who oversee, administers and improve the process behind hiring, managing and training to ensure high-quality, efficient and effective HR

operational support. An HR Operations manager have the responsibility of providing high quality leadership management and design a cost- effective HR Operations function which delivers proactive and on-time business focused HR advice and services. The normal responsibility of the HR Operations Manager is to ensure the smooth running and performance of the human resource operations teams. Hence, in some cases, the HR Operations manager interfaces with people outside operations, such as vendor managers. As such, this manager must be sufficiently familiar with all operations processes to provide direct supervision of all day-to-day activities, including mission planning, real-time controlling, staffing and leading:

- **Planning:** is the development of plan and strategies that enables an organization to define its values and main objectives as well as adapt and seek improvements in every area of the business. HR Operations manager provide short term planning related to how the organization will accomplish the goals, objectives and strategies, outlined in the strategic plan. In order, to achieve these objectives, HR Operations manager is responsible for identify the timelines, budgets, physical resources, and performance measures indicators associated with these goals and providing just-in-time (week-to-week) consulting for emerging issues.

- **Controlling:** is the process that regulates day-to-day output relative to schedules, specifications, and costs. With the operational controlling, HR Operation managers tracking real personnel costs, personnel programs (hr planning, human resource procurement, human resource development) and maximizing the efficiency of human resource programs (Veronika Soosova, 2011). The core idea of operational controlling is streamlining the process via minimizing costs and work as quickly and efficiently as possible.

- **Staffing:** focuses on the attraction and selection of the right number of employees at the right time as well as on every major movement in the employment cycle (on-boarding, promotion, rotation, exit). HR operations manager has a pivotal role to play such as determining staffing policies, design jobs so employees are efficiently and effectively utilized, minimizing labor costs where it's possible (hiring, layoff and training costs) and provide a reasonable quality of work life (a safe workplace) (Jay Heizer and Barry Render, 2011).

- **Leading**: Another responsibility of HR operations manager is leading, which includes

ongoing development and deployment of the performance management system, employee workshops, guidance and materials, communication and advice to staff (Χυτήρης Λ.και Άννινος Λ., 2015). The continuing role of HR operations manager must be finding ways to increase staff motivation that boosts the performance and productivity by investigating and implementing innovative technologies which inspire employees to integrate technology solutions into their daily business operations and therefore achieved cost saving goals and increase productivity.

On the whole, to provide excellent HR services, that maximizes the potential of staff, the HR operations manager should take more responsibility for (Taylor's, Jay Heizer and Barry Render, 2011, p.41):

- Matching the right employees to the right jobs

- Identifying appropriate training and development activities

- Providing proper work methods and tools

- Establishing legitimate incentives for work to be accomplished.

1.4 Objectives of HR Operations Management

1.4.1 Improving Operational efficiency through HR outsourcing, automation, re-engineering, and TQM (Six Sigma, benchmarking, employee empowerment)

Over the last decades still to date, companies seek ways to improve their operational efficiency by delivering low-cost and effectively HR services via redirecting a broad range of day-to-day activities to outsourcing vendors, deploying appropriate HR automation systems, re-engineering the prevailing HR processes and therefore suggesting improvements in TQM such as designing programs that reduce defects, cost (e.g. Six Sigma,) waste of time (just-in-time), comparing its business process and performance results against "best-in-class" leaders (benchmarking) and encouraging employee involvement (employee empowerment). Each of this delivery models contribute to fulfilling customer needs, keeping the employees positive and empowered, and continually improving the current activities in the workplace.

Let's consider each in turn.

1.4.2 Human Resource Outsourcing

HR Outsourcing is the "the long-term contracting of in-house human resource services to third-parties in which internal personnel previously performed" (APQC, 2010). Moreover, outsourcing may involve the transfer of people from the company to the supplier. Outsourcing is a management tool that represents different objectives. With the increasing globalization, HR outsourcing considered as one of the methods that organizations pick and choose for reducing costs and therefore shift costs from fixed to variables, focus on core competences of the business, and leveraging external HR expertise as well (Davenport, 2006). The decision to outsource often rests on the need of optimizing their service delivery and in general strengthening their organizational efficiency and HR service performance (Butler and Callahan, 2012). In fact, firms outsource human resource (HR) services because of the potential to deliver value and benefits to employees, customers and partners, upgrade service quality and improve speed to levels that cannot be obtained from internal staff groups (Hern and Burke, 2006).

Before selecting an outsourcing, vendor companies need to decide what functions and processes should be outsourced (John Hindle, 2005). In particularly, HR outsourcing is seen as an opportunity for firms to retain their in-house "core" activities (activities in this category include performance enhancement, consulting within the firm, employee relations, labor negotiations, and executive compensation) that contribute to the company's competitive advantage and off load the "non-core" activities related to routine and transactional work such as payroll, benefits administration, employee records, and retirement administration (Cicek and Ozer, 2011, Gilley et all, 2004) so they can dedicate their time and effort to core business activities, thereby maximizing the effectiveness of those activities (Siew and Vinayan, 2016).The most commonly HR functions that companies usually outsourced, which at times are grouped among non-core activities (Ordanini and Silvestri, 2008) encompass the following three categories:

- recruitment process outsourcing
- training and development

- payroll

As a result, HR Outsourcing companies can provide a wide range of services in a more efficient and cost-effective manner, that previously involved in an internal HR department. (Table 2, illustrates the main services-but not limited to -of HR outsourcing activities).

1.4.3 Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO)

Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO) is a process where an organization handing over full or part of its recruitment functions to an external provider to take the responsibility for the end-to-end delivery of the process, from vacancies to selection or limited to only certain parts included candidate interviews and other key activities (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). Usually the rationale for recruitment transfer taps in two core reasons; the efficiency and cost savings and the enhancement of quality. The former has been recognized as a potential driver of RPO with the general assumption that outside vendors delivering and performing better process at cheaper rates via new technologies (Delmotte and Sels, 2008). For example, technological advances lead to new and better methods of searching applicants and even more efficient ways of handling resumes (Willey and Sons, 2006). The latter based on the belief that RPO improve the quality through outside vendors with expertise knowledge and skills, who have greater access to a wide range of top-quality talent pool from in-house personnel.

1.4.4 Training and Development

Training and development is another area of HR function that most firms decide to use external service providers for the management and execution of their training projects and development needs. There may be several key reasons why companies outsourcing its training function in today's market. Recent surveys indicate that many companies used outside training experts to create custom content (Noe et al., 2011). Other reasons that organizations are currently chosen to source a part or all its training activities with external suppliers, are associated with the potential to improve the quality of training, to realize

quicker response to emerging training needs (JIT) and in general reduce the cost of training by incorporating "best commercial practices". Quality is improved if a potential outsourcer provides quality products and services. In most cases, cost savings occurs due to the fact, that vendors can take advantage of economies of both knowledge and scale, with a certain leverage on these costs (a core competence for vendors) which HR departments are unable to obtain (Steven M. Bragg, 2006, Burke, 2006). For example, if a vendor concentrates on an area such as training and provide these services thoroughly a diverse base of customers, achieve economy of knowledge by rendering aware of the latest training issues with the latest investments on technology, and thus, objectively gains even further economies of scale and is likely to be more profitable (Hern and Burke, 2006). Moreover, training can benefit from an outside vendor through technological capabilities that reduce response time, cycle time, and improve quality of services. In addition, because of outsourcing training, firms can perform important levels of performance and productivity which in turn associated with customer satisfaction (Gilley et al, 2004).

1.4.5 Payroll

Payroll is the most common transactional activity that outsourced after recruitment and training. By outsourcing the HR payroll, firms can achieve a wide range of benefits, extremely beneficial for both Human Resource Management and for the Finance Department, including, time-savings, cost savings, take advantage of team of experts, enhanced security and limited the mistakes or risk. Usually, payroll processing is a time-consuming and complicate process that includes the calculation of salaries, wages and deductions, tax obligations for each employee, printing, and distributing of checks, provision of management reports, in other words procedures that demand a lot of labor hours and an appropriate number of workers to handle all these activities. Outsourcing payroll could lead to time savings for organizations, as immediately frees up precious time from employees, enabling them to concentrate on more productive work. Additionally, payroll outsourcing can reduce high amount of costs involved in maintaining in- house payroll processing. For example, the organizations that managing payroll internally, deal with typical costs such as the salaries of the HR staff, the purchasing, hosting and maintaining of a new and more effective HR payroll system as well as the time spent training the in-house team. As such, an outsourcing company can split many of these

costs, by using automated workflow process that increase the quality and credibility of HR payroll services. Moreover, an outsourcing expert who specialized in payroll processing, is more able to understand, monitoring and supporting the constantly changing regulations such as taxes, labor legislation, social security, industry specific rules that affect and involved in the payroll administration. On the other hand, external providers assure the quality and reliability of payroll through certifications which secure electronic management and transfer of sensitive data (ISO 27001, ISO 9001, etc.). Finally, payroll outsourcing could thus mean for the company that is relieved of the stress of payroll as well as from the payroll mistakes and risks such as incorrect calculations in salaries, wages, overtimes, omissions or late payroll tax filings which can be very costly and painful both for organization and employee. especially after re

In short, there are variety of reasons, why companies outsource their HR functions. Although, cost reduction ranked as the main driver that organizations use HR outsourcing, some researchers state that HR outsourcing is becoming more and more popular among organizations, not particularly in their decision to reduced costs but in improved service quality as well as to concentrated on their core activities (Delmotte and Sels, 2008). Nonetheless, outsourcing these HR activities, enables the firm to create value by effectively focusing on strategic activities that providing a source of competitive advantage (Mukherjee et al., 2013)

Table 2 SERVICES OFFERED BY HR OUTSOURCING

HR activities	Services
Recruitment & Selection	- Job description process - Job posting - Applicant Screening - Candidate Interviews and Recommendations - Negotiate offer - Integration of new hire
	- Develop learning software applications - Planning training programs & tracking

Training & Development	individuals progress
Payroll	• Payroll processing and reporting • Payroll tax reporting • Time off tracking • Online benefits enrollment

Source: Adapted from Joe Raja and S.Preethi (2012) "Emerging Trends In Human Resource Management with Special Focus On Outsourcing In Various Sectors"p.200

1.4.6 Automation

Effective technologies have been mentioned as a key component for organizations in order to achieve cost reductions and provide more efficient operations. One of the many benefits of technology, includes the adoption of automation that provides a means to facilitate the delivery of HR services in a standardized and fast running way. The overarching goal of automation is threefold: 1) to reduce the time it takes for HR personnel to complete routine tasks, that otherwise would have needed to do manually 2) to improve quality through lending reliable results and making the process simpler (Li and Meissner, 2009) and 3) to produce more output in the same amount of time. More significantly, it has the potential not only speeds up the process and reduce operation costs, but also arms system administrators with tools that eliminate the possibility of errors and omissions and replace them with flexibility, control, data integrity and risk mitigation. In fact, through automation technology processes can more effectively be measured, streamlined, controlled and managed.

Automation handles almost all the administrative and transactional tasks in an HR function including filing documents, creating new folders and distributing documents between employees, by significantly reducing the time it takes from the HR personnel to perform the above tasks. For instance, an automated document distribution provides a flexible, prompt and smooth distribution of documents through network computer systems by allowing staff to forward documents to each other without needing to leave the system or even make a phone call or move to another department to notify the staff person. In addition, automation has created significant improvements in some core HR operations such as:

- **Time sheet payroll processing** automation can greatly reduce processing time

and eliminates time consuming mistakes.

- **Employee on-boarding** can be performed in a significantly less time through an automation program. More specifically, its adoption results in delivering important forms, confidentiality agreements, waivers and just-in-time useful information to new hires and provide consistent and timely tracking of on-boarding events.

- **Recruitment and selection** automated platform increases productivity for everyone involved and optimize the searching of the suitable workers. Specifically, it can automatically match manifestations of interest with jobs offered, be able to create one or more ads for new jobs by completing an appropriately designed form with predefined fields such as Job Title (Specialty), Number of Persons Seeking, Employment Area, etc., as well as to create automated emails that can be personalized and sent out to candidates with the click of a button. As such, applicants will be able to post their CVs to the system as long as they first register as users by providing their email address and choosing a username and password, thereby the business will be able to see the candidates for all the ads they have created. Nonetheless, an automated recruitment system not only is saved time from personnel to write an e-mail but is also saved time further from the line, as less candidates will contact to be informed about their applications**.**

For each of the above HR operations, automation allows employees to relieve of paper documents and make their job easier and simpler.

1.4.7 Total Quality Management

Total quality management is an approach of management that attempts to the continuing improvement in all aspects of the company's operations and at all levels, including products, services, people, processes (performance measurements) and environment that are important not only to the customer needs but for the organizational objectives as well (Heizer and Render, 2011). Implementation of TQM in Human Resources function requires employee empowerment in which individuals get involved in making-decision and are held accountable for accomplishing a task, reengineering of HR business process, benchmarking with "best-in-class" companies and an effective use of Six Sigma program that reduce defects and wages.

In a nutshell, applying these practices, HR departments are seeking to achieve quality into their day-to-day services, setting each of them as the key for motivating employees to change their working approaches, organizational structures, beliefs and attitudes they have gone along with for years (Padhi, 2005, Alnaweigah, 2013).

1.4.8 Employee empowerment

Employee empowerment means the process where employees have the autonomy and control over their work and get involved in every step-in goal setting and overall plan of the organization. Empowerment occurs when a part of power moving from top management to the lowest levels (Hanaysha and Tahir, 2016). This entails that empowered employees are entitled to use their skills and abilities, think, act, suggest new ideas and solutions about their work, in an autonomous, in-dependent ways (Heathfield, 2016). Employee empowerment also provides an environment where employees feel efficient, giving them the power to develop their sense of self-efficacy, self-confidence and competency which in turn can be benefitted both their organization and themselves.

Therefore, the most essential advantages noted in employee empowerment, are improving productivity, increasing creativity, motivation, commitment and the reduction of cost (Kucuk Ylimaz,2009). An example of employee empowerment in human resources management, serve as the process where an individual has the authority and control of signature in every document related to the hiring of a new employee, sickness and other tasks that are sharing from up to down.

1.4.9 Re-engineering

The necessity for continuous improvement of HR services through a standardized, cost effective, logical, market-driven and customer-focused delivery has resulted in business process re-engineering. The term of re-engineering refers to the fundamental radical rethinking and redesigning of HR business process with the potential to bring dramatic improvements in performance (Kaufmann and Choo, 2008). Overall, re-engineering focuses attention on reorganizing the work from the root of things, via cultivating a new way of thinking, related to innovation and renewal, which allows radical changes in people behavior, policies,

systems, services, process flow charting and organizational structure (Francis and Kabir, 2008). Ideally, re-engineering should be organized around best practices and effective use of advanced technology that increase employee productivity, reduce cost and fulfill customer expectations and satisfaction. In fact, the ultimate objective of re- engineering is to identify the areas that need development and improvement, by eliminating the work is not necessary (or non-value-added) and establishing new appropriate methods in the form of low cost, high quality and speed. This implies that re-engineering should looks only at work activities rather than at jobs or people who perform the work and it is not an excuse for "downsizing"-reduction of staff- within an operation (Slack et al., 2013).

Therefore, re-engineering has a profound impact on human resource management since it requires from HR department to support, design and understand the change so that all employees will be motivated to achieve the vision and goals of re-engineering. For example, it may need to recruit employees with a new set of skills required for the job. Moreover, employees may need a plenty of training for their newly re-engineered jobs that adds value to the skills of employees while increase their productivity. The organization also may need to redesign the structure of its pay scales and rewards to achieve the desired results (Noe et al., 2011). As such, HR must think about whether it should pay employees for specific tasks they should perform from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., or offer skill-based or knowledge-based pay.

