

FUNDAÇÃO GETULIO VARGAS
ESCOLA DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO DE EMPRESAS DE SÃO PAULO

CAROLINE PICQ

**WHICH STRATEGIES CAN AN EDUCATIONAL BUSINESS, SUCH AS A
KINDERGARTEN IN GERMANY, DEVELOP TO FOSTER EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT?**

SÃO PAULO

2016

FUNDAÇÃO GETULIO VARGAS
ESCOLA DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO DE EMPRESAS DE SÃO PAULO

CAROLINE PICQ

**WHICH STRATEGIES CAN AN EDUCATIONAL BUSINESS, SUCH AS A
KINDERGARTEN IN GERMANY, DEVELOP TO FOSTER EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT?**

Thesis presented to Escola de Administração de
Empresas de São Paulo of Fundação Getulio
Vargas, as a requirement to obtain the title of
Master in International Management (MPGI).

Knowledge Field: Human Resources

Adviser: Prof. Dr. Ligia Maura Costa

SÃO PAULO

2016

Picq, Caroline.

Which strategies can an educational business, such as a Kindergarten in Germany, develop to foster employee engagement? / Caroline Picq – 2016.

59 f.

Orientador: Ligia Maura Costa

Dissertação (MPGI) - Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo.

1. Jardim de infância - Alemanha. 2. Recursos humanos. 3. Motivação no trabalho.
4. Educação. I. Costa, Ligia Maura. II. Dissertação (MPGI) - Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo. III. Título.

CDU 658.3.054.8

CAROLINE PICQ

**WHICH STRATEGIES CAN AN EDUCATIONAL BUSINESS, SUCH AS A
KINDERGARTEN IN GERMANY, DEVELOP TO FOSTER EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT?**

Thesis presented to Escola de Administração de
Empresas de São Paulo of Fundação Getulio
Vargas, as a requirement to obtain the title of
Master in International Management (MPGI).

Knowledge Field: Human Resources

Approval Date: 09/03/2016

Committee members:

Prof. Dr. Ligia Maura Costa

Prof. Dr. Susana Carla Farias Pereira

Prof. Dr. Lilian Furquim de Campos Andrade

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank Professor Lígia Maura Costa for her support and supervision, as well as the members of the defence committee, Professor Susana Carla Farias Pereira and Professor Lilian Furquim de Campos Andrade, for their feedback and constructive comments.

I am also deeply grateful to the Kindergarten in Munich where I had the pleasure to work during three months and that welcomed me with such enthusiasm and trust. I keep very positive memories of my time with them.

Special thanks to my dear friend Jill Ferron who supported me and encouraged me through the whole process of this master thesis. I am grateful as well for the MPGI program being such a special experience in my life and allowing me to meet so many new and amazing friends.

Finally, I would like to thank my mother, my sister and my father for their unconditional love.

ABSTRACT

Which strategies can an educational business, such as a Kindergarten in Germany, develop to foster employee engagement? The goal of this master thesis is to identify effective and viable measures to engage employees, that could be potentially implemented in a Kindergarten in Germany.

The literature concerning the notion of employee engagement is so inconsistent that even studies about the subject fail to find one common definition and have to acknowledge the variety of existing definitions (IES, 2014, p.52-53). This reflects the youth of the concept, which has only been partially studied by academics and practitioners in recent years. The literature gap about employee engagement concerns many aspects, among which small companies and educational businesses, in particular those focusing on early child development. Considering the low levels of employee engagement in Germany combined with the absence of studies on educational organizations focusing in early child development this master thesis studies engagement in German Kindergärten(s).

This master thesis is divided in two parts consisting of a literature review and a case study. The literature review allows to follow the evolution of the concept along the years, while the case study focuses on assessing employee engagement in Montessori Kindergärten(s) in Munich & elaborating potential measures to increase engagement levels. Double sided research was undertaken for this case study. On the one hand a quantitative research was performed, through a survey, in order to uncover which strategies would be viable to foster employee engagement. On the other hand a qualitative research was undertaken, consisting in an internship in a Kindergarten, in order to shed light on how to do so.

Findings in the quantitative research indicate overall engagement levels average to low. Results related to specific statements bring out the originality of the educational sector, which is in some aspects intrinsically engaging, similarly to the medical field (Seijts & Crim, 2006). Furthermore low engagement levels led to a conversely high number of positives responses to potential engagement strategies suggesting their potential effectiveness. Findings in the qualitative research are coherent with qualitative results and complement them.

Key words: Human Resources. Employee Engagement. Education. Kindergarten, Germany.

RESUMO

Quais estratégias uma empresa educacional, tal como um jardim de infância na Alemanha, pode desenvolver no intuito de favorecer o envolvimento dos funcionários? O objetivo desta tese de mestrado é identificar medidas eficazes e viáveis para envolver os funcionários, que poderiam potencialmente ser implementadas em um jardim de infância na Alemanha.

A literatura sobre o conceito de envolvimento dos funcionários é tão inconsistente que até estudos sobre o assunto não conseguem encontrar uma definição comum e tem que reconhecer a variedade de definições existentes (IES, 2014, p.52-53). Isso reflete a juventude do conceito que foi só parcialmente estudado pelos acadêmicos e profissionais nos últimos anos. A lacuna que existe na literatura sobre o envolvimento dos funcionários se encontra em vários assuntos, entre os quais as pequenas empresas e as empresas educacionais, em particular as com foco na primeira infância. Tomando em consideração os baixos níveis de envolvimento dos funcionários na Alemanha, em conjunto com a ausência de estudos sobre empresas educacionais especializadas na primeira infância, a presente tese de mestrado trata do envolvimento dos funcionários em jardins de infância na Alemanha.

A presente tese de mestrado está dividida em duas partes constituídas por uma revisão da literatura e um estudo de caso. A revisão da literatura permite acompanhar a evolução do conceito ao longo dos anos, enquanto o estudo de caso está focado na avaliação do envolvimento dos funcionários em jardins de infância Montessori em Munique, assim como na elaboração de potenciais medidas para aumentar o nível de envolvimento dos funcionários. Uma dupla pesquisa foi realizada para este estudo de caso. Por um lado a pesquisa quantitativa foi realizada através de um inquérito no intuito de descobrir que estratégias seriam viáveis para promover o envolvimento dos funcionários. Por outro lado a pesquisa qualitativa foi realizada através de um estágio em um jardim de infância Montessori em Munique com o intuito de esclarecer como seria possível pôr as tais estratégias em prática.

Os resultados da pesquisa quantitativa indicam níveis globais de envolvimento dos funcionários que são médios a baixos. Os resultados relacionados a afirmações específicas realçam a particularidade do setor educacional, que em certos aspectos beneficia de altos níveis de envolvimento dos funcionários pela própria natureza da missão, como também é o caso na área médica (Seijts & Crim, 2006). Além disso baixos níveis de envolvimento dos funcionários levaram a resultados inversamente elevados de respostas positivas às potenciais estratégias, o que sugere a potencial eficácia de tais estratégias. Os resultados da pesquisa qualitativa são coerentes com os resultados da pesquisa quantitativa e a complementam.

Palavras Chaves: Recursos humanos. Motivação no trabalho. Educação. Jardim de infância, Alemanha.

Introduction	9
Literature Review	11
I - The concept of employee engagement	11
Academics	12
Practitioners	18
II - Leveraging employee engagement	22
Academics	22
Practitioners	24
a) Levers identified by consultancy firms	25
b) Levers identified by practical examples	27
Methodology	30
Case study on a Kindergarten in Munich	30
Quantitative study	31
Design	31
Participants	35
Data analysis	35
Qualitative study	36
Design	37
Participants	38
Data analysis	39
Results	40
Quantitative study	40
Results	40
Discussion	41
Qualitative study	43
Results	44
Conclusions	46
Transferability of conclusions	47
Conclusion	48
Limitations of this research	48
Future possibilities	48
References	50
Journals, magazines, newspapers in print format	50
Books, chapters in books, reports, etc	51
Online resources	52
Appendixes	58
Appendix 1 - Survey	59
Appendix 2 - Historical Timeline of Key Elements in Academic Literature	60

INTRODUCTION

This master thesis attempts to answer the following question: Which strategies can an educational business, such as a Kindergarten in Germany, develop to foster employee engagement? The goal is to identify effective and viable measures to engage employees, that could be potentially implemented in a Kindergarten in Germany.

The literature concerning the notion of employee engagement is so inconsistent that even studies about the subject fail to find one common definition and have to acknowledge the variety of existing definitions (IES, 2014, p.52-53). Such inconsistency is just a reflection of the youth of the concept, which has only been partially studied by academics in recent years, leaving still open many gaps in the literature. Tackling a concept that is still in its early building stages is both challenging and interesting as it allows to make an effective contribution. The literature gap about employee engagement concerns many aspects, among which small companies and educational businesses, in particular those focusing on early child development.

The existing academic literature is still focused on finding a commonly accepted definition and determining appropriate levers for employee engagement. Practitioners have contributed to the literature but only from the perspective of international & large companies. Small businesses and educational structures have not yet been studied in terms of employee engagement.

This master thesis is divided in two parts consisting of a literature review and a case study. First the literature review allows to follow the evolution of the concept along the years, as summarized through a timeline (appendix 2), pointing out the lack of commonly accepted definition, measurement standards and levers. Nevertheless the most relevant methods for defining, measuring and leveraging employee engagement have been highlighted whether their source is academic or practice. Considering the low levels of employee engagement in Germany combined with the absence of studies on educational organizations focusing in early child development this master thesis studies engagement in German Kindergärten(s). The case study's focus is to assess employee engagement in Montessori Kindergärten(s) in Munich as well as to elaborate and to assess potential measures to increase engagement levels.

Methodological choices have been made in accordance to the findings in the literature review. The importance of both relationships and the ability for employees to voice their opinions led to double sided research. On the one hand a quantitative research was performed, through a survey, in order to uncover which strategies would be viable to foster employee engagement. On the other hand a qualitative research was undertaken, consisting in an internship in a Kindergarten, in order to shed light on how to do so.

Performing surveys enables both to assess and engage employees at once (IES, 2014, p.33). Thus a survey has been elaborated in combination with potential measures to engage employees, according to the levers identified in the literature review. In order to elaborate an efficient survey the questions have been chosen from the measurement methods mentioned in the literature review. Furthermore, to make the case study viable, the number of questions has been reduced compared to their original versions. The survey has been divided in three parts. The first part assesses employee engagement according to an academic measurement scale called the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) assessing employees' vigor, absorption and dedication. The second part of the survey is based on a measurement method implemented by practitioners, the most renowned method comes from a

consultancy firm called Gallup. From the 12 statements from the original Gallup survey, only 4 have been chosen according to their correlation with the potential measures to implement. The third and last part of the survey assesses the effectiveness of the potential measures elaborated to foster employee engagement.

Interactions in the workplace have also been highlighted as a key element to engage or disengage employees, both from practitioners (Gallup, 2013) and scholars (Seijts & Crim, 2006). Consequently a qualitative research was undertaken. The researcher performed a three months internship in Kindergarten K. During this period of time she was considered as an employee and as such entrusted with responsibilities similar to those of a regular educator employed for the company. This enabled a qualitative study using several data collection methods: passive & active observation, document analysis and finally interviews (both in person and through phone). Data was analyzed following the points raised in the quantitative survey and through notes taken during the qualitative research in order to bring out patterns and correlations .

Findings in the quantitative research are mitigated but still point towards rather low levels of employee engagement. Results related to specific statements bring out the originality of the educational sector, which is in some aspects intrinsically engaging, similarly to the medical field (Seijts & Crim, 2006). However engagement levels remain overall average to low. As expected the UWES (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2003) and the Gallup (Gallup, 2013) measurement scales confirm one another. Furthermore low engagement levels led to a conversely high number of positives responses to potential engagement strategies suggesting their potential effectiveness.

Findings in the qualitative research are coherent with quantitative results and complement them. Low engagement levels' cause are potentially observed and specific patterns are identified. In particular relationships' features and the lack of opportunities for employees to speak up are explained and linked to quantitative results.

The results from this master study are limited for many reasons. First, the quantitative study is 1) shortened compared to the original versions it was based on, and 2) lacks a representative number of respondents. Second, the qualitative study, in spite of granting an in-depth perspective, presents three limitations 1) the natural bias of the researcher is inevitable, 2) the absence of quality control as it is an individual master thesis, and 3) the uniqueness of Kindergarten K (qualitative research performed on more Kindergärten(s) would grant the study a broader reach). Finally the study only encompasses the city of Munich, which in spite of being one of the biggest German cities with 1,3 million inhabitants (Statistische Ämter, Des Bundes und Der Länder), is not representative of the whole country.

LITERATURE REVIEW

I - THE CONCEPT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

CONTEXT OF THE CONCEPT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The concept of employee engagement, also often qualified as work engagement, is quite recent and is often correlated to and confused with concepts such as job satisfaction, employee commitment and a myriad of similar terminologies that only reflect the recency of this construct.

The first time the term engagement & work were tackled together by an academic study was in 1990 by Kahn and afterwards there was a 12 years void before more scholars gave it some thought. Although this new-born notion is quite transversal, ranging from different fields from psychology, human resources, management to organizational studies, only recently has the notion gained interest among academics, mostly due to the attention it got from the practitioners' public. Indeed now the concept of employee engagement seems to have become trendy (Shuck & Reio Jr., 2011), in spite of little academic research being available on the subject.

In 2003 scholars from the University of Utrecht dived in the subject and elaborated a work engagement scale which has now become known as the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2003). The UWES measures engagement according to three components of engagement identified as vigor, dedication and absorption (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2003). Still no measure to influence it has been clearly suggested. Finally three years later, ten characteristics and levers of employee engagement have been clarified by Seijts & Crim (Seijts & Crim, 2006). A lot has been written, by scholars and practitioners, about employee engagement since Kahn first uncovered the issue. Recently more and more academic studies are seeing the light of day catching up with non-academic studies which have been proliferating since the early 2000's, and even being quite innovative as an article from 2015 correlates positively employee engagement with the expression of spirituality in the workplace (Roof, 2015).

Academically speaking the notion of employee engagement is still in its early building stages (Shuck & Reio Jr., 2011) and as such there seems to be certain confusion about its definition. This blurry situation presents obviously the disadvantage of lacking rigorous and certain boundaries, no uniform measurement techniques or levers to influence it. Despite these drawbacks, the chaos surrounding employee engagement allows room for experiments & improvements. The gap between the practitioners and academics could be perceived negatively, as scholars being late to study a demanded issue, but it actually enables further collaboration between the two (Harter, Hayes, Schmidt, 2002; Shuck & Reio Jr., 2011) that has surely been and will continue to be beneficial to the study and development of the concept as a whole. As the reader is noticing, employee engagement is a subject full of paradoxes, uncertainties and discoveries; it is a like a child, still growing up. Bakker & Schaufeli illustrate quite clearly the disparity between academia and practice when it comes to employee engagement:

« The current popularity of engagement is illustrated by [...] an internet search [which] yielded almost 650,000 hits though narrowing the search down to only scholarly publications – many of them from the gray area (e.g., white papers, fact sheets, and consultancy reports) – reduced the number of hits to less than 2000. These impressive numbers stand in sharp contrast to the dearth of publications on engagement that are included in PsycINFO, the leading database of academic publications in psychology. The most comprehensive PsycINFO search revealed one hundred publications with either “employee engagement” or “work

engagement” in the title or in the abstract of any publication. [...] Compared to the popularity of engagement in business and among consultants there is a surprising scarcity of academic research. » (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2010, Defining and measuring work engagement: Bringing clarity to the concept. In A. B. Bakker & M. P. Leiter (Eds), *Work engagement: A handbook of essential theory and research*, pp. 10-24)

DEFINING THE CONCEPT

Academics

Many scholars acknowledge the variety of definitions and the lack of consistency (Shuck & Reio Jr., 2011) in their papers as they try to define employee engagement. There is not one widely accepted definition, the process of defining the concept is still ongoing, nevertheless it is interesting to observe its evolutionary stages and draw a picture of the current situation. Let's first analyze the literature produced by those who can be considered as the founding fathers of the concept. Then our study will focus on the most recent input.

