

The impact of Mission-Directed Work Teams on job satisfaction of employees

by

Cobie Vermeulen

A mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MSocSci: Employee Assistance Programmes

In the Department of Social Work and Criminology at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

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SUPERVISOR: DR F TAUTE

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job satisfaction of employees

I declare that this thesis / dissertation is my own original work. Where secondary material is used, this has been carefully acknowledged and referenced in accordance with university requirements.

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Cobie Vermeulen
SIGNATURE

11 July 2010
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I thank my heavenly Father for bestowing His grace upon me and for His supporting guidance throughout this study and my life in general.

I am indebted to my supervisor, Dr Taute, for her guidance, patience and encouragement. Her diverse field of interests and practicality created an intellectually stimulating environment to execute this study.

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On a personal note I would like to thank my parents who taught me to believe in myself and that dreams can come true if one works hard.

In conclusion I would like to thank my loving husband, Marius Vermeulen, for his ongoing support and encouragement throughout this project.

ABSTRACT

A company's success is predominantly measured by how well it does financially. Management and shareholders are interested in increased production and profits. In order to increase the profit margin, the issue of productivity needs to be addressed. Research had shown that there is a correlation between job satisfaction and productivity (Clark, 2003:1; Javed, Maqsood & Durrani, 2004:7; Syptak, Marsland & Ulmer, 1999:26).

Sugarbird, a division of Pioneer Foods Pty (Ltd), one of South Africa's leading food manufacturers, has embarked on integrating the Mission-Directed Work Team programme (MDWT programme) into Sugarbird's daily operating activities. This programme focuses on the development and establishment of meaningful practices that can be implemented throughout an organization in order to provide management and employees with the skills to benchmark themselves against world-best practices. As the basis of this study the researcher had chosen applied research, with the aim to evaluate the impact of the MDWT programme on job satisfaction at Sugarbird and to answer the following research question: "Does the MDWT programme have a positive impact on job satisfaction?"

The population considered in this study was the 100 ground-level workers at Sugarbird. On the day and time the questionnaire was administered, 79 employees (23 males and 55 females) were present on site and were included in the study.

Before the MDWT programme was launched in April 2007, an internal climate survey was conducted which indicated that employees experienced low levels of job satisfaction and that communication, transparency, decision-making and acknowledgement were issues that needed to be addressed. For the purpose of this study a questionnaire was designed to determine whether the MDWT programme had an impact on these variables. The results of the

study indicated that the MDWT programme does have a positive impact on job satisfaction and that employees have taken ownership of this initiative.

Employees are in general satisfied with the communication strategies within Sugarbird and it is positive to note that the majority of employees trust their supervisors. The majority of employees stated that they are satisfied with the manner in which transparency at Sugarbird is dealt with. An overwhelming majority of employees think that the opinion of workers is important in decision-making regarding day-to-day activities. When focusing on general opinions of employees, a significant number of employees indicated that their opinions are not being heard. All employees are in agreement that Sugarbird has a formal incentive programme that recognises employees' achievements and the majority of employees indicated that Sugarbird does indeed acknowledge positive inputs from employees. There is however a strong discrepancy between the acknowledgements of major- versus small accomplishments as employees are of the opinion that major accomplishments are more easily recognised.

In conclusion, it could be stated that the MDWT programme do have an impact on the job satisfaction levels of employees at Sugarbird and that communication, transparency, decision-making and acknowledgement did improve due to the MDWT programme.

KEY TERMS

Impact

Mission-Directed Work-Team Programme

Job Satisfaction

Communication

Acknowledgement

Transparency

Decision-making

ABSTRAK

'n Organisasie se sukses hang hoofsaaklik daarvan af van hoe goed dit finansieël doen. Bestuur en aandeelhouers stel belang in verhoogde produksie en profit. Ten einde die winsmarge te verhoog moet produktiwiteit aangespreek word. Navorsing het bewys dat daar 'n korrelasie tussen werkstevredenheid and produktiwiteit bestaan (Clark, 2003:1; Javed, Maqsood & Durrani, 2004:7; Syptak, Marsland & Ulmer, 1999:26).

Sugarbird, 'n divisie van Pioneer Foods Pty (Ltd) wat een van Suid Afrika se grootste voedselvervaardigers is, het 'n Missie-Gefokusde Werkspan program [Mission-Directed Work Team programme (MDWT programme)] geïmplementeer wat geïntegreer word in Sugarbird se daaglikse bedryfsaktiwiteite. Hierdie program fokus op die ontwikkeling en vestiging van betekenisvolle praktyke wat geïmplementeer kan word regdeur die organisasie ten einde bestuur en werknemers toe te rus met vaardighede waarmee hul hulself kan meet teenoor wêreld-beste praktyke. As basis vir hierdie studie het die navorser besluit op toegepaste navorsing, met die doelwit om die impak van die MDWT program op werkstevredenheid by Sugarbird te evalueer asook om die volgende navorsingsvraag te beantwoord: "Het die MDWT program 'n positiewe impak op werkstevredenheid?"

Hierdie studie se bestudeerde populasie was die 100 grondvlakwerkers by Sugarbird. Tydens die voltooiing van die vraelys, was daar 79 werknemers (23 manlik en 55 vroulik) teenwoordig wat almal by die studie ingesluit is.

Alvorens die bekendstelling en implementering van die MDWT program in April 2007 is 'n interne klimaatstudie gedoen wat aangedui het dat werknemers lae vlakke van werkstevredenheid openbaar het. Kommunikasie, deursigtigheid, besluitneming asook erkenning is aangedui as kwessies wat aangespreek moet word. Vir die doeleindes van hierdie studie is 'n vraelys ontwikkel om te bepaal of die MDWT-program 'n impak op hierdie veranderlikes gehad het. Die resultate van die studie dui aan dat die MDWT-

program wel 'n positiewe impak op werkstevredenheid gehad het en dat werknemers eienaarskap van hierdie inisiatief geneem het.

Oor die algemeen is werknemers tevrede met die kommunikasie-strategieë binne Sugarbird en is dit positief om te meld dat die meerderheid van werknemers hul toesighouers vertrou. Die meerderheid van werknemers het aangedui dat hulle tevrede is met die wyse waarop deursigtigheid by Sugarbird hanteer word en is van mening dat die opinie van werknemers belangrik geag word tydens dag-tot-dag besluite. 'n Beduidende hoeveelheid werknemers het egter aangedui dat hulle algemene opinies nie gehoor word nie. Al die werknemers stem saam dat Sugarbird oor 'n formele erkenningsprogram beskik wat erkenning gee aan werknemers se prestasies. Die meerderheid van werknemers het verder aangedui dat Sugarbird positiewe insette van werknemers erken. Daar is egter 'n diskrepansie tussen die erkenning van groot- teenoor klein prestasies en die werknemers is van opinie dat groot prestasies meer geredelik erken word.

Samevattend kan aangevoer word dat die MDWT-program 'n positiewe impak op werkstevredenheid van werknemers by Sugarbird gehad het en dat kommunikasie, deursigtigheid, besluitneming en erkenning wel verbeter het as gevolg van die MDWT-program.

SLEUTELTERME

Impak

Werkstevredenheid

Missie-Gefokusde Werkspan Program

Kommunikasie

Erkenning

Deursigtigheid

Besluitneming

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A company's success is predominantly measured by how well it does financially. Management and shareholders are interested in increased production and profits. In order to increase the profit margin, the issue of productivity needs to be addressed. InvestorWords.com [sa] defines productivity as the amount of output per unit of input (labour, equipment, and capital). Productivity is also described as a state of mind, which is the spirit of progress of the improvement of what already exists (Cronjé, Du Toit, Marais & Motlatla, 2004:578). The latter authors also regard productivity as the determination to perform better than before and to improve an existing situation, irrespectively of how good it may already be and add that it is the continuous attempt to implement new methods and techniques. It could thus be stated that an organisation is productive if it achieves its goals and does so by transferring inputs to outputs at the lowest cost. As such, productivity implies a concern for both effectiveness and efficiency (Odendaal & Roodt, 2003:15).

Research had shown that there is a correlation between job satisfaction and productivity (Clark, 2003:1; Javed, Maqsood & Durrani, 2004:7; Syptak, Marsland & Ulmer, 1999:26). The researcher is of opinion that an incentive-based programme could contribute towards improved job satisfaction amongst employees, which could have a positive impact on productivity. According to Wikipedia [sa], the Hawthorne studies (1924–1933) were one of the biggest preludes to the study of job satisfaction. These studies sought to find the effects of various conditions on workers' productivity. They concluded that novel changes in work conditions could temporarily increase productivity (called the Hawthorne Effect). It should be noted that it was later found that this increase in productivity was predominantly due to the knowledge of workers that they were being observed. This finding provided strong evidence

that people work for purposes other than pay, which paved the way for researchers to investigate other factors in job satisfaction.