1.4.10 Benchmarking

Benchmarking is another approach in the context of the total quality management, that widely adopted from organizations to stay abreast with the latest trends and factors in the worldwide business environment (Wheelen and Hunger, 2012). This approach helps organizations to look "outside" at what other organizations are doing and obtain valuable information which will help them to identify gaps and making changes in the process design in order to achieve a competitive advantage (Swist, 2000). More specifically, benchmarking is a quantitative and qualitative analysis of a company's performance against global leaders in peer group. Ideally, focuses on searching for the "best practices" in key areas, from competitors that present extremely improvements in their general operations or in specific sectors with the intention of adopting each company the appropriate methods, innovative ideas and highly effective operating procedures that lead to superior performance. On the whole, the basic idea of

benchmarking is that enables organizations to achieve their strategic objectives by making processes as efficient as possible and therefore improving their competitive position. In fact, it can show (**http://www.businessdictionary.com**):

- Critical competitive strengths and weakness
- How an organization performs against peer group
- What actions/improvements are called for
- How this information can be used to improve high performance levels

Benchmarking can be classified into four general categories- internal, competitive, functional and generic (Akinnusi, 2008):

- **Internal benchmarking** is used within the organization or same groups of companies and attempt to looks at the inside rather than be compared with other companies or other industries. In this way best practices are exploited across departments, teams or individual within an organization to another and further determined which practice or procedure produce the best results.
- **Competitive benchmarking** is a comparison against the "best leaders" within its industry. In addition, competitive benchmarking is used when a company needs to identify strengths and weaknesses in upstream performance.
- **Functional benchmarking** involves functions that may be similar but are conducted amongst two different organizations in the same or different industry e.g the airline catering service and, respectively, catering in hospitals.
- **Generic benchmarking** is used to improve performance compared with the best in class as well as identify desirable objectives and create new standards (ie the development and implementation of technology).

In human resource management, benchmarking considered as an indispensable tool for HR professionals who want to measure practices and results against the competition and fine-tune their workforce strategy and operations. As such, benchmarking best practices for the efficiency of HR functions, usually involves metrics and database relating to cost-per-hire, compensation cost, health-care costs, training hours per employee, turnover, and organizational changes. For instance, HR professionals can compare their organizations cost per hire (both internal and external) related to the sourcing, recruiting, and staffing activities, to take another look at how similar organizations are utilizing their cost of hire metric. In Figure

1 illustrated the formula for cost-per-hire comparable (CPHC) which is designed for comparison between organizations. Moreover, compensation benchmarking is pivotal for human resources department when it is created a new vacancy, which must be conform with the salary assessments and market comparisons and should be determined with the accurate and comparable cost before filling the position as well (SHRM, 2009). Therefore, HR professionals have the ability to compare their health-care costs with current industry based cost, measure of workforce change such as turnover and retention and hence to compare their overtime and absence rates with industry peers so they can integrate policies and methods that increase efficiency and productivity (APD, 2016).

Figure 1: Cost per hire comparable

$$CPHC = \left(\frac{\Sigma \text{ (External Costs)} + \Sigma \text{ (Internal Costs)}}{\text{Total Number of Hires in a Time Period}} \right)$$

Source: "Cost-per-Hire Standard", 2012, American National Standards Institute, Inc., p.14

1.4.11 Six Sigma

Six Sigma is a quality program which has its roots in manufacturing, where the goal is to reduce defects in any processes. Defects are defined in Six Sigma as any outputs of product or services that doesn't meet the customer requirements. Nowadays, Six Sigma has been widely applied in many organizations as it can yield major improvements in an organization's financial performance, profitability, services and product quality and customer satisfaction (Holmes et al., 2014). As such, Six Sigma has gained significant importance in services of Human Resources Operations including, recruitment and selection, compensations and benefits, job postings, employee reviews, databases, training etc. Human Resources Operations, by using Six Sigma methodology, design programs and services that improve organizational efficiency as well as customer needs and their specifications. An example of Six Sigma tool is a process map that has a lot of benefits to reward practitioner whether is design a new program or seeking to improve an existing process. This allows HR expert to

see how the materials or information would flow from start to finish or the time it takes to speed up the process and if the program has significant defects, for example unnecessary bureaucracy that it needs multiple sign offs that may not be required. Six Sigma also described as a problem-solving tool that defines problem areas, eliminates errors, and provides safeguards to prevent these problems from reoccurring. In fact, HR professionals who deal a problem, must have a Master Black Belt (a top practitioner) of the Sigma technique to work through and manage the process.HR professionals by working with the Black Belt, learned how to use the tools and the practical application of those tools. One of the benefit of Six Sigma is that it requires for HR professionals to have a project before they start to be certified or to be trained. While they are working a project with a Black Belt, they would be able to learn how to use the tools as well as please the stakeholders at the same time because they will be resolving the problem very quickly.

Table 3 Black Belt steps

Applying the Black Belt steps to process Improvement

Define
- This is where senior management define what it is that needs doing.

Measure
- This is where the team, guided by the Black Belt, will measure the process as it presently is

Analyze
- This is where we stand back, challenge and ask questions like, 'why we are doing this?'

Improve
- This is where all the ideas, mostly generated by the team, are implemented

Control
- This is where controls are put in place to ensure that the new process continues to be used. At this time the Six Sigma expert leaves the team and moves on to the next project

Adapting from Slack etal., "Operations Management" - Short case Six Sigma at

1.5 Improving Productivity

Another major objective of HR operations is to improve the productivity of its products or services. Productivity defined as the "ratio of outputs (products and services) divided by per one unit or total inputs resources (materials, information, customers), (Jay Heizer and Barry Render, 2011). As such, improvement can be achieved by reducing costs of inputs while maintaining the levels of its outputs or increasing outputs and maintaining the levels of inputs. The following is providing as example only and introduced as a process improvement that reduces the processing time for each input and increases output. Due to economic crisis a small furniture company deciding to keep operations costs down by laid off costly staff and replace it with new high skilled but cheaper workforce, needed to meet all requirements. The human resources operations manager decides to put together a group of people with extensive experience hiring new staff. One of the first task is to produce an input-output model of the hiring process (Figure 2**No table of figures entries found.**):

Figure 2: Improving Productivity through recruiting process
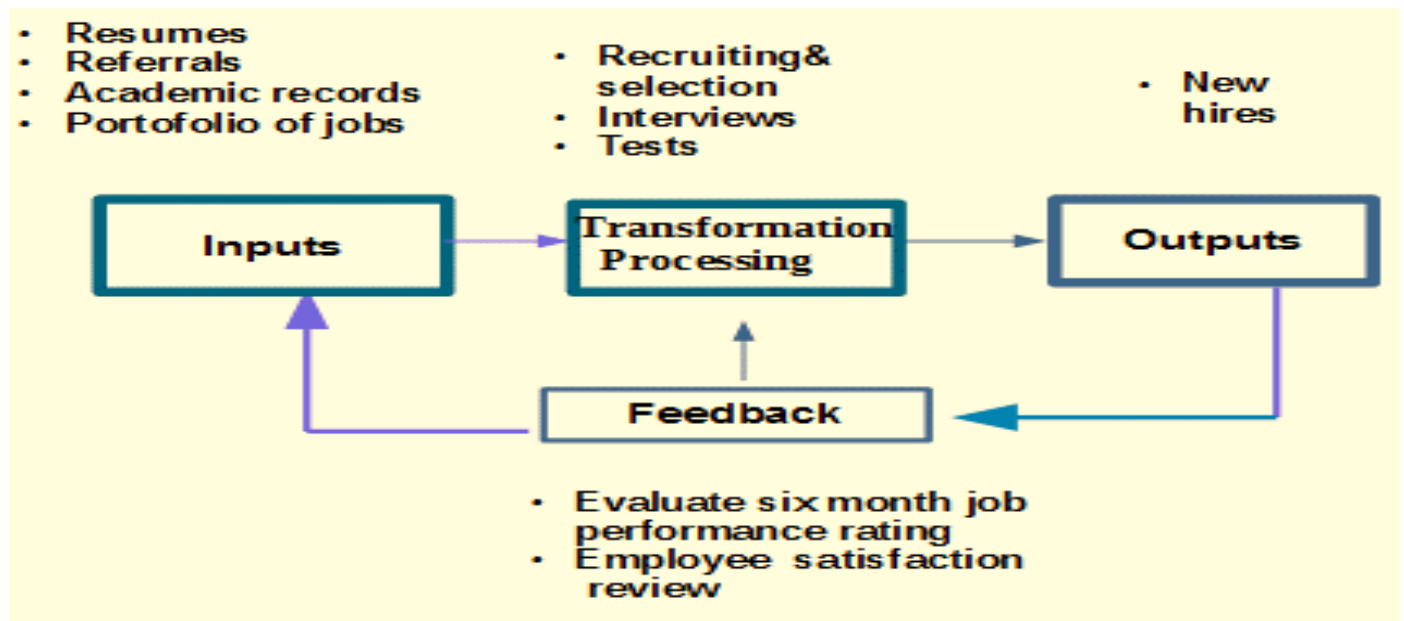
1. 6 Job design

Job design "primarily focuses on designing the process of transformation of inputs into outputs and considers the human and organizational factors that impact that transformation" (Zareen et al., 2013, p.49). In essence, details the variety of tasks that constitute a job for an individual or a group in their working lives (Jay Heizer and Barry Render, 2011). The aspects of job design which assist in reducing labor costs and improve the quality of working life involves (1) designing efficient jobs, (2) designing jobs that motivate, (3) designing works for commitment, (4) designing works for safety and health, (5) designing flexible work schedules:

Design for efficiency
- Rearranging or replacing work (e.g. automating, division of labor-specialization)
  Design for motivation
- Giving more responsibility for several types/levels of work (job enrichment)
- Giving the employee's additional responsibility/tasks (job enlargement)
- Redeploy employees from one specialized job to another (Job rotation)
- Giving employees more decision-making authority to their jobs (employee empowerment)
- Creating effective teams that working together to reach a common goal (self-directed team)
   Design for commitment
- Requiring the employees to use a variety of skills and talents (skill variety)
- Allowing the employees doing a job from beginning to end with visible outcome (task identity)
- Providing a sense that the job has a significantly impact on related work and social life (task significance)
- Granting control and freedom over work (autonomy)
- Providing clear, direct and understandable information about performance(feedback)
  Design for safety and health
- The way a person interfaces with his or her immediate working area, that makes the job easier or impossible (ergonomics)

- The way a physical environment affects employees work (illumination, noise, vibration, temperature, etc.)

Design for flexible scheduling

- Alternative scheduling (four 10-hour day work week or 12-hours shifts-3days one week and 4 the next, flextime)
- Telework or Telecommuting (part or full off-site work)

All these elements have aimed to providing a clear definition of a specific job that can be efficient, productive, qualitative and reasonably safe. In addition, a job should be designed according to psychology and attitude of the employee, so he/she has a positive perception of it.

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Chapter 2 HR Operations function and the new HR Operating model

2.1. HR Operations function: The operational role of HR Practitioners

HR operations function refer particularly to transactional activities, that encompass the executive administration of day-to-day human resources functions and duties, including HR operational planning, recruitment and selection, the development, deployment and retirement of personnel, reward and salary administration and employee information, but also, can support transformational activities which concerned with the development and implementation of HR business plans and strategies. Each of these functions, formulating by the guidance of HR professionals, who perform a variety of responsible and multiple roles, to ensure that the organization's meet regulatory standards and nonprofit best practices and therefore align with the organization mission and strategies.

One of the most important of HR Operations function, is the provision of programs and services that attract, develop, retain and reward a high-performance workforce and a reasonable quality of work life. Operations management people provide a variety of services and performs a variety of function to assist in the administration of day-to-day responsibilities. The APQC Process Classification Framework[SM] (PCF) serves as a methodological approach for the management of human resources operations function, involving many interrelated areas that operate in an overlapping continuum: operational planning, recruitment, sourcing

and selection, development and council, reward and retaining, redeployment and retirement and employee information. These functions are discussed in further details below.

2.2. Develop and manage Operational HR Planning and strategies

2.2.1 Develop and implement HR Operational plans: Operational (or tactical) planning is the process by which strategic goals converted into action plans. It outlines operational objectives, strategies, requirements, outcomes, the time frames, costs, tools, technologies and key performances and explains how these objectives will be implemented and monitoring for the coming financial year, in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness for the day-to-day human resource management (recruitment, classification and compensation training & organizational development, employee relations, employee benefits, information technology, temporary assignment pool). An operational planning does not normally exist as one single standalone plan; is usually part of an overall strategic plan. For example, a five- year strategic plan would typically require a year-to-year operational plan, funded by five operating budgets.

 Strategic and operational planning is at the foundation of an organization's activities. A strategic plan sets out where an organization is going over the next years whereas an operational plan details how an organization will get there and when.

2.2.2 Develop and implement HR Operational plans: Therefore, in an Operational Plan, HR practitioners should be addressed the following key components:

- **Strategies:** How the objectives in the strategic plan will be achieved
- **Clear objectives:** like a strategic plan, an operational plan defines specific statements that should be accomplished relating to each goal. Goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (SMART).
- **Human and other capacity requirements**: what inputs will be needed (such as internal systems, management decisions) to perform into outputs (staffing plans, skill

gaps[4]), required to implement a project.

- **Financial requirements:** what funds required to implement the plan and what are the current and potential sources of these funds.

- **Technology**: which innovative technologies need to be adapted to maintain the competitive advantage

- **Risk assessment:** what risk exists and how it can be addressed

- **Estimate of project lifespan, sustainability:** how long the project will last and how it will ensure the sustainability of the project's achievements.

- **Responsibility:** Who is responsible for completing the actions

Table 4 "Monitor and update Operational plans"

```
┌─────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Operational planning:│ →  │ Strategies:          │ →  │ What inputs will be  │
│                      │     │ How the objectives in│     │ needed to perform    │
│ Time :1,3,6,12 months│     │ strategic plan will be│     │ into outputs         │
│                      │     │ achieved             │     │                      │
└─────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────┘
                                                                    │
          ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
          ↓
┌─────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Financial            │ →  │ Technology:          │ →  │ Risk assessment:     │
│ requirements:        │     │ Which innovative     │     │                      │
│ What funds required  │     │ technology need to be│     │ What risk exists     │
│                      │     │ adapted              │     │                      │
└─────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────┘
                                                                    │
          ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
          ↓
┌─────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Estimate of project: │ →  │ Responsibility:      │
│ How long the project │     │ Who is responsible for│
│ will last            │     │ completing the        │
│                      │     │ actions              │
└─────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────┘
```

2.3 Recruitment, sourcing and selection process

The operational recruitment, sourcing and selection process, encompass actions directed toward ensuring adequacy operating cost (and therefore profitability), speed and high quality of people. The process involves activities like creating and developing employee requisitions, recruiting and sourcing candidates, screening and selecting candidates, managing pre-placement verification, managing new hires/re-hires, and tracking candidates.

2.3.1 Create and develop employee requisitions: The first step of this process

associated with aligning the organizational staffing plan to strategic HR needs (how many people to hire, what skills they should possess to keep up with technology, who is retiring soon, what are the sales forecasts). Once the job needs have been determined, job requisitions must be prepared, and open and job descriptions should be prepared and posting quickly. The nest stage is the decision whether the vacancy should be sourced internally, or whether it should be sourced externally. Whichever approach is adopted, HR practitioner should notify the hiring managers about the decision, manage the time of advertising, check the dates for final copy and administer the changes of requisition.

2.3.2 Recruit/Source candidate process: Once a company has decided to advertise a

job vacancy, a decision must be taken about which recruiting methods (local newspapers, social media, websites, executive consultant agency, personal referral etc.) are the most effective for the specific job description. Consequently, HR practitioner performing recruiting activities such as recruitment fairs, career path sessions, company presentations etc, participating in recruiting events (career days), and managing recruitment vendors (consultancy agency).

2.3.3 Screen and select candidates: Upon the company has received the applications

for the job, HR practitioner is then able to begin the quick and instant pre-screening process, identifying and deploying candidate selection tools (psychometric assessments, telephone conduct, e-mail, etc.), interviewing and testing applicants and finally selecting/rejecting candidates.

2.3.4 Manage pre-placement verification: By this point, the HR practitioner conducting reference and background checks relating to the candidate's qualifications and prior experience, performing pre-employment screenings, and recommending (or not recommending) a candidate.

2.3.5 Manage new hire/re-hire: As a last point, the HR Recruiter drawing up and prepare the employment offer for the selected individuals and drafting offer letters, negotiating an offer, and hiring a candidate.

2.3.6 Track candidates: Once the employment relationship has ended, records created as part of managing/tracking applicant data. The HR practitioner retain records relating to personnel file which include applications, pre-employment tests, performance appraisals, rate changes, position changes, leaves, transfers, promotions, demotions, documentation of disciplinary actions and job descriptions and the archiving of non- hires.