The foundation

It is possible to identify three key moments in the short academic history of the employee engagement concept. First, in 1990, Kahn identifies three psychological conditions for engagement: meaningfulness, safety, availability (Kahn, 1990, p.692). Second, in 2003, Bakker & Schaufeli determine three components of work engagement: vigor, dedication, absorption; and elaborate a corresponding work engagement scale known as UWES (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2003). Finally, in 2006, Seijts & Crim define ten key elements that engage employees the most (Seijts & Crim, 2006). Let's analyze each stepping stone more attentively.

William Kahn

Initially Kahn's research did not focus on employee engagement as such a concept did not exist at the time. William Kahn, currently an organizational behavior professor at Boston University, USA, published in 1990 what can be considered the starting point of the current concept of employee engagement. Its premise is that « people can use varying degree of their selves, physically, cognitively, emotionally, in work role performances » (Kahn, 1990, p.692). From there he aimed to analyze through a qualitative case study how people « engage or express and employ their personal selves, and disengage, or withdraw » in correlation « with three psychological conditions - meaningfulness, safety, availability » (Kahn, 1990, p.692). His point of interest was the shifting moment from one behavior to another and its source. Acknowledging previous research on concepts of job involvement and commitment he points out the fact that those notions seem to consider that people maintain specific psychological states over a long period of time « as if posing in still photographs » (Kahn, 1990, p.693). Intrigued and guided by his intuition that human attitudes and behavior are much more variable over time his goal was to understand what triggers such variation from one state to another. This could be described in other words as what makes an employee have an engaged attitude and what makes him/her shift and behave in a not engaged or disengaged manner. His study analyzes single moments in which people perform tasks while focusing on the context in which such behavior swings occurs, as he believes they are under « multiple levels of influences - individual, interpersonal, group, intergroup and organizational » (Kahn, 1990, p.719).

« Focusing on specific moments of work role performance is like using the zoom lens of a camera: a distant stationary image is brought close and revealed as a

series of innumerable leaps of engagement and falls of disengagement » (Kahn, 1990, p.719).

Kahn concludes on the importance of three elements influencing engagement as well as disengagement: meaningfulness, safety, availability.

Bakker & Schaufeli

As early as 2003 interested in the development of « what has been coined *positive psychology*: the scientific study of human strength and optimal functioning » (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2003, p.3) as well as its consequences Bakker & Schaufeli developed a scale to measure it, that they published as early as they could due to peer's demand from across the globe (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2003).

It is important to note that their research is focused essentially on work engagement, although they acknowledge that both expressions (work engagement and employee engagement) are used interchangeably (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). The authors explain their choice as follows:

« We prefer the [work engagement] because it is more specific. Namely, work engagement refers to the relationship of the employee with his or her *work*, whereas employee engagement may also include the relationship with the *organization* ». (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2010, p.10)

The choice of the term employee engagement for the purpose of this master thesis follows exactly the above-mentioned perception that it encompasses the relationship the employee has with both its work and its organization, as according to Kahn every element in the context of task performance can be a stimulus for engagement or disengagement at any moment. Hence it seems relevant to include the relationship with the organization as it also influences employees' behavior, and consequently engagement. Nevertheless Bakker & Schaufeli have immeasurably contributed to the academic literature concerning engagement as they define it in correlation with three attitudes: vigor, dedication and absorption.

« Engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Rather than a momentary and specific state, engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior. Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Absorption, is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work ». (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2003, p.4-5)

Interestingly both Bakker & Schaufeli and Kahn define engagement on a triptych basis, Kahn focusing on internal emotions guiding external behaviors, and Bakker & Schaufeli focusing directly on the external result. Another relevant difference is the time scale used: Kahn highlights the variability of engagement from one moment in time to another, while Bakker & Schaufeli identify it as a rather impermeable state.

Based on such definition Bakker & Schaufeli have elaborated a scale to measure it which has since been widely used across the world, from Japan (Shimazu, Schaufeli, Kosugi, Suzuki, Nashiwa, Kato, Sakamoto, Irimajiri, Armano, Hirohata, Goto & Kitaoka-Higashigushi, 2008), Norway (Nerstad, Richardsen & Martinussen, 2010), Spain (Extremera, Sánchez-García, Durán & Rey, 2012), India (Chaudary, Rangnekar & Barua, 2012) to Brazil (Souza Vazquez, Magnan, Pacico, Hutz & Schaufeli 2015). The original Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) consists in 17 statements, which have later on been reduced to 9 by the authors and hence called UWES-9 (Bakker, Schaufeli & Salanova, 2006). Each statement relates either to vigor, dedication or

absorption and should be rated from 0 to 6 by the respondent according to how often they feel that way (0 being never and 6 being always). Bakker & Schaufeli, through the UWES, were the first scholars to offer a proven measurement method, which remains the only one widely accepted coming from an academic source so far. As it will be seen later on practitioners have also elaborated their own measurement methods.

Seijts & Crim

Although Seijts & Crim do not provide a definition of employee engagement, they consider that « there is widespread agreement among academics and practitioners that engaged employees are those who are emotionally connected to the organization and cognitively vigilant » (Seijts & Crim, 2006). Knowing how to differentiate an engaged employee from one that is not engaged or disengaged seems to be enough for the authors who adopt a practical perspective and use much of the practitioners' literature provided in particular by consultancy firms. The authors go a step further than previous scholars and instead of focusing on measuring or assessing the state of employee engagement (as they seem to use the data provided by practitioners) their goal is to define key aspects of engagement that as such can be used as levers to engage employees. Famously called « The Ten C's of employee engagement » it encompasses the following aspects: connect, career, clarity, convey, congratulate, contribute, control, collaborate, credibility, confidence. All those notions are intertwined and interconnected, but analyzing them separately allows the authors to get into details on how they can be applied in practical situations. It seems important to mention that the intensity in which the previously-mentioned elements influence positively employee engagement has not been measured neither by the authors nor by other scholars.

The first aspect, connect, focuses on employees' relationships with their superiors.

« Employee engagement is a direct reflection of how employees feel about their relationship with the boss [...] One anecdote illustrates the *Connect* dimension well. In November 2003, the CEO of WestJet Airlines, Clive Beddoe, was invited to give a presentation to the Canadian Club of London. Beddoe showed up late, a few minutes before he was to deliver his speech. He had met with WestJet employees at the London Airport and had taken a few minutes to explain the corporate strategy and some new initiatives to them. He also answered employees' questions. To paraphrase Beddoe, "We had a great discussion that took a bit longer than I had anticipated." Beddoe's actions showed that he cares about the employees. The employees, sensing that he is sincere, care about Beddoe and the organization; they "reward" his behavior with engagement » (Seijts & Crim, 2006, p.3).

The authors' point is to use employee-boss relationships as a lever to influence positively engagement. Focusing on creating good relationships at all levels of hierarchy between employees and superiors is recommended to increase employee engagement levels.

The second element, career, relates to how employees perceive their growth, mostly in professional terms as it is often a consequence of acquiring new expertise, and learning new things in general. « Leaders should provide challenging and meaningful work with opportunities for career advancement. Most people want to do new things [...] » (Seijts & Crim, 2006, p.3). Positioning career as the second lever translates its relevance for employee engagement, which has been recently supported by practitioners' research finding that employees search for positions with career progression otherwise they are likely to disengage and leave the company (Linkedin, *Why & How People Change Jobs*, 2015).

Next, clarity, revolves around the idea that only with clear goals can employees engage and perform at their best. They need to know where they are going in order to act in an engaged manner to get there. « In sum, employees need to understand what the organization's goals are, why they are important, and how the goals can best be attained » (Seijts & Crim, 2006, p.4). The ability for employees to both have in mind the company's vision, as well as how their contribute to achieve it, is the basis to enable them to take practical steps in that direction. Indeed an employee not knowing his/her direction feels aimless and falls into an attitude that lacks engagement.

Convey is another essential element that relates to employees getting feedback from their superiors. In order to engage one needs to have guidance and support, almost positioning the boss' role as a coach: this type of relationship (related also to the first point: connect) generates engagement and fosters goal achievement (related to previous point: clarity). The authors' illustrate their point as follows:

« There is a great anecdote about the legendary UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden. He showed how important feedback – positive and constructive – is in the pursuit of greatness. Among the secrets of his phenomenal success was that he kept detailed diaries on each of his players. He kept track of small improvements he felt the players could make and did make. At the end of each practice, he would share his thoughts with the players. The lesson here is that good leaders work daily to improve the skills of their people and create small wins that help the team, unit, or organization perform at its best. » (Seijts & Crim, 2006, p.4)

The next point, congratulate, seems to complete the notion of feedback. Positive feedback such as praise or recognition in any way are highly motivational and as such have potential to leverage employee engagement. Indeed authors' correlate the above-mentioned notions « Exceptional leaders give recognition, and they do so a lot; they coach and convey » (Seijts & Crim, 2006, p.4). Confirming Seijts & Crim's recommendation to congratulate, researchers from the National Institute for Physiological Sciences in Japan have found praise to be efficient increasing motivation (as effective as financial rewards) and consequently performance: « Praise, a social reward, is thought to boost motor skill learning by increasing motivation, which leads to increased practice » (Sugawara, Tanaka, Okazaki, Watanabe & Sadato, 2012). Applying such results to employee engagement means that praise motivates employees, who in turn feel more engaged, who in turn perform better: a virtuous circle has been uncovered.

The human desire to contribute and make an impact is also an important aspect of employee engagement. « This might be easy to articulate in settings such as hospitals and educational institutions » (Seijts & Crim, 2006, p.4) as it is often engrained in the nature of such jobs: doctors are making a positive impact on their patient's health and educators are also having a positive impact on their student's development. Consequently such job positions could be believed to be naturally more engaging, but is it actually so? Almost no research has been conducted on this matter, neither from scholars nor from practitioners, hence the pertinence of the current master thesis.

Another element suggested as a driver of employee engagement is control, in the sense that employees are empowered. Employees having control over their work, whether in terms of tasks to be responsible for or in terms of working pace or schedule, are believed to be more engaged. To Seijts & Crim's idea of control goes even further and entails empowering employees to participate in decision-making through specific management practices.

« There are numerous examples of organizations whose implementation of an open-book management style and creating room for employees to contribute to

making decisions had a positive effect on engagement and organizational performance. The success of Microsoft, for example, stems in part from Bill Gates' belief that smart people anywhere in the company should have the power to drive an initiative. » (Seijts & Crim, 2006, p.5)

The next point, collaborate, complements the first of all points: connect, as it focuses on relationships with peers and in a team (whereas connect focused on hierarchical relationships).

Studies show that, when employees work in teams and have the trust and cooperation of their team members, they outperform individuals and teams which lack good relationships. Great leaders are team builders; they create an environment that fosters trust and collaboration. Surveys indicate that being cared about by colleagues is a strong predictor of employee engagement. (Seijts & Crim, 2006, p.5)

Finally the last two points have been combined in this master thesis due to their similarity. Credibility and confidence relate respectively to the reputation and high ethical standards conveyed by a company as well as the pride and trust employees have in their organization as a whole. To illustrate credibility WestJet company is used as an example of high level of employee engagement since 85% of them own shares in the company (Seijts & Crim, 2006, p.5). Lack of confidence is also illustrated by a situation in which a CEO's unethical behavior (an extramarital affair with an employee) ashamed so much its workforce that they were ashamed of wearing their uniform to and from work (Seijts & Crim, 2006, p.5).

Each one of these scholars contributed to the development and ever evolving refinement of the concept of employee engagement. In spite of their lack of consistency they have raised relevant questions from definition to measurement of employee engagement. Since these first adventurers in the field much has been written, although it is still far from enough to fill in the literature gaps. Let's now analyze the most recent academic input.

The current state

The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) has been studying the concept of employee engagement, as well as similar concepts, since the early 2000's. Recently, in 2012, its contribution has encompassed the educational field; as such it is particularly relevant for the present master thesis. In addition to the IES' long-lasting contribution in 2011 scholars have again tackled the issue of employee engagement definition and came up with another triptych (following Kahn, 1990 and Bakker & Schaufeli, 2003) which seems even more broad than the previous ones.

The Institute for Employment Studies

The IES in the UK has also conducted some research for more than a decade now. In 2004 researchers identified drivers of employee engagement and continued their research more recently in 2007. In 2012 the Institute launched a project to foster employee engagement in higher educational institutions. In 2014 in its latest report about employee engagement researchers still fail at finding one commonly accepted definition and even claims to have reviewed more than 50 different definitions in the process of the study (Robinson & Gifford 2014).

In 2004 in a report exclusively dedicated to studying the drivers of employee engagement IES concluded that engagement relies on employees':

« [1] involvement in decision-making; [2] the extent to which employees feel able to voice their ideas, and managers listen to these views, and value employees'

contributions; [3] the opportunities employees have to develop their jobs; [4] the extent to which the organization is concerned for employees' health and well-being. » (Robinson, Perryman & Hayday, 2004)

The similarity with the ten C's from Seijts & Crim (2006) is easy to identify and they seem to confirm and strengthen one another. IES' 2004 report also focused on measuring employee engagement, but its method does not seem to have been used neither by other scholars nor practitioners. The IES continued its research and in 2007 it defined a broader list of the elements at the heart of employee engagement:

1. « job satisfaction
 2. feeling valued and involved
 3. equality of opportunity
 4. health and safety
 5. length of service
 6. ethnicity
 7. communication
 8. co-operation »
- (Robinson, Hooker & Hayday, 2007)

This enhanced list seems to be based on and complete the previous one elaborated in 2004. IES' latest research has been published in 2014 acknowledging the still inconsistent situation (IES, 2014, p.52-53) and foreseeing the future growing importance of employee engagement: « With more organizations being differentiated **purely** by the attitudes and abilities of their people, engagement has probably never been more critical » (Reddington, 2014, p.30). It also emphasizes the importance of surveys not only to engage employees but in particular as a key tool to uncover what drives or hinders engagement in each company. As the reports points out:

« In a nutshell, if organizations really want an engaged workforce that delivers major commercial benefits, the traditional employee survey will have a strong future. Flexible, adaptable and manageable, it is a key tool for assessing what blocks and drives engagement [...] And if you link survey data with key business metrics in this way, the humble survey may not become your engagement strategy – but it will certainly act as its pulse, giving you powerful insights into the outlook of your workforce and the health of your business. » (Cattermole, 2014, p.33).

In addition to IES' continuous contribution to employee engagement since the early 2000's, the most relevant point for the purpose of this master thesis is IES' 2012 project concerning employee engagement in higher educational institutions.

« UCEA and Universities HR commissioned IES to develop an evidence-based toolkit for HEIs on employee engagement. The aim of the project was to provide a practical framework for use by those in leadership roles in HEIs in building employee engagement within their institutions. » (IES, 2012)

Although it is beyond our topic, focusing on institutions for early child development, it is important to note it is the only academic research focusing on employee engagement within educational institutions and as such it begins filling in the literature gap.

Shuck & Reio

More and more research is being carried out, although it is still quite scattered throughout the academic disciplines, ranging from human resources, management or psychology.

« Employee engagement strategies are widely applied in practice, yet the construct remains underdeveloped in the human resource development (HRD) literature. This underdevelopment in the HRD scholarly community, combined with high levels of interest in the HRD practitioner community, highlights the need for closing the gap in theory, scholarship, and practice. » (Shuck & Reio Jr., 2011, p.419)

Closing the gap by contributing to the definition of employee engagement Shuck & Reio elaborated in 2011 a framework for employee engagement composed of three aspects: cognitive

engagement, emotional engagement, behavioral engagement (Shuck & Reio Jr., 2011, p.422-423). Their framework was elaborated on the premise of Kahn's work and consequently, while analyzing each one of the three aspects of engagement, it is possible to see the link with Kahn's initial work.

Cognitive, emotional and behavioral engagement relate respectively to:

« Cognitive engagement revolves around how an employee thinks about and understands his or her job, company, and culture and represents his or her intellectual commitment to the organization. Employees who are cognitively engaged would respond positively to statements such as 'The work I do makes a contribution to the organization'; 'I feel safe at work; no one will make fun of me here'; and 'I have the resources to do my job at the level expected of me.'

Emotional engagement concerns the feelings and beliefs held by those who are cognitively engaged, perhaps determining how these feelings and beliefs are formed, influenced, and directed outward, eventually toward overt display of effort. Emotionally engaged employees will be able to positively respond to statements such as 'I feel a strong sense of belonging and identify with my organization', and 'I am proud to work to work here'.