Sugarbird, a division of Pioneer Foods Pty (Ltd), one of South Africa's leading food manufacturers, continuously strives to be competitive in the world class Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) arena. Based on this strategy, the executive management was of the opinion that productivity and waste management had room for improvement. Emerging human resource trends in organisational development indicate that these two facets can only be addressed through the management style of empowerment, transparency and goal alignment. Based on this fact, the current management had embarked on integrating the Mission-Directed Work Team programme (MDWT-programme) into Sugarbird's daily operating activities. At Sugarbird, the first stage of the programme was launched in April 2007 and focused specifically on mini-business goal alignment. The goals of this module were the following.

- Establish business focus through the mini-business concept and four levels of Mission-Directed Teamwork.
- Align goals and implement visual management of quality, speed, cost-effectiveness, safety and morale.
- Implement continuous improvement by applying the "Plan-Do-Check-Action" cycle.

This programme focuses on the development and establishment of meaningful practices that can be implemented throughout an organisation in order to provide management and employees with the skills to benchmark themselves against world-best practices. The aim of this study was to evaluate the impact of the latter programme on job satisfaction of workers at Sugarbird.

Van der Merwe (2008), Operational Manager of Sugarbird stated during an interview that the MDWT programme appears to improve the job satisfaction of the workers at Sugarbird, but that no formal assessments are in place to measure it effectively. At time of the interview, there was a need within

Sugarbird to assess the impact of the MDWT programme on job satisfaction in order to determine possible ways forward. A formal, unbiased assessment would ensure honest opinions from the employees regarding the MDWT programme and job satisfaction.

An important aspect of this study was therefore to provide feedback and recommendations regarding specific interventions to the management of Sugarbird, as well as to identify areas in which further research could be conducted. This would empower both management and employees to address issues that might still hinder job satisfaction and indirectly have a negative impact on productivity.

1.2 PROBLEM FORMULATION

The researcher is of the opinion that problem formulation is one of the most significant components of the research process, as it forms the basis on which the research is executed. According to Fouché (2002:104), this phase aims at creating a formal, written problem formulation with a view to finalising a research proposal. Principia Cybernetica Web [sa], defines problem formulation as follow: “An activity aimed at identifying a problem by specifying (a) the undesirable and problematic state currently occupied, (b) the resources currently available to move away from that problematic state, particularly the available courses of actions, the combinatorial constraints on using them, and (c) the criteria that need to be satisfied to say that a problem no longer exists or is solved”. The researcher is of opinion that problem formulation defines the gap between an existing- and the desirable state and delineates the resources for closing it.

According to Van der Merwe (2008), Sugarbird was a family business that was acquired by Pioneer Foods Pty (Ltd) in 2001. Sugarbird is situated in Malmesbury and the vast majority of employees had been working for Sugarbird for at least 15 years. As part of the restructuring process new management structures were introduced – which had an impact on the morale and perceived job security of employees. Although the job descriptions of the

employees remained almost unchanged, employees experienced a change in the climate and had to adhere to the new management structure as well as additional corporate policies and procedures of Pioneer Foods Pty (Ltd).

It is common for various members of a family to work for different divisions of Pioneer Foods and it could be assumed that they have conversations at home where they compare their day at work. Should there be irregularities with regards to issues such as communication, transparency, decision-making and acknowledgement, the employees will be aware of these and it could have a negative impact on job satisfaction. Sugarbird did an internal climate survey in April 2007. The results of this survey indicated that employees experienced low levels of job satisfaction and that communication, transparency, decision-making and acknowledgement were issues that needed to be addressed. Van der Merwe (2008), together with his management team, shares the opinion that lowered job satisfaction has a negative impact on productivity and thus also profitability. In order to address this as well as to improve quality, speed and cost-effectiveness, Sugarbird introduced the MDWT programme in April 2007 – which focuses on the development and establishment of meaningful practices that can be implemented throughout an organisation in order to provide management and employees with the skills to benchmark themselves against recognised world-best practices. With the introduction of the MDWTs, employees became more aware of the “bigger picture” of business and it is assumed by management that this buy-in would contribute to a better understanding and responsibility in business.

Since the implementation of the MDWT programme, no formal assessment had been done to identify positive changes or shortcomings. Van der Merwe (2008) is of the opinion that the MDWT programme has had a positive impact on job satisfaction, but he does not have unbiased and objective evidence of this opinion. He further stated that there might be new issues that need to be addressed as a result of personal growth experienced by the employees.

In short, the need for an objective assessment of job satisfaction at Sugarbird had been expressed by Van der Merwe (2008). The associated problem

which needed to be addressed was that management were uncertain if the MDWT programme was successful regarding communication, transparency, decision-making and acknowledgement and it is imperative within a business environment to ensure cost-effective programmes from which the employees can benefit.

1.3 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Fouché (2002:107) states that there is some confusion about the exact meaning of the concepts “purpose”, “goal” and “objective”. According to this author, “goal”, “purpose” and “aim” are often used interchangeably and implies the broader, more abstract conception of the end toward which effort or ambition is directed. “Objective” refers to the more concrete, measurable and more speedily attainable conception of the goal, purpose or aim. The International Development Research Centre [sa] defines an objective as a summary of what is to be achieved by the study. The Centre states further that an objective is defined by two questions, namely “Why do we want to carry out the research?” and “What do we hope to achieve?”. Fouché (2002) explains the goal, purpose or aim as the “dream”, and the objectives as the steps one has to take (one by one, within a realistic time-span) in order to attain the dream. The researcher agrees with the latter and is of the opinion that the goal of a study refers to the end product, while the objectives are the steps that should be taken to reach the goal. For the purpose of this research dissertation, the researcher will use the terms “goal” and “objectives”.

The purpose of this study was exploratory due to the fact that the researcher strived to gain insight into the current situation at Sugarbird with regards to job satisfaction.

1.3.1 Goal of the study

The goal of this study was to evaluate the impact of the MDWT programme on job satisfaction of employees at Sugarbird.

1.3.2 Objectives of the study

In order to reach the goal of this study, the following objectives were identified:

- To undertake a thorough literature study on the impact of factors such as communication, transparency, decision-making and acknowledgement on job satisfaction of employees.
- To explore the initial goals, contents and role-out of the MDWT programme at Sugarbird.
- To explore the impact of the MDWT programme on the job satisfaction of employees at Sugarbird through an empirical study.
- To draw conclusions and make recommendations regarding the use of the MDWT programme at Sugarbird.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

Wikipedia [sa] defines a research question as the methodological point of departure of scholarly research in both the natural sciences and humanities. It is the question which the research sets out to answer. The latter definition correlates with a definition by The Research Assistant (2009:1) which states that a research question is a statement that identifies the phenomenon to be studied.

The research question is one of the first methodological steps the investigator has to take when identifying selecting a research topic and should be accurately and clearly defined (Breakwell, Hammond & Fife-Shaw, 2000:24; Wikipedia, [sa]). Choosing a research question is the central element of both quantitative and qualitative research and in some cases it may precede construction of the conceptual framework of study. It makes the theoretical assumptions in the framework more explicit and indicates what the researcher wants to determine (Wikipedia, [sa]). According to Breakwell *et al.* (2000:24) the research question should guide the researcher in determining whether the research topic is realistic and feasible given the practical and ethical restrictions. In order to derive an answer to this question, the researcher should move from a general topic to the formulation of a specific question which will be addressed through the research process. Breakwell *et al.*

(2000:25) further state that it is necessary to state exactly what the research wants to find out about the topic of interest. If the researcher's goal is to discover something about the selected topic, it is always possible to state the research goal in the form of a question. In order to qualify the research question further, the researcher has to stipulate the appropriate contexts of interest – also taking into consideration the ethical aspects of the study. This will enable the researcher to collect data which will actually address the questions which are of interest.

Taking into consideration all of the above, the following research question was formulated: “Does the MDWT programme have a positive impact on job satisfaction?”

1.5 RESEARCH APPROACH

Fouché and Delport (2002:79) state that there are presently two well-known and recognised approaches to research, namely the qualitative- and the quantitative paradigm. Qualitative research methods are a collection of formal research methodologies that allow researchers to get in-depth information on their subjects, generally through interviewing or observation (Creswell as quoted by Ivankova, Creswell & Clark, 2007:254).