2.4 Development, Training and counseling processes

The *Develop, Train and counsel employees'* process provides actions about how adults learn, develop and how training can be organized most effectively. To be effective, the HR practitioner of training and development operations, must be able to manage and develop a cost-effective, value-adding function appropriate to the needs of an organization. By looking at the operational side of the HR function, the process involves the management of employee orientation and deployment, employee performance, employee relations, and the implementation of employee training and development

2.4.1 Manage employee orientation and deployment: An effectively orienting and on-boarding program is a critical issue for an HR practitioner to establish successful and productive working relationships. On-boarding program provides new employees with the

appropriate tools, information and resources needed to be integrated into the organization. The program encompasses process of a new hire documents, a welcome packet (welcome letter, employee information form, employee handbook), necessary equipment and services such as a computer, passwords, cards and e-mail accounts and a tour across the company, so the new personnel become acquainted with the overall workforce (peers and managers) as well as with the installations of the enterprise. To gather the information that leads to an informed decision about how well the on-boarding initiatives are working, HR professionals identify efficiency and effectiveness metrics for evaluating and report the overall effectiveness of the process. Particularly, an on-boarding program begins by the day a recruiter posts a job opening

2.4.2 Manage employee performance: Employee performance is a goal-oriented

process that improves employee effectiveness. It is a process by which HR team and managers collaborate to plan, review, appraise and evaluate the performance management program, setting objectives, provide feedback and encourage performance improvement, ensuring that employees are meeting their objectives and career goals

2.4.3 Manage employee relations: The *Manage employee relations is a* process

directed toward on the needs of employees with the purpose of boosting commitment and promoting effective, fair, and professional relationships between the employee's and employer's .The HR   practitioners provide critical services including employee safety and health, labor relations, ensuring compliance with collective bargaining agreements and employment policies and therefore building and maintain positive and more productive labor management partnerships .

2.4.4 Manage employee development: HR professional's developments should be an

ongoing process to keep the talent employee's and consistently motivate them to go one step ahead. To do this, HR professional's developments developing   competence management plans that concerned with learning management systems, defining employee development guidelines and practices (resources needed, activities-describe what, when, where, with whom, how to measure the progress etc.) identifying and updating an employee's career plan (areas of development, development goals- action steps, expected completion, date, obstacles and solutions) and managing employee skills development.

2.4.5 Develop and train employees: The goals that organization needs to achieve through the development and training must be effectively identified and prioritized. HR's role is aligning learning programs with competencies needs which are defined by performance data, project requirements, organizational business plans and objectives, appraisal records, the group needs and the job role requirements (Draganidis and Mentzas, 2006).HR practitioners must be able to evaluate factors for establishing training needs by analysis of required and available skills including developing, conducting, and managing employees and/or management training programs.

2.5 Reward and retain employees

The aim of Employee reward is to help attract, retain and motivate high-quality people. Personnel and development practitioners must be able to contribute to the development of reward plans, manage recognition and motivation programs, and manage retention, benefits, payroll and other components in reward system ad hoc.

2.5.1 Develop and manage reward, recognition, and motivation programs : To ensure both internal and external equity HR practitioners must establish an effective salary/compensation structure and plan (determine pay rates/salary levels and ranges), developing benefit (flexible, pre-established benefit for employees at retirement) and reward plan (pay policy and practices, salary and payroll administration, total reward, minimum wage, executive pay, www.wikipedia.org), analyzing and controlling employee remuneration, compensation and all of the other benefits and HR policies. In addition, administering compensation and rewards to motivate employees in order to attract and retain highly talented people.

2.5.2 Manage and administer benefits:

The HR practitioner is responsible for delivering the employee benefits program, administering all new hire benefit communications and enrollments, coordinating annual open enrollments and benefits fair process ensuring all benefit file feeds transfer on time and accurately, providing on-going benefits support to employees, processing claims and auditing monthly benefits billing.

2.5.3 Manage employee assistance and retention:

The manage employee assistance and retention process involves actions to keep employees motivated to remain full productive and committed to the organization. These actions are addressed by HR practitioners who provide supporting programs encouraging the work-life balance (caring for dependents, proactive approaches to health and wellness, creating a more flexible workplace etc.) and family in a variety of ways (family (or parent-child) resource center, family place, family center, Suzanne Smythe, 2004).

2.5.4 Administer payroll:

Payroll administration is defined as the process that calculates the final pay based on the hours worked. Concretely, at operational side, payroll department establishes policies and procedures for payroll processing, leaves of absence, and payroll deductions to ensure that employees who receive multiple license pay are eligible for this pay. Yet, is the responsibility of HR to input accurately data into the integrated HR/Payroll system ensuring that employee starter/transfer/variation/leaver details, gross payments, income tax, insurance, pensions and other deductions are correctly set up and calculated in accordance with statutory and contractual requirements. Additionally, HR practitioner monitor regular, overtime, and other hours, oversee daily e-mail accounts, analyze and report employee utilization, measure financial returns on completed capital projects and therefore provide a high quality, consistent and timely service to employee's payroll inquiries.

2.6 Redeploy and retire employees

An effective *Redeploy* and *retire employees process* can preserve organization knowledge, improve internal work process, provide new opportunities, enhance workforce engagement and quality, and reflect cost savings as a result of streamlined processes(www.apqc.org/osb). The Redeploy and retire employees process group includes managing promotions and demotions, managing separations, retirements, and leaves of absence, developing and Implementing employee outplacement services, managing deployment of personnel, relocating employees and managing assignments and managing expatriates and employee relocations:

2.6.1 Manage promotion and demotion process: The *Manage promotion and demotion* operational process includes the administration and execution of employee's transfer within the organization. As such, HR practitioners help the smooth movement of employees by initiating the transfer process, sending the relevant documents to be filled by the employee, issuing the transfer letter, updates and sending the employee file to the location where the employee is getting transferred. Further, process the employee records, payroll and benefits transactions.

2.6.2 Manage separation: Separations caused by resignations, terminations, layoffs, deaths, sickness etc. The operational role of HR practitioners includes the creation and generation of final payments, turnover reports, and vendor notification. This process also includes communications with former employees regarding rest of payment, benefits or other company's obligations to former employees.

2.6.3 Manage retirement: The procedure for retirement includes the management of the organization's retirement systems, tools, and processes. Once an employee decides to retire and access their occupational pension, a formal notice should be given to Human Resources, if is in line with the terms of an employee's contract. Consequently, HR must write to the employee and acknowledge their retirement, action the retirement date on the HR system and parallel inform the director of Department of the forthcoming retirement.

2.6.4 Manage leave of absence: Managing leave of absence includes the planned and

unplanned periods of absence such as annual leave, accrued days of, sick leave, educational leave, non-attendance, and late arrival. HR practitioners oversee in detail the leave balances of employees and provide an overall record of leave credits ensuring that staff does not exceed the annual allowable limits.

2.6.5 Develop and implement employee outplacement: An outplacement program provides on-going support for dismissed employees and employees remaining in an organization. It is the responsibility of HR practitioners to provide a comprehensive career transition information for employees whose roles have been eliminated in order to facilitate their transition to new jobs and help them re-orient themselves in the job market (en.wikipedia.org).These information typically includes the following elements: personal and career review, self-evaluation and self-audit, CV preparation, Interview preparation and practice, marketing and selling him/herself and planning for next steps.

2.6.6 Manage deployment of personnel: To ensure optimum operational efficiency and respond to changing operational conditions, Chief Operating Officers and managers will be constantly reviewing priorities within their departments, which may lead to deployment of personnel. Deployment is the movement of staff from one work assignment to another to meet operational needs. A primary objective of HR practitioners must be to minimize the time of employee's movement to the new positions. As such, HR practitioners are responsible for managing the movement of personnel, coordinate training requirements, as well as dates, times, and places that training will be conducted.

2.6.7 Relocate employees and manage assignments: Relocate employees and manage assignments: Regardless of where employees need to be, HR practitioners administers every aspect of each assignment for the duration relocating employees' expatriate life cycles, ensuring each transition is quick, smooth, and cost-effective. From the initial offer letter, HR practitioners providing relocating employees with a single point of coordination, managing all the aspects of the relocation into one seamless service, starting with the pre-assignment briefing of the relocating employee through ongoing assignment support as well as their repatriation.

2.6.8 Manage expatriates: The Manage expatriates process includes activities associated with both the expatriation and repatriation of employees within the organization.

2.7 Manage employee information

Human resource (HR) organizations continuously contend with daily administrative challenges of managing vast amounts of employee information throughout their time at the company (IBM, 2008). The role HR has during this process should include the effective management and maintenance of documents associated with employees, ensuring the accurate, reliable and quick storage of data in HR Information Systems (HRIS). The Manage employee information process group includes managing reporting processes, responding to employee questions and requests; managing and maintaining employee data; managing human resource information systems; developing and managing employee metrics; developing and managing time and attendance systems; and managing and collecting employee suggestions and performing employee research.

2.7.1 Manage reporting processes: A successful management reporting processes highlights important HR measures and metrics for improving operational efficiency and information quality. Management reports consists of an organized presentation of key HR data relating to the performance of daily operations (for example recruitment documentation, induction reviews, graphical analysis, exit interviews, absenteeism records, employee agreements and handbooks, benefits, payroll, management financial accounts, annual performance appraisals, policy manuals or any other employee-related materials) as well as workforce analytical capabilities for varying levels of management. As such, HR practitioners play a pivotal role in executing and implementing an effective, efficient, secure and integrated management reporting program transforming it into useful, actionable, high quality output and delivering it to business users.

2.7.2 Manage employee inquiry process: The process of employee inquiry involves

receiving, responding to, and recording information on employee inquiries. The role of HR practitioner begins when an employee initiates an HR inquiry or transaction either online through self-service or by calling the employee service center. Additionally, HR practitioner should respond to employee request and resolve HR inquiry or transaction and therefore recording the data on employee inquiries.

2.7.3 Manage and maintain employee data: Yet even greater efficiency and

employee data integrity can be achieved by maintaining employee information securely. HR practitioners need to revise personal data such as changing benefits enrollment, employee status and pay grades.

2.7.4 Manage human resource information systems: The Manage human resource

information systems (HRIS) process, involves managing the day-to-day running of human resource information systems. Ideally, enable HR professionals to create reports and analyze information quickly and accurately, to make the workforce easier to manage.

2.7.5 Develop and manage employee metrics: The Develop and manage employee

metrics process consists of collecting and managing work force data that are used to report on human capital program outcomes, workforce trends, demographics, and performance.

2.7.6 Develop and manage time and attendance systems: Time and attendance

system provides HR practitioners with diverse tools which increase worker productivity, reduce the inefficiency, labor costs and minimize compliance risks. Therefore, HR practitioners are responsible for tracking, editing, gathering and entering data via paper forms into HR Information Systems (HRIS) related to employee hours worked, overtime and paid time off. Time and attendance systems based on paper time cards or sheets including the employee's name, social security number, and number of hours worked per week that enable HR practitioners to have full control of employee's working hours ensuring that receive proper compensation for overtime as well as ensuring compliance with labor regulations regarding proof of attendance.

2.7.7 Manage employee communication: All operations improvements depend on

effective communication between departments and employees. As such, HR practitioners are responsible for design and implement employee communication plans; support workplace relationships, provide   directly and consistently information about organization issues, managing employee suggestions and grievances; and publishing employee communications through three top channels: print (accessed on paper), electronic (accessed on a piece of technology) and face-to-face (interpersonal)

Figure 3: Flowchart of Human Resource Management
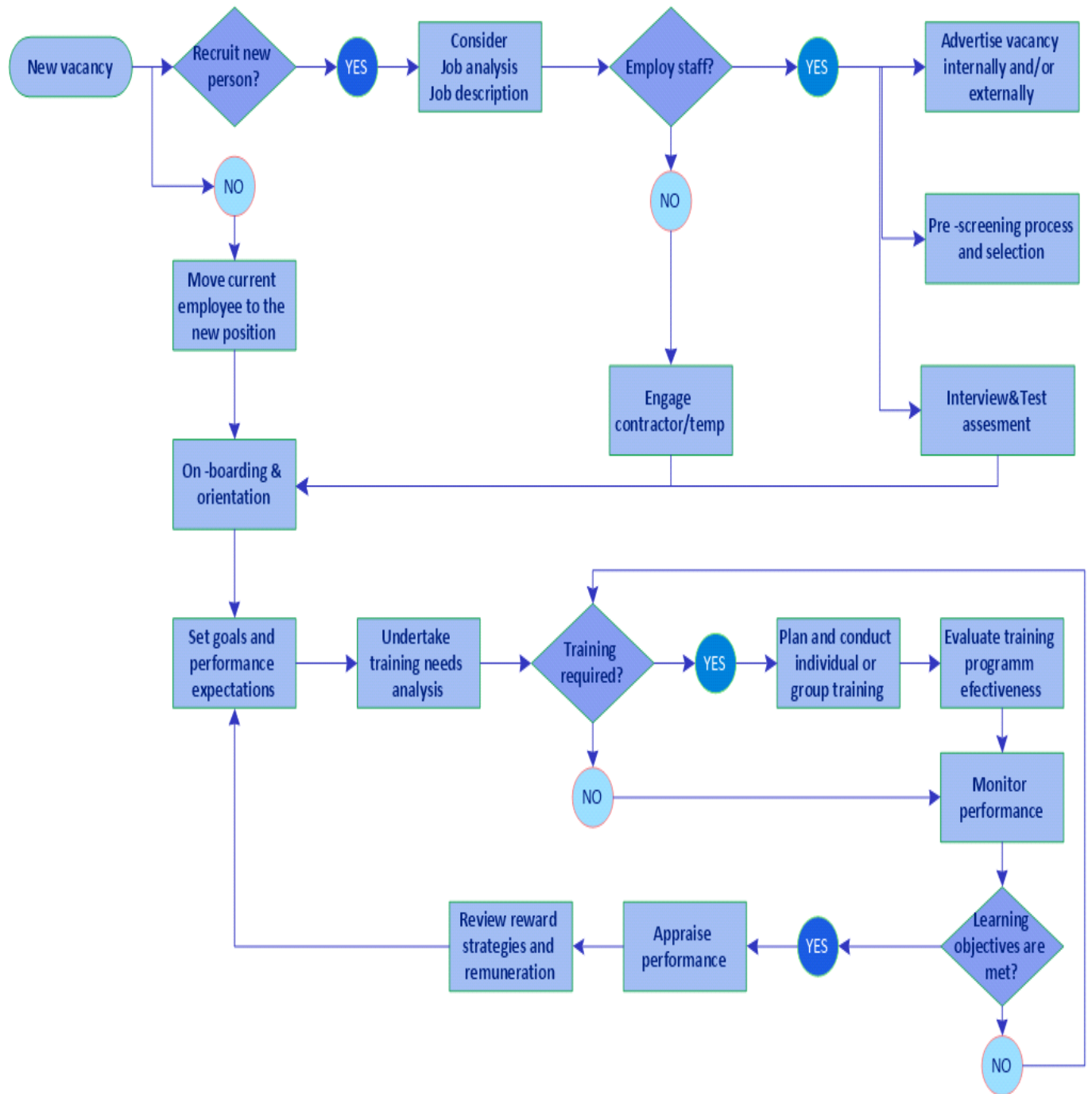
Source: Concept Draw

2.8 Latest trends in the HR Operations: Business Partners, Centers of Excellence, Shared Services

Increasingly, the advent of technology has influenced greatly the overall function of modern business from the way they approach their customers (e-commerce), cost issues, the handling and transport of their products to the issues related to human resources functions. The evolution of HR has been driven by increased workers productivity and performance, competition for talent employees, globalization, and a shift to more technologically grounded positions (Maugans Esq., 2015). Over the years the HR function has changed and will continue to change. In particular, many HR departments have migrated from an operational role (the 'personnel department') to a strategic role, of 'a Business Partner', trying to get a better alignment between the HR services and business priorities. In fact, the emergence of the restructure of HR function began two decades ago, by Dave Ulrich's book 'Human Resource Champions'(1997), which based on the idea of separating the traditional HR functions (administration work, payroll) and business partner roles. The notion was that organizations need to focus "less on what HR does and more on what HR delivers and to whom" (White Paper, 2009). This means that, HR professionals to moving toward the excellence and create value for customers and employees, required to change their roles as well as establish modern management systems. In line with this issue, Ulrich introduced a model described as the "three-legged stool", grouped into three functions, a team of Business partners, Centers of Expertise and Shared Services. The purpose of the business partner model was to redefine the role of HR professionals and to maximize HR's contribution (both administrative and strategic) to business performance. While Ulrich's model was viewed as a necessary need that focused on a modern and agile HR management, it was not fit to all organizations. Conversely, the smallest and medium-sized business continue to operating in a traditional structure of HR services, that typically includes, generalists, specialists and administration. However, the reality today is that, the majority of organizations (77%) utilize Ulrich's model (CIPD, 2015), which virtually defines the style of "HR Operations". The next generation of HR model provide core HR Operational services, coupled with designated professional HR staff to manage performance, disciplinary and change management issues and employee relations appropriately.