Understood as the physical and overt manifestation of cognitive and emotional engagement, behavioral engagement can be understood as increased levels of discretionary effort. [...] Behaviorally engaged employees respond positively to statements such as 'When I work, I really push myself beyond what is expected of me' and 'I work harder than is expected to help my organization be successful'. » (Shuck & Reio Jr., 2011, p.422-423)

Interestingly the authors specify which statements would enable the analysis and measurement of each aspect that make up employee engagement. It translates their desire not only to close the literature gap from an academic perspective as well as to provide useful tools for practice.

Later on, continuing their research, they published a study in 2014 in which their « findings support the utility of supporting employee participation in HRD practices to improve employee engagement and reduce turnover intent » (Shuck, Twyford, Reio Jr. & Shuck, 2014, p.239) .

Shuck & Reio also justify the relevance of their research by acknowledging the ever growing interest in employee engagement from practitioners:

« Despite being relatively new to academics, employee engagement has gained in popularity in the practitioner literature since the early 1990s [...] Entire companies and international consulting groups advertise dedication to the diagnosis, evaluation, and development of solutions to low employee engagement, although few share a common definition, measurement approach, or application. Moreover, some go so far as to call employee engagement the *keystone* to talent management and business success. Thus, much has been written about engagement in the practitioner literature, and as a result, employee engagement has developed an impressive practitioner following.

Yet how can this be? How can a concept so underdeveloped and still emerging in scholarly research have so little agreed-upon definition and have so few validated measures yet so widely accepted in application and practice as to be named the *keystone* to business success? » (Shuck & Reio Jr., 2011, p.420)

Considering the amount of practitioners' research on employee engagement, it is only normal this is also analyzed as part of the literature review.

Practitioners

Research among practitioners swarms but lacks consistency. Definitions vary from one consultancy firm to another, but there a constant categorization of employees between engaged, neutral and disengaged. Some reports go into further categorization and most of them do not adopt the same

definition for each category, but all do define different groups of employees according to their engagement levels. Some consulting firms have majorly focused on employee engagement and as such have produced reports and research that have even caught the attention of academics. Gallup is the most widely known firm among practitioners to specialize in employee engagement, Towers Watson and Blessing White also have gained some notoriety.

Gallup

The consultancy firm does not define the concept of employee engagement but it does identify what it considers an engaged employee, an employee who is not engaged and an actively disengaged employee. Engaged employees « work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company. They drive innovation and move the organization forward », while employees who are not engaged are considered as « essentially ‘checked out.’ They’re sleepwalking through their workday, putting time — but not energy or passion — into their work ». Finally actively disengaged employees « aren’t just unhappy at work; they’re busy acting out their unhappiness. Every day, these workers undermine what their engaged coworkers accomplish. » (Gallup, 2013, p.17).

Gallup defines and measures employee engagement according to a questionnaire composed of 12 statements and called the Q12. Essentially respondents have to grade each statement according to how much they agree with it or not. Gallup elaborated those statements to reflect all the needs employees have in the workplace, and classified them hierarchically (Gallup, 2013, p.15-16):

- Primary needs are assessed in the 2 initial statements.
 - « I know what is expected of me at work. »
 - « I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right. »
- Secondary needs are assessed in the next 4 questions and encompass how one contributes and how one is recognized.
 - « At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day. »
 - « In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work. »
 - « My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person. »
 - « There is someone at work who encourages my development. »
- The following 4 statements reflects needs in terms of relationship and connection with peers.
 - « At work, my opinions seem to count. »
 - « The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important. »
 - « My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work. »
 - « I have a best friend at work. »
- The last 2 statements encompass the need for growth and improvement, whether career-wise or skill-wise.
 - « In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress. »
 - « This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow. »

Gallup uses a specific method to analyze the data collected through the Q12 survey. The technique used is called « meta-analysis », first used in the early 2000s (Harter, Hayes, Schmidt, 2002), and seems to be the key strength of the company in terms of employee engagement research. Its advantage is that it enables the consulting firm to positively correlate key performance indicators (KPI) to business outcomes such as profitability, productivity or customer satisfaction. Such measurement method, tested and proved by the consultancy firm itself, is particularly relevant for the new field of employee engagement. The elaboration, proofing and research of the meta-analysis has been done in collaboration with scholars (Harter, Hayes, Schmidt, 2002). Furthermore its data is

so relevant that even academics use it (Wollard & Shuck, 2010) and hence it contributes to the development of the academic literature concerning employee engagement creating a virtuous collaborative circle.

Gallup assesses employee engagement as consultancy projects for its clients, but it also gathers data and produces regularly worldwide evaluation of employee engagement levels. Its latest assessment in 2013 found that « 63% of workers worldwide are not engaged in their work, while another 24% are actively disengaged » (Gallup, 2013, p.7). Thus only 13% of employees worldwide are engaged. Such low numbers lead Gallup to begin the current year titling an alarming article « The Worldwide Employee Engagement Crisis » (Mann & Harter, 2016). Even more relevant is the estimation Gallup makes about the financial cost of worldwide disengagement.

« Active disengagement is an immense drain on economies throughout the world. Gallup estimates, for example, that for the U.S., active disengagement costs US \$450 billion to \$550 billion per year. In Germany, that figure ranges from €112 billion to €138 billion per year (US\$151 billion to \$186 billion). In the United Kingdom, actively disengaged employees cost the country between £52 billion and £70 billion (US\$83 billion and \$112 billion) per year. » (Gallup, 2013, p.7)

By 2012 Gallup had analyzed employee engagement data in more than 192 organizations, assessing the engagement of 1.4 million employees (Gallup, 2013, p.21). Such broad data collection is even more relevant because it is widespread and pin points correlations between engagement and performance, which are consistent across the globe. Throughout Gallup's 2013 report the importance and advantages of engaged employees is constantly put forward, for example it states that companies with a highly engaged workforce are 22% more profitable (Gallup, 2013, p.21). Even more relevant Gallup correlates directly financial results in earnings per share with employee engagement:

« Gallup's research also shows that companies with engaged workforces have higher earnings per share (EPS) and seem to have recovered from the recession at a faster rate. In a recent study, Gallup examined 49 publicly traded companies with EPS data available from 2008-2012 and Q12 data available from 2010 and/or 2011 in its database and found that organizations with a critical mass of engaged employees outperformed their competition, compared with those that did not maximize their employees' potential.

In fact, researchers discovered that as the economy began to rebound after 2009, having an engaged workforce became a strong differentiator in EPS. Companies with engaged workforces seemed to have an advantage in regaining and growing EPS at a faster rate than their industry equivalents. Conversely, those organizations with average engagement levels saw no increased advantage over their competitors in the economic recovery.

Organizations with an average of 9.3 engaged employees for every actively disengaged employee in 2010-2011 experienced 147% higher EPS compared with their competition in 2011-2012. In contrast, those with an average of 2.6 engaged employees for every actively disengaged employee experienced 2% lower EPS compared with their competition during that same time period » (Gallup, 2013, p.7)

The consultancy firm points out the relevance of employee engagement for companies (from a financial perspective) and for the economy as whole (from a political and academic perspective). Shedding light on numbers that are both alarming (only 13% of engaged employees worldwide) and intriguing (companies with a highly engaged workforce are 22% more profitable), helping raise awareness about employee engagement and its impact. Such an ample database combined with effective measure & analysis of employee engagement is unmatched both among practitioners and scholars. So much that its results are used by both and consequently enrich immensely the field of

employee engagement as a whole. However Gallup is not the only consultancy firm investing in employee engagement research.

Towers Watson

Towers Watson (TW) interviewed 32,000 full-time workers in 2012 and found that worldwide only over a third (35%) of employees were highly engaged (TW, 2012, p.2). These numbers seem more encouraging than Gallup's, however it is important to note that the study is not so broad as it encompasses respondents in only 29 countries (TW, 2012, p.20). The study classifies its respondents in four categories: highly engaged, unsupported, detached and disengaged (TW, 2012, p.4). Its innovation compared to other research is the introduction of the concept « sustainable engagement » (TW, 2012, p.3). TW defines engagement from a sustainable angle encompassing three sets of emotions & behaviors that employees can adopt (again it is relevant to note that even practitioners base their definitions on a triptych, similarly to Kahn (1990), Bakker & Schaufeli (2003) and Shuck & Reio (2011)) described as follows:

- « The extent of employees' discretionary effort committed to achieving work goals (**being engaged**)
- An environment that supports productivity in multiple ways (**being enabled**)
- A work experience that promotes well-being (**feeling energized**) » (TW, 2012, p. 5)

Additionally to contributing to the definition of employee engagement TW has focused on correlating business results with employee engagement levels. Its 2012 report details:

« In a recent analysis of 50 global companies, for which we had both sustainable engagement data and relevant financial data, we found striking differences [...] in average operating margin relative to sustainable engagement levels. [...] Those companies with low traditional engagement had an average operating margin just under 10%, [...] those with high traditional engagement [an] average operating margin [...] just over 14%. But among those with high sustainable engagement, average one-year operating margin was close to three times higher, at just over 27%. » (TW, 2012, p.8)

Despite differences in methodology and results between Gallup and Towers Watson, the latter also reaches the conclusion that the current state of employee engagement is in crisis. So much that the reports declares:

« Our data suggest that businesses appear to be at a critical tipping point in their ability to maintain engagement over time. While [many] are already running their businesses very differently in today's highly interconnected global marketplace [...] a surprisingly large number don't appear to be keeping pace in terms of how they're managing and supporting the very people assigned to execute the work on the ground. Put starkly, they are running 21st-century businesses with 20th-century workplace practices and programs. And the cracks in the foundation are starting to show in both small and large ways. » (TW, 2012, p.2)

Blessing White

Blessing White (BW) defines employee engagement from a dual perspective considering it entails both that employees contribute to the company's success and that gain personal satisfaction from their role (BW, 2013, p.3). BW categorizes employees according to their engagement level in a very detailed manner. The consultancy firm identifies 5 categories as follows:

- The Engaged: High contribution and high satisfaction
- Almost Engaged: Medium to high contribution and satisfaction
- Honeymooners & Hamsters: High satisfaction but low contribution
- Crash & Burners: High contribution but low satisfaction
- The Disengaged: Low contribution and satisfaction

(BW, 2013, p.4)

BW's results focuses mainly on evaluating engagement levels by region and analyzing retention rate according to employee engagement levels. Engagement levels by region have slightly improved from 2011 to 2012, going from 30% in Europe to 31%, and going from 33% to 40% in North America (BW, 2013, p.5). In terms of retention BW's report states « The Engaged stay for what they can give, the Disengaged stay for what they can get » (BW, 2013, p.9) and goes on pointing out that most employees decide to leave or stay in the company according to their career prospects (BW, 2013, p.9). On this point the academic literature is confirmed by the practitioners: from Seijts & Crim's ten C's the one related to career has proven to be a turning point in terms of retention, hence also for turnover.

The purpose of any research concerning employee engagement, whether from scholars or from practitioners, had the goal to be useful, hence put into practice. Once the concept has been defined and its levels assessed, one question still remains: how can employee engagement be positively influenced?

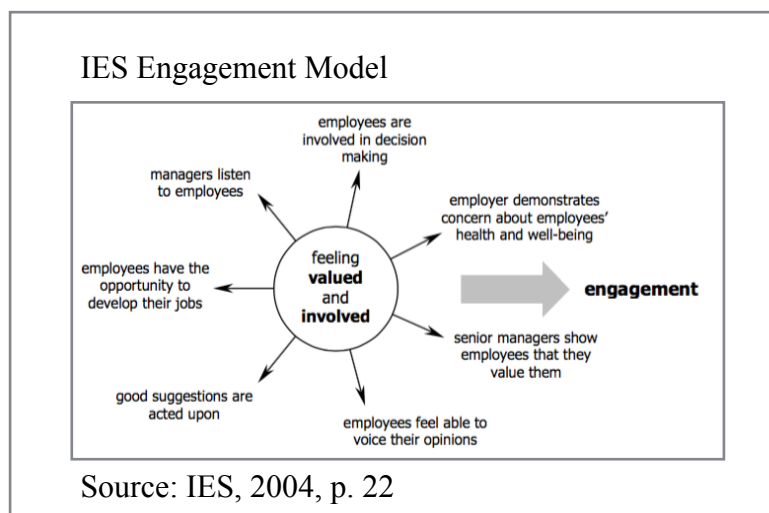
II - LEVERAGING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Academic study of the concept of employee engagement is still inconsistent (IES, 2014, p.52-53) thus so is its measuring & leveraging. As time passes more and more academics recommend levers for practical application, although practice has already widely written about it and experimented, in spite of the lack of consistency.

Academics

The IES' drivers of employee engagement (2004)

IES' research focused since the early 2000s on employee engagement and specifically on its drivers. IES found that « The strongest driver of engagement is a sense of **feeling valued and involved**. » (IES, 2004, p.21) and consequently elaborated an engagement model as pictured below.



IES goes on giving guidelines to implement measures fostering employee engagement. Such measures, in order to be effective should involve: 1) training, development and career, 2) immediate management, 3) performance and appraisal, 4) communication, and finally 5) equal opportunities and fair treatment. At first the guidelines are

general, however keeping in mind a practical perspective, the IES' report goes on detailing potential levers as quoted below:

« **Good quality line management** — managers who: 1) care about their employees, 2) keep them informed, 3) treat them fairly, 4) encourage them to perform well, 5) take an interest in their career aspirations, 6) smooth the path to training and development opportunities.

Two-way, open communication — which allows the employee to voice ideas and suggest better ways of doing things, while at the same time keeping employees informed about the things that are relevant to them (including the relationship between the jobs they have and the wider business).

Effective co-operation within the organization — between different departments and functions, and also between management and trade unions.

A focus on developing employees — so that individuals feel that the organization takes a long-term view of their value, and delivers both the training they need now and fair access to development opportunities.

A commitment to employee well-being — demonstrated by taking health and safety seriously, working to minimize accidents, injuries, violence and harassment, and taking effective action should a problem occur.

Clear, accessible HR policies and practices to which line managers and senior managers are committed — particularly with regard to appraisals, equal opportunities and family friendliness.

Fairness in relation to pay and benefits — in terms of comparisons within and outside the organization.

A harmonious working environment — which encourages employees to respect and help each other. » (IES, 2004, p.24)

While IES' general guidelines seem to overlap some of the ten C's from Seijts & Crim, the report later on gives specific viable recommendations to leverage employee engagement. Among academics IES' 2004 report is one of the first to present applicable levers for employee engagement.

The ten C's (2006)

Seijts & Crim's research broadly defines ten key elements for employee engagement as seen previously. Those ten C's are ambiguous in the sense that they can be both criteria and levers for employee engagement. In spite of their pertinence, the authors do not suggest any practical measures to be implemented to leverage employee engagement from each C's perspective. Although C's are often illustrated with practical example, general measures are left unresolved, leaving room for the reader's imagination. As the ten C's have been previously studied, they will only be summed up here: #1 Connect, #2 Career, #3 Clarity, #4 Convey, #5 Congratulate, #6 Contribute, #7 Control, #8 Collaborate, #9 Credibility, #10 Confidence.

Scholars' growing interest for employee engagement in the past few years have led to interesting research that is worth mentioning when it comes to leveraging employee engagement.

The importance of surveys

Complementing the IES' latest report on the importance of surveys for employee engagement, scholars find that the implementation of surveys is as necessary as the communication about its results (Gable, Chyung, Marker & Winiecki, 2010, p.24).

Wiley recommends surveys to be regularly performed as to enable to track engagement levels' evolution according to measures implemented. The author stresses how important is to tailor the

survey according to the specificities of the business, although it should always be based on what he considers the « four macro pillars » of employee engagement:

« #1: Leaders who inspire confidence in the future; #2 Managers who recognize employees and emphasize quality and improvement as top priorities; #3 Exciting work and the opportunity to grow and develop; and #4 Organizations that demonstrate a genuine responsibility to their employees and the communities in which they operate. » (Wiley, 2014, p.40)

Furthermore communication is also an essential point. Communicating the results to the employees is relevant as it is the first step for both greater transparency and implementation of measures as part of an engagement strategy. Scholars even suggest to implement a communication plan including details such as:

- « How to communicate the engagement survey results down the organization's ranks of leaders (as well as what to communicate).
- How leaders should communicate engagement survey results to frontline employees (i.e., non-leadership direct reports).
- A year-round plan for integrating the communication of positive changes resulting from the engagement survey into routine communications throughout the organization. » (Gable, Chyung, Marker & Winiecki, 2010, p.24)

This seems particularly relevant as most of the research concerning employee engagement seems to focus on either the measurement or the levers but few seem to acknowledge how much both are intertwined and how measurement surveys can actually already be a lever for employee engagement if done right.