In identifying quantitative research, Fouché and Delport (2002:79) refer to Creswell's definition that states that:

Quantitative research can be defined as an inquiry into social or human problems, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analysed with statistical procedures in order to determine whether the predictive generalisations of the theory holds true.

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:156) describe quantitative research as research conducted using a range of methods which use measurement to record and investigate aspects of social reality. As the researcher wanted to evaluate the impact of the MDWT programme on the job satisfaction levels of ground-level workers at Sugarbird, it seemed appropriate to follow the

quantitative approach as the researcher wanted to establish a statistical knowledge base. This implied that the researcher would systematically evaluate the following components of job satisfaction: communication, transparency, decision-making and acknowledgement.

1.6 TYPE OF RESEARCH

Broadly speaking, there are two types of research; basic (fundamental) and applied research. Basic research generates fundamentally new knowledge while applied research investigates current problems and uses existing knowledge and technology to address the problems (Fouché, 2002:108; Ivankova, Creswell & Clark, 2007:255).

As the basis of this study the researcher had chosen applied research, with the objective to evaluate the impact of the MDWT programme on job satisfaction at Sugarbird. Although the type of research that was used in this study could be described as applied research, the researcher specifically focused on evaluative research as a form of applied research. Due to the fact that the researcher wanted to determine the impact of the MDWT programme on job satisfaction at Sugarbird, she was of opinion that evaluative research is the most appropriate type of research in this regard.

Garson (2008:1) and Babbie (2005:359) agree that evaluative research refers to a research purpose rather than a specific research method. This purpose is to evaluate the impact (effect and effectiveness) of social interventions, such as a programme aimed at solving a social problem. The researcher prefers a definition of evaluation by Trochim (2001:30) in which he states: "Evaluation is the systematic acquisition and assessment of information to provide useful feedback about some object". The author continues that the major goal of evaluation should be to influence decision-making or policy formulation through the provision of empirically driven feedback. The researcher supports this perspective and utilized the results of the research findings in making certain recommendations to the senior management of

Pioneer Foods Pty (Ltd) with regards to an improved or adapted MDWT programme.

Babbie and Mouton (2006:643) differentiate between formative- and summative evaluations. Formative evaluations are done to provide feedback to people who are trying to improve a programme, while summative information is aimed at providing information for decision-makers who are wondering whether to fund, terminate, or invest in a social programme. Trochim (2001:32) states that formative evaluations improve the object being evaluated, while summative evaluations examine the effects or outcomes of some object. Due to the fact that the researcher evaluated the impact of the MDWT programme on job satisfaction at Sugarbird, this study was summative in nature.

1.7 PILOT STUDY

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:155) explain that a pilot study is a small study conducted prior to a larger piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling, instruments and analysis are adequate and appropriate. Cooligan (2004:24) describes a pilot study as the preliminary study or trials often carried out to predict snags and assess features of a main study to follow. The researcher was of the opinion that the pilot study was necessary to fine-tune the study for the main study as although she planned her investigation very carefully, the practical situation would always remain unknown.

1.7.1 Feasibility of the Study

In order to ensure the feasibility of the pilot study, the researcher consulted with Van der Merwe (2008), who is the General Manager of Sugarbird. He gave written consent to perform this study (see Appendix A). As part of the agreement with Sugarbird, written permission had been obtained to conduct the study with a group of employees within an agreed upon time frame. The costs of questionnaires and travelling for the study were covered by the

researcher. Employees' working hours are fixed and therefore all respondents were available.

1.7.2 Testing of measurement instrument

A test study requires an in-depth look at the questionnaire with the aim of improving its quality (Strydom, 2002a:215). With regards to the questionnaire, the researcher is of opinion that pilot testing was of the great importance in assuring the validity of the questionnaire.

In order to improve the reliability of the study the pilot test was conducted within the same parameters as the main study with two respondents who were not part of the main study. The latter implied that the researcher used the same time-frame and personally conducted the session in which the questionnaires were completed. Struwig and Stead (2001:89) indicate that the sample should indicate any problems respondents may have with the instructions or the items. The pilot testing of the questionnaire enabled the researcher to document words, phrases and sentences that were unclear to the respondents and as a result adapt the questionnaire to address possible limitations. Fortunately there were only minor changes to be made to the questionnaire.

1.8 RESEARCH POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD

1.8.1 Population

Babbie (2005:196) describes a population as that aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected. Cooligan (2004:24) shares the same opinion and describes a population as a larger, complete group of people from among whom the samples are selected. For the purpose of this study, the population can be described as the 100 ground-level workers at Sugarbird.

1.8.2 Sample

The sample of a study refers to the group of people selected to be in the study (Trochim, 2001:45). The researcher agrees with Strydom and Venter

(2002:198) who states that feasibility is the main reason for sampling and that the use of samples may result in more accurate information that might have been obtained if the entire population had been studied.

Sugarbird has 100 permanent ground-level employees. On the day and time the questionnaire was administered, 79 employees were present on site. In order to increase the validity of the research, the researcher decided not to implement any sampling method but to include all of these employees in the study. The respondents were 23 males and 55 females between the ages of 20 and 60. The majority (N = 74) were Afrikaans speaking, while there were two Xhosa speaking and two English speaking respondents. The Xhosa speaking respondents are both fluent in Afrikaans and opted to complete the questionnaire in Afrikaans.

1.9 ETHICAL ASPECTS

Babbie (2005:61) is of the opinion that ethics is typically associated with morality, and that both concepts deal with matters of right and wrong. In this regard, he refers to Webster's New World Dictionary that defines 'ethical' as "conforming to the standards of conduct of a given profession or group". The researcher is of the opinion that the latter definition could be confusing and regarded as non-specific and prefer the following definition by Strydom (2002b:63):

Ethics is a set of moral principles that are suggested by an individual or group, are subsequently widely accepted, and offer rules and behaviour expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students.

Ethical considerations are especially important in the following three stages of research: Sampling, intervention and interpretation of results (Huysamen, 2001:185). The researcher has aimed to ensure that important ethical considerations were addressed. The following sections will specifically focus on the latter.

- **Harm to respondents**

Strydom (2002b:64) states that respondents can be harmed in a physical or emotional manner. Although the researcher is of opinion that the potential risk of harm to respondents was limited, she took special precautions to ensure that respondents were not harmed in any way. In order to ensure that, the researcher formulated all questions in the questionnaire in a manner that was easily understood by all employees.

- **Informed consent**

Cooligan (2004:614) describes informed consent as an agreement to participate in research in the full knowledge of the research content and participant rights. Knowledge about the research includes all possible or adequate information on the goal of the research, the procedures, possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which respondents may be exposed, as well as the credibility of the researcher (Strydom, 2002b:65).

In order to ensure that all respondents felt co-responsible for the success of the study and understood the above-mentioned principles, the researcher had contact sessions with all employees (population) prior to the questionnaires being completed. During these sessions the researcher explained the purpose of the study, as well as what to be expected during the completion of the questionnaires. It was explained to all employees that the completion of the questionnaires was voluntary and that respondents could decide not to take part in the process. No employees withdrew from the study.

During these sessions, the researcher supplied all respondents with a letter, stating the goal, objectives, rights of the respondents as well as the time and place where the questionnaires would be completed. The researcher also explained the expected process as well as how and when the results of the study will be released, after which respondents were asked to sign a consent letter (see Appendix B).

During the session where the questionnaires were completed, the researcher repeated all the information mentioned above.

- **Deception of respondents**

It is unethical to withhold information from respondents. Loewenberg and Dolgoff (as referred to by Strydom, 2002b:66) describe deception of respondents as the deliberate misrepresentation of facts in order to make the respondent believe what is not true. The researcher made sure that the respondents received adequate information in order to make an informed decision and thus ensuring that respondents were not deceived.

- **Violation of privacy, anonymity, confidentiality**

Privacy implies the element of personal privacy (Strydom, 2002b:67). Anonymity will be guaranteed in a research project when neither the researcher nor the readers of the findings can identify a respondent through the research findings (Babbie, 2005:480).

Trochim (2001:346) describes confidentiality as an assurance that is made to respondents that identifying information about them that is acquired through the study will not be released to anyone outside the study.

The researcher promotes adherence to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. In order to ensure the latter, it was not expected from employees to write their names on the questionnaires. This ensured that management would not be able to link specific answers to certain respondents. The importance thereof was explained to both management and employees and the researcher is of opinion that this approach increased the probability of honest and objective answers.