2.8.1 Ulrich's HR 'three-legged stool' the new best practice model

In most organizations, the most HR functions operating with the famous "three legged stool" or the 'three box' model as originated by Ulrich (1997), which is assumed as the best practice in providing human resources services (CIPD, 2012).In fact, this new structure of the HR department is divided into front office and back office(Marek Stritesky, 2014).Back office consists of expert teams (Centers of excellence)who are specialized in recruitment, compensations and benefits, learning and career development and administrative departments (Shared services),which are typically dealing with routine operational and administrative process(payroll, technology, record keeping, information and support).

- Business partners
- Centers of expertise
- Shared services

Figure 4: The New HR Operating Model
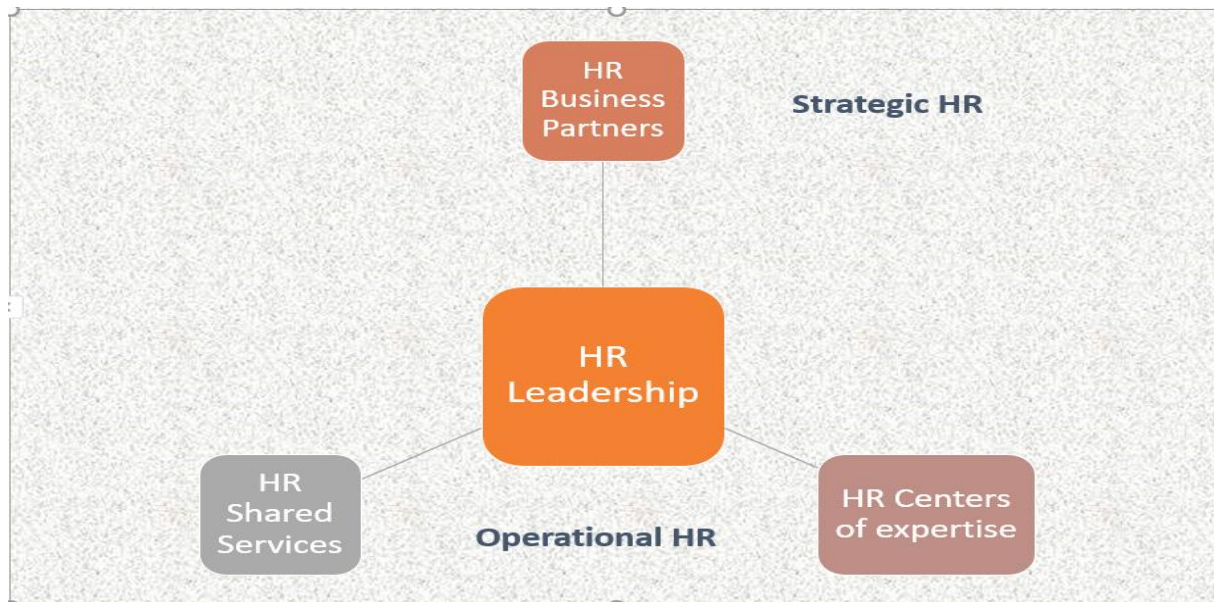
One leg of the stool includes HR Business Partners, known as generalists or consultants who

carry out four multiple roles: strategic HR planner, change agent, administrative expert and employee champion. The roles of change agent and strategic partner are more strategically orientated while administrative expert and employee champion are more operationally focused. The Figure   illustrates the four key roles that HR professionals must play for delivering value via HR agenda and practices. The second leg is a center of excellence (or expertise), that involves a team of HR specialists with specific knowledge in areas such as recruitment, compensation, L&D reward, and engagement. Shared services constitute the third leg which includes back office transactions services.

2.8.2 HR Operations Embedded Among HR Business Partners support

In this sub-function, HR Business Partners, are HR professionals commonly referred to as generalists, who operating at senior levels of the organization with strong qualifications and deep knowledge of strategic objectives. These are people who have a "seat at the leadership decision-making table" and calculate as a crucial participant in the organization-strategic conversation (Eaglebarger, 2016). They are usually embedded in the business unit where serve as a bridge between the needs of the business and the capabilities of HR team. Business Partners function as consultant and confidante in all areas of Human Resources Operations, providing coaching and support to employees and managers   in their daily operations of their workforce. The overriding goal of HR Business Partner is to drive organizational efficiency through improving processes and practices in the term of short-term and long-term business goals. In support of the last point, they sharper focus on what is strategically important that could be increase quality and productivity as well as enhance employee engagement and satisfaction.

  Ulrich (1997) defined a framework comprised of four HR general categories, which together applied the concept of "HR Business Partner" in the organization. He argued that HR practitioners perform these four proactive roles that improved the business bottom line and enable HR to bring strategic value to an organization. The following sections explains with further details each role and suggests how Operations managers can be associated with each role. The four key roles that emerge are:

- Act as a strategic partner in supporting the HR team and management ensuring that HR strategy is aligned with business strategy
- Act as change agent in managing organizational change
- Act as administrative expert in the re-engineering and implementation of centers of excellence programs, using administrative expert knowledge.
- Act as an employee champion in managing employee contribution

Business Partner= Strategic Partner+ Change Agent+ Administrative Expert+ Employee Champion

Figure 5: HR Professionals roles

Source: Human Resource strategy "Operations management, seventh edition, 2013, p.254"

2.8.2.1 Strategic partner

Much of the mission of strategic partner is to achieve greater alignment between operations strategy and business strategy to improve financial performance and develop flexibility and competitive advantage. To actively manage the strategic alignment, HR professionals guide effective and efficient the implementation of HR operational issues including staffing, compensation and reward, learning and development and performance management cycle. Namely:

Staffing
- Coaching managers to drive greater productivity and high engagement
- Collaborate with the Recruiting team and hiring managers to define staffing goals, evaluate & close candidates
- Develops contract terms for new hires, promotions and transfers
  Rewards
- Partnering with the Rewards & Analytics team to improve cross-functional calibration of performance and rewards
- Meet with leadership to discuss salary guidelines
  Learning and Development
- Work with Organizational & People Development team whereas provide input on solution development
- Participates in evaluation and monitoring of training programs
  Performance management
- Provides day-to-day performance management guidance to line management (e.g., coaching, counseling, career development, disciplinary actions).

2.8.2.2 Change agent

Acts as a change agent promotes innovation and continual improvement. As Change agent, Business Partner oversee the organizational transformation as part of the human resource function (Rafat et al., 2012). The foremost responsibility of a change agent is to evaluate,

analyze and implement necessary changes to organizational procedures that bring improvements into customer value proposition, quality, delivery, time cycle and growth. The change agent must also be able to serve as facilitator of change and designer of HR management systems, balancing fairness and equity with legislative requirements and best practice. To support the HR Value Stream and bring improvements in implementing lean transformation and transactional process, the operational role of change agent includes:

- Implementing tactical strategies to achieve the desired vision

- Executing against long and short-term objectives to support the value stream's goals

- Assisting in the change of systems/processes as well as the introduction of a new HR information system as required in support of the Lean initiatives. In this occasion, change agent plays the role of a trainer or a teacher

- Assisting in identifying on-going training needs

- Reviewing new procedures/controls and appraising the efficiency and effectiveness of HR operations, and working with the HR Department, Managers and Supervisors to resolve any issues that might arise during implementation and/or maintenance phases

- Reviewing rewards strategies both monetary and social

A Change agent can either be an internal agent such as managers or external such as consultants from outside the firm (Lunenburg, 2010). A study by Sang Long (2013), claims that HR professionals as change agents need to possess some specific competencies in order to execute this role. Namely, need to have effective relationship skills by building good professional relationship to both their HR peers and other line managers, Human Resource Development (HRD) skills in order to understand how to develop, execute and evaluate learning and development programs, performance management in a way that improves employee's productivity and work performance, value chain knowledge of such areas as finance, marketing, operations, and general management and the ability to manage conflicts among members in the organization. Ulrich and Brockbank (2005), appended that the success of any change effort depends heavily on the capacity of HR professionals to develop both an operational and strategic role.

2.8.2.3 Administrative expert

This role refers to the traditional function of human resource which related to the design and execution of the day-to-day operations of the HR department. In general, HR administrative expert is responsible for creating an organizational infrastructure in a way that improves the HR processes and add value to a business (Ulrich,1997). As administrative experts, HR professionals manage the overall functional workflow for HR activities including staffing, training, appraising, engaging and rewarding. At an operational level, administrative expert should be able to design and manage its processes efficiently and effectively through:

- Identify high-quality and increase productivity (there are fewer errors, outputs are faster, (Peter Reilly, 2014)

- Achieved cost reductions

- Improve speed of delivery of HR services and continuously focus on the needs of the business units (Rafat et al., 2012)

- Provide adequate advice on administrative procedures

- Interpret administrative and operating policies and procedures for employees

In many companies, administrative processes considered as a matter of shared service centers (Marek Stritesky, 2014).These services could be performed in a centralized ,standard operating model that can provide a more quickly and quality improvement of HR processes through administrative efficiency (i.e. technology) such as benefits administration, employee record keeping, recruitment/staffing process, occupational health/safety, compensation/pay activities. Therefore, Ulrich defined four possible outcomes which outlined the HR profession's administrative expert or functional expert role, for the delivery of such services (White Paper, 2009):

- the adoption of cloud and outsourcing

- the shared services center for administrative work

- the Center of Expertise for deep specialized knowledge in key HR area and

- the integrated unit, a cross functional center of excellence offering integrated and innovative solutions.

2.8.2.4 Employee champion

As employee champion, the HR practitioner advocate for a working environment that maximizes the potential of staff. Namely, the role of employee champion is to provide guidance and support on all matters relating to the employees needs and improves the quality of management and team work(Ulrich,1997). A key element of this role is to ensure that employee contribution and commitment remain high and all people at all levels are treated with dignity and respect. The person in the function of employee champion manage and resolve complex employee relations issues, work closely with management and employees to improve work relationships, build morale, increase productivity and retention. The operational role of HR employee champions should therefore concentrate on the following:

- Provide employee development opportunities

- Develop a good working-life balance and an effective employee communication

- Dealing with employee problems that are both work and non-work related

- Respond to employee complaints about unfair treatment or inappropriate actions

- Handling daily emergency issues that arise

2.9 HR operations as a Centers of Expertise (CoE)

Centers of Expertise consists of a team of HR experts that focused on specialized skills and knowledge offering to the organizations the flexibility they need to remain competitive. Centers of Expertise have clear product and solution delivery focus (Marciniak, 2012). In the 'three-legged stool' model they are collaborating with line managers in the business, HR Business Partners, and all HR functional areas whereas operating like a business-focused internal HR consultancy on specific projects and initiatives (Deloitte, 2013). The role of the HR professional in Centers of Expertise covers many of major areas, notably in creating

solutions innovation aligned with the business challenges like, talent management, absenteeism, organizational change, and others whilst providing support for day-to-day functional needs such as traditional reward, benefit and learning.

Like the Business Partners, the Centers of Expertise teams utilize their 'unique' knowledge and skills to add the most value to the business results. Some of the major operational responsibilities of the centers include:

- Collaborate with HR business partners to select and implement the right services
- Establishes and monitors performance metrics for quality and effectiveness.
- Recommends changes in procedures to improve efficiency.
- Supports implementation and transformation of projects as needed.
- Provide employees timely performance feedback.
- Develop employees to their fullest potential and provide challenging opportunities that enhance employee career growth.
- Recommend salary increases, promotions, transfers, disciplinary actions and dismissals in conformance with company policies and procedures.

2.10. HR operations within Shared Services (SSCs)

HR Shared services (often referred to as HR Service Centers) is the provision of human resource services that are delivered by multiple sourcing channels (e.g call centers or technology) of the same organizations (Meijerink et al., 2016). In fact, HR Shared Services is a separate, single business unit, that focused on purely administrative and "back office" activities with a potential to contribute to a high-quality and low-cost HR delivery. The idea of shared services has been established from organizations in the mid-1990s, as many companies realized that many transactional tasks are more efficiently done in a centralized, standardized way and since then have worked to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their HR operations and enhancing service levels (Deloitte, 2013).By employing Shared Services, companies have captured a variety of benefits including cost reductions,

technology consolidation, organizational agility and high levels of HR service quality, for example enterprise applications, security and controls, compliance and tax services. (Soalheira and Timbrell, 2014,).

Shared Services can use a multiple of methods including centralization, outsourcing and offshoring to improve economies of scale, obtain greater flexibility and access to outside expertise. Virtually, are typically concerned with transactional work that involves standardize, routine and day-to-day operations such as employee assistance programs, relocation administration, record keeping, benefits enrollment and administration, applicant tracking, payroll and learning administration.

Nowadays, HR Shared Services professionals continue to focus on improving operating effectiveness and process re-engineering, in a bid to reduce operating costs and help the business achieve its strategic objectives in performance and growth. Their responsibilities cover a wide range of activities in the form of HR administration, Data Transaction, Employee Inquiries and Vendor Management. Namely:

HR Administration:
- Handle end-to-end recruitment process from sourcing to on-boarding
- Provide compliance training and tracking of all requirement
- Ensure the timely processing of accounts payable transactions and travel related expenses of personnel
- Develop standard work, service level agreements and key performance indicators for all areas of the department
- Provide feedback to Operations Supervisor for process and technology improvements

Data Transaction:
- Prepare records, requisitions, forms, and other documents and ensure accuracy and completeness; compile, organize; and maintains record keeping and filing systems
- Process all information required to initiate and update online employment records for the transfer, promotion and termination of employees
- Enter data in various HR administration systems (SAP, SCAN HRMS, etc.)

Employee Inquiries:
- Respond to ad hoc employee inquiries regarding rules, payroll, regulations, policies

and procedures, and responds to requests for information by telephone, e-mail or fax

Vendor Management:
- Many HR departments already outsource certain aspects of its in-house services including, benefits administration, payroll and recruiting processes. A central Shared Services team:
- Assist with managing the foreign vendor files/certifications and all documentation (attachments) thoroughly and accurately, in accordance with company policy and accepted accounting practices
- Assist with foreign vendor correspondence via multiple channels e.g. e-mail, phone, fax, etc

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CHAPTER 3 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

How do employees feel about their work, their managers and leaders? What motivates some employees to 'go the extra mile' at work? Why some employees decide to abandon their organizations while others continue to be loyal to its success? The concept of employee engagement gaining significant importance in recent years. More than ever, organizations need fully engaged employees, that can help them to achieve their mission and therefore contribute to creating and sustaining a competitive advantage ahead of their competitors. Engaged employees constitute a significant asset to the company. Employee engagement indicates how satisfied or content employees are with their organization and their jobs. High levels of engagement in domestic and multinational firms promote the lasting loyalty, foster employee retention, and ultimately enhance organizational performance and productivity.

3.1 The meaning of Engagement

The definition of employee engagement varies considerably among business, consultancy firms and academics of which all have different conceptualizations (Welch, 2011). In short, the one thing everyone knows, is that there is no one accurate and generally accepted definition of employee engagement (D. Robinson &J. Gifford, 2014). To date, there have been numerous definitions of the concept since the explosion of phenomenon began to attract wider academic attention during the 1990s. Table analyze these studies and others, and presents the conceptualization that was invoked for each model.

   The first mention of employee engagement appears in an *Academy of Management Journal* article, "Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work" (Kahn,1990). In his article develop the first grounded theory of personal engagement and personal disengagement. More specifically he defined personal engagement as'' the

harnessing of organizations members selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally, during role performances'' (p.694). Employees are physically engaged within a role they are performing (independently or with others), when they put an extent amount of effort into their work e.g. brain power, extra time and energy, cognitively engaged when they know what is expected of them and have the awareness needed on their work and thus they are emotionally engaged when they have opportunities to improve and develop, act as advocates of the organization and indicate willingness to behave altruistically with coworkers and leaders whom they trust. Drawing from the work of Hackman & Oldham, 1980 and Alderfer (1985), Khan referred to three psychological conditions that influenced employee to personally engaged or disengaged: meaningfulness, safety and availability. Of the three aspects, meaningfulness recognized by researchers as the strongest condition at work. According to Khan, employee's ''experienced such meaningfulness when they felt worthwhile, useful, and valuable'(p.704). Thus, employees perceive psychological safety when they are expressing their true selves at work without fear. Hence, he refers to psychological availability as the presence of physical, emotional and psychological resources the individuals needed on the job (Douglas et al., 2004; Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014). Kahn (1992) also state that engagement captures an individual's psychological presence, or ''being there''. Employees are psychologically present when are attentive, connected, integrated, and focused in their role performances (Rothbard & Patil, 2011).