Spirituality

Scholars recently have correlated two elements that might seem at first glance opposed: employee engagement and spirituality. In 2014 Roof conducted a study to find out whether or not introducing spirituality in the workplace would influence employee engagement. Its study gathered 124 respondents and used the UWES-9 scale to measure how spirituality influenced either vigor, dedication or absorption. Findings supported a positive correlation between spirituality and both vigor & dedication, whereas absorption was not correlated to spirituality neither positively nor negatively (Roof, 2015, p.585). Such research is pertinent as both concepts, spirituality & employee engagement, are still at their early stages, thus filling a literature gap. Even more intriguing are the positive results. Such research as well as findings seem particularly innovative as not even practice seems to have focused on this yet. From such perspective scholars are making a leap forward and innovating. However this should be nuanced as the definition of spirituality (Roof, 2015, p.588) might sometimes overlap a few elements of employee engagement. Indeed Roof mentions spirituality might sometimes « [offer] one the hope of making a difference not just a living [... and to...] develop a sense of community, and find meaning and a connection with something greater » (Roof, 2015, p.587). Similarities can be found with C#1 Connect and C#8 Collaborate in terms of connection and community respectively, as well as with C#6 Contribute in terms of making a difference. Thus actually Roof's findings are not so surprising. Nevertheless such research is particularly relevant for employee engagement in the educational field as the workplace is intrinsically based on relationships and making a difference.

Practitioners

Literature from practitioners' such as consultancy firms is relevant exactly because the goal of such literature is to determine effective assessment scales and effective levers to drive employee

engagement. Practitioners' input often comes from consultancy firms such as Gallup's renowned research, but it can also come from practical examples whose success is so talked about that it cannot be ignored.

a) Levers identified by consultancy firms

Levers by Gallup

Gallup's research on employee engagement has been mostly focused on meeting its clients' needs to achieve or maintain high engagement levels, thus it is particularly relevant to study the levers it proposes. The consultancy firm's strategy to raise employee engagement levels is based on a triptych: selecting the right people, developing employees' strengths and finally enhancing employees' well-being (Gallup, 2013, p.5).

« Ultimately, people engage people » (Gallup, 2013, p.39), and as previously proven through academic literature, relationships are key for engagement, hence it is no surprise that the first element Gallup mentions is fostering good relationships, through careful selection of employees and leaders.

Gallup considers it as important to select great managers as it is to select great employees:

« Great managers engage their teams on several levels. First, they display genuine care and concern for their people. [...] Second, great managers care just as much about performance as they do about their people as individuals. [...] Finally, great managers value and invest in talent. » (Gallup, 2013, p.39-40)

Selecting the right managers is important because from this stems the two other elements of the triptych: employee talent development and well-being. Thus, if done properly, this first step should save time and be effective in generating growth in engagement levels. The reports continue further explaining why employee selection is a natural continuation:

« Gallup has found that, generally speaking, employees' perceptions of their primary manager influence about 70% of their engagement, while coworkers' attitudes and other factors account for the remaining 30%. Thus, once an organization puts the right managers in place, the next step to strategically boosting overall engagement is to select the right employees. [...] At the end of the day, engagement is all about people. » (Gallup, 2013, p.40)

Gallup's proven results are actually also intuitive; in the same way positive people cheer others up while negative ones drain others down, engaged employees motivate others in the workplace while disengaged employees can have a poisonous effect.

Developing employees' strengths is also crucial because employees are the ones creating the added value in the company. The more talented and performant they are, the better it is for the company. Numerous practitioners' publications through blogs and magazines stress the importance of hiring and retaining top talent employees to boost their workforce. That is not the only aspect Gallup measured to assess how valuable it is to develop employees' strengths. Its 2013 report found out that « people who use their strengths every day are six times more likely to be engaged on the job » (Gallup, 2013, p.41). All the more reasons to leverage employee engagement through talent development and strengths-focused strategy (the latter being correlated to C#5 congratulate from Seijts & Crim, 2006). Indeed Gallup's research found out that « employees who received strengths-based coaching saw their engagement scores improve substantially » (Gallup, 2013, p.42).

Last but not least, enhancing employees' well-being is a very broad concept. Gallup's focus is two-ways oriented: healthy employees' are more engaged, and engaged employees are healthier; generating a virtuous circle. Gallup suggest 5 guidelines companies should follow to make sure that health and employee engagement are driving one another positively.

- « Make well-being an organizational strategy — much like other organizational outcomes. Healthy behaviors are contagious. [...]»
- Communicate a commitment to well-being consistently in all of the programs the company offers. [...] Hold leaders accountable for well-being programs available to employees. Leaders should constantly evaluate programs they use for well-being improvement. [...]
- Consider how to embed activities to increase well-being in individual development plans and goals. Encourage well-being goal setting [...]
- Set positive defaults for making healthy choices. Employees face several choices and decisions throughout their workday. When it comes to well-being, make it easy [and simple] to pick the right choices. » (Gallup, 2013, p.47-48).

In sum Gallup's recommendations seems viable thanks to their clarity. Furthermore they promise to be effective as Gallup's data analysis depth is widely renowned.

Levers by Towers Watson

TW's study is particularly relevant in terms of drivers because the definition of employee engagement adopted is one that encompasses sustainability. Sustainable employee engagement is one that is supposed to be long-lasting, meaning that high levels of employee engagement are steady over time. Consequently TW's levers are focused on sustainable employee engagement. This innovation is particularly relevant as Kahn (1990) posed the question - still unanswered - of the possibility of long lasting engaged behaviors. TW considers the answer is positive and suggests five main drivers of sustainable engagement as shown below.

Top five drivers of sustainable engagement	
Priority areas of focus	Behaviors and actions that matter to employees
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is effective at growing the business • Shows sincere interest in employees' well-being • Behaves consistently with the organization's core values • Earns employees' trust and confidence
Stress, balance and workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manageable stress levels at work • A healthy balance between work and personal life • Enough employees in the group to do the job right • Flexible work arrangements
Goals and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization's business goals • Steps they need to take to reach those goals • How their job contributes to achieving goals
Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign tasks suited to employees' skills • Act in ways consistent with their words • Coach employees to improve performance • Treat employees with respect
Organization's image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly regarded by the general public • Displays honesty and integrity in business activities

Source: TW, 2012, p.7

Interestingly TW finds that « the drivers of sustainable engagement focus almost entirely on the culture and the relational aspects of the work experience » (TW, 2012, p.7). Therefore a great company culture is a key indicator of engaged employees in the long run.

Levers by Blessing White

As seen previously BW defines employee engagement from a dual perspective taking into account employees' contribution as well as satisfaction. Consequently in order to assess how to drive employee engagement BW's research was divided into these two aspects (BW, 2013, p.14-17). Concerning contribution, respondents were asked to choose among a series of 7 elements which of those would improve their performance. Concerning satisfaction, respondents were asked to choose among a series of 8 elements which of those would improve their personal satisfaction.

On the one hand results found that satisfaction is mainly driven by 1) opportunities to do what one does best, and 2) career development opportunity and training (BW, 2013, p.16-17). The latter is particularly interesting as it confirms academic literature. Of Seijts & Crim's ten C's, one is related to career; BW's research proves the relevance of this criteria and lever of employee engagement, elaborated by scholars.

On the other hand contribution's drivers vary significantly across regions. In spite of such variations overall two drivers stand out: 1) clarity about employees are expected to do, and 2) more resources (BW, 2013, p.14-15). Again clarity confirms Seijts & Crim's C #3 proving that employees engage more and perform better once they have a clear vision of the goals and steps to reach them.

In spite of a lack of consistency in terms of definition of employee engagement, levers seem to benefit from better coherence as often scholars' research and practitioners research overlap each other, thus also confirming one another. Digging even deeper to leverage employee engagement it seems relevant to bring practical examples. Although they do not originate from scholars or consultancy firms, these company practices are renowned for their success in terms of employee engagement and as such seem pertinent to be mentioned.

b) Levers identified by practical examples

Letting go of poisonous disengaged employees: « pay to quit » policy from Amazon

Businesses understanding how disengaged employee can drain the whole company down use a specific strategy. Zappos, mentioned earlier, inspired Amazon and now both companies pay their employees to leave. As astounding as this statement might seem it is a win-win strategy for both the employer and the employee. Keeping unmotivated employee is not beneficial for businesses, hence Amazon sends once a year to each one of its employees a letter offering a financially advantageous offer to leave for those who would not feel the desire to work at Amazon anymore. The company « pays its employees to quit » (Bezos, 2014) if they do not want to stay. In this way the company gets rid of any negative element, making sure the working atmosphere is at its best for those who are actually happy to work for the company. Jeffrey P. Bezos, founder and CEO of Amazon, explained this clearly in its 2014 letter to shareholders:

« The [...] program is called *Pay to Quit*. It was invented by the clever people at Zappos, and the Amazon fulfillment centers have been iterating on it. Pay to Quit is pretty simple. Once a year, we offer to pay our associates to quit. The first year the offer is made, it's for \$2,000. Then it goes up one thousand dollars a year until it reaches \$5,000. The headline on the offer is "Please Don't Take This Offer." We hope they don't take the offer; we want them to stay. Why do we make this offer? The goal is to encourage folks to take a moment and think about what they really

want. In the long-run, an employee staying somewhere they don't want to be isn't healthy for the employee or the company ». (Bezos, 2014)

This strategy is doubly beneficial: first for relieving the company from disengaged employees draining it down, and second for engaging employees who actually choose to stay. Exactly because it is a choice, employees have the opportunity to take a step back and reflect whether they want to commit to the business or would rather leave. This means that those who stay, really want to. Employees therefore feel a stronger sense of belonging and engagement, which as studied previously, impacts positively business results. Paying employees to quit thus sounds like a winning strategy. This costly system is not available to every company, but is actually money-saving once put into place: since disengaged employees pull down productivity and results in general, getting rid of them allows businesses to grow faster and better.

The importance of company culture

As TW's 2012 report stressed previously a strong company culture is key for employees to be engaged. Company culture is considered to be « an intangible system of values, collective personality, and beliefs shared by people in an organization [...] » (Doyle, 2011).

Both Google and Airbnb are widely known for their strong company culture. While Google has financial capacities to invest in its culture, Airbnb did not have it at first and company culture has always been one of its differentiators (Chesky, 2014). Financial investments focusing on company culture and employee engagement have been made by both companies such as: corporate offices' architecture reflecting the company's culture, infrastructures & advantages for employees well being & needs. Areas of focus are usually:

- health with advantages such as doctors on site, health insurance, gym membership / on site, healthy & free food
- work / personal life balance with advantages such as paid parental leave (Molina, 2015), center for kids including « on-site after school programs and kindergarten classes » (Fairchild, 2014).
- enjoyment, indeed Google is constantly used as an example since it implemented in its offices nap and play areas.

Literature review conclusion: a very young literature plagued by gaps and inconsistency

In sum it seems clear that what has been written about employee engagement lacks consistency. From the definition of the concept to its drivers, academic research is scarce and still uncertain. Even among academics terms are easily interchanged with work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010), or confused with other notions such as job satisfaction (IES, 2007, p.18). This literature gap from an academic perspective is slowly being filled in and benefits from the attention given to the subject by practitioners. Among practitioners a lot has been written about employee engagement, from sizable consultancy firms such as Gallup, to various blogs' or online magazines' articles. Nevertheless there are literature gaps from academics and practitioners concerning employee engagement whether it is in terms of the size of the businesses studied or in terms of sectors.

In spite of the lack of consistency the subject has been tackled, mostly to meet the needs from international companies. It is pertinent to notice that neither academic literature, nor practitioners have studied small businesses. Indeed since the practitioners' literature has mostly been written by consultancy firms, it focuses on their potential clients. Only sizable companies can afford to hire a consultancy firm to assess and improve their level of employee engagement. A few online blogs and articles give some advice to foster employee engagement with little or no financial input (Dewhurst,

Guthridge & Mohr, 2009; Lucas, 2013; Petrone, 2015) but it is scattered on the web, lacks clarity to be actually viable and its effectiveness is rarely tested. Despite lots having been written about employee engagement in large companies, there is a gap in practitioners' literature concerning small businesses and start-ups although they are important drivers for the economy: « Many empirical studies have shown the aggregate relationships between entrepreneurship and SME activity and economic growth and job creation » (OECD, 2010, p.24). Both academics and practitioners have left small business aside concerning employee engagement.

When it comes to services of public benefit such as health - jobs that are supposedly intrinsically engaging - only large pharmaceutical companies or broad hospital structures seem to have been studied by practitioners. Concerning the educational field, subject at the heart of our societies and that shapes future generations, almost nothing has been done concerning employee engagement. Only recently have higher educational structures' needs started, since 2012, to be studied by the IES (IES, 2012). Academics have studied job satisfaction among teachers in different regions of the world (Sargent & Hannum, 2005; Klassen & Anderson, 2009; Wagner & French, 2010), but what about assessing the actual state of engagement among educators and actually studying how to improve it? There is a void in academic and practitioners' literature concerning employee engagement in educational structures, even more so concerning early educational development from 0 to 6 years old. These years are so important to solidify a strong foundation for those future adults (Dodson, 2007) and yet nothing has been studied to make sure their educators are engaged and giving them their best.

METHODOLOGY

CASE STUDY ON A KINDERGARTEN IN MUNICH

Sensing the importance of the literature gap for small businesses focusing on early education such as Kindergärten(s) the author, who has particular interest in the educational sector and Germany, chose to focus on the German context, and more specifically in the city of Munich.

Given that Germany has the lowest birth rate in the world (BBC, 2015) the country should have particular interest in increasing that number as well as offering great educational institutions to the children, which will make up its future generation of leaders. In Germany the number of private schools has increased by 76% in 20 years (Tricarico, 2014). Private schools encompass many alternative educational methods such as Waldorf schools or Montessori pedagogy, which are increasingly popular (Ebtisch, 2012).

When it comes to the notion of employee engagement Germany also seems a relevant target as the country was highlighted in Gallup's 2013 report for having a management crisis with only 15% of engaged employees, 61% of not engaged employees and finally 24% of actively disengaged employees (Gallup, 2013, p.94). The consultancy firm further estimates that the central issue in employee engagement in Germany should be on relationships.

« In particular, companies should investigate the criteria they use to promote people in their organization and closely evaluate how effectively their managers motivate and inspire people. [...] A key problem is that German management education pays little attention to actually managing people. The M.B.A. degree reflects that the educational emphasis is on managing finances and administering processes. But good management also requires a focus on people, something that German companies currently lack. [...] By ignoring the benefits of engagement and the managerial talent to support it, German companies will continue to leave their financial well-being to chance. » (Gallup, 2013, p.94)

Low numbers in employee engagement are coupled with low numbers in employee well-being, which is not surprising as both notions are intertwined and correlated. Gallup's research has uncovered that 47% of employees in Germany consider their lives thriving, while the same number reported to be struggling, while 5% report they are suffering (Nink, 2013). The interesting element in such research is that it sheds light on the cost of employees' lack of well being. On one hand, employees who consider themselves as thriving and are in the engaged category miss on average 3.9 work days per year, while on the other hand, employees who consider themselves as suffering and are categorized as disengaged miss on average 10.7 work days per year, almost three times more than engaged employees (Nink, 2013). Gallup estimates precisely the cost for German companies:

« Those lost workdays come with a heavy price tag. Each day of employee absence costs a company in Germany 275.20 euros, according to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. For employees who are actively disengaged and suffering, the average annual per-person cost of absenteeism due to sick days is 2,945 euros. For employees who are engaged and thriving, the average annual per-person cost of absenteeism due to sick days is 1,073 euros, which represents a cost savings of 64%. » (Nink, 2013)

Consequently, there is a financial benefit in fostering engaged, happy and healthy employees; even more in the case of Germany. The purpose of this case study, to find out how to increase engagement levels within a German company, is highly relevant in such economic context.