- **Actions and competence of the researcher**

It is the ethical obligation of researchers to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake an investigation (Strydom, 2002b:70). As such, the well-equipped researcher should then “evaluate all possible risks and advantages of the investigation and assume responsibility for honouring promises made to the subjects”.

Due to the fact that the majority of the ground-level employees are coloured people, the researcher had to respect the cultural diversity of the group and refrained from making value judgements on these cultural aspects. In order to ensure that all respondents were treated fairly, the researcher included the Union in all stages of the project.

The researcher is of the opinion that she had obtained adequate skills and knowledge regarding research methodology through the theoretical and practical components of the course. The latter contributed to the fact that the researcher is empowered to undertake the proposed investigation.

- **Release or publication of the findings**

Strydom (2002b:71) emphasises the fact that an ethical obligation rests on the researcher to ensure at all times that the investigation proceeds correctly and that the findings are communicated and presented in such a manner that no one is deceived. As stated earlier, the researcher will communicate the results to all respondents, management and union representatives. Due to the nature of the study, there is limited confidential information and the image of Sugarbird will not be harmed in any way if results are published.

1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

- **Impact**

The Free Dictionary (2008) defines impact as having an effect on something. The latter corresponds with a definition from the *Webster's New World Dictionary* (2008) which defines impact as follows: "To affect or influence, in a significant manner". The researcher agrees with both of these definitions and defines it as an intervention intended to have a positive effect or influence on job satisfaction of employees at Sugarbird.

- **Job satisfaction**

McEwent [sa] defines job satisfaction as a sense of achievement and success, which is generally perceived to be directly linked to productivity as well as to personal wellbeing. A definition by the BNET Business Directory [sa] corresponds with the latter as it defines job satisfaction as "the sense of fulfilment and pride felt by people who enjoy their work and do it well". A "broader" definition could be found in the Business Directory.com [sa] where job satisfaction is defined as contentment (or lack of it) arising out of interplay of employees' positive and negative feelings toward his or her work. Murray (1999:10) refers to a similar definition by Spector, who defines job satisfaction as a cluster of evaluative feelings about the job.

The researcher prefers the latter two definitions as they highlight both positive as well as negative evaluative perceptions about work. For the purpose of this study the researcher defines job satisfaction as a merger of both positive and negative feelings regarding an employee's job which can be directly linked to a perception of achievement and success.

- **Mission-Directed Work Team programme (MDWT)**

The MDWT programme was designed to translate the following key strategies and principles into meaningful practices that can be implemented throughout an organization (Competitive Dynamics, 2005:3):

- Focus on simultaneous improvement of quality, speed and cost-effectiveness.
- Establish close links to customers and suppliers.
- Drive both linear, continuous improvement as well as non-linear breakthrough improvements in the workplace.
- Eliminate all forms of waste and make value flow as pulled by the customer.
- Apply leadership practices that promote teamwork, continuous learning, participation and flexibility.

This programme is line-driven and provides leaders and their teams with skills to benchmark themselves against recognized world-best practices, thereby identifying and exploiting opportunities for sustainable improvement (Competitive Dynamics, 2005:3).

1.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is important to critically evaluate the results and the whole study. Although this study has certain limitations that need to be taken into account when considering the study and its contributions, some of these limitations can be seen as fruitful avenues for future research under the same theme.

With regards to language, the questionnaires were translated in both Afrikaans and English. Two of the respondents were Xhosa-speaking, but could understand English. While completing the questionnaires it became clear that these two respondents struggled to read the English. The researcher had to read the questions to them and sometimes had to explain some of the concepts that were used. For future studies it is recommended

that a translator is used or that all respondents who speak the same language are grouped together in separate sessions.

1.12 CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

- Chapter one: Introduction and General introduction.
- Chapter two: Literature study on the impact of communication, decision-making, transparency and acknowledgement on job satisfaction.
- Chapter three: Research methodology, data analysis and interpretation.
- Chapter four: Conclusions and recommendations.

1.13 SUMMARY

Chapter one has presented a brief introduction and general orientation towards this study. It has highlighted the needs of Sugarbird as well as the goal and objectives of the study while focussing on evaluating the impact of the MDWT programme on job satisfaction at Sugarbird.

The following chapter will aim at defining the key concepts of this study by means of referral to current literature.

CHAPTER TWO

THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION, DECISION-MAKING, TRANSPARENCY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ON JOB SATISFACTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Sugarbird, a division of Pioneer Foods, one of South Africa's leading food manufacturers, continuously strives to be competitive in the world class Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) arena. Based on this strategy, the executive management was of the opinion that productivity and waste management had room for improvement. Emerging human resource trends in organizational development indicates that these two facets can only be addressed through the management style of empowerment, transparency and goal alignment. Based on this fact, the current management has recently embarked on integrating the Mission-Directed Work Team programme (MDWT programme) into Sugarbird's daily operating activities. Before the MDWT programme was launched in April 2007, an internal climate survey was conducted which indicated that employees experienced low levels of job satisfaction and that communication, transparency, decision-making and acknowledgement were issues that needed to be addressed. These factors will be discussed shortly.

2.2 JOB SATISFACTION

"Companies with the highest job satisfaction are usually those with stronger bottom lines" (Keough, 2005:3). According to Gruen (2004:2), there is a strong correlation between job satisfaction and productivity where a higher skill level strengthened this effect. Employee satisfaction further leads to customer satisfaction which results in customer loyalty (Federico, as referred to by Clark, 2003:2).

Balgobind (2002:37) refers to Bruce and Blackburn who stated that the notion that satisfied employees make a difference was derived from what was

termed the “third industrial revolution”, which began with the Hawthorne studies of the 1930’s which called for humanization in the workplace. The result was that ‘enriched’ jobs were created as opposed to providing only a day’s pay for a day’s work. This paradigm shift was based on the rationale that employees who are well cared for will ensure long-term productivity.

Job satisfaction is a multi dimensional construct that is strongly influenced by disposition and mood and can be regarded as an important contributor to mental and psychological health problems in the workplace (Hosie, Sevastos & Cooper, 2006:45). It is further associated with how well employees’ personal expectations at work are aligned with outcomes (McKenna, 2006:295) and is defined as people’s general attitude/feelings towards their job (Känd & Rekor, 2005:9; Robbins, 2007:252). Lamprecht, Iwanowa and Unterrainer (2008:2) refer to Bruggermann and Büssing who define job satisfaction as a general attitude towards one’s job resulting from a comparison of the actual working situation and the personal expectations or needs. Job satisfaction is also regarded as an indication of the extent to which an individual likes a job and thus represents a positive affective orientation toward a job, or towards the intrinsic and extrinsic facets of a job (Hosie *et al.*, 2006:49). Intrinsic job satisfaction refers to the internal state associated with inherent job characteristics (e.g. utilization of skills, opportunities for control, challenges, amount of responsibility and job complexity), while extrinsic job satisfaction refers to an external state contingent upon aspects of a job (e.g. pay, industrial relations, working conditions, job security, working conditions and hours). These two elements are positively inter-correlated.

Various authors (Syptak *et al.*, 1999:26; Känd & Rekor, 2005:8) refer to Herzberg’s Two-Factor theory that identifies two dimensions of job satisfaction: ‘Motivation’ and ‘Hygiene’. Motivators (or satisfiers) describe intrinsic factors of work and create satisfaction by fulfilling individuals’ needs for meaning and personal growth and are issues such as achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility and advancement. The hygiene issues describe extrinsic factors of work and cannot motivate employees but

can minimize dissatisfaction, if handled properly. These issues are related to the employee's environment and include company policies, supervision, salary, interpersonal relations and working conditions. Motivators therefore create job satisfaction, while hygienes remove dissatisfaction.

Robbins (2007:15) refers to Kotter who states that early experiences have a major effect on an individual's subsequent career in an organization and influences job satisfaction, attitude and level of productivity. Keough (2005:1) states that employees working for smaller companies tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction as managers at small firms know more about their employees and therefore treat them as people rather than just a resource.

Haviland (2004:1) stated that women in the United States, who often hold jobs that pay less than men's and are often unsupported in their efforts to balance work and family, report levels of job satisfaction that meet and exceed those of men. She refers to this as the gender paradox in job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is important to both employees and employers. If an organization fails to create conditions for minimum levels of job satisfaction, the consequences may be deterioration in productivity, increased employee turnover and absenteeism as well as low morale (Syptak *et al.*, 1999:26; McKenna, 2006:299). In addition to the latter, employees with low levels of job satisfaction are most likely to suffer from burn-out, experience reduced levels of self-esteem and have elevated levels of anxiety and depression (Hosie *et al.*, 2006:50). Clark (2003:1) refers to a study by Development Dimensions International (DDI) which indicates that employee satisfaction is strongly related to employee commitment and loyalty, with both measures proven to have relationships to retention and productivity.