The Gallup's Organization Buckingham and Coffman (1999), used a simple list of twelve questions, to assess whether a workplace is the kind of place that attract and retain the best employee's. Buckingham and Coffman supported, that engagement exists when employees would answer *yes* to these 12 questions.

Drawn's on Khan's theory, Rothbard (2001), examined the effects of engagement in multiples roles (e.g., work and family). She defines engagement as a ''psychological presence which is composed of two main components - attention and absorption. In her study, these dynamics are as a related but distinct to the fact that ''attention represent a role may be thought as invisible and material resource, that person can allocate in multiple ways, whereas absorption represent an intrinsic motivation in a role'' (p.657)

Another theory of engagement has its roots in the literature on job burnout (Saks et al., 2014). Maslach et al, (2001, p.417), noting that engagement is '' the positive antithesis to burnout […] characterized by high levels of activation and pleasure. Indeed, engagement is

characterized by energy, involvement, and efficacy—the direct opposites of the burnout dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy. Other researchers of burnout (Gonzalez-Roma et al., 2006), also found that the core dimensions of employee engagement (vigor and dedication) are the conceptual opposite of the core dimensions of burnout (exhaustion and cynicism) (Dagher et al., 2015). Around the turn of burnout is the Job Demands–Resources(JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), whereby it is proposed that working conditions can be classified in two general categories, job demands and job resources. (Demerouti, et al., 2001). Job demands are primarily related with factors such as a high work pressure, emotional demands, and role ambiguity that may lead to exhaustion whereas lack of resources such as social support, performance feedback, and autonomy which further lead to disengagement.

Schaufeli et al. (2002, p.74), Schaufeli and Bakker (2004, p.295), and Bakker and Demerouti (2008, p.209) defined engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption". Vigor refers to important levels of energy and resilience on the job, indicated willingness for further effort and persistence in the face of difficulties. Dedication refers to a situation wherein employees are proud of their company, satisfied and enthusiasm with their job. Absorption refers to being fully engrossed and concentrate in their works (Saks and Gruman, 2014).

Harter et al., (2002) were the first to examine the employee engagement at the business unit level (Shuck et al, 2009). In their meta-analysis, reported that employee engagement is positively related to organizational outcomes such as customer satisfaction, loyalty, profitability and productivity, that appears to generalize across companies. They regard employee engagement as''the individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work'' (p. 269). Employees can become "involved'' and ''enthusiastic'' when they have a positive perception of their workplace which leads to a positive internal motivational state (Colbert et al, 2004).

May et al (2004), influenced by Kahn's (1990) work supported that the three psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability are positively related to engagement. They further suggest that "engagement may be thought of as an antecedent to job involvement in that individuals who experience deep engagement in their roles should come to identify with their jobs" (p.12).

Robinson et al (2004) define engagement as one step ahead of commitment. They define employee engagement as a "positive attitude of employees towards their organization and its

values" where in employees have awareness of business context and work to improve job and organizational effectiveness". (p.ix)

Saks (2006) in his study approached employee engagement as "distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that are associated with individual role performance" (p.602). In fact, he extended the term of employee engagement to encompass two types of engagement: job and organization engagement (Welch, 2011).

Drawing on the work of several literature(s) Macey and Schneider (2008) conceptualized employee engagement as "a complex nomological network encompassing trait, state, and behavioral constructs, as well as the work and organizational conditions that might facilitate state and behavioral engagement" (p.23).

Building on Kahn's definition Rich et al., (2010) noted that "engagement reflects the simultaneous investment of cognitive, emotional, and physical energies in such a way that one is actively and completely involved in the full performance of a role" (p.622). Thus, from the perspective of Kahn's theory, argue that three antecedents of engagement contribute to employee engagement which is associated, in turn, with improved performance: value congruence, organizational support, and core self-evaluations. He suggested that employees perceived value congruence when they perform roles that represent behaviors which are congruent with how they like to see themselves (psychological meaningfulness). In addition, organizational support lead individuals to take risks, expose their real selves, try and perhaps fail without fearing the consequences (psychological safety). Finally, employees with high core self-evaluations tend to feel more confident about their capabilities and status, they are more capable to dealing with work demands and thus have more resources available to invest in the performance of their work roles (psychological availability).

Gruman and Saks (2011, p.126), conceptualize engagement as "state-like with corresponding behavioral expressions" involves performance agreement (goal setting and psychological contracts), engagement facilitation (job design, coaching and social support, leadership, and training) and performance and engagement appraisal and feedback (trust and justice).

Table 5: Employee Engagement: Researchers, Definition, Methodology

Researcher(s)	Definition	Methodology
Khan (1990,1992)	"the harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performance" (p. 694).	Research conducted in a six-week summer camp in the West Indies (interviews consisted of 24 opened questions) and in an architecture firm in the northeastern United States, consists of 5 warm-up questions (see the Appendix).
Buckingham and Coffman (1999)	An employee who could answer yes to all 12 questions on Gallup's questionnaire	Based on in -depth interviews with more than 80,000 managers at all levels, following of 12 questions that exploring the best workplace to stay and work (see the Appendix).
Rothbard (2001)	"psychological presence which is composed of two main components - attention and absorption (p .657). Focuses on people's emotional responses (negative or positive) to engaging in multiple roles-family and work.	Analysis of the responses of 1,310 employees at a large public university, to a questionnaire exploring the psychological presence on role activities (see the Appendix).
Maslach et al. (2001)	"engagement is characterized by energy, involvement, and efficacy – the direct opposites of the three burnout dimensions" (exhaustion, cynicism and ineffectiveness) (p. 416)	Systematic empirical research
Harter et al. (2002)	"Employee engagement refers to the individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work''(p.269)	Meta-analysis
Schaufeli et al. (2002, p.74), Schaufeli and Bakker (2004, p.295), Bakker and Demerouti (2008, p.209)	"a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption"	Employees from four organizations received paper-and-pencil questionnaires, which accompanied by a letter- 854 middle managers and executives of a Dutch telecom company were invited to participate in the study

May et al., (2004)	Use Kahn's (1990) definition	Survey methodology. "The study was conducted at a large insurance firm located in the Midwestern, USA. The questionnaire was designed to measure the participants' perceptions about themselves, their jobs, supervisors and co-workers."p20
Saks (2006)	"distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that are associated with individual role performance" (p.602).	Participants included 102 employees working in a variety of jobs and organizations. Participants were asked to complete the survey as part of a study on employee work experiences and attitudes
Christian et al., (2011)	"a relatively enduring state of mind referring to the simultaneous investment of personal energies in the experience or performance of work"(p.95)	A search of computerized databases from 1990 to April of 2010. The search included the terms job, work, employee, physical, emotional, cognitive, vigor, dedication, and absorption, with the keyword engagement.

3.2 The Measurement of Engagement

As the concept of employee engagement continues to be a lack of agreement it should not be surprising that there have also been concerns about how to measure and improve employee engagement (Saks and Gruman, 2014). The typical measurement method, in both the academic and business consultancy following the same general prescription: an engagement survey where employees are effectively asked, through several types of questions, to rate their own level of engagement at work. Questions measuring employee

engagement often include statements that the employee can agree or disagree with, such as organizational culture, leadership, communication, strategic alignment, growth opportunities, recognize and reward. The most popular and most frequently used measure of engagement are Gallup's engagement survey (GWA), which is really a measure of management practices and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) which refers to the work conditions.

3.2.1 The Gallup Workplace Audit

The Gallup Organization's Gallup Workplace Audit (GWA, Harter et al., 2002), it was originally designed to measure actionable issues for management such as satisfaction, rewards, feedback task significance, development opportunities, and clarity of expectations (Christian et al., 2011). The 12-surveyed questionnaire included in the Gallup Workplace Audit (GWA) which assess the extent to which employees are engaged in their work are as follows:

Table 6: The 12-surveyed questionnaire included in the Gallup Workplace Audit (GWA)

1. _____   I know what is expected of me at work
2. _____   I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right
3. _____   At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day
4. _____   In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work
5. _____ My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person
6. _____ There is someone at work who encourages my development
7. _____   At work, my opinions seem to count
8. _____   The mission/purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important
9. _____   My associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work
10. _____ I have a best friend at work
11. _____   In the last six months, has someone at work has talked to me about my progress
12. _____   In the last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow

3.2.2 Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) includes the three constituting aspects of work engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Those who scored high levels of vigor, usually have much energy, zest and stamina when working. Those who score high on dedication Originally, the UWES included 24 items (Schaufeli & Baker, 2003) but after psychometric evaluation , 7 items appeared to be unsound and were therefore eliminated so that 17 items remained: 6 vigor items, 5 dedication items, and 6 absorption items (Schaufeli, Salanova et al., 2002).The resulting 17-item version of the UWES has been used by several researchers (Seppala et al., 2009,   Bakker et al., 2011; Cole et al., 2012; Crawford et al., 2010;O.Ugwu, 2013) and has been translated into eleven languages and used among different occupational groups (e.g., managers, social workers/psychologists, hospital staff, university staff, police officers, Schaufeli and Baker , 2003 p .24-25, 45). The 17 questionnaire items are:

Table 7: The 17-item version of the UWES

Work & Well-being Survey (UWES) ©
1. _____   At my work, I feel bursting with energy. (VI)
2. _____   I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose. (DE)
3. _____   Time flies when I am working. (AB)
4. _____   At my job, I feel strong and vigorous. (VI)
5. _____   I am enthusiastic about my job. (DE)
6. _____   When I am working, I forget anything else around me. (AB)
7. _____   My job inspires me. (DE)
8. _____   When I get up in the morning I feel like going to work. (VI)
9. _____   I feel happy when I am working intensely. (AB)
10._____   I am proud of the work that I do. (DE)
11. _____   I am immersed in my work. (AB)
12. _____   I can continue working at very long periods at a time. (VI)

13. _____ To me, my job is challenging. (DE)

14. _____ I get carried away when I am working. (AB)

15. _____ At my job I am very resilient, mentally. (VI)

16. _____ It is difficult to detach myself from my job. (AB)

17. _____ At my work, I always persevere, even when things do not go well. (VI)

Note: VI=Vigor scale, DE=Dedication scale, AB=Absorption scale

Source: Schaufeli & Bakker (2003). (The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale is free for use for non-commercial scientific research. Commercial and/or non-scientific use is prohibited, unless previous written permission is granted by the authors)

Other researchers have created and used their own measures of employee engagement. For example, Rothbard (2001) developed a18-item scale that consists of four work attention items, four family attention items, five work absorption items, and five family absorption items for assessing employee engagement. May et al. (2004) based on Khan's work, developed a thirteen-item scale that includes four items to measure cognitive engagement, four items to measure emotional engagement, and five -items to measure physical engagement. Maslach et al., (2001) designed the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI, Maslach et al., 1997), that includes 22 items which are divided into three- items to assess emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment. Saks (2006) developed a six -item scale to measure job engagement and a six- item scale to measure organization engagement. Rich et al. (2010) developed an 18-item scale that includes six items to measure each of Kahn's three dimensions of engagement (physical, emotional, and cognitive).

Most of these measures based on Khan's theory while Maslach Burnout Inventory or the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) are more similar to the measurement of burnout.The advantages of the survey methodology indicates that surveys are relatively easy to administer, can be developed in less time (compared to other data-collection methods e.g., qualitative data from interviews) and therefore numerous questions can be asked about a subject, giving extensive flexibility in data analysis. The major disadvantage of using survey methodology in behavioral research is that the reliability of survey questions may lead to unclear data because certain answer options may be interpreted differently by respondents. For example, the answer option "somewhat agree" or "neutral" may represent different things

to different subjects, and have its own meaning to each individual respondent. Hence, 'Yes' or 'no' answer options can also be problematic.

3.3 Types of employee engagement

An organization is defined as a group of people who collaborate to accomplish common strategic goals. Every organization has specific mission, vision, policies and culture that affect employee's morale, communication and ultimately behavior. Sometimes the way an organization guide its operations, is not aligned with employee's motivation. For example, what encourages one individual to put an extra effort and to perform at full potential is not necessarily the same as what encourage another. Thus, this attitude tends to be classified employees into one of three categories - engaged, not engaged and actively disengaged.

- **Engaged employees:** considered as the mainstay of the organization. Are those who are satisfied and happy and feel a sense of integration in their work. Such employees are not often absent from work, are more efficient, more positive and flexible to changes and willing to carry out. They are innovative and help organization to grow and move forward.

- **Not engaged:** this is the category in which majority of employees are hold either positive or negative attitude and opinion about the organization. They are those who present increased absenteeism and great frequency of late arrival at work. They don't undertake initiatives and always wait for instruction from their superiors. Disengaged employees do not put passion and energy into their work.

- **Actively disengaged:** These employees are completely detached from workplace goals and are often vocalize their unhappiness and dissatisfaction in the organization. Such workers do not say positive things about the company, do not see a long-term path, and do not strive to go above and beyond (Aon Hewitt, 2015). However, this category of employees constitutes a threat for the organization by creating problems and tensions.

3.4 The Drivers of Engagement

If engagement can be defined and measured, then what drives it? The subject in engagement in workplace is to be comprehend what motivates people, what drives their actions and how this translates into productivity, performance and loyalty to the organization. Over the years these drivers have changed reflecting the economic downturn, generational changes and global workplace trends. Though there are many factors that influence employee engagement this study paper reviews a few from previous researches. Factors will discuss are leadership, internal communication, growth opportunities and social support. Prior to the study of engagement drivers, the next paragraph presents overall global employee engagement trends from 2013 to 2014.

3.4.1 Global engagement drivers

Many factors cause engagement to happen (or not happen)—from workplace culture, organizational communication and managerial styles to trust and respect, leadership and company reputation. As shown in Exhibit, the top five global engagement drivers for 2014 were career opportunities, organization reputation, pay, brand alignment, innovation. According to the survey results, pay and organization reputation were also top global drivers in 2013, with communication and managing performance in 2013 being replaced with innovation and brand alignment in 2014. Across the region two of the top drivers -organization reputation and pay -have remained consistent from 2013 to 2014, whilst many of employees are dissatisfied with future career opportunities at their organization, with perceptions surrounding this driver have fallen 3 points, to 44%, compared with the precedent year. This brings attention to the point that globally, the average employee looking for growth, equitable reward, and pride in their company.

Table 8: Key Drivers of Employee Engagement:

Aon Hewitt Survey 2015

Drivers	Positive Perception	Perception change 2013 to 2014
Senior Leadership	60%	+ 5%
Valuing People	59%	-6%
Organization Reputation	59%	0 %
Managing Performance	57%	0 %
Brand Alignment	56%	+ 3%
Work Process	55%	0 %
Innovation	53%	1 %
People HR practices	51%	-5%
Recognition	51%	+1%
Communication	47%	0%
Pay	46%	0%
Career Opportunities	44%	-3%

Source: Aon Hewitt Consulting (2015), 'Trends in global employee engagement'

3.5 Models of employee engagement drivers

Many models around the term "drivers" of engagement have been popularized by academic and practitioner's organizations, based their models on empirical research. A breakdown of recent research findings is presented below:

- Analysis of engagement within the NHS by IES (Robinson et al., 2004) indicate that the strongest driver of engagement is a sense of feeling ''valued and involved''. This entails that employees are involved in decision-making, feel able to voice their ideas, have opportunities for development and therefore feel health and safety while working.