Although the length of this study does not enable to have a nationwide perspective, Munich allows for a sample view. In order to have an in-depth perspective the author completed qualitative research which included a three months internship in a Kindergarten (welcoming children aged from 0 to 6 years old) in Munich following the Montessori pedagogy, which will be called Kindergarten K from now on. The experience in Kindergarten K, enabling to gather qualitative data about employee satisfaction and engagement, will be detailed in the qualitative study.

Germany counts 600 Kindergärten(s) following Montessori pedagogy, among which 30 Kindergärten(s), representing 5% of all Montessori Kindergärten(s) nationwide, are located in Munich (Montessori Dachverband Deutschland e. V., 2005). Munich's large choice of Kindergärten(s) following Montessori pedagogy is relevant as it gives clients (parents) the ability to select which one is the best according to their opinion, hence better employee engagement levels would lead to better positioning in comparison to the competition. Furthermore in more general terms the whole Kindergärten(s) market in Munich has boomed over the past few years (Cottrell, 2011) giving parents a much broader choice and increasing competition for managers and owners of Kindergärten(s), especially in terms of employee retention. In such a competitive context the relevance of an engaged workforce makes perfect sense.

Thus the pertinence of the this master's thesis is attempting to answer: Which strategies can an educational business, such as a Kindergarten in Germany, develop to foster employee engagement? In order to guarantee the highest quality possible for this case study both a quantitative and a qualitative study have been performed and will be detailed below.

QUANTITATIVE STUDY

Design

Defining potentially applicable measures

To design potentially applicable measures to influence positively employee engagement we will rely on the levers identified in the literature review. The ten C's elaborated by Seijts & Crim will be our guideline since it combines two key qualities: recency (2006) & width.

Let's analyze which C's can be used as a basis to design practical measures. In order to keep the survey short and to the point we need to select the C's that are both most relevant to our case study and financially viable. Consequently the C's that are either engrained in a company's structure, impossible to implement in practice, or not actually measurable cannot be used for the purpose of this quantitative study.

First, some elements are engrained in a Kindergarten's identity among which the fact that employees have high ethical standards (C #9) and the fact that they contribute through a meaningful impact on the children's development (C #6). Second, some elements are simply not actionable in such a specific context. Concerning the confidence employees have in the ethical standards of their leaders (C #10) there seems to be no measure that could realistically be implemented to influence it since the Kindergarten's leaders are also usually the owners and as such it seems difficult to take action about their leadership behavior through a survey of the employees. Concerning the importance of career opportunities (C #2) it seems difficult for small structures such as Kindergärten(s) to do so in practice. Two main options exist to offer opportunities for professional

development: either the company promotes internally, which is not a realistic option for businesses whose growth perspective are uncertain, or the company offers financing for employee's training, which is too costly for small businesses. Finally the actionable C's encompass connect, convey, congratulate, clarity and control. Let's analyze below how effective measures could be potentially implement to leverage employee engagement.

C #1 #4 #5 : connect, convey, congratulate.

These concepts require leaders to have a good relationship with their employees (C #1), give them regular feedback (C #4) and praise them as often as possible (C #5). This could be particularly effective in educational structures where relationships are at the heart of the job. Indeed the example of Kindergarten K, through an analysis of its employees qualitative feedback, would benefit from engaging more employees from this perspective. One option could be to implement a strengths-based leadership strategy starting by a one on one weekly meeting (for 15 minutes) between employees and their direct supervisor where a) feedback is given and b) praise and recognition is given when applicable. Such a measure is cheap financially but what would its cost be in terms of time? Generally Kindergärten(s) are rather small structures with a limited number of employees, so the cost in terms of time should be low. For example in Kindergarten K, studied in detail, each supervisor had a maximum of 4 direct employees to manage, thus it would cost each supervisor a maximum of one hour per week to reap effective results in terms of employee engagement.

C #3 : clarity.

This concept expects leaders to communicate a clear vision of the company's goals. Most educational institutions, especially those focusing in early child development such as Kindergärten(s), are more focused on contributing meaningfully to the children's growth than elaborating a short, medium or long-term growth strategy for their business. The absence of such vision has not been mentioned in Kindergarten K's analysis through qualitative feedback but could nevertheless be a financially affordable manner to leverage employee engagement according to the current literature. One potential measure could be to define yearly goals and communicate them to employees at every level, making sure that they are clearly defined and that employees are aware how their role contributes to achieve those goals.

- The cost in terms of time would be first the time spent in directors' meeting to elaborate those yearly goals. Let's consider a reasonable 4 hours are necessary either through a single meeting or through 4 meetings of one hour each during the month of December to prepare for the year ahead.
- The second cost would be the time needed to share those goals with employees of all levels. Such communication could be done through a single 30 minutes meeting for each team.
- Let's try to evaluate the costs in terms of time for Kindergarten K, studied in detail.
 - There were 6 teams, in addition to the direction team; so a total of 7 teams. So that would cost yearly 4 hours for the direction team to elaborate the goals and vision for the coming year.
 - In addition to that there would be a cost of 30 minutes for each one of the 6 teams dedicated to communicate the goals & vision, making a total of 3 hours.
 - One member of the direction team would also be in charge of such communication: costing him/her an additional 3 hours to present the vision to the teams.
 - In sum the yearly costs would be: 4 hours for each employee of the direction team, 3 additional hours to the member of the direction team in charge of communication, and 3 hours for team meetings to communicate the vision; making up a total cost of 10 hours per year.

This cost in terms of time seems affordable for small businesses, especially considering the potential positive impact on employee engagement.

C #7 : control.

This concept encompasses the ability employees have to control the pace of their job as well as their ability to voice their ideas. While the former might be difficult to implement in an educational institution where the educators presence at specific hours is engrained in the job, the latter can be improved by implementing an open book management style allowing employees to voice their ideas and participate in decision making (Seijts & Crim, 2006). This seems particularly relevant for a Kindergarten's structure since employees are directly in contact with the children, whereas the management team is not. Thus such sharing of information can be particularly enriching for Kindergärten(s) in order to meet customer needs better and improve the general functioning of the business. How could it be put in practice? First by allowing & valuing initiatives, and second by implementing regular meetings (one on one or team) to gather employee feedback about the company and discuss their suggestions. To make it cost efficient in terms of time these could consist in one hour team meeting per month. For example in the Kindergarten K, studied in detail, there were a total of 6 teams, in addition to the direction team. It would then cost the company monthly 7 hours, and yearly 84 hours.

C #8 : collaborate.

This concept relates to good relationships between team members. In every company relationships are essential for a good working atmosphere and consequently good performance (Seijts & Crim, 2006). In Kindergärten(s) and educational structures in general this is even more important because the whole business is built on interactions; whether it is with children or with peers. One possible measure would be to implement one hour team building per week in an informal atmosphere where all employees (since Kindergärten(s) are usually relatively small companies) gather and mingle. This could be done during working hours, costing the company 4 hours monthly and around 52 hours yearly (this can vary according to the number of holiday's weeks), or during leisure time by promoting a weekly evening meeting for drinks, costing almost nothing to the company except maybe the time it takes to send an email inviting all employees to a specific meeting point at a specific time.

Thus these potential measures that could be implemented in educational organizations at a low cost form four hypotheses:

1. Implementing a strengths-based leadership strategy through a one on one weekly meeting (for 15 minutes) between employees and their direct supervisor where a) feedback is given and b) praise and recognition is given when applicable leads to higher levels of employee engagement.
2. Defining yearly goals and communicating them to employees through a 30 minutes team meeting, making sure that those goals are clearly defined and that employees are aware how their role contributes to them leads to higher levels of employee engagement.
3. Allowing & valuing initiatives, combined with regular meetings to gather employee feedback about the company and discuss their suggestions leads to higher levels of employee engagement.
4. Implement a one-hour team building session per week in an informal atmosphere where all employees gather and mingle leads to higher levels of employee engagement.

Before actually implementing such measures it is necessary first to assess the current level of employee engagement (in order to be able to measure its evolution - positive or negative - over

time) and to test the potential effectiveness of those measures to increase employee engagement. A survey is the most common method used to measure employee engagement (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2003; Gallup, 2013) and is also suggested as a measure that in and of itself engages employees (Gable, Chyung, Marker & Winiecki, 2010). Thus elaborating a relevant survey, to achieve the two above-mentioned aims, is the next step.

Defining a relevant survey

The survey should not be a long one, in order to get the respondent's attention and to enable the gathering of as many responses as possible. Additionally, it should encompass the best measurement techniques highlighted by the literature review and allow to test if the potential measures would receive a warm welcome and as such be effective.

Part A

From an academic perspective the UWES work engagement scale seems what is most appropriate to measure employee engagement. In spite of the fact that the literature is still inconsistent (IES, 2014, p.52-53) and the definition of terms highly variable the UWES is the first scale academically elaborated to measure engagement and has been used throughout the world (in Japan, Norway, Spain, India & Brazil) by numerous academic studies (respectively: Shimazu, Schaufeli, Kosugi, Suzuki, Nashiwa, Kato, Sakamoto, Irimajiri, Armano, Hirohata, Goto & Kitaoka-Higashigushi, 2008; Nerstad, Richardsen & Martinussen, 2010; Extremera, Sánchez-García, Durán & Rey, 2012; Chaudary, Rangnekar & Barua, 2012; Souza Vazquez, Magnan, Pacico, Hutz & Schaufeli 2015).

Although there are 17 statements used in the original questionnaire, for the purpose of this study only 3 will be used (to guarantee feasibility in terms of time), assessing respectively vigor, dedication and absorption. The selected statements are the 3 first ones from the original questionnaire:

- At my work, I feel bursting with energy (assessing vigor)
- I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose (assessing dedication)
- Time flies when I'm working (assessing absorption)

Part B

From practitioners' perspective Gallup's studies and measurement methods are highly recognized, so much that even scholars actually quote it in their studies (Wollard & Shuck, 2010). Again, in spite of 12 statements only a reduced number (4) will be used for the purpose of this study. In order to assess relevant employee engagement features linked to the previously defined potential measures, the statements have been chosen according to their reflection of the ten C's recommendations that have inspired the elaboration of the four potential measures. The selected statements are the following:

- I know what is expected of me at work (related to C# 3 : clarity)
- At work, my opinions seem to count (related to C# 7 : control)
- In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work (related to C #1 #4 #5 : connect, convey, congratulate)
- I have a best friend at work (related to C# 8 : collaborate)

Part C

Finally to assess more precisely how effective the previously mentioned measures could be, one statement will be dedicated to each measure. They will be stated as hypothesis:

- I would feel happier at work if I had a one on one weekly meeting (for 15 minutes) with my direct supervisor where 1) feedback is given and 2) praise and recognition is given when applicable
- I would feel happier at work if I had 1) clear awareness of the organization's yearly goals, communicated to me through a 30 minutes team meeting, where 2) my contribution to their achievement was clearly defined
- I would feel happier at work if 1) I was allowed and valued for taking initiatives and 2) was able to give feedback to leaders about the company in a constructive discussion
- I would feel happier at work if I participated in a one hour team building session per week in an informal atmosphere where all employees gather and mingle

Participants have been asked to rate those statements from 0 to 6 according to how much they agree with the statement. Each number will mean the following:

0. I completely disagree
1. I disagree
2. I rather disagree
3. I am neutral
4. I rather agree
5. I agree
6. I completely agree

The final table used for the survey can be found in appendix 1.

Since the literature review has highlighted the lack of consensus on both how to define and measure employee engagement this quantitative survey allows to assess the validity of the UWES and Gallup methods. If UWES' statements and Gallup statements are found to be positively correlated it will be possible to conclude that they validate one another. This advancement would bring consistency to the literature, in spite of the absence of one commonly accepted definition, positively correlated results enable to consider that scholars and practitioners are actually talking about the same concept, since equivalent results are found with equivalent measurement methods (surveys).

Additionally, to avoid bias in result analysis, it seems important to note that it is expected to find a opposite correlation between parts B and C. Indeed if respondents rate low in part B (which assesses employee engagement specifically to validate the potential effectiveness of employee engagement measures suggested in part C) it is expected they would rate high in part C. Conversely if respondents rate high in part B (meaning they are already engaged) it is expected they might rate low or medium in part C since employee engagement measures would have less impact on them. Nevertheless the latter correlation, if found to be true, would not necessarily disqualify the interest and use of suggested measures to engage employees even more.

Participants

Quantitative data for this study was collected by E-mail survey. The above-mentioned survey has been sent through email, with a link to the survey hosted by the website SurveyMonkey, to 30 Kindergärten(s) in Munich following the Montessori pedagogy. E-mail addresses of these Kindergärten(s) were obtained through online research mainly through Google.

Data analysis

The results gathered will be filtered through each part A, B and C.

Results will be first analyzed per se as each part of the survey has different goals. First, part A aims to assess employee engagement through the UWES method. Second, part B aims to assess employee engagement (in specific aspects linked to potentially viable measures) according to Gallup's method. Finally, part C aims to assess the potential effectiveness of viable employee engagement measures.

Results will then be analyzed comparatively in order to try to uncover correlations.

First, results from part A and part B will be analyzed in order to assess if the UWES measurement method is equivalent to the Gallup measurement method. It seems relevant to compare measurement scales originating from both the academic and practice arena as both have been contributing to the development of the concept of employee engagement. Hopefully similarly high or low results in both part of the survey would allow to correlate them positively, then validating one another. If results are disparate an absence of correlation will be observed, raising doubts about the equivalence of both methods. The very notion of employee engagement would be questioned as a lack of consistency among measurement methods, would highlight potentially fundamental differences in definition and construction of the concept's basis.

Next, results from part B and C will be analyzed in a body to assess how they influence one another. It is expected that low engagement levels calls for measures to engage employees. Thus engagement levels would be assessed in part B, while part C assesses the potential effectiveness of measures to foster engagement. Consequently, if engagement levels are low and potential measures are judged to be effective, there should be an opposite correlation of low results in part B with high results in part C. However, if engagement levels are low and potential measures are not considered to be effective, there should be a similar correlation of low results in part B with low results in part C. Conversely if employee engagement levels are high, there should be an opposite correlation of high results in part B with low results in part C. Nevertheless, in the case of high employee engagement levels meaning high results in part B combined with high results in part C, the effectiveness of employee engagement measures should still be taken into account, as the increase of employee engagement levels is always desirable.

QUALITATIVE STUDY

Considering the importance of relationships and « emotional » aspects in the study of employee engagement, qualitative research seemed necessary to bring out deeper insights and thus enable a more comprehensive analysis. Due to the scarcity of qualitative research in the academic sphere which favors usually quantitative studies, some time will be spent to clarify specificities of qualitative research before actually diving into the qualitative study performed.

« Qualitative methods seek a deeper truth. They aim to 'study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them,' and they use 'a holistic perspective which preserves the complexities of human behaviour' » (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997, p. 740)

Although qualitative analysis, through field research, might seem less precise than traditional quantitative methods a combination of different techniques grants it precision and comprehensiveness, in a depth much greater than most quantitative analysis allow. Depending on each particular study it is suggested for maximum efficiency to combine different methods of qualitative research such as:

« Examples of qualitative research methods:

[1] Documents—Study of documentary accounts of events, such as meetings

[2] Passive observation—Systematic watching of behaviour and talk in natural occurring settings

[3] Participant observation—Observation in which the researcher also occupies a role or part in the setting, in addition to observing

[4] In depth interviews—Face to face conversation with the purpose of exploring issues or topics in detail. Does not use preset questions, but is shaped by a defined set of topics

[5] Focus groups—Method of group interview which explicitly includes and uses the group interaction to generate data » (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997, p.740)

The combination of two or more methods, when possible and / or appropriate, grants greater credibility to qualitative research since « there is no way of abolishing, or fully controlling for, observer bias in qualitative research » (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997, p.741). In spite of such intrinsic bias, scholars (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997, p.741-742) consider that qualitative research can be relevant as long as it is done rigorously. Three steps will guide this master's thesis qualitative research: the design, the participants and the data analysis.