In conclusion, the links between employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, productivity and financial performance could be summarized as follows (Clark, 2003:2):

- Unhappy employees are less productive and tend to have higher levels of absenteeism.
- Satisfied employees are more productive, loyal and innovative.
- Increases in job satisfaction lead to increases in employee morale. This again leads to improved productivity.
- Employee satisfaction leads to customer retention.

2.3 MISSION-DIRECTED WORK TEAM PROGRAMME

The Mission Directed Work-team Programme (MDWT) focuses on the development and establishment of meaningful practices that can be implemented throughout an organization in order to provide management and employees with the skills to benchmark themselves against world-best practices. This programme is line-driven and provides leaders and their teams with skills to identify and exploit opportunities for sustainable improvement (Competitive Dynamics, 2005:3).

According to Competitive Dynamics (2009:1), the MDWT programme transforms the front-line of an organization into a productive and participative environment, thus providing a sense of purpose for employees at work. The latter is achieved by creating a supportive environment within an organization by firstly introducing management to the programme as management has a critical role to play both as coach and as master coach. In this regard, a practical, experiential approach to learning is adopted, introducing all leaders to the concepts and tools relating to the programme. Competitive Dynamics (2009:1) is of the opinion that the success of transformation within the workplace is determined within the “mini-business”. The second step in this process is to train team leaders in the tools and techniques needed to transform the workplace. Each team leader then becomes the leader of a “mini-business” and is expected to introduce the team members to this programme in a modular manner. Application of the principles and practices is enhanced through on-site, monthly, coaching reviews involving front-line teams.

2.3.1 Aims of the MDWT programme

Competitive Dynamics (2009:2) states that the aims of the MDWT programme are to provide leaders and their teams with skills to:

- achieve world-class competitiveness through innovation and continuous improvement of Quality, Speed, Cost-effectiveness, Safety and People;
- establishing business focus, goal alignment and full employee engagement throughout the organization;
- simplify the management of business objectives through the creation of a visual workplace;
- create a work climate characterised by teamwork, participation and continuous learning; and
- develop a world-class organization which is also a great place to work.

2.3.2 Benefits of the MDWT programme

According to Competitive Dynamics (2009:3), the following benefits are associated with this programme:

- Improved competitiveness through innovation and continuous improvement of quality, speed, cost-effectiveness, safety and people development.
- Immediate, visible improvements in the workplace.
- Leaders and teams equipped with tools and skills to implement world-best practices.
- Fully engaged teams focused on business objectives, aligned throughout the organization.
- Enhanced teamwork, participation and continuous learning.
- Seamless integration with existing continuous improvement activities.

2.3.3 Framework of the MDWT programme

In Table 1 below, the framework of the MDWT programme according to Lange and Matheson (2007:1) is summarized.

Table 1: Framework of the MDWT

Module	Description	Focus areas
One	Mini-Business Goal Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Vision, Values and Goals ✧ MB Name and Vision ✧ Setting MB Goals ✧ Daily Team Communication ✧ Visual Management ✧ Monthly Multi-level meetings ✧ Team Problem Solving ✧ 6-monthly Multi-level Meetings ✧ Continuous Improvement Cycle ✧ Kaizen and Kaikaku ✧ Budgeting ✧ Team-on-team Reviews
Two	Visual Workplace – 5s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ S1 Sort and Discard ✧ S2 Shine ✧ S3 Signpost and Order ✧ S4 Simplify ✧ S5 Sustain
Three	Equipment Optimisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Overall Equipment Effectiveness and 6 Losses ✧ Autonomous Maintenance ✧ Preventive Maintenance ✧ Determining Equipment Priorities ✧ Implementing Quick Changeover Technology ✧ Sustaining ✧ Equipment Optimization Drive
Four	Team Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Empowering the Team ✧ Motivating the Team ✧ Team Decision-Making ✧ Conflict Handling ✧ Effective Communication ✧ Team Feedback
Five	Workflow Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Measuring and Improving Responsiveness ✧ Pull Production systems (Kanban) ✧ Managing Capacity Constraints to Increase Output ✧ Production Scheduling ✧ Cellular Production

Six	Team Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Developing a Multi-skilled Team ✧ Performance Management ✧ Goal Setting and Performance Reviews: Module focusing on - Addressing Unsatisfactory Behaviour ✧ Responding to negative feedback ✧ Continuous improvement through Coaching & Performance Management
Seven	Quality Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Visual Management ✧ Applying 5S ✧ QC Standards and Self-inspection to improve Quality; Pareto Analysis ✧ Implementing WC Quality Assurance System ✧ Time-to-detect, time-to-correct ✧ Implementing Poka-Yoke ✧ Zero Monitor Manufacturing (ZMM) ✧ Statistical Process Control
Eight	Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ What is Customer Service ✧ Traditional vs. WC Focus ✧ Establishing Customer Service ✧ Improving Customer Service ✧ Developing Suppliers
Nine	Process Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Mini Business Waste Elimination – Eliminating 7 Wastes ✧ Implementing Waste Elimination Counter Measures ✧ Waste Elimination Tools ✧ Cross Functional Team Process Improvement – Process Improvement Tools ✧ Principles
Ten	Self Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Achievement Motive ✧ Developing Achievement Motivation ✧ Emotional Intelligence ✧ Goal Setting

2.4 COMMUNICATION

Javed *et al.* (2004:1) argue that the success of an organization in terms of its productivity, employee satisfaction as well as the minimal turnover rate depends predominantly on effective communication practices at all levels in the workplace, with effective communication also being an important factor in minimizing stress levels (Mullins, 2007:105). Gill (1999:729) refers to Warr's "vitamin model" in which positive feedback is regarded as a principle feature for a good job. Communication between employees and senior management

is regarded as one of the most important aspects of job satisfaction (IOMA, 2008:1).

A good communication and participation plan can aid employee involvement and participation (Ackerman, Anderson & Marquardt, 2000:30). According to Balgobind (2002:43) individuals gain internal rewards when they learn that they personally performed well in a task they care about. In order to achieve the latter, effective communication structures should be in place. Javed *et al.* (2004:7) agrees with this and states that there is a correlation between effective communication and job performance as effective communication enhances job satisfaction, a good feeling of personal accomplishment and increased productivity. There is also a relationship between communication and transparency, as communication should be regarded as the operative driver of transparency (Baltoni, 2004:1).

An important aspect of the expanding role of managers is to ensure effective and consistent communication about the state of employees' wellbeing (Hosie *et al.*, 2006:277). Balgobind (2002:80) refers to Klauss and Bass who found a correlation between communication effectiveness of supervisors and increased satisfaction and effectiveness of the work group. In this regard, effective communication refers to factors such as careful transmission, two-way communication, active listening and trustworthiness. These authors further found that increased efficiency, reduced grievances and absenteeism correlates with positive ratings of supervisors' effectiveness. Such communication effectiveness included supervisors who were attentive, easy to talk to, receptive to ideas and suggestions and showed their subordinates how to improve performance.

The behaviour of individuals within an organization is best understood from a communication point of view and organizational communication practices are the best ways to gauge those behaviours (Javed *et al.*, 2004:1). These authors divide communication into the following categories:

- Interpersonal communication.
- Group level communication.

- Organizational level communication.
- Inter-Organizational level communication.
- Mass communication.

Javed *et al.* (2004:1) is of the opinion that companies have realized the importance of inter-organizational communication which focuses on the improvement of interpersonal skills of all organizational members and categorize these as follows:

- Formal communication.
- Informal communication.
- Vertical communication.
- Horizontal communication.

2.5 TRANSPARENCY

“What businesses now need to know more than ever before are managers who know how to create social architectures for openness” (Bennis as referred to by McElroy, 2003:2). Greater transparency promotes accountability and better management, with the best managers having transparent administrative practices (Gomery, 2005:177).

According to Wikipedia [sa], transparency, as used in the humanities, when used in a social context, implies openness, communication and accountability. It is a metaphorical extension of the word ‘transparent’, which refers to an object that can be seen through. Transparent procedures for example include open meetings, financial disclosure statements, the freedom of information legislation, budgetary review and audits.