Figure 6 Robinson's (2004) Model
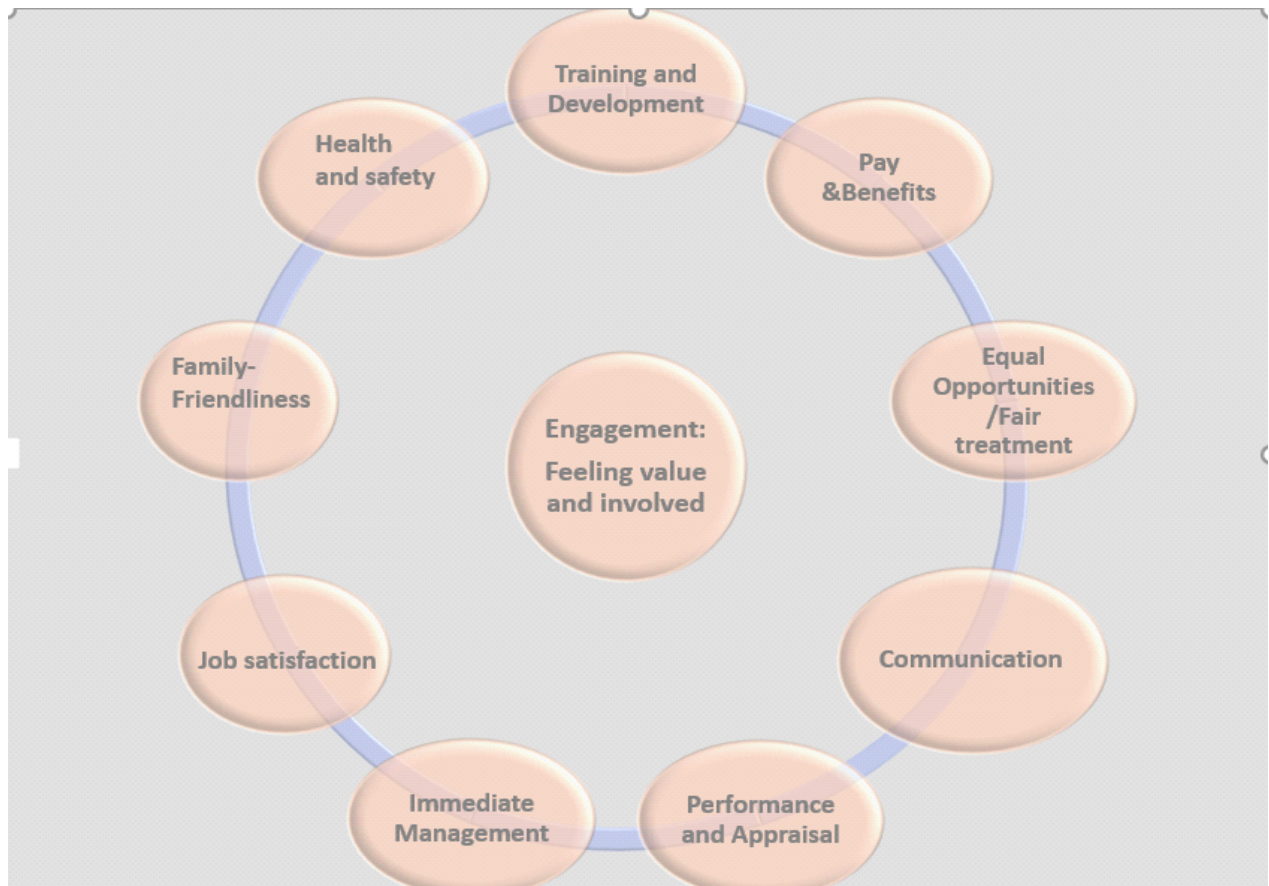
Source: Robinson D, Perryman S, Hayday S (2004), The Drivers of Employee Engagement

- Kumar (2012), identified the follow key drivers which lead to employee engagement:

Career development- employees have opportunities to develop their abilities,

learn new skills, acquire new knowledge and realize their potential

Leadership-employees need a sense of direction (want to know what to expect and what to

do), a respectful treatment and an ethical perspective - a concern for others and respect for

oneself.

Empowerment -aligns with trust and initiative, is the process of giving front-line employees

the authority to make decisions when a manager is not available.

Image- The perceptions of employees about the quality of goods and services which their company provides in its customers.

Other factors where organizations must invest to retain engaged employees according to Kumar are:

- Provide **Equal Opportunities and Fair Treatment** for growth and advancement to all the employees
- Promote fair **Performance appraisal** for all employees
- Offer a competitive remuneration of **Pay and Benefits**
- Provide appropriate systems of **Health and safety**
- Assurance that employee receive **Job satisfaction**
- Focusing on internal **Communication** between managers and employees
- Develop **Family friendliness** cultures and policies that facilitate employee's efforts to balance the demands of both work and family obligations
- Encourage **Co-operation** between employees and between employees and managers

Figure 7: Factors leading to   employee engagement
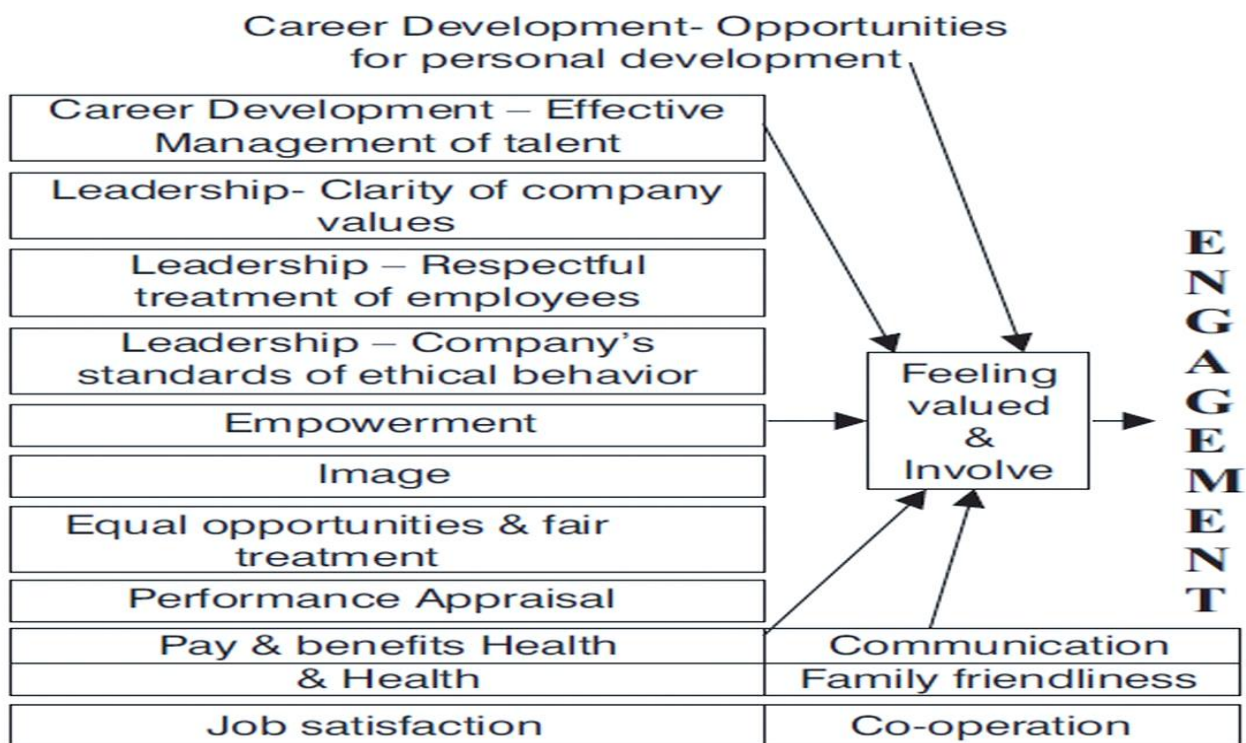
Source: Kumar, 2012

- Aon Hewitt defines engagement as a combination of emotions, intentions and behaviors required for the utmost performance and productivity. The Aon Hewitt engagement model presented further down, demonstrate common and unique drivers for engagement as well as insights and prescriptions for action for three significant engagement outcomes—say, stay, and strive. Consequently, employee must exhibit all three facets of saying, staying, and striving to be considered "engaged":

- **Say**- say positive thinks about the organization to coworkers, potential employees, and customers

- **Sta**y-have an intense sense of belonging and desire to stay in the organization

- **Strive**-are motivated to go above and beyond

Figure 8: Engagement outcomes

Source: Adapted from Aon Hewitt, 2015, Say, Stay, or Strive?, Unleash the Engagement Outcome You Need

- Penna (2007) presents a hierarchy of engagement factors, which underpins the meaning at work   that staff is seeking to find throughout the various stages of their career. Penna states that people find meaning at work when they feel fulfilled in their job, being valued, appreciated and having a sense of belonging and congruence with the organization (Bhatla ,2011). According, to Penna, the more an organization invests in the higher level of engagement factors, the more attractive becomes to new potentials and talent employees and therefore even more engaging to its existing staff.

Figure 9: Penna's (2007) Hierarchical Model "Increasing Engagement"

Source: Dharmendra Mehta and Naveen K. Mehta ,2013

Part 2

3.6 How HR Operations drive engagement

Nowadays, companies need to understand that high levels of employee engagement, occurs throughout each stage of their lifecycle at the organization, from recruiting and selection, onboarding, development and retention to promotion to management. Engagement should begin with the "right hire for the right position" (Shilpa ROY P,2013 p.98) so that company could benefit of what potential candidate can offer to the company and therefore employee create a positive image for the organization.

3.7 Job Design and engagement

Job design plays a central role to employee's satisfaction, motivation and productivity. Job determines how an employee should do his or her job. It includes job key contents such as, task and responsibilities that involved to the job, what qualifications and training is needed to perform the specific role, the people who employee work with and refer to and related questions that optimize the work process and improve productivity (Gibbs et al., 2015). A good job design, makes the job looks interesting and attractive. Employee's that hold jobs that increase autonomy, skill variety, task identity, task significance and feedback are more highly engaged and satisfied. Let's examine how these elements of the job can lead to positive attitudes and behaviors and how related to engagement:

- *Autonomy is positively related to engagement*

2. Breaugh (1985) defined autonomy as the degree to which a job provides employees with freedom and discretion allowed to schedule their tasks and responsibilities (Phaik Lin and Lee Ping, 2016). High levels of autonomy increase job satisfaction and therefore increase work motivation. Moreover, autonomy makes employees feel more responsible for the outcomes of their work and therefore are more engaged at work.

- *Skill variety is positively related to engagement*

Skill variety is the degree to which "a job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, which involve the use of a number of different skills and talents of the person" (.R. Hackman, G.R. Oldham,1976).When a task requires from a person to involve in activities that highlights his or her skills and abilities,(from experience or routine) or demand new skills (growth and learning), this in turn experienced as meaningful by the individual and thus will be reflected in high levels of engagement(Sabine Sonnentag, 2017).

- *Task identity is positively related to engagement*

Task identity is the degree to which a task performed from the beginning to end. An individual who execute an entire piece of work may find more meaning in the work that helps him/her to stay energized and engaged with the overall task.

- *Task significance is positively related to engagement*

Task significance is the degree to which a job has an impact to others within or outside the organization. When an employee performs a task with high task significance, and this task matters for other people or will be benefit someone else, this person will be more motivate and dedicate.

- *Feedback is positively related to engagement*

Feedback is the degree to which an information is given to employee about the effectiveness of his or her performance and goal attainment. When people receive for their work a continuous and quality feedback, they tend to be more engaged and valued.

3.8 Recruitment and Employee Engagement

Sue Newell (2005, p.116) viewed recruitment and selection as a process "of selecting the correct jigsaw pieces (the 'right' individuals) from the incorrect pieces (the 'wrong' individuals) to fit into a particular hole in a jigsaw puzzle". Hiring competent individuals, entails effective recruitment and selection procedures which aim to select applicants who will be a good fit" with the job and organizational culture.

Recruitment is one of the first and the best way to begin employee engagement in an

organization. It is the process of attracting and engaging qualified people for the cover of immediate needs of the enterprise. So, the organization should let people know that attractive and realistic job descriptions is a proven way to engage applicants from the beginning making them feel valued and commitment to the firm. Another way to attract the strongest candidates is to have an upgraded and continuous on-line recruitment process in which can easily access the candidate through online recruitment. Through these sites, candidates they learned about the companies, locations they don't know before, what are the skills an employer is expecting from them and what their career level is. Moreover, high levels of engagement can be achieved not only from external applicants but from existing employees within an organization. When employers recruiting internal employees for desirable positions, they are enhancing their engagement as they are giving them possibilities of movement/promotions that boost their commitment to the firm.

3.9 On -boarding and Employee Engagement

Employee engagement begins from the moment the organization sends the offer. On - boarding play a vital role in building a strong impression for new employees and presents a positive effect on their productivity, performance, loyalty and morale. On-boarding presents a unique opportunity to set the stage for the rest of an employee's lifecycle. The essential elements that foster employee engagement during on boarding program include:

- Information about the company and workplace from the first day for new hires
- Is essential to learn new hires how the company works. This may be a presentation from managers department about their roles and expertise, and give an overview of the products and services they oversee
- Providing new hires with the knowledge they need to get started, and connecting them to resources they need for long-term effectiveness
- Give employees their job descriptions and written outlines of their performance objectives upfront

3.10 Training and Employee Engagement

Training is imperative for keeping employees engaged and helping them increase productivity. Through training employees can enhance their skills and knowledge, abilities, attitudes and personal resources they need to perform their jobs and even increase performance and ascend to the hierarchy. Additionally, the right training and development provide the means to motivate employees and feel valued for their contribution. Training also enhances employees to invest their time in their training and be more willing to put extra effort in to grasp complex ideas and master difficult skills. In addition, training boosts the chances of success and reduces drop outs.

3.11 Internal Communication and Employee Engagement

Increasingly, internal communication has been recognized as a crucial need of employees which organizations have to meet to develop employee engagement and achieve objectives. Successful communication can increase staff satisfaction and productivity and influence employee's professional life and their willingness to advocate for the organization. On the other hand, poor communication can create uncertainty that leads to distrust and conflict. Internal communication is an organizational process, which underpins the relationships between senior managers and employees and creates a sense of community within the organization (Mishra et al., 2014). Operationally defined as a social interaction which act through technology and systems, used for conveying and receiving employee's appropriate messages useful and acceptable to them. Internal communication can be utilized by a range of method which can be categorized by three top channels: print (accessed on paper), electronic (accessed on a piece of technology) and face-to-face (interpersonal) (Welch, 2012). Each category includes procedures that facilitate interactions between an organization, supervisors and employees and creating workplace relationships that based on trust and information sharing. Similarly, a study conducted by Karanges et al., (2015) shows that internal organizational communication and internal supervisor communication support workplace relationships, based on meaning and worth, and play an appropriate role in influencing optimal employee engagement. To contribute to engagement, the senior leaders and line managers required to provide   directly and consistently information about

organization issues that enable employees achieve the organization's goals and strategies. Access to information in organization, boosts morale and makes individuals feel valued and respected. White, Vance and Stafford (2010) found that when employees receive adequate information about their job, they feel acceptable thereby creating a sense of community. In addition, Welch and Jackson (2007) demonstrate that internal corporate communication promotes "commitment to the organization, a sense of belonging to it, awareness of its changing environment and understanding of its evolving aims" (p.186). Recent survey from State of the sectors (2016), reports that aspects of internal communication like strategic narrative, strong visible leadership and engaging managers can contribute to engaging employees throughout the organization.

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CHAPTER 4 A Comprehensive analysis of HR Operations and Employee Engagement Activities of Skroutz

4.1 Overview of Skroutz

Skroutz is an innovative search engine of price and product comparison, which has been founded in Athens in 2005 by George Hatzigeorgiou, Vasilis Dimos and George Aygoustidis. It is the largest product and price comparison site in Greece with 5.6 million unique visitors a month. In 2013 it began to operate in Turkey with the brand name "alve" and later, in 2015, has expanded on the market of England with the brand name "scrooge" and the proper writing of the name of the hero of Dickens.

Today, the company provides a range of user-adjustable software and e-commerce solutions platforms, utilizing innovative technologies and methodologies that highlights the passion of its human resources.

The team of Skroutz consists of 130 unique talented people in Athens and 15 people in Turkey. Starting up from a garage of some squares and in the halls of a university this moment it is housed in a modern building of architecture and open space philosophy covering a total area of 2,200 square meters.

4.2 VISION & MISSION

4.2.1 Vision

"Skroutz understanding that the challenges in the market are continuous, is trying to be distinguished and achieve excellence in everything it does"

4.2.2 Mission

- To combine deep knowledge and specialization of the subject
- To provide quality services and excellent results
- To play a leading role in Greece and abroad
- To create new opportunities in its industry
- To capitalize on the passion and talent of its team
- To implement quick decision-making procedures
- To apply its projects accurately

4.3 Organizational structure of Skroutz

Skroutz wishing to retain some features of the start-up culture, maintains a relatively flat structure. It has four major sections that are composed of Engineering, Content, Commercial and Quality.

The Engineering section is dealing with the page, with internal CRM, the e-shop CRM, the shopping platform, and the infrastructure needed to do the above.