Design

As explained earlier the goal of this qualitative research is to help provide data and information on how to increase engagement levels within a German Kindergarten in order to answer the question: Which strategies can an educational business, such as a Kindergarten in Germany, develop to foster employee engagement?

Considering that many aspects of employee engagement are related to relationships (Seijts & Crim, 2006) and that Germany's specific employee engagement issue lies exactly in interpersonal interactions, as mentioned earlier (Gallup, 2013, p.94), it seemed pertinent to conduct a qualitative research. Indeed of the ten C's four are intrinsically related to interactions: #1 Connect, #4 Convey, #5 Congratulate and #8 Collaborate; although most of the other C's also have indirect correlations with relationships (Seijts & Crim, 2006).

Setting the study in Munich seemed pertinent as it is the third biggest city in Germany in terms of population, with 1,3 million inhabitants (Statistische Ämter, Des Bundes und Der Länder). Furthermore in Munich parents are offered a broad choice of private Kindergärten(s), among which at least 30 Kindergärten(s) following the Montessori pedagogy. Montessori pedagogy is based on the notion of peace in order « to educate and unite humanity as brothers and sisters, tearing down all barriers and [making] each person a citizen of the world » (Baligadoo, 2014, p.429). Duckworth summarizes Montessori pedagogy as follows:

« A stimulating environment in which the child was free to follow his or her imagination, and in which the teacher was more of a facilitator than an instructor, [...] as well as a classroom centered on cooperation rather than competition. [Maria Montessori] also envisioned a developmental, holistic approach to early education which focused on the child's emotional, ethical and spiritual development rather than merely his or her academic development. [...] Maria Montessori's vision of the classroom [was] a place where children could learn the ways of peaceful conflict resolution on both a personal and global scale. » (Duckworth, 2006, p.39)

Among the 30 Kindergärten(s) in Munich following the Montessori pedagogy, Kindergarten K was selected for its modernity and open-mindedness. Indeed, not only does it follow Montessori

pedagogy but it also encompasses an international aspect, immersing children in a multilingual atmosphere. These qualities are believed to give Kindergarten K an edge above its competitors. Additionally such a cutting-edge spirit in terms of pedagogy would more easily foster an equally modern approach to management.

Participants

The researcher performed a three months internship in Kindergarten K during which she was entrusted with responsibilities similar to those of a regular educator employed for the company.

It is important to mention some aspects of the researcher's perspective & background in order to limit the bias of this qualitative study. On one hand there is a positive bias as mentioned previously in the sense that the researcher associates Kindergarten K, thanks to key elements in its business concept, with potential modernity and sensibility to employee engagement issues. On the other hand there is an opposite bias, that can potentially be negative, which is that the researcher might influence participants during data gathering - particularly through her attitude (an enthusiastic or pessimistic attitude might lead to a variation of some results), or even through potentially competing interests (such as employees feeling in competition with one another). Further bias can exist in the sense that the researcher having performed a literature review already has some expectations in terms of results and might be guiding - unintentionally - participants in the expected direction through the use of a specific set of words or voice intonation. All these elements might affect the results of this qualitative study and should be key elements to nuance the final findings.

To limit the impact of such potential bias several methods of qualitative data collection have been selected and implemented. More precisely four methods of data collection have been used: passive observation, participative observation, documents analysis as well as interviews.

Firstly, observation has been performed both passively and actively. Passive observation consisted in « systematic watching of behaviour and talk in natural occurring settings » (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997, p.740). In this particular case it meant the observation of interactions between employees during normal working activities. Specifically two teams were observed as well as employees entrusted with specific activities unrelated to child caring, encompassing a total of 11 employees, 3 being male and 8 being female. Since passive observation on its own might seem like detective work and could put employees in an uncomfortable situation it needed to be completed.

Thus in addition to close passive observation during a three months period, participative observation was undertaken. In this case the researcher, due to her role as employee also caring for the children, was entrusted with responsibilities and interacted with other employees as their peer. Interactions could be with any employee from the company, but mostly occurred with the 11 above-mentioned employees. Occupying a role in the study's setting allowed for in-depth insights both from internal and external sources. Internally the researcher's feelings of engagement or disengagement were relevant, and more importantly the proximity from being one of the employees led them to be more open and trustworthy, hence facilitated data collection.

Next document analysis has been performed. Weekly team meetings were performed, usually with 4 team members although numbers varied each week due to sick employees or changes within the team. Reports from such meetings were recorded and were a must-read for all team members. In spite of data confidentiality not allowing to recollect those in appendixes, they offered relevant findings. Information was collected both by analysis of the content (mentioning employees

initiatives as well a weekly planning of task distribution) and by observation of the choice of employees to write down the report, which can also be a sign of engagement or disengagement.

Finally interviews were conducted in order to assess in a more detailed manner the relationships, management style and organizational specificities present in Kindergarten K. In spite of the absence of pre-set questions the interviews were guided by previously defined subjects that allowed the researcher to obtain relevant data. Face-to-face and one on one interviews (lasting approximately one hour) were undertaken with 8 employees, both from the direction team and the educative teams. Phone interviews were also performed with 3 employees, initially guided by but not limited to the questions used for the quantitative survey, and lasted each between ten to twenty minutes. All employees interviewed were female.

Data analysis

Quality control methods suggest to have the results double checked by another researcher in order to avoid bias, although scholars acknowledge it is often not possible. (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997, p.742). Here there was no possibility of doing a qualitative research with two researchers as it is done in the context of an individual master thesis, hence the absence of quality control for this qualitative study.

Both passive and participative observation have led the researcher to obtain a general overview of the state of employee engagement within the company and how it is related to specific tasks, relationships as well as individual personality. Such informal data collection through observation and casual conversation has not allowed for written recording, except for some personal messaging. In spite of confidentiality restrictions for Kindergarten K's documents, the researcher was allowed to take her own notes when it comes to analysis of the weekly meetings' reports. Data was analyzed to bring out clues indicating engagement or disengagement from specific employees. Finally both phone and face-to-face interviews have been analyzed through note taking in order to bring out similarities and disparities, in general terms and also according to hierarchy levels. All of the above-mentioned data analysis methods have been used to follow, complement and support the points mentioned in the quantitative survey.

RESULTS

QUANTITATIVE STUDY

The survey was sent through email to 30 Kindergärten(s) in Munich following the Montessori pedagogy. Out of these 30 Kindergärten(s) only one accepted to forward the survey to its employees. Among employees the response rate was 39%. It is not representative of the Munich sample, and thus these results are not relevant as proven guidelines to foster employee engagement growth. The quantitative data is complemented with qualitative data gathered from Kindergarten K.

Results

Description of results for part A

At my work, I feel bursting with energy (assessing vigor):

9.09% rather disagreed, 54.55% of respondents were neutral, 27.27% rather agreed, 9.09% agreed.

I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose (assessing dedication):

9.09% of respondents were neutral, 45.45% rather agree, 18.18% agreed, 27.27% completely agreed.

Time flies when I'm working (assessing absorption):

27.27% rather disagreed, 27.27% of respondents were neutral, 27.27% rather agreed, 9.09% agreed, 9.09% completely agreed.

Description of results for part B

I know what is expected of me at work (related to C# 3 : clarity):

9.09% rather disagreed, 9.09% of respondents were neutral, 45.45% rather agreed, 9.09% agreed, 27.27% completely agreed.

At work, my opinions seem to count (related to C# 7 : control):

27.27% completely disagreed, 18.18% disagreed, 9.09% of respondents were neutral, 9.09% rather agreed, 27.27% agreed, 9.09% completely agreed.

In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work (related to C #1 #4 #5 : connect, convey, congratulate):

36.36% completely disagreed, 9.09% disagreed, 18.18% of respondents were neutral, 18.18% rather agree, 9.09% agreed, 9.09% completely agreed.

I have a best friend at work (related to C# 8 : collaborate):

36.36% disagreed, 18.18% rather disagreed, 36.36% of respondents were neutral, 9.09% rather agreed.

Description of results for part C

I would feel happier at work if I had a one on one weekly meeting (for 15 minutes) with my direct supervisor where 1) feedback is given and 2) praise and recognition is given when applicable:

27.27% of respondents were neutral, 27.27% agreed, 45.45% completely agreed.

I would feel happier at work if I had 1) clear awareness of the organization's yearly goals, communicated to me through a 30 minutes team meeting, where 2) my contribution to their achievement was clearly defined:

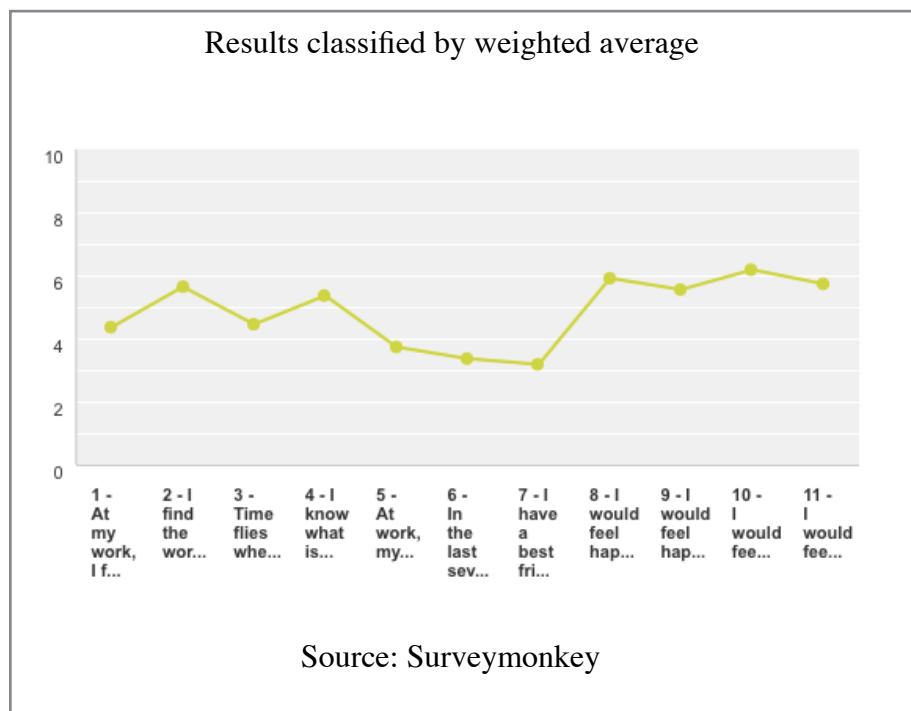
18.18% of respondents were neutral, 36.36% rather agreed, 18.18% agreed, 27.27% completely agreed.

I would feel happier at work if 1) I was allowed and valued for taking initiatives and 2) was able to give feedback to leaders about the company in a constructive discussion:

18.18% of respondents were neutral, 27.27% agreed, 54.55% completely agreed.

I would feel happier at work if I participated in a one hour team building session per week in an informal atmosphere where all employees gather and mingle:

27.27% of respondents were neutral, 9.09% rather agreed, 27.27% agreed, 36.36% completely agreed.



Discussion

For the discussion to be relevant results will be classified in two categories: results between I completely disagree and I am neutral will be considered negative, while results between I agree and I completely agree will be considered positive.

Interpretation of results for part A

At my work, I feel bursting with energy (assessing vigor):

63,64% of negative results, 36,36% of positive results.

Such results indicate employees predominantly do not feel vigorous at their work, indicating rather low levels of engagement.

I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose (assessing dedication):

9.09% of negative results, 90,9% of positive results.

Conversely the dedication seems to reflect a strong engagement from employees, and contrasts strongly with vigor. In this case this might be related to the sector: educational sector is known to be intrinsically engaging since employees feel their work has an impact.

Time flies when I'm working (assessing absorption):

54,54% of negative results, 45,45% of positive results.

Results are mitigated, although the majority of respondents seem to indicate a lack of absorption in their work the differences are not so pronounced.

Overall the UWES measurement scale suggests the workforce lacks engagement. However disparities are strong and the intrinsic purpose of educational jobs raises engagement levels, although it could still benefit from some increase.

Interpretation of results for part B

I know what is expected of me at work (related to C# 3 : clarity):

18,18% of negative results, 81,81% of positive results.

Numbers seem to highlight a strong engagement from employees. It might be correlated to the sector: educators and doctors are generally aware of their mission since it is at the core of their jobs, while such clarity might not be engrained in other jobs in business for example.

At work, my opinions seem to count (related to C# 7 : control):

54,54% of negative results, 45,45% of positive results.

Results are not so pronounced but indicate nevertheless a low level of employee engagement on this aspect.

In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work (related to C #1 #4 #5 : connect, convey, congratulate):

63,63% of negative results, 36,36% of positive results.

These numbers are more pronounced than those from the previous question, and they seem to confirm the previous diagnosis of low levels of employee engagement.

I have a best friend at work (related to C# 8 : collaborate):

90,9% of negative results, 9.09% of positive results.

Results strongly indicate this aspect of employee engagement is lacking thus leading to low levels of employee engagement. This data combined with the above-mentioned results comforts the overall feeling of a lack of employee engagement.

Overall the Gallup measurement scale suggests the workforce lacks engagement.

Interpretation of results for part C

I would feel happier at work if I had a one on one weekly meeting (for 15 minutes) with my direct supervisor where 1) feedback is given and 2) praise and recognition is given when applicable:

27.27% of negative results, 72,72% of positive results.

I would feel happier at work if I had 1) clear awareness of the organization's yearly goals, communicated to me through a 30 minutes team meeting, where 2) my contribution to their achievement was clearly defined:

18.18% of negative results, 81,81% of positive results.

I would feel happier at work if 1) I was allowed and valued for taking initiatives and 2) was able to give feedback to leaders about the company in a constructive discussion:

18.18% of negative results, 81,82% of positive results.

I would feel happier at work if I participated in a one hour team building session per week in an informal atmosphere where all employees gather and mingle:

27.27% of negative results, 73,02% of positive results.

All statements have been welcomed with positive results suggesting that such measures would be welcomed positively by employees and thus would be effective in raising employee engagement levels.

Correlation of results between part A & B

The question here is to find out whether the UWES measurement method is equivalent to the Gallup measurement method. In spite of mitigated results both the UWES and Gallup inspired statements tend to indicate rather low levels of employee engagement. Results from both parts of the survey are alike and uncover peaks in employee engagement related to intrinsic aspects of educational professions, similarly to medical professions, as previously mentioned in the literature review (Seijts, & Crim, 2006). It is possible to conclude that both measurement methods validate one another, although using both of the full original versions would enable for greater precision and could be studied in future research.

Correlation of results between part B & C

The purpose of analyzing these two parts together is to uncover if and how they influence one another. Expectations are, as mentioned earlier, if the assessment of engagement in part B generates negative results then potential engagement strategies in part C should lead to positive results. Such expectations seems to have been numerically confirmed. Surprisingly though the positive responses to the latter strategies in part C are much more pronounced than the lack of employee engagement in part B. Thus it suggests than even in situations when employee engagement is at average levels, strategies to engage employees can be very effective.

QUALITATIVE STUDY

A distinction between the findings and their potential meaning is « is rarely possible [in a qualitative study], since the results are by definition an interpretation of the data » (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997, p.742). Nevertheless the validity of such interpretation should be assessed according to academic standards. Greenhalgh & Taylor recommend the division of the results in three parts: 1) the description of the results, 2) the description of the conclusions derived from such results, and finally 3) the assessment of the potential transferability of such conclusions to other settings (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997, p.742-743).

Results

For greater clarity results will first be presented following the data collection method, and next patterns will be highlighted. The individual behaviors listed below have been illustrated with practical examples in order to provide clarity, and linked when possible to previous knowledge in order to guarantee both coherence and legitimacy.

Data collection methods

Data was collected through four methods: passive observation, active observation, document analysis and interviews. Each one led to variable results which will be listed below.

Passive observation

Passive observation proved to be relevant and its results will be gathered in two main points; first the lack of initiative & organization and second the presence of positive relationships.

A lack of initiative was clearly perceivable from two employees, who have by now resigned. Behaviors included: sitting at a desk doing paper work instead of interacting with the children, no implementation of an artistic project for each employee (although required by the direction team), absence of classification or arrangement of the classroom features. Such a lack of initiative was complemented by a general lack of organization. The latter was most perceivable through one employee in charge of organizing the schedules. Due to several, repeated and unforeseen absences she had to go talk to all team members to re-organize the schedules which had undergone last minute changes due to employees' absenteeism. This particular employee's behavior included walking around the Kindergarten to talk to each team as well as interacting with many employees at once, either in a cooperative or in a conflictual fashion.