Transparency could be regarded as the counterweight to thievery (Baldoni, 2004:1). McElroy (2003:26) defines transparency as “the extent to which business processes and related information resources, assets, and outcomes are visible and open to inspection by stakeholders.” Although this definition

focuses specifically on stakeholders, this author highlights the importance of all employees' attitudes towards openness as well as the extent to which those attitudes influence the way in which openness procedures and practices are followed within an organization. Zinger (2009:1) is of the same opinion and states that leaders can promote higher levels of employee engagement by engaging in honest and transparent communication that promotes flexibility. If an organization creates an environment of transparency, employees know where they can find the information they need. When information fortresses become information streams, communication becomes productive, creative and constant (Collins, 2003:28). Gomery (2005:179) agrees with this and states that appropriate access to information is a key part of the transparency that is essential in modern public administration.

The presence of transparency is regarded as a principle feature of a good job (Gill, 1999:729). A study by Lamprecht *et al.* (2008:11) is in agreement with the latter and indicates that transparent and clear information of organizational processes encourages employees' general job satisfaction as well as their intention to stay at the workplace. Transparency further plays an important role in changing an existing culture (Gomery, 2005:178) and should be regarded as a process and not an act (Baldoni, 2004:1). This author argues that organizations striving for transparency convey a message that they are proud of the manner in which they conduct business, treat their employees, deal with their customers and enrich their stakeholders.

2.6 DECISION-MAKING

Western leadership theories advocate participation in decision-making by subordinates (Mullins, 2007:28) as employees' participation in decision-making has a positive impact on job satisfaction (Lamprecht *et al.*, 2008:11; Känd & Rekor: 2005:9). Hosie *et al.* (2006:16) refer to Livingston who defined decision-making as "the capacity to find the problems that need to be solved, to plan for the attainment of desired results, or to carry out operating plans once they are made".

Drucker, Hammond, Keeney, Raiffa and Hayashi (2001:2) state that the most time consuming step in the decision-making process is not making the decision, but to put it into effect. These authors further refer to Brewer, Selden, and Facer who suggest that policy makers and public managers should consider employees in decision-making processes as one of the strategies for advancing motivation.

Känd and Rekor (2005:1) state that perceived involvement in decision-making (PIDM) is not only an important determinant of job satisfaction, but also strengthens the links between other determinants of job satisfaction. PIDM accumulates the concepts of 'employee involvement' and 'participation in decision-making'. In this regard Känd and Rekor (2005:7) refer to Mariapa who defines employee involvement as "a term used to qualify employee relations practices which management believes to encourage employees' commitment to managerial goals and the success of the enterprise". Perceived employee involvement (PIDM) is an indirect form of involvement where representatives act as channels of communication between managers and employees and employees perceive that their interests are represented to a large extent (Känd & Rekor, 2005:7). PIDM is a long term process, which demands both attention from the management side and initiative from the employees' side.

A study by Känd and Rekor (2005:25) found that in terms of company size there are significant differences in PIDM where PIDM in smaller business units is larger. This correlates with the strategy of the MDWT program where employees are divided into smaller business units in order to enhance communication in the organization (Competitive Dynamics, 2009:1).

Participation in decision-making is described as involvement in the process of reaching decisions in which influence is shared among individuals who are otherwise hierarchically unequal (Locke & Schweiger as referred to by Känd & Rekor, 2005:7). Allowing employees to take part in management meetings and activities calls for greater understanding and employees perceive that they actually can make a difference in improving their situation within the

organization. This results in increased loyalty, commitment and retention (Känd & Rekor, 2005:26).

2.7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/RECOGNITION

Mullins (2007:394) is of the opinion that organizations in general are woefully neglectful of bestowing acknowledgement or appreciation, which is one of the most powerful motivators. When employees feel appreciated communications thrives (Collins, 2006:30). Praise, recognition and feedback regarding performance aids in self-correcting and motivation and thus impact productivity (Javed *et al.*, 2004:3).

Various authors (Fincham & Rhodes, 2006:200; Känd & Rekor, 2005:10) refer to Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation where recognition is regarded as an intrinsic motivational factor which leads to positive motivation and increased productivity. When working in a diverse environment with employees from different cultural backgrounds, it is important to acknowledge that different cultures have different needs and that policies should be adapted appropriately to the people hired (Collins, 2003:30). This would indicate to employees that management acknowledges individuality and will have a positive impact on job satisfaction.

According to Hosie *et al.* (2006:269) the most successful recognition programmes are those that are closely aligned with the strategic directions and values of an organization. In this regard, performance reward schemes are some of the initiatives organizations can utilize to reward exceptional behaviours by employees. Syptak *et al.* (1999:28) give the following practical ways to recognize employees' efforts:

- Successes need not be monumental before recognition is given.
- Praise should be sincere.
- Acknowledge good work immediately.
- Publicly thank employees for handling a situation well.
- Write kind notes of praise.

- Give them a bonus, if appropriate.
- Establish a formal recognition programme, e.g. “employee of the month”.

2.8 SUMMARY

This chapter defined the following key concepts of this study by means of referral to current literature: Job satisfaction, communication, decision-making, transparency and acknowledgement.

The first section of Chapter Three will aim at addressing the research methodology used in this study. The remainder of Chapter Three will focus on data analysis as well as the interpretation of results.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The goal of this study was to assess the impact of the MDWT programme on job satisfaction – with a specific objective to assess employees' satisfaction towards communication, transparency, decision-making and acknowledgement. The latter resulted in the following research question: “Does the MDWT programme have a positive impact on job satisfaction?”

The following section will therefore focus on research methodology (research design and data collection method), data analysis as well as interpretation of results.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 Research design

Fouché and De Vos (2002:137) refer to Huysamen who defines a research design as “the plan or blueprint according to which data are collected to investigate the research hypothesis or question in the most economical manner”. Trochim (2008:1) states that a research design can be thought of as the structure of research and adds that it is the "glue" that holds all of the elements in a research project together.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the quantitative-descriptive (survey) design, as the research required the use of questionnaires as a data collection method (Fouché & De Vos, 2002:137). The specific survey design that was used is the randomised cross-sectional survey (Fouché & De Vos, 2002:143).

3.2.2 Data collection method

An important element of the research design and methodology is deciding on the data collection method to be used. As stated earlier, this research project

was quantitative in approach, which implied that measuring instruments was employed (Delpont, 2002:165). The author further states that researchers working from a quantitative approach can utilise one of the following data collection methods; questionnaires, checklists, indexes and scales. A questionnaire is an instrument that is specifically designed to elicit information that will be useful for analysis (Babbie, 2005:253). The researcher decided to use self-administered questionnaires in order to collect the data required (see Appendix C).

Questionnaires were handed out to all respondents who completed it on their own, but in the presence of the researcher. The researcher limited her contribution to the completion of the questionnaire to the absolute minimum (Delpont, 2002:174).

Statements used in questionnaires are mostly used to obtain data of a subjective nature, e.g. about dispositions, attitudes and opinions (Delpont, 2002:182). This type of response system was used in this study as it was ideal for this research as the researcher wanted to determine attitudes and opinions regarding the MDWT programme which could correspond with job satisfaction.

The researcher included only closed ended questions in the questionnaire as some respondents could struggle to put their thoughts into words. The questionnaire was also divided into two different sections in order to facilitate the eventual processing of data. These sections included a biographic section as well as a section which focused on the exploration of attitudes towards the different themes to be assessed. An important aspect of the questionnaire that the researcher had to take into consideration was that the majority of the employees at Sugarbird are Afrikaans speaking. Therefore the questionnaire was available in both English and Afrikaans. The researcher also determined that all employees are literate, but that levels of comprehension differ. Therefore the researcher ensured that the level of language and the vocabulary used in the questionnaire will be acceptable and understandable to all.

In order to address the research question, the researcher also identified the unit of analysis. The latter was defined as the person(s) or object from which the researcher collects data (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:174). For the purpose of this study, the unit of analysis referred to the 78 ground-level workers who received questionnaires through which specific parameters of job satisfaction were measured.

In order to ensure objective opinions, the researcher was present while the questionnaires were completed. All respondents completed the questionnaires at the same time in the same venue. Van der Merwe (2008) suggested that the process was supervised by the researcher in order to allow workers to be objective. Respondents had the opportunity to place the completed questionnaire in an envelope and deposit it into a bin after the contact session. All completed questionnaires will be safely stored at the University of Pretoria for 15 years after data analysis.