The Content department is responsible for checking, registering and grouping the products that the stores send, as well as for their enriching, so that the user can find the information they need without having to visit the store's web-site.

The Commercial section consists the link between the e-shops and the skroutz. The team of

Commercial section is responsible for evaluating and processing a store's request, especially advising and supporting stores to get the most value out of their appearance on skroutz site.

The quality department is dealing with website users, answers their questions, receives feedback and distributes them to the appropriate channels.

There are also support groups such as, Marketing, HR, Accounting and office support.

4.4 HR Operations and Its Activities

HR Operations refer to effective and efficient day-to-day aspects which provide a variety of HR related services, essential to meeting the needs directly to employees. It includes tasks and processes that performed in core administrative level, which drive organizational success and effectiveness. These tasks are associate with back office administrative areas such as, recruiting and hiring, employee orientation and workplace induction, HR policies, performance management matters and employee separations, HR programs and research projects, human resource information systems (HRIS), payroll and benefits administration office operations.

4.4.1 Key HR Operations performing in Skroutz

In Skroutz, HR team is responsible for the daily management of employee's needs, performing tasks that support in-house HR operations. Under the direction of HR Director and other management, HR team, performs activities in the human resource area, including employment screen, recruiting, interviewing, orientation and on-boarding, employee data management, human resource information system (HRIS), training and placement of line personnel below tow motor operations, time keeping, scheduling, and additional necessary labor relations.

As such, in the performance of their respective tasks and duties, the HR Operations team is responsible for performing quality work within deadlines with or without direct supervision, interact professionally with other employees, work effectively as a team contributor on all assignments and work independently while under-standing the necessity for communicating

and coordinating work efforts with other employees and organizations.

4.4.2 Recruiting, Orientation and On-boarding

An essential duty for HR team in Skroutz, is recruiting, hiring, engaging and retain its employees. So, the focus in this area is based on sourcing candidates for available opportunities, coordinate and effectively communicate the interview process, by making cultural fit questions to ensure that employee it brings onboard exhibits the best fit within overall organization. In the end of each interview, HR recruiter gives a gift bag to candidate, that improves candidate experience, whereby to create excellent first impressions. After the recruitment team has decided who candidate either is preferred for the next stage or rejected, it sends a contact within a time frame of 15 days. Once a successful new executive or employee have been chosen, recruitment team makes a job offer letter, confirming them key information such as, position title, first day in Skroutz, schedule location, dress code, as well as, any necessary job training.

Orientation and on boarding program start from the first day, by welcoming the new executive or employee and familiarizing them with the organization. It includes a welcome letter to all Skroutz, meetings with supervisors and company leaders, introductions to staff and coworkers, information about the company's background, culture, policies, processes and goals, preparation of workspace, including any necessary office supplies and hardware/software, account logins, email addresses, network registrations, etc. Finally, it ends with a follow up meeting with Human Resource Manager for orientation and onboarding evaluation.

4.4.3Management of employee data and related system

The management of employee data is another important task for HR Operation team in Skroutz, based on the needs of its workforce.HR team is responsible for securing and reporting on accurate and timely staff-related data that drives management decisions, as well as, the effectiveness and efficiency of the systems that house this data and the workflow with other corporate groups. Moreover, is responsible for the successful implementation and on-going effectiveness of a new HRIS.

4.4.4 Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS)

Through its own Human Resource Information System (HRIS), Skroutz HR team prepares employment records related to operations such as hiring, termination leaves, transfers, or promotions, using human resources management system software, maintains information systems in support of human resource administration and projects and monitors HR information needs in the existing systems to meet changing requirements.

4.4.5 Development and ongoing administration of Compensation and Incentive Plans

In this task, HR Operations team is responsible for the development and on-going administration of company's entire compensation program, including base pay, and various incentive and recognition programs ensuring that Skroutz practices are competitive and fair. Hence, is responsible for conducting competitive market reviews and company's annual merit increase process.

4.4.6 Development of strategy and implementation of progressive employee benefits

HR Operation team is also responsible for developing the strategy, implementation and oversight of the daily administration of the entire employee benefit offering. These benefits, include but are not limited, to private medical plan, paid-time off and wellness programs. Skroutz benefit offerings should be market competitive and support its employee engagement efforts while being cost sensitive.

4.4.7 HR Policy and Implementation

HR policy and implementation in Skroutz, is another essential task of HR Operation team, indispensable to simplify the workforce management, sustain quality and productivity .In this position, HR team maintain and introduce human resources policies such as the recruitment policy, procedures, laws, standards, or internal regulations, based on organizational culture and Skroutz work environment, as instructed by the Human Resources Director who has the responsibility for implementing all human resource policies and programs.

4.4.8 Employee Development/Training

 HR Operation team also address employee training, or promotional opportunities scheduling, attendance & scheduled time off reporting, employee relations issues, such as harassment allegations, work complaints, at the direction of Director & Operations/Supervisors Department as well as, by the instruction of the Human Resources Director.

4.5 Engagement strategies of Skroutz

Engagement is affected by many factors which involve emotional and motivational factors that drive satisfaction and commitment in an organization. For Skroutz, keeping its employees engaged, is the biggest challenge. As such, in order to have engaged employees, it follows some effective employee engagement strategies which keep employees motivated, productive and happy.

- **Start it from the top:** Leadership in Skroutz is responsible for providing employees positive attitudes and behaviors, which are linked with engagement constructs. The trust and support that leadership team shows to employees, considered as a critical ingredient that cultivate a strong culture of engagement in the company.

- **Ensure that employees have a good working environment and everything they want and need to do their jobs**: Skroutz is intended to provide the best possible proper and safe working environment to employees. So, its offices are settled in an open space with plenty of light, comfortable public spaces, stunning lighting, sketches and drawings on the walls that make employees happy. Moreover, line managers ensure that each of employees has all the tools, materials, information resources and support from supervisors they need (Nusrat Jerin Akanda, 2013).

- **Give opportunities for training and development:** Skroutz encourage and support the development of its employees offering a variety of ways in which everyone can engage with new ideas and techniques. For this reason, almost 80% of its employees go to at least one conference abroad every year, upon their return a blog post is written and communicated to whole Skroutz or a presentation is given. Hence, it has created a small library with all sorts of books for anyone to take home and read and all employees can make a request for a book addition.

- **Provide internal know-how:** Frequently learning sessions are given between teams either of same or different teams in order to exchange know-how and for everyone to have a complete overview of what is going on within the organization.

- **Have strong feedback system:** Managers in Skroutz can influence engagement in a variety of ways. Twice a year, they rate employees and then discuss performance feedback face-to-face. Employees receive tactical and effective feedback that encourage them to improve and produce more or better-quality work (Noe et al, 2011).

4.6 Employee Engagement Techniques of Skroutz

The secret of success that differentialize Skroutz from other organizations is not only its unique work environment, but also some current techniques it is uses toward employee

engagement. There are moments and details that make employees feel happy for the time they spend in and outside of the office (www.skroutz.gr). Specifically:

- **Food (not just) for thought**: Every Friday the favorite conversation in Skroutz is what they will order next week, as Friday is the day the catering that supplies the company, sends them the menu with its enjoyable suggestions for the whole week. The favorite moment of the day is also when employees go to company's big dining room to eat. Whether on Skroutz's balcony or on its big wooden table, eating time is a relaxing and fun time for all employees. Therefore, breakfast offered daily as well as coffee, refreshments, fruits, yogurts etc.
- **Morning stand-ups on balcony**. The team of each Skroutz section makes in the morning small 10-minute coordination meetings "on the leg". Here they mention the chores of the day, they discuss any issues or pendulums and draw their ambitious plans. In the case the time spoils them, the space of kitchen and living room is just as welcoming.
- **Fun is in Skroutz blood**: Ping-pong, nerf guns EVERYTHING, table, books for all, jokes and endless teasing.
- **BBQ ... and fun again:** Where and when, just spontaneously (or not so), people of Skroutz gather on balcony and the barbecue gets fire! Others put a hand on baking, others give instructions, others catch a conversation and others eat up immediately what it comes out of the barbecue.

4.7 Findings, Analysis and Conclusions

In May 2016 Skroutz administered an Employee Engagement Survey to its employees. The survey was designed by the Human Resource Department to measure employee attitudes on a variety of topics in three categories: strategic alignment, culture, and engagement.

4.7.1 Highlights:

- 87% of Skroutz's regular employees participated in the survey

- **Top five areas receiving the highest level of agreement included:**

- I would suggest without hesitation to a friend of mine to work at Skroutz **(78,1%)**

- When I get the chance, I often say in my environment very good things about my work at Skroutz **(78,1%)**

- Skroutz operates in a socially responsible way **(75,8%)**

- I understand that my job affects the achievement of corporate goals **(64,3%)**

- Have the necessary tools and resources in their hand in order to do their job well **(63,2%)**

- **Bottom five areas receiving the lowest level of agreement include:**

- Skroutz gives me the opportunities in terms of education and development of knowledge and skills **(28,7%)**

- With the ability to make decisions that affect the flow and the way my work is done **(27,6%)**

- With the information I receive on issues concerning the company and its course **(15%)**

- With the opportunities to apply my abilities and talents to my everyday life **(19,5%)**

- With the opportunities Skroutz gives me in terms of education and development of knowledge and skills **(22,9%)**

4.7.2 The Methodology

The population for this survey included Skroutz employees with a valid email address. A total of 100 employees were invited to participate in the survey via email. The email provided a link to the survey hosted by Human Resource Department. A total of 87 employees responded to the survey. The response rate considering only regular employees.

4.7.3 Results

The results section is organized into three main parts. Part I includes the percentage distribution results for all the statements in the survey, organized by each ection. Section I is about the Strategic Alignment statements. Section II is about the Culture statements; and Section III is about the Engagement statements.

4.7.4 Characteristics of Respondents

Employee demographic information included: longevity at the Skroutz, job classification, department, and executive area. Table 5 shows the percentage distribution by job classification, and it shows how respondents represented their employee group population (Table 1). For instance, technicians made up 43,7% of the respondents, content with 35,6 %, BI and Growth with 16,1% and 4,1% of administrations responding to the survey.

Table 9. Response Rate by Employee Group

	n	Percent of Respondents
Tech(Devs,SysAdmins, Designers)	38	43,7%
Content	31	35,6%
BI & Growth (Sales, Marketing, QA)	14	16,1%
Administration (Office Support, Accounting)	4	4,6%
Total	87	100%

The largest employee profile by longevity range was seen in the 1-3 years

Questions asked for level of agreement using a six-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

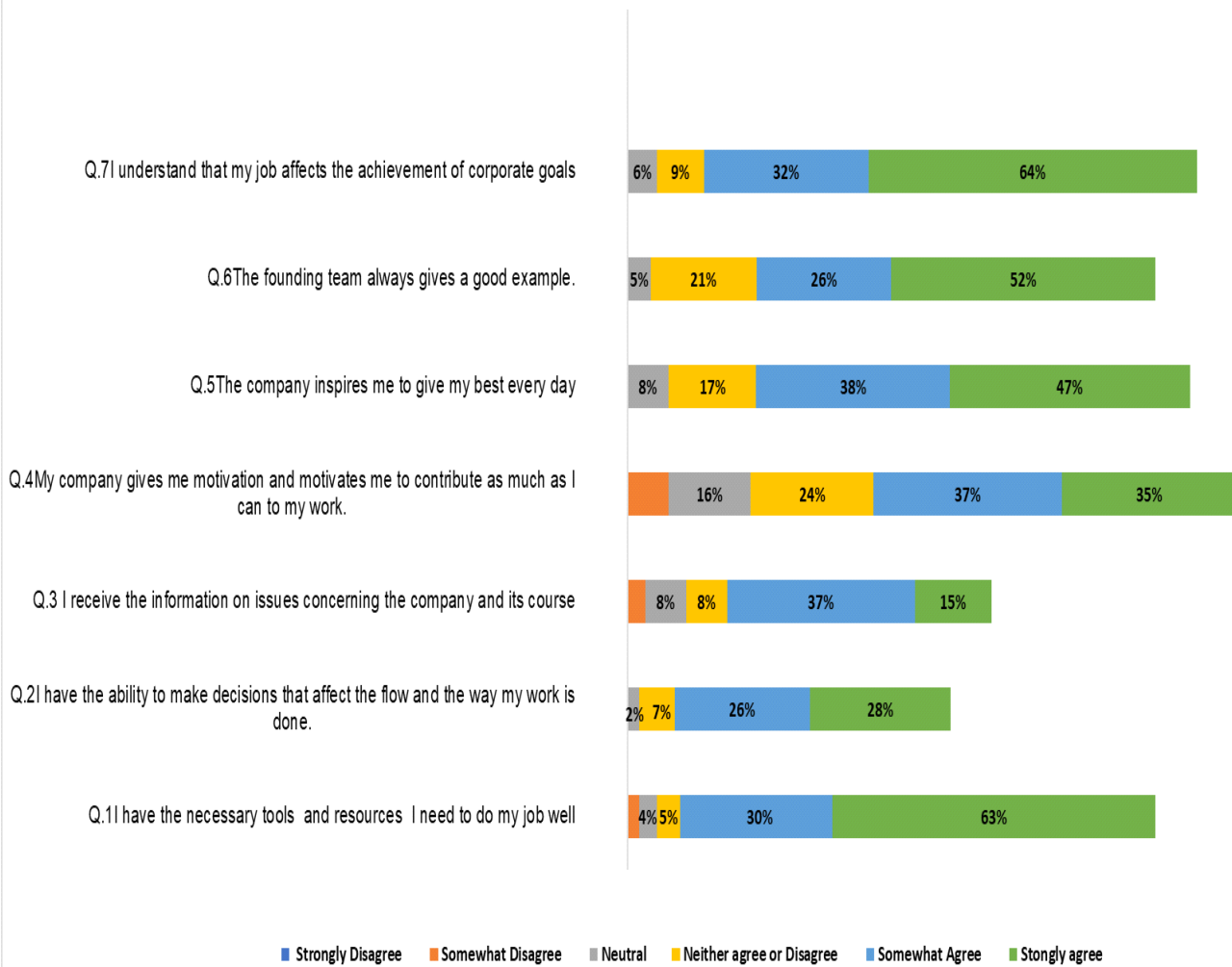# 4.7.5 Section 1: Strategic Alignment

The primary purpose of the Strategic Alignment section is to determine how well strategic directions and institutional effectiveness criteria are understood and how organization can motivate employees to align their behaviors with the organizations strategy. Additionally, the section measures level of agreement relating to Skroutz's vision for the future and the role of supervisors in aligning department goals to company's goals. The results from this section are showed that Skroutz employees feel equipped with the skills and resources necessary to contribute to continuous improvement efforts and to help Skroutz achieve its strategic goals (63,2%). The one question that experienced a decline in agreement was "I receive the information on issues concerning the company and its course"(15%).