Positive relationships were also observed between many of the employees. Specific behavior included: informal smily conversations, leaving the workplace together talking and smiling, meeting outside the workplace for leisure. These behaviors were manifested at different moments and often in a repeated manner by 5 of the 11 employees specifically observed.

Active observation

Active observation seems to have enabled the gathering of relevant data for employee engagement, completing the more superficial passive observation.

On the one hand complaints have been observed and seem to be related with a recurring theme: no possibilities to speak up. This notion seems to be related to both C#1connect and C#7 control as it englobes being able to voice one's ideas as well as to be heard in a positive interaction with superiors. Below are some of the complaints collected from employees

- « I feel they have not acted fairly, it was their responsibility and now I have to pay the price for their mistake. But I do not want to create drama, so I won't talk about it with [direction team member x]. »
- « They have mis-organized the schedule and then I am blamed and now there is unnecessary gossip about it. I have already tried to talk to [direction team member x] and I am tired of this situation. »

- « I have tried several times to talk about it [organization and management suggestions] with [direction team member x]. She does not want to hear any suggestions. Now I am tired of trying to change things. »

Only one of the employees quoted above has left the company by now. It seems employees do have an opinion about management, organizational or practical issues, in spite of not feeling heard.

On the other hand positive relationships were observed several times in the course of the three months internship. Observed behaviors included the following: suggesting sporty & leisure meetings outside of the workplace, using phones during conversations to show photos or add each other on Facebook, offering to help one another for tasks considered difficult or annoying, making jokes, being smily. These behaviors seem in sharp contrast contrast with the complaints and remind the statement #10 in Gallup's Q12 « I have a best friend at work » (Gallup, 2013).

Hence the active observation's results are mixed: interactions with peers seem to excel while the ability to voice one's ideas seem to be at a low point. Engagement results should be nuanced in the light of such contrasting aspects.

Document analysis

During weekly team meetings, usually with 4 members although this number was variable, reports were hand written and then recorded on computer. These meetings aimed to guarantee awareness of specific information by all team members, as well as to implement practical adjustments and plan the weekly distribution of tasks. There was no room for employees to tackle a subject not encompassed in the previously-mentioned themes. In terms of participation all employees seemed equally engaged and seemed to volunteer evenly to write the report or do specific tasks. Two employees participating in such team meetings have now left and no difference in behavior had been noted compared to those who are still employed at Kindergarten K. Thus the researcher poses doubts on whether or not it is a relevant method to gather data on employee engagement. Indeed participative meeting are intrinsically engaging activities and one not participating might appear to be extremely disengaged, thus for companies not suffering from extremely low rates of employee engagement this qualitative measurement method might not be the most appropriate.

Interviews

Interviewing 4 employees and 4 members from the direction team proved to be an extremely interesting exercise. Differences due to hierarchical positioning have been uncovered and main elements raised through these one on one meetings seem parallel.

Direction team members showed no awareness of employee engagement as a concept although some were aware of a few of its components. One direction team member in charge of the communication, marketing and human resources of the Kindergarten noted the importance of relationships, she says « I insisted on meeting personally every new employee and having a short conversation, even if it last only 5 to 10 minutes. Even though I have not necessarily hired them myself, it is important that I know everyone working in the Kindergarten and it is important that everyone knows me personally ». Indeed a personal interaction is the starting point for good relationships between employees and their superiors, as highlighted by #C1 connect (Seijts & Crim, 2006). None the direction team members manifested any desire to hear employees' opinions, not that they would necessarily be against it, but the thought probably has not crossed their minds.

However two of the direction team members expressed complaints about some employees, both in general and specifically pointing one person, stating they were not performant enough (in the sense that they lacked organization so certain important tasks were delayed or completed with a disruptive delay, or they lacked initiative so the service offered to the children was not as complete as expected).

Employees interviews' results were more mixed. Two of the interviewed employees have by now left the Kindergarten, which might indicate a lack of engagement from their side and hence explain the variability of the results. Only one of the four interviewed employees had no complaints at all and seemed extremely satisfied with the situation as a whole, it seems important to mention she had recently been promoted. This seems an important factor as career progression is a key element in employee engagement mentioned by various scholars (IES, 2004; Seijts & Crim, 2006) and practitioners (BW, 2013; Gallup, 2013). The two employees who have by now resigned mentioned they felt they were not able to voice their opinions and there had a few misunderstandings with superiors which led to some gossip within the company. These two employees seems to express broken relationships with hierarchy due both to misunderstandings - reminding C#1 connect - and to lack of positive interactions; which can be speaking up - reminding C#7 control - and receiving praise - reminding C#5 congratulate - among other possibilities (Seijts & Crim, 2006).

Patterns

This qualitative research enable to uncover specific elements. First relationships, whether positive or mitigated appeared to be at the heart of the Kindergarten. Second, employees' ability to voice their ideas has been a recurring theme throughout the three months period of observation. Finally direction team members have voiced slight dissatisfaction concerning employees attitude and performance.

Relationships follow different patterns according to who they involve. Peers seem to have positive interactions, leading to believe that C#8 collaborate (Seijts & Crim, 2006) is fulfilled. In contrast relationships involving different hierarchical levels are more mitigated and seem to be broken sometimes; uncovering a possible crack in C#1 connect (Seijts & Crim, 2006). Most employees seem either satisfied or neutral (not mentioning the subject) while a few (3) have shown clear dissatisfaction (consequently 2 of the dissatisfied employees have left).

Employees' control over their work and ability to voice their ideas, as encompassed by C#7 (Seijts & Crim, 2006), seems to be a major issue for some employees. In Kindergarten K 4 employees have expressed they feel the desire to speak up and have not been able to find an attentive listener.

Finally the direction team also seems to express some dissatisfaction with the state of the workplace. Of the 4 members interviewed 3 have voiced some complaint towards performance or employees' attitude.

Conclusions

The qualitative research has enabled to highlight mitigated results concerning employee engagement. In order to limit personal or cultural bias, behavior has been illustrated with practical examples and analyzed in the light of the information in the literature review. Correlating behavioral results with key elements in employee engagement identified by the literature review

enables to assess an average situation. Among the 11 employees studied in detail 4 have manifested more thoroughly their dissatisfaction while the rest showed no sign of disengagement. The 7 remaining employees split themselves between neutral or engaged employees. For a proper perspective on the state of engagement in Kindergarten K according to the qualitative research those numbers have been transferred to percentage. 36% of employees of the observed group are disengaged, while the remaining 64% encompass engaged and neutral employees. The qualitative research did not enable for precise delimitation between these last two categories. Although the majority of employees seem rather engaged, it is important to assess that disengaged employees are the ones draining down businesses and poisoning the work atmosphere, as highlighted in the literature review.

Qualitative results seem to be coherent with quantitative results as both highlight a mitigated situation. On the one hand engagement levels are reasonably high because partly engrained in the essence of the educational profession. On the other hand organizational and management aspects could benefit from implementing strategies to foster employee engagement. In particular it is interesting to note that the qualitative review has thoroughly mentioned employees' desire to speak up, and the corresponding strategy in the quantitative research has obtained high results (above 80% of positive results).

Transferability of conclusions

These findings seem very specific to Kindergarten K as the qualitative analysis has been performed on a small group of 11 individuals and over a short period of time that does not ensure transferability of conclusions to other settings. However the methods used for this qualitative research could be useful for further research on the subject, as later detailed in future possibilities.

CONCLUSION

LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

On one hand this master thesis benefits from a practical insight into employee engagement issues thanks to the field study in Kindergarten K. However on the other hand it lacks applicability on a broader scale.

Indeed both the lack of respondents to the survey combined with its short length do not enable this study to be representative, neither in early child development organization nor in the whole of Germany. The survey had been specifically shortened compared to their original versions to try to gather as many responses as possible. In spite of that, such low numbers of respondents do not enable for representative findings. The original versions of the two surveys used consisted of more than 10 questions each both for UWES and Gallup. Keeping only 3 to 4 questions in each case from the original version does limit the precision and effectiveness of employee engagement measurement.

The findings from this master thesis and potential measures to engage employees can nevertheless be useful and implemented for educational institutions in general, but proof and measurement of its efficiency remains for further study.

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

Future possibilities essentially encompass broadening the case study in order to strengthen its data.

First, concerning employee engagement measurement itself, it seems it would be relevant to do a study enabling a deeper research that allows to use both full original versions of UWES and Gallup measurement methods. Indeed using the full surveys would enable better and more precise measurement of the actual state of employee engagement. Furthermore comparing the results from the two surveys would be relevant for the development of the concept of employee engagement itself. If results are similar, hence the measurement methods are equivalent and tend towards a common definition of employee engagement. Conversely if results are disparate the notion of employee engagement itself can be questioned in the sense: do practitioners (Gallup) and academics (UWES) actually study and measure the same concept?

Second, the scope could be extended to the whole of Germany and / or to encompass more formats of early child development organizations.

Here only Montessori Kindergärten(s) have been studied, which are essentially private structures in Germany. It seems relevant to expand the scope to Kindergärten(s) both in the public and private arena, thus encompassing a broader range of pedagogical concepts. Analyzing then the differences or similarities in engagement levels according to the private and public sector could be pertinent for further research.

This case study has focused on the city of Munich, in which 1,3 million of the more than 81 millions of Germans live (D Statis, Statistisches Bundesamt). In spite of being one of the largest cities in the country with great economic activity, numbers show it is not representative of the

whole of Germany. Although a countrywide study might be difficult to put in place, gathering some of the most populated cities in the country for a study might be relevant. The six most populated cities are respectively Berlin (3,4 millions inhabitants), Hamburg (1,7 million inhabitants), Munich, (1,3 million inhabitants), Cologne (1 million inhabitants), Frankfurt (679 664 inhabitants) and Stuttgart (606 588 inhabitants) (Statistische Ämter, Des Bundes und Der Länder). Ideally engagement data could highlight regional differences. It would particularly interesting if there is a clear regional division in engagement levels to make the parallel with other elements such as salaries. Gallup's 2013 research highlighted lower engagement levels in the East of Germany (33% of engaged employees) than in the West (55% of engaged employees), and correlated it, among other elements, with salary differences: « workers in West Germany earn 3,350 euros per month on average, while workers in East Germany earn 2,547 euros per month » (Gallup, 2013). It would be interesting to observe if educational institutions' engagement levels follow the global nationwide trend.

REFERENCES

Journals, magazines, newspapers in print format

- Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 33(4), 692-724
- Bakker, A. B. & Schaufeli W.B., (2008). Positive Organizational Behavior: Engaged Employees in Flourishing Organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 29(2), 147-154
- Bakker, A. B., Schaufeli W.B. & Salanova M., (2006). The Measurement of Work Engagement With a Short Questionnaire, A Cross-National Study. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66(4), 701-716
- Shimazu, A., Schaufeli W.B., Kosugi, S., Suzuki, A., Nashiwa, H., Kato, A., Sakamoto, M., Irimajiri, H., Armano, S., Hirohata, K., Goto, R., Kitaoka-Higashigushi, K., (2008). Work Engagement in Japan: Validation of the Japanese Version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 57(3), 510-523
- Nerstad, C. G. L., Richardsen, A. M., Martinussen, M. (2010). Factorial validity of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) across occupational groups in Norway. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 51(4), 326-333
- Extremera, N., Sánchez-García, M., Durán, M. A., Rey, L. (2012). Examining the Psychometric Properties of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale in Two Spanish Multi-occupational Samples. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 20(1), 105-110
- Chaudary, R., Rangnekar, S., Barua, M. K., (2012). Psychometric Evaluation of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale in an Indian Sample. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Management Research and Innovation* 8(3), 343-350
- Souza Vazquez, A. C., Magnan, E. S., Pacico, J. C., Hutz, C. S., & Schaufeli W.B. (2015). Adaptation and Validation of the Brazilian Version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. *Psico usf* 20(2), 207-217
- Shuck, B. & Reio Jr., T. J.. (2011). The Employee Engagement Landscape and HRD: How Do We Link Theory and Scholarship to Current Practice?. *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 13(4), 419-428
- Shuck, B., Twyford, D., Reio Jr., T. J., Shuck, A. (2014). Human Resource Development Practices and Employee Engagement: Examining the Connection With Employee Turnover Intentions. *Human Resources Development Quarterly* 25(2), 239-270
- Harter, J.K.; Hayes, T. L.; Schmidt, F.L. (2002). Business-Unit-Level Relationship Between Employee Satisfaction, Employee Engagement, and Business Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 87(2) 268-279

Wollard, K. & Shuck, B. (2010). Employee Engagement and HRD: A Seminal Review of the Foundations. *Human Resource Development Review* 9(1) 89-110

Roof, R. A. (2015). The Association of Individual Spirituality on Employee Engagement: The Spirit at Work. *Journal of Business Ethics* 130(3) 585-599

Wiley, W. J. (2014). Using Employee Opinions about Organizational Performance to Enhance Employee Engagement Surveys: Model Building And Validation. *People & strategy : journal of the Human Resource Planning Society* 36(4) 39-49

Gable, S. A., Chyung, S. Y., Marker, A. & Winiecki, D. (2010). How should organizational leaders use employee engagement survey data? *Performance Improvement* 49(4) 17-25

Wagner, B. D. & French, L. (2010). Motivation, Work Satisfaction, and Teacher Change Among Early Childhood Teachers. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education* 24(2) 152-171

Sargent, T. & Hannum, E. (2005) Keeping Teachers Happy: Job Satisfaction among Primary School Teachers in Rural Northwest China. *Comparative Education Review* 49(2) 173-204

Klassen, R. M. & Anderson, C. J. K. (2009). How times change: secondary teachers' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in 1962 and 2007. *British Educational Research Journal* 35(5) 745-759

Greenhalgh, T. & Taylor, R. (1997). Papers that go beyond numbers (qualitative research). *British Medical Journal*, 315(7110), 740-743

Duckworth, C. (2006). Teaching peace: a dialogue on the Montessori method. *Journal of Peace Education*, 3(1), 39-53

Baligadoo, P. D. (2014). Peace Profile: Maria Montessori - Peace Through Education. *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice*, 26, 427-433

Books, chapters in books, reports, etc

Bakker, A. B. & Schaufeli W.B. (2003). *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale Preliminary Manual*. Utrecht: Occupational Health Psychology Unit Utrecht University.

Sugawara, S. K., Tanaka, S., Okazaki, S., Watanabe, K., Sadato, N. (2012). Social Rewards Enhance Offline Improvements in Motor Skill. *PLoS ONE* 7(11): e48174. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0048174.

Bakker, A. B. & Schaufeli W.B. (2010). Defining and measuring work engagement: Bringing clarity to the concept. In A. B. Bakker & M. P. Leiter (Eds), *Work engagement: A handbook of essential theory and research* (pp. 10-24). New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Bakker, A. B. & Leiter, M. P. (2010). Where to go from here: Integration and future research on work engagement. In A. B. Bakker & M. P. Leiter (Eds), *Work engagement: A handbook of essential theory and research* (pp. 181-196). New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Robinson D., Perryman S., Hayday, S. (2004). The Drivers of Employee Engagement. Institute for Employment Studies. Report 408.

Robinson D.; Hooker H. ; Hayday, S. (2007). Engagement: The Continuing Story. Institute for Employment Studies. Report 447.

Robinson D. & Gifford, J. (2014). The Future of Engagement, Thought Piece Collection. Institute for Employment Studies. Engage for Success Thought Leadership Paper No 2014-01.

Reddington, M. (2014). The future of engagement: Conversational practice. In Robinson D. & Gifford, J. (Eds), *The Future of Engagement, Thought Piece Collection* (pp. 27-30). Institute for Employment Studies. Engage for Success Thought Leadership Paper No 2014-01.

Cattermole, G. (2014). The future of employee surveys. In Robinson D. & Gifford, J. (Eds), *The Future of Engagement, Thought Piece Collection* (pp. 31-34). Institute for Employment Studies. Engage for Success Thought Leadership Paper No 2014-01.