3.2.3. Data analysis

Neuman (2003:8) indicates quantitative data as data expressed by numbers. Babbie (2005:24) elaborates on Neuman's view that quantification opens up the possibility of statistical analyses, ranging from simple averages to complex formulas and mathematical models - the process of converting data to numerical format. Data analysis is undertaken by means of standardized statistical procedures and all data are presented by means of exact figures gained from precise measurements. The latter implies that the quantitative research design was standardized according to a fixed procedure and can thus be duplicated at a later stage.

For the purpose of this study the researcher used ordinal scaling where the respondent was asked to place the items presented in an ordinal scale in rank order according to some criteria (Delport, 2002:186). In this regard, summated rating was used as it is the simplest form of an ordinal scale. Data gathered are presented graphically using pie charts, histograms and tables.

3.3 DATA INTERPRETATION

A total of 79 respondents completed a questionnaire as part of the evaluative research project. One questionnaire was disregarded as certain statements had two or more answers. This brings the total of subjects to 78 of whom 55 were female and 23 male. (Male: N = 23; Female: N = 55).

3.3.1 Gender and age distribution

Figure 1: Gender distribution

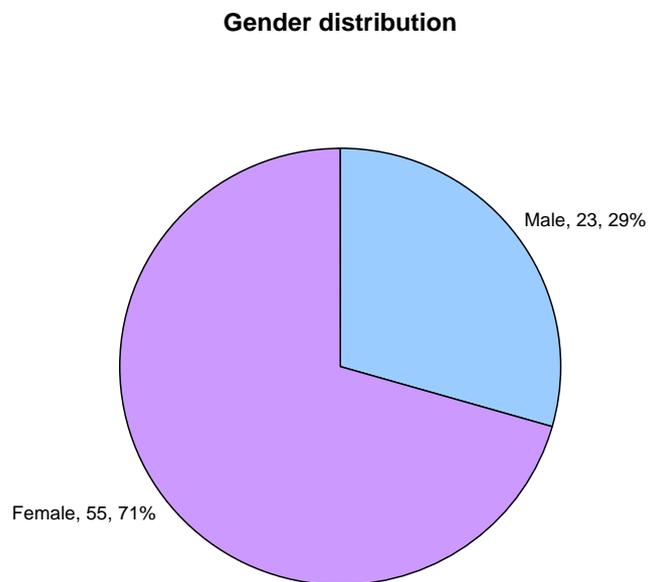
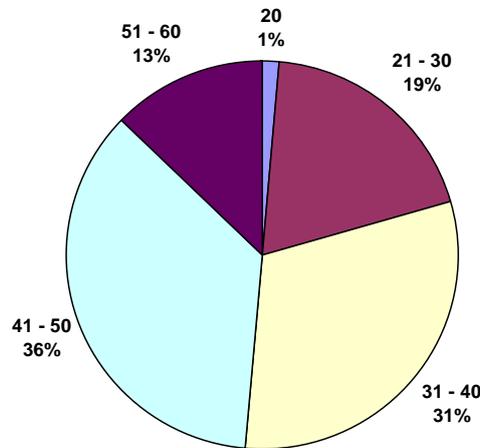


Figure 1 illustrates that the majority of employees at Sugarbird are female.

Figure 2: Age distribution

Age Distribution of Employees



As illustrated in Figure 2, the majority of respondents are between the ages of 31 and 50 (67%). Nineteen percent are between 21 and 30 years of age and 13% of respondents fall in the age group 51 – 60 years.

3.3.2 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is associated with how well an employee’s personal expectations at work are in line with outcomes (McKenna, 2006:295). The researcher is in agreement with the latter and in an attempt to investigate to what extent employees’ expectations are met by associated outcomes, a questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire consisted of 38 questions of which five focussed specifically on how respondents rank their current job satisfaction. After grouping all relevant data together, the following distribution of scores was calculated:

Figure 3: Job Satisfaction

Figure 3 indicates that the majority of responses given were either very satisfied or satisfied as 66.2% of responses fell into the category of “strongly agree” and 26.4 % into the “agree” category. Respectively only 5.1% disagree and 2.3% strongly disagree with statements focussing on Job Satisfaction. It could thus be stated that the majority of employees are very satisfied with their job.

Through the MDWT programme a supportive environment is created and each team leader becomes the leader of a “mini-business” (Competitive Dynamics, 2009:1). The high levels of job satisfaction confirms research by Keough (2005:1) who states that employees working in smaller companies (or “mini-businesses”, like Sugarbird) tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction as managers of these “mini-businesses” know more about their employees.

Table 2 presents an overview of respondents’ responses regarding Job Satisfaction.

Table 2: Job satisfaction

“I am satisfied with my job.”		
Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agrees	47	60.3%
Agrees	30	38.5%
Disagrees	1	1.2%
Strongly disagrees	0	0.0%
Total	78	100%

“I am going to work each day in a good mood.”		
Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agrees	47	60.3%
Agrees	23	29.5%
Disagrees	8	10.2%
Strongly disagrees	0	0.0%
Total	78	100%

“During the last six months I have not thinking of leaving my job.”		
Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agrees	53	67.9%
Agrees	11	14.1%
Disagrees	8	10.3%
Strongly disagrees	6	7.7%
Total	78	100%

“My job meets my expectations.”		
Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agrees	48	61.5%
Agrees	25	32.1%
Disagrees	3	3.8%
Strongly disagrees	2	2.6%
Total	78	100%

“I am proud of my job.”		
Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agrees	63	80.8%
Agrees	14	17.9%
Disagrees	0	0.0%
Strongly disagrees	1	1.3%
Total	78	100%

When comparing female and male scores, the following occurs (see figure 4):

Figure 4: Job Satisfaction: Female versus Male

When referring to Figure 4, it is clear that the female respondents experience a higher level of job satisfaction than the males. Significantly more females than males indicated that they “strongly agree” with statements focussing on job satisfaction, with 95.7% of female scores correlating strongly with positive attitudes regarding job satisfaction. In comparison, only 85.2% of corresponding male scores can be regarded as positive.

This confirms findings by Haviland (2004:1) who states that women often report higher levels of job satisfaction than their male counterparts.

3.3.3 Communication

The questionnaire included eight questions which were specifically dedicated to communication. After examining the responses, 71.3% of respondents indicated that they are very satisfied with the communication within Sugarbird. Twenty three percent of respondents were satisfied with only 4.3% unsatisfied. One percent stated that they were very unsatisfied. Compare Figure 5.

Figure 5: Communication

Ackerman *et al.* (2000:30) argues that a good communication and participation plan can aid employee involvement and participation. One of the aims of the MDWT programme is to create a work climate characterised by teamwork and participation (Competitive Dynamics, 2009:2). The results illustrated in Figure 5 indicate that the MDWT programme at Sugarbird has addressed this aim and that employees are satisfied with communication in general.

Figure 6: Communication: Female versus Male

Figure 6 illustrates the comparison of male versus female respondents' perception of communication within Sugarbird. From this it is clear that there is no significant difference between the two gender's attitudes towards communication.

Table 3: Communication

"Constant feedback is given to workers who make suggestions."		
Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agrees	48	61.5%
Agrees	25	32.1%
Disagrees	5	6.4%
Strongly disagrees	0	0.0%
Total	78	100%

"I receive a copy of the Flag Post once a quarter."		
Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agrees	60	76.9%
Agrees	16	20.5%
Disagrees	2	2.6%
Strongly disagrees	0	0.0%
Total	78	100%

"I know Sugarbird's vision, values and goals."		
Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agrees	65	83.3%
Agrees	12	15.4%
Disagrees	1	1.3%
Strongly disagrees	0	0.0%
Total	78	100%

"When I have a grievance I feel comfortable to discuss it with my supervisor."		
Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agrees	46	59.0%
Agrees	23	29.5%
Disagrees	8	10.3%



Strongly disagrees	1	1.2%
Total	78	100%

“Daily team meetings are important to clarify daily expectancies.”		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agrees	66	84.6%
Agrees	12	15.4%
Disagrees	0	0.0%
Strongly disagrees	0	0.0%
Total	78	100%

“I enjoy communicating information and ideas with my colleagues.”		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agrees	57	73.1%
Agrees	18	23.1%
Disagrees	3	3.8%
Strongly disagrees	0	0.0%
Total	78	100%

“I am well informed about policies and procedures.”		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agrees	59	75.6%
Agrees	16	20.5%
Disagrees	2	2.6%
Strongly disagrees	1	1.3%
Total	78	100%

“I trust my supervisor enough to discuss personal problems with him/her.”		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agrees	44	56.4%
Agrees	24	30.8%
Disagrees	6	7.7%
Strongly disagrees	4	5.1%
Total	78	100%

Cushman and Cahn (1985: 102) refer to Lickert and Seashore who identified a need for individuals within an organization to view their supervisor-subordinate interaction as supportive and sustaining the individual’s sense of personal worth and importance. McConnel (2002:435) agrees and states that employees are likely to infer a great deal about a supervisor’s overall attitude according to how effectively one communicates. Trust is the most important element of the psychological context of supervision as it encompasses respect and a sense of security (Tsui, 2005:60).