The seven questions in this section with the highest level of agreement are presented in Table 9:

Table 10. Survey for Strategic Alignment Questions

Question	Completely Agreement Response (n=87)
Q.1 I have the necessary tools and resources I need to do my job well.	63.2%
Q.2 I have the ability to make decisions that affect the flow and the way my work is done.	27.6%
Q. 3 I receive the information on issues concerning the company and its course	15%
Q4 My company gives me motivation and motivates me to contribute as much as I can to my work.	34.5%
Q.5The company inspires me to give my best every day.	47,1%
Q.6 The founding team always gives a good example.	51,7%
Q.7 I understand that my job affects the achievement of corporate goals.	64,4%

Strategic Alingment n=87

Q.7 I understand that my job affects the achievement of corporate goals: 6% | 9% | 32% | 64%

Q.6 The founding team always gives a good example.: 5% | 21% | 26% | 52%

Q.5 The company inspires me to give my best every day: 8% | 17% | 38% | 47%

Q.4 My company gives me motivation and motivates me to contribute as much as I can to my work.: 16% | 24% | 37% | 35%

Q.3 I receive the information on issues concerning the company and its course: 8% | 8% | 37% | 15%

Q.2 I have the ability to make decisions that affect the flow and the way my work is done.: 2% | 7% | 26% | 28%

Q.1 I have the necessary tools and resources I need to do my job well: 4% | 5% | 30% | 63%

Legend: ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Somewhat Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Neither agree or Disagree ■ Somewhat Agree ■ Stongly agree
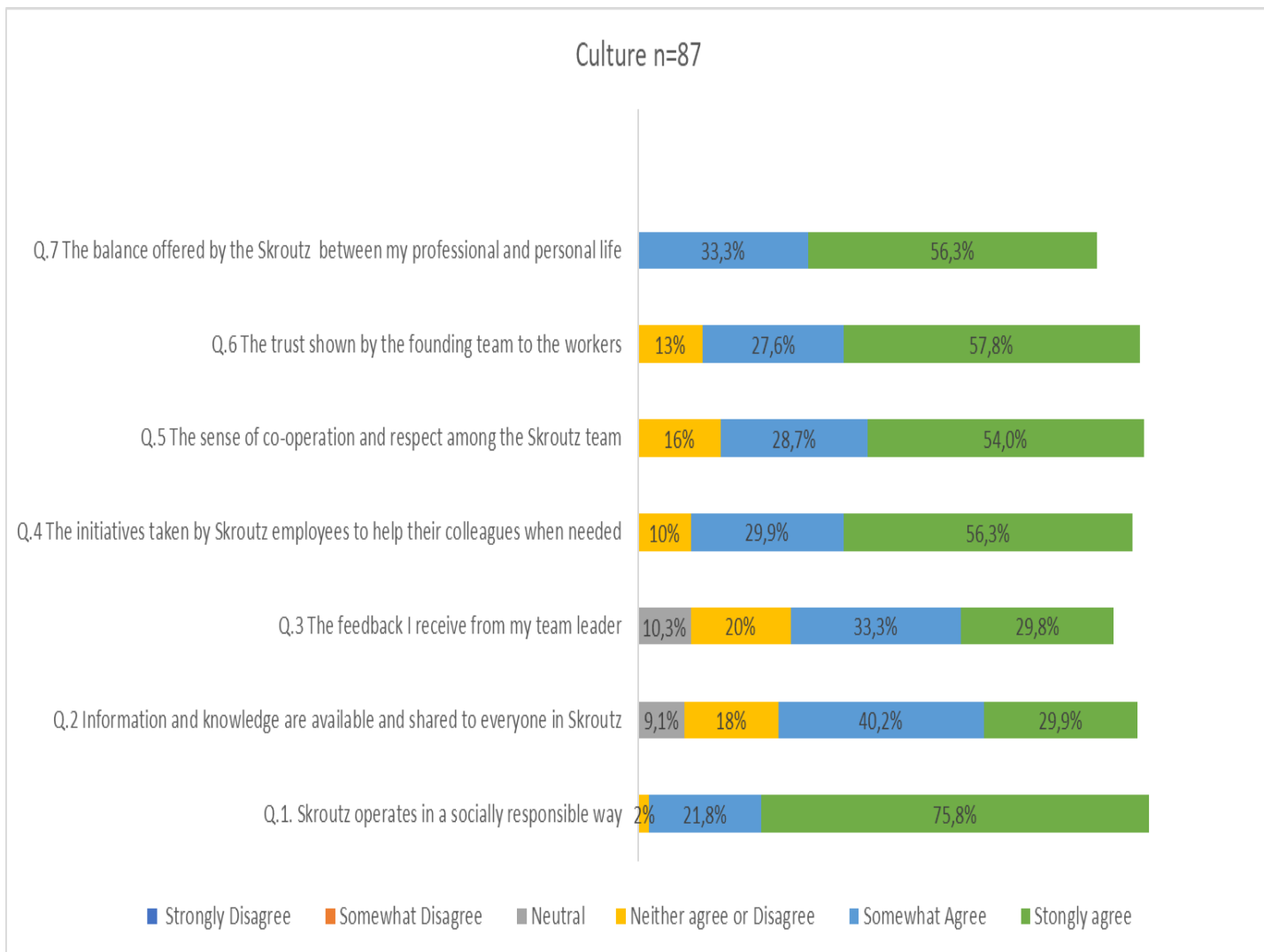
4.7.6 Section 2: Culture

This section shows that individuals perceived support from their colleagues and supervisors and have a sense of belonging, obligation and intimacy. Section 2 on Culture helps Skroutz measure its Culture criterion and provides evidence the way value is attached within organization. Additionally, the questions help measure several aspects of the Operations criterion specifically, leading and communicating. The one question that experienced a decline in agreement was "The feedback I receive from my supervisor". The seven questions in this section with the highest level of agreement are presented in Table 10. The results from this section are showed that, Skroutz has a strong work-life balance between work and personal life (56,3%). Additionally, the corporate social responsibility, is a significant part of

the workforce (75,8%). This means that Skroutz, enabling employees to employ more of their whole selves at work. Trust from the leadership is also received high levels of agreement (57,8%). As well, all

employees in Skroutz are treated with respect and there is a good cooperation among team.

Table 11. Survey for Culture Questions

Question	Completely Agreement Response (n=87)
Q.1. Skroutz operates in a socially responsible way	75,8%
Q.2 Information and knowledge are available and shared to everyone in Skroutz	29,9%
Q.3The feedback I receive from my supervisor	29,8%
Q.4The initiatives taken by Skroutz employees to help their colleagues when needed	56,3%
Q.5 The sense of co-operation and respect among the Skroutz team	54%
Q.6 The trust shown by the leadership to the workers	57,8%
Q.7 The balance offered by the Skroutz between my professional and personal life	56,3%

Culture n=87

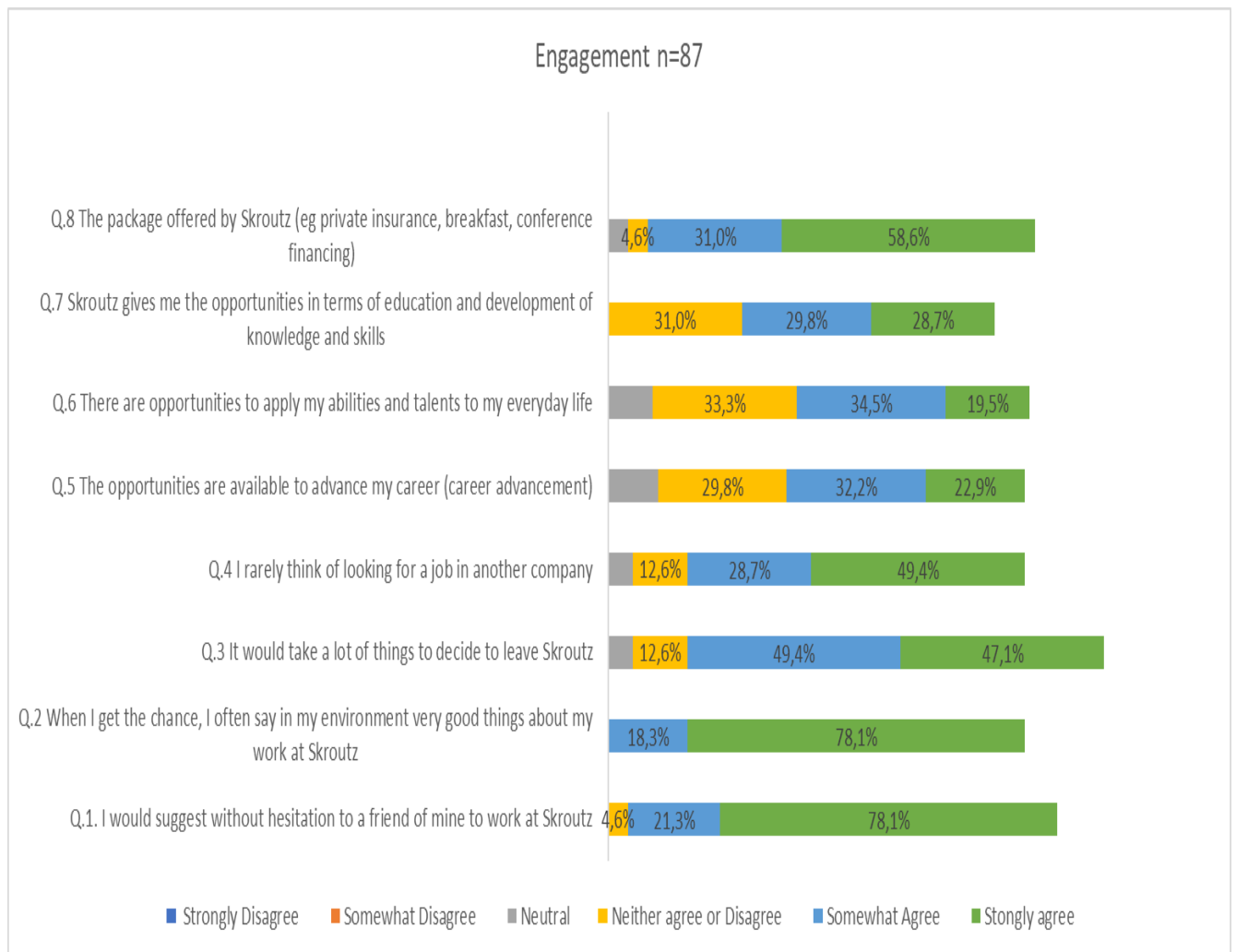| Question		
Q.7 The balance offered by the Skroutz between my professional and personal life	33,3%	56,3%
Q.6 The trust shown by the founding team to the workers	13% — 27,6%	57,8%
Q.5 The sense of co-operation and respect among the Skroutz team	16% — 28,7%	54,0%
Q.4 The initiatives taken by Skroutz employees to help their colleagues when needed	10% — 29,9%	56,3%
Q.3 The feedback I receive from my team leader	10,3% — 20% — 33,3%	29,8%
Q.2 Information and knowledge are available and shared to everyone in Skroutz	9,1% — 18% — 40,2%	29,9%
Q.1. Skroutz operates in a socially responsible way	2% — 21,8%	75,8%

Legend: ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Somewhat Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Neither agree or Disagree ■ Somewhat Agree ■ Stongly agree

4.7.7 Section 3: Engagement

The purpose of this section is to broadly measure the level of engagement Skroutz employees have in their daily work and with the company. The queries are intended to measure the level of employee's engagement related to their growth and training opportunities, the brand name, benefits and the loyalty to the company. The overall satisfaction questions (Q1. and Q2.) are approaching the percent of 80% agreement (strongly agree).

Those questions that received the lowest agreement scores for this section included:

- There are opportunities to apply my abilities and talents to my everyday life (19,5%)
- The opportunities are available to advance my career (career advancement) (22,9%)
- Skroutz gives me the opportunities in terms of education and development of knowledge and skills (28,7%)

Table 12. Survey for Engagement Questions

Question	Completely Agreement Response (n=87)
Q.1. I would suggest without hesitation to a friend of mine to work at Skroutz.	78,1%
Q.2 When I get the chance, I often say in my environment very good things about my work at Skroutz.	78,1%
Q.3 It would take a lot of things to decide to leave Scrooge.	47,1%
Q.4 I rarely think of looking for a job in another company.	49,4%
Q.5 The opportunities are available to advance my career (career advancement).	22,9%
Q.6 There are opportunities to apply my abilities and talents to my everyday life.	19,5%
Q.7 Skroutz gives me the opportunities in terms of education and development of knowledge and skills.	28,7%
Q.8 The package offered by Skroutz (eg private insurance, breakfast, conference financing).	58,6%

Q.8 The package offered by Skroutz (eg private insurance, breakfast, conference financing) — 4,6% | 31,0% | 58,6%

Q.7 Skroutz gives me the opportunities in terms of education and development of knowledge and skills — 31,0% | 29,8% | 28,7%

Q.6 There are opportunities to apply my abilities and talents to my everyday life — 33,3% | 34,5% | 19,5%

Q.5 The opportunities are available to advance my career (career advancement) — 29,8% | 32,2% | 22,9%

Q.4 I rarely think of looking for a job in another company — 12,6% | 28,7% | 49,4%

Q.3 It would take a lot of things to decide to leave Skroutz — 12,6% | 49,4% | 47,1%

Q.2 When I get the chance, I often say in my environment very good things about my work at Skroutz — 18,3% | 78,1%

Q.1. I would suggest without hesitation to a friend of mine to work at Skroutz — 4,6% | 21,3% | 78,1%

Legend: ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Somewhat Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Neither agree or Disagree ■ Somewhat Agree ■ Stongly agree

4.8 Opportunities for improvement

The survey results point to some continuing opportunity areas as well as highlight some additional areas for further consideration.

- The Engagement section results offer the greatest area for improvement. Only two of the 7 questions met the 80% agreement level target, one received the 58,6% (Q.8 The package offered by Skroutz e.g. private insurance, breakfast, conference financing) and the agreement level for the rest of the questions only reached percentages nearly an average of 30% agreement

- Taking action on the performance feedback system is part of Skroutz's operational goals (29.8%). Feedback system improvements will include a systematic schedule for career discussion.

- A relatively lower level of agreement with the statement about Q.5 "The opportunities are available to advance my career (career advancement).

  And Q.6 "There are opportunities to apply my abilities and talents to my everyday life," suggests that continued opportunities for improvement exist (strongly agree 22.9%, somewhat agree 19,5%).

- Agreement with the information on issues concerning the company and its course received the lowest agreement score.

4.9 Conclusion

In this paper I aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of how employee engagement could be embedded into day-to day HR Operations of an organization. I have argued that organizations with efficient and effective HR Operations are more customer focused and provide impressive levels of flexibility, innovation, quality, cost and speed that contribute to employee engagement. Moreover, I have supported that engagement needs to be strategically embedded and supported across recruiting and selection, on-boarding programs, training and development practices processes and systems and internal communication. Consequently, I proposed a model (Ulrich's model) that has a major impact on HR Operations management, especially on how the new HR roles and responsibilities can drive business goals, effective performance and engagement.

As I have found from the data analysis of Skroutz survey, employees are engaged with pleasant working conditions, autonomy and support from the leadership which in turns drive performance, that consists one of the essential elements for business growth and survival. The research also found that HR Operations is more responsible to create engaged

employment by focusing on nonfinancial benefits, such as making employees feel like a valued part of an organization showing them that they are appreciated or even more giving them developmental opportunities and performance feedback. Employee engagement is an extremely important priority for business leaders. Having engaged employees is a win-win situation. This entails that engagement does not mean employee's happiness and satisfaction- employee engagement is something more, is the emotional commitment employees have to the organization and its goals.

4.10 Future Implications

The areas of interest to be explored over coming years and the key questions that researchers are likely to face include:

- How engagement can build during the economic crisis? What are the factors which keep employees focused and motivate? What leaders/managers can do to protect their companies, their employees, and themselves?
- How does engagement interact with psychological and emotional factors like longevity, location and age? Until now, several literatures on engagement have gave attention to issues such as work-life balance and working hours, but emotional and geographic factors have very rarely been discussed.

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Appendixes

Questionnaire on "A Comprehensive Analysis of HR Operations and Employee Engagement Activities of Skroutz"

□ You are working for Skroutz- less than 1 years ,1 to 3 years, 3 to 5 years more than 5 years

On a six-point scale, where "6" is Strongly Agree and"1"is Strongly Disagree

Section 1: Strategic Alignment

		Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Neither Agree or Disagree 4	Somewhat Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
Q_1	I have the necessary tools and resources I need to do my job well.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Q_2	I have the ability to make decisions that affect the flow and the way my work is done.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Q3_3	I receive the information on issues concerning the company and its course	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Q_4	My company gives me motivation and motivates me to contribute as much as I can to my work.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Q_5	The company inspires me to give my best every day.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Q_6	The founding team always gives a good example.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Q_7	I understand that my job affects the achievement of corporate goals.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

- **Section 2: Culture**

		Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Neither Agree or Disagree 4	Somewhat Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
Q_1	Skroutz operates in a socially responsible way.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Q_2	Information and knowledge are available and shared to everyone in Skroutz.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Q_3	The feedback I receive from my supervisor.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Q_4	The initiatives taken by Skroutz employees to help their colleagues when needed.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Q_5	The sense of co-operation and respect among the Skroutz team.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Q_6	The trust shown by the leadership to the workers.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Q_7	The balance offered by the Skroutz between my professional and personal life.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

- **Section 3: Engagement**

		Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Neither Agree or Disagree 4	Somewhat Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
Q_1	I would suggest without hesitation to a friend of mine to work at Skroutz.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q_2	When I get the chance, I often say in my environment very good things about my work at Skroutz.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Q_3	It would take a lot of things to decide to leave Skroutz.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Q_4	I rarely think of looking for a job in another company.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Q_5	The opportunities are available to advance my career (career advancement).	○	○	○	○	○	○
Q_6	There are opportunities to apply my abilities and talents to my everyday life.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Q_7	Skroutz gives me the opportunities in terms of education and development of knowledge and skills.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Q_8	The package offered by Skroutz (eg private insurance, breakfast, conference financing).	○	○	○	○	○	○