Harter J.K., Schmidt F.L., Keyes C. L. (2002). Well-Being in the Workplace and its Relationship to Business Outcomes: A Review of the Gallup Studies. In Keyes C. L. & Haidt J. (Eds), *Flourishing: The Positive Person and the Good Life* (pp. 205-224). Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Doyle, C. (2011). *Dictionary*.

Dodson, F. (2007) . *Tout se joue avant six ans*. France : Marabout.

Online resources

Mann, A. & Harter, J. (2016, January 7). The Worldwide Employee Engagement Crisis. Gallup Business Journal. Retrieved from: <http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/188033/worldwide-employee-engagement-crisis.aspx>

Institute for Employment Studies (IES). (2012). *Employee engagement in Higher Education Institutions - a toolkit*. Retrieved 2016, January 22 from: <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/project/employee-engagement-higher-education-institutions-toolkit>

Hein, R. (2014, July 30). Tips for Measuring and Improving Employee Engagement. CIO. Retrieved from: <http://www.cio.com/article/2459447/careers-staffing/tips-for-measuring-and-improving-employee-engagement.html>

Sorenson, S. (2013, June 20). How Employee Engagement Drives Growth. Gallup Business Journal. Retrieved from: <http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/163130/employee-engagement-drives-growth.aspx>

Petrone, P. (2015, October 6). 5 Ways to Motivate Your Employees (Without Spending Any More Money). LinkedIn Talent Blog. Retrieved from: <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/employee-retention/2015/5-ways-to-motivate-your-employees-without-spending-any-more-money>

Lucas, S. (2013, June 11). 7 Ways to Motivate Without Money. Inc.. Retrieved from: <http://www.inc.com/suzanne-lucas/7-ways-to-motivate-without-money.html>

LinkedIn Talent Solutions. (2015). Why & How People Change Jobs. Retrieved December, 18, 2015, from: https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/business/talent-solutions/global/en_us/job-switchers/PDF/job-switchers-global-report-english.pdf

Petrone, P. (2015, September 24). 5 Groundbreaking Perks That Truly Help to Retain Great Talent. LinkedIn Talent Blog. Retrieved from: <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/2015/09/5-groundbreaking-perks-that-truly-help-to-retain-great-talent>

Petrone, P. (2014, November 13). Want A Raise? Take A Vacation. LinkedIn Pulse. Retrieved from: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20141113175323-283620963-why-52-4-billion-in-free-work-is-bad-for-business>

Robinson, J. (2014, September 24). The Secret to Increased Productivity: Taking Time Off. Entrepreneur. Retrieved from: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/237446>

Blank, C. What Are the Benefits of Taking a Vacation. USA Today. Retrieved December, 18, 2015, from: <http://traveltips.usatoday.com/benefits-taking-vacation-1755.html>

Schwartz, T. (2013, February 9). Relax! You'll Be More Productive. Sunday Review, Opinion. The New York Times. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/10/opinion/sunday/relax-youll-be-more-productive.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1

CEO: Take more naps, vacations to boost productivity. (2013, February 11). The Daily Briefing. The Advisory Board Company. Retrieved from: <https://www.advisory.com/Daily-Briefing/2013/02/11/CEO-Take-more-naps-vacations-to-boost-productivity>

Gamification. In *Badgeville*. Retrieved December, 19, 2015, from: <https://badgeville.com/wiki/Gamification>

Gabe Zichermann. In *About.me*. Retrieved December, 19, 2015, from: <https://about.me/gzicherm>

Petrone, P. (2015, October 1). The Biggest Lesson Recruiters Can Learn From Steve Jobs. LinkedIn Talent Blog. Retrieved from: <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/inspiring-stories/2015/the-biggest-lesson-recruiters-can-learn-from-steve-jobs>

Crabtree, S. (2013, October 8). Worldwide, 13% of Employees Are Engaged at Work. Gallup. Retrieved from: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/165269/worldwide-employees-engaged-work.aspx>

Craig, W. (2014, October 24). What Is Company Culture, and How do You Change It?. Forbes, Entrepreneurs. Retrieved from: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/williamcraig/2014/10/24/what-is-company-culture-and-how-do-you-change-it/>

Doyle, A. (2015, December 18). What Is Company Culture?. About careers, About.com. Retrieved from: <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/jobsearchglossary/g/glossary-definition.htm>

- Google Offices (Googleplex) Around The World. Hongkiat. Retrieved December, 20, 2015, from: <http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/google-offices-googleplex-around-the-world-photos/>
- Patel, S. (2015, August 6). 10 Examples of Companies With Fantastic Cultures. Entrepreneur. Retrieved from: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/249174>
- Luijke, J. (2013, December 9). Squarespace Voted Crain's Best Place to Work in NYC for Two Years in A Row. SquareSpace Blog. Retrieved from: <http://blog.squarespace.com/blog/squarespace-voted-crains-best-place-to-work-in-nyc-for-two-years-in-a-row>
- Graham, M. (2015, July 15). The secret to building a successful company culture. TNW News. <http://thenextweb.com/futureofwork/2015/07/15/the-secret-to-building-a-successful-company-culture/>
- Daisyme, P. (2015, April 7). Creating a Company Culture Where Employees Never Leave. Entrepreneur. Retrieved from: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/243134>
- Gay, S. (2011, February 15). Game Thinking - The Business of Gaming (Gamification). Slideshare. Retrieved from: <http://fr.slideshare.net/stephengay/game-thinking-the-business-of-gaming-gamification>
- Crim, D. ; Seijts, G. (2006, March / April). What Engages Employees the Most OR, the Ten Cs of Employee Engagement. Ivey Business Journal. Retrieved from : <http://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/what-engages-employees-the-most-or-the-ten-cs-of-employee-engagement/>
- Straz, M. (2015, February 9). 4 Ways Encouraging Employee Engagement Improves the Bottom Line. Entrepreneur. Retrieved from: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/242637>
- Nink, M. (2013, April 26). Low Employee Wellbeing and Engagement Hurt German Companies. Gallup Business Journal. Retrieved from: <http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/162053/low-employee-wellbeing-engagement-hurt-german-companies.aspx>
- Boushey, H. ; Glynn, S. J. (2012, November 16). There Are Significant Business Costs to Replacing Employees. Center for American Progress. Retrieved from: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/labor/report/2012/11/16/44464/there-are-significant-business-costs-to-replacing-employees/>
- 21 Employee Turnover Insights. Quantum Workplace. Retrieved 2015, December 21 from: <http://www.quantumworkplace.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Resources-Whitepapers-21-Employee-Turnover-Insights.pdf>
- Towers Watson (TW). (2012) *Global Workforce Study. Engagement at Risk: Driving Strong Performance in a Volatile Global Environment*. Retrieved 2015, December 22 from: <https://www.towerswatson.com/Insights/IC-Types/Survey-Research-Results/2012/07/2012-Towers-Watson-Global-Workforce-Study>
- Gallup. (2013) *State of the Global Workplace*. Retrieved 2015, December 22 from: <http://www.gallup.com/services/176735/state-global-workplace.aspx%20>

Frontstream Blog. (2014, January 20) *30 Inspirational Employee Engagement Quotes*. Retrieved from: <http://www.frontstream.com/30-inspirational-employee-engagement-quotes/>

Daisyme, P. (2015, August 12) The Unique Cultures of 10 Hugely Successful Companies. Retrieved from: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/249293>

Chesky, B. (2014, April 20). Don't F*ck Up the Culture. Medium. Retrieved from: <https://medium.com/@bchesky/dont-fuck-up-the-culture-597cde9ee9d4#.sqsea0ucl>

Welch, M. (2014, July 28) How Do You Define Employee Engagement?. IPR: Institute for Public Relations. Retrieved from: <http://www.instituteforpr.org/define-employee-engagement/>

Dicke, C.. Employee Engagement: I Want It, What Is It?. eSalesTrack. Retrieved 2015, December 25 from: <https://est05.esalestrack.com/eSalesTrack/Content/Content.ashx?file=52eebe5-d7d7-45e1-a242-c9d4207f1d9f.pdf>

Wellins, R. S.; Bernthal, P.; Phelps, M. Retrieved 2015, December 25 from: <http://www.ddiworld.com/resources/library/white-papers-monographs/employee-engagement>

West Jet. Great Jobs. Retrieved 2016, January 2nd from: <https://www.westjet.com/guest/en/jobs/ownership-benefits.shtml> & <https://www.westjet.com/pdf/greatWestJetJobs.pdf>

Cardoso, L.; Wright, R.; Gott, J. (2013, March). Gender Matters for Generation Y. A.T. Kearney, Woman's Forum. Retrieved 2016, January 2nd from: https://www.atkearney.com/web/women-s-forum/detail/-/asset_publisher/VMEx2L1PhjPS/content/gender-matters-for-generation-y/10192

Airbnb Office San Francisco. Custom Spaces. Retrieved January, 6, 2016, from: <https://customspaces.com/office/ZewNn5vLy4/airbnb-office-san-francisco/>

Carnegie, D. (1936). *How to win friends and influence people*. Vermilion; 2006 Edition, p. 5/6.

Robinson, J. (2006, November 9). In Praise of Praising Your Employees. Gallup Business Journal. Retrieved from: <http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/25369/praise-praising-your-employees.aspx>

Sutherland, A. (2006, June 25) What Shamu Taught Me About a Happy Marriage. Fashion and Style. The New York Times. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/25/fashion/25love.html?ex=1169438400&en=3edcee0d461222fa&ei=5087&excamp=mkt_shamu

Dewhurst, M.; Guthridge, M.; Mohr, E. (2009, November). Motivating people: Getting beyond money. McKinsey & Company. Insights and Publications. Retrieved from: http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/organization/motivating_people_getting_beyond_money

McKinsey & Company, The Conference Board. (2012) *The State of Human Capital*. False Summit. Retrieved from: <http://www.mckinsey.com/search.aspx?q=employee+engagement>

Snell, J. (2011, October 6). Steve Jobs: Making a dent in the universe. MacWorld. Retrieved from: http://www.macworld.com/article/1162827/steve_jobs_making_a_dent_in_the_universe.html

Hershatter, A.; Epstein, M. (2010, June). Millennials and the World of Work: An Organization and Management Perspective. *Journal of Business and Psychology*. Retrieved on 2016, January 8 from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225557983_Millennials_and_the_World_of_Work_An_Organization_and_Management_Perspective

Training Journal. (2014, February 18) *The Power of praise and recognition*. Retrieved from: <https://www.trainingjournal.com/articles/feature/power-praise-and-recognition>

DiSalvo, D. (2012, November 9). Study: Receiving a Compliment has Same Positive Effect as Receiving Cash. *Forbes, Pharma & Healthcare*. Retrieved from: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/daviddisalvo/2012/11/09/study-receiving-a-compliment-has-same-positive-effect-as-receiving-cash/>

National Institute for Physiological Sciences (2012, November 8). A scientific explanation to why people perform better after receiving a compliment. Press release. Retrieved from: <http://www.nips.ac.jp/eng/contents/release/entry/2012/11/post-223.html>

The Culture Works. *A Culture of Recognition: The Teachings of The Carrot Principle*. Retrieved 2016 January, 9 from: <http://www.thecultureworks.com/services/speaking/a-culture-of-recognition-the-teachings-of-the-carrot-principle/>

Rowe, W. G.; Guerrero, L. (2011). *Cases in Leadership*. Second Edition. p.202/203. Sage Publications. Retrieved 2016 January, 9 from: <https://books.google.fr/books?id=ETVmYQ09-yAC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr#v=onepage&q&f=false>

McLain, D.; Krieger, J. (2013, July 25). Surveys Alone Won't Boost Your Employees' Engagement. *Gallup Business Journal*. Retrieved from: <http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/163424/surveys-alone-won-boost-employees-engagement.aspx>

Asplund, J.; Elliot, G. (2015, October 8). Employees Who Use Their Strengths Outperform Those Who Don't. *Gallup Business Journal*. Retrieved from: <http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/186044/employees-strengths-outperform-don.aspx>

Gallup, Strengths. (2009) *Gallup Recognition Interview*. Retrieved 2016, January 10 from: https://www.google.fr/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKEwiMzPis0Z_KAhWBWj4KHdarDRAQFggdMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fstrengths.gallup.com%2Ffile%2F116332%2FGallup-Recognition-Interview.aspx&usg=AFQjCNGhJiqcEiCkWd6I3yso9ZiTzNqLhg

Blessing White Research; GP Strategies (2013, January). *Employee Engagement, Research Update, Beyond the numbers: A practical approach for individuals, managers, and executives*. Retrieved 2016, January 10 from: <https://blessingwhite.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Employee-Engagement-Research-Report-2013.pdf>

Hammock Inc. (2009, December 16) 10 Steps for Conducting an Effective Exit Interview. National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB). Retrieved from: <http://www.nfib.com/article/10-steps-for-conducting-an-effective-exit-interview-50358/>

Taylor, B. (2014, April 14). Why Amazon Is Copying Zappos and Paying Employees to Quit. Harvard Business Review, Organizational Culture. Retrieved from: <https://hbr.org/2014/04/why-amazon-is-copying-zappos-and-paying-employees-to-quit/>

Bezos, J. P. (2014, April). 2014 Letter to shareholders. US Securities and Exchange Commission. Retrieved from: <https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1018724/000119312514137753/d702518dex991.htm>

Molina, B. (2015, August 5). Netflix to offer paid 'unlimited' parental leave. USA Today. Retrieved from: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2015/08/04/netflix-offer-paid-unlimited-parental-leave/31127963/>

Fairchild, C. (2014, October 25). 7 companies with the best perks for parents. Fortune. Retrieved from: <http://fortune.com/2014/10/25/7-companies-with-the-best-perks-for-parents/>

OECD. (2010). *SMEs, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Introduction*. Retrieved 2016, January 23 from: <http://www.oecd.org/berlin/45493007.pdf>

BBC (2015, May 29). *Germany passes Japan to have world's lowest birth rate - study*. Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-32929962>

Ebtisch, S. (2012, October 15). Sind Privatschulen besser als staatliche Schulen?. Süddeutsche Zeitung. Retrieved from: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/bildung/waldorf-montessori-und-co-sind-privatschulen-besser-als-staatliche-schulen-1.1483389>

Tricarico, T. (2014, April 26). Das sind die größten Mythen über Privatschulen. Die Welt. Retrieved from: <http://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/karriere/bildung/article127333102/Das-sind-die-groessten-Mythen-ueber-Privatschulen.html>

Montessori Dachverband Deutschland e. V.. (2005) *Montessori-Einrichtungen in Deutschland*. Retrieved from: <http://www.montessori-deutschland.de/einrichtungen.html>

Cottrell, C. (2011). Can 'elite' Kitas fill Germany's day-care gap?. The Local. Retrieved from: <http://www.thelocal.de/20110523/35199>

D Statis, Statistisches Bundesamt. *Population based on the 2011 Census*. Retrieved 2016, January 26 from: https://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/SocietyState/Population/CurrentPopulation/Tables/Census_SexAndCitizenship.html

Statistische Ämter, Des Bundes und Der Länder. *Area and population*. Retrieved 2016, January 26 from: http://www.statistik-portal.de/Statistik-Portal/en/en_inhalt01.asp

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1 - Survey

The following statements relate to your work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you agree or disagree. Then grade each statement from (0) to (6) according to the following scale:

0 means: I completely disagree

1 means: I disagree

2 means: I rather disagree

3 means: I am neutral

4 means: I rather agree

5 means: I agree

6 means: I completely agree

Grade	Statement
	At my work, I feel bursting with energy
	I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose
	Time flies when I'm working
	I know what is expected of me at work
	At work, my opinions seem to count
	In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work
	I have a best friend at work
	I would feel happier at work if I had a one on one weekly meeting (for 15 minutes) with my direct supervisor where 1) feedback is given and 2) praise and recognition is given when applicable
	I would feel happier at work if I had 1) clear awareness of the organization's yearly goals, communicated to me through a 30 minutes team meeting, where 2) my contribution to their achievement was clearly defined
	I would feel happier at work if 1) I was allowed and valued for taking initiatives and 2) was able to give feedback to leaders about the company in a constructive discussion
	I would feel happier at work if I participated in a one hour team building session per week in an informal atmosphere where all employees gather and mingle

Appendix 2 - Historical Timeline of Key Elements in Academic Literature