From the results summarized in Table 3 it is clear that the majority of respondents are satisfied with communication at Sugarbird and that they trust their supervisors. Respectively 11.6% and 12.8% of respondents indicated that they do not trust their supervisors and that they will not always discuss their grievances with their supervisors and that an appropriate intervention may be necessary. Although the majority of respondents are satisfied with the communication mechanisms within Sugarbird, there are a group of respondents who do not fully trust their supervisors.

3.3.4 Transparency

BusinessDictionary.com (sa) defines transparency as a lack of hidden agendas and conditions, accompanied by the availability of full information required for collaboration, cooperation, and collective decision-making. It is also regarded as the minimum degree of disclosure to which agreements, dealings, practices, and transactions are open to all for verification.

A total of seven questions were included in the questionnaire to assess respondents' level of satisfaction regarding transparency at Sugarbird. Figure 7 illustrates that the majority (92.3%) of respondents are of the opinion that business processes, conditions and other practices are transparent. From this group, 67.4% are very satisfied with transparency, while 24.9% are satisfied.

Figure 7 Transparency

Transparent and clear information of organizational processes encourages employees' general job satisfaction (Lamprecht *et al.*, 2008:11) and transparency should be regarded as a process and not an act (Baldoni, 2004:1). As indicated by Figure 7, the majority of subjects are satisfied with transparency at Sugarbird which correlates with positive attitudes towards job satisfaction (See Figure 3).

With regards to budgetary insight, the following question was asked: "Workers have insight into budgets". The respondents' responses were as follows:

Table 4: Transparency: Budgetary insights

“Workers have insight into budgets.”		
Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agrees	47	60.3%
Agrees	15	19.2%
Disagrees	13	16.7%
Strongly disagrees	3	3.8%
Total	78	100%

“Workers have insight into financial profits and losses.”		
Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agrees	58	74.4%
Agrees	16	20.5%
Disagrees	3	3.8%
Strongly disagrees	1	1.3%
Total	78	100%

Wikipedia [sa] states that transparency implies openness, communication, and accountability and includes financial disclosure as an important transparency procedure. Although the majority of respondents are satisfied with budgetary insights, it is important to note that in the light of an overwhelming general positive attitude, 20.5% of respondents disagree with the first statement which are evident of a possible area of concern.

Focusing on transparency with regards to management decisions, respondents responded as follows on the associated questions:

Table 5: Transparency: Management decisions

“Management informs workers about management’s activities.”		
Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agrees	57	73.1%
Agrees	18	23.1%
Disagrees	3	3.8%
Strongly disagrees	0	0.0%
Total	78	100%

“Workers get the opportunity to question management decisions in a positive manner.”		
Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agrees	42	53.9%
Agrees	31	39.7%
Disagrees	5	6.4%
Strongly disagrees	0	0.0%
Total	78	100%
“Decisions made on management level are explained to workers.”		
Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agrees	50	64.1%
Agrees	23	29.5%
Disagrees	4	5.1%
Strongly disagrees	1	1.3%
Total	78	100%

Gomery (2005:177) states that greater transparency promotes accountability and better management, while Zinger (2009:1) argues that leaders can promote higher levels of employee engagement by engaging in honest and transparent communication. According to Competitive Dynamics (2009:1) the MDWT programme aims at transforming the front-line of an organization into a productive and participative environment. From Table 5 it is clear that the majority of respondents are satisfied with management’s decisions as well as the manner in which it is communicated with respondents. This indicates that the MDWT programme has in fact contributed to a greater level of transparency from management, which resulted in a more participative work environment.

Table 6: Transparency: Business processes

“Business processes are visible and open to workers.”		
Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agrees	59	75.6%
Agrees	15	19.2%
Disagrees	1	1.3%
Strongly disagrees	3	3.9%
Total	78	100%

The majority of respondents are satisfied with transparency of business processes, as indicated in Table 6. This correlates with a study by Lamprecht *et al.* (2008:11) which indicates that transparent and clear information of organizational processes encourages employees' general job satisfaction.

An interesting phenomenon occurs when comparing the female respondents' scores with males'. Figure 8 illustrates that 71.2% of females are very satisfied with transparency issues as opposed to 58.4% of very satisfied males. When comparing all satisfied scores (strongly agrees plus agrees), it is clear that the females are significantly more satisfied with transparency (Female: 94.3% versus Male: 87.6%). This correlates with findings by Haviland (2004:1) who refers to the gender paradox in stating that female employees are often more satisfied with various elements of their jobs than their male counterparts.

Figure 8: Transparency: Female versus Male

3.3.5 Decision-making

Hosie *et al.* (2006:16) refer to Livingston who defined decision-making as “the capacity to find the problems that need to be solved, to plan for the attainment of desired results, or to carry out operating plans once they are made”. The questionnaire included five questions which aimed at determining the respondents’ perception of decision-making at Sugarbird. Figure 9 illustrate that only 63.8% of respondents are very satisfied with this variable, while 28.7% indicated that they are satisfied. Seven percent of respondents are either unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with decision-making at Sugarbird.

Figure 9: Decision-making

Van der Merwe (2008) highlights the importance of participative decision-making at Sugarbird and argues that it should be strengthened during MDWT meetings. One of the aims of the MDWT programme is to create a work climate characterised by teamwork, participation and continuous learning (Competitive Dynamics, 2009:2) and it could be argued that these elements are an important aspect in decision-making.

The results illustrated in Figure 9 indicate that 92.5% of respondents are satisfied with decision-making at Sugarbird. This correlates with a statement by Känd and Rekor (2005:1) who are of opinion that perceived involvement in decision-making (PIDM) is not only an important determinant of job satisfaction, but also strengthens the links between other determinants of job satisfaction.

Figure 10: Decision-making: Female versus Male

Figure 10 compares the two genders’ satisfaction levels on decision-making and illustrates that significantly more males are unsatisfied with decision-

making (Males: 10.4% versus Females: 6.2%). As perceived involvement in decision-making is an important determinant of job satisfaction (Känd &Rekor (2005:1), the results in Figure 10 correlate with findings by Haviland (2004:1) who states that women often report higher levels of job satisfaction than their male counterparts.

A summary of respondents' responses regarding decision-making is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Decision-making

“The opinion of workers is important.”		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agrees	55	70.5%
Agrees	18	23.1%
Disagrees	5	6.4%
Strongly disagrees	0	0.0%
Total	78	100%
“The opinion of workers is important in decision-making regarding day-to-day activities.”		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agrees	55	70.5%
Agrees	22	28.2%
Disagrees	1	1.3%
Strongly disagrees	0	0.0%
Total	78	100%
“Workers have the opportunity to help solving the questions and problems.”		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agrees	52	66.7%
Agrees	21	26.9%
Disagrees	4	5.1%
Strongly disagrees	1	1.3%
Total	78	100%
“Management arise workers’ enthusiasm in participating in the decision-making process.”		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agrees	44	56.4%
Agrees	26	33.3%
Disagrees	7	9.0%
Strongly disagrees	1	1.3%
Total	78	100%
“The opinion of workers is being heard.”		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agrees	43	55.1%
Agrees	26	33.3%
Disagrees	8	10.3%
Strongly disagrees	1	1.3%
Total	78	100%

Lamprecht *et al.* (2008:11) as well as Känd and Rekor (2005:9) argue that employees' participation in decision-making has a positive impact on job satisfaction. Generally speaking, Table 7 indicates that the majority of respondents are satisfied with decision-making strategies within Sugarbird, which correlate with high levels of job satisfaction (see Figure 3).

Table 7 further illustrates that the results from the completed questionnaires indicate that there is also a significant group of respondents who are of opinion that workers' opinions are not important and being heard. It would seem as if short term input from workers is considered, but that workers' opinions beyond day-to-day decision-making are disregarded. At the moment employees are part of Mini-Business Units of the MDWT-programme and they share decision-making within these units. This correlates with findings by Känd and Rekor (2005:26) who state that small business units have higher participation in decision-making. However, the challenge is to integrate these small business units into the greater structure. In this regard Locke and Schweiger (as referred to by Känd & Rekor, 2005:7) highlight the importance of involvement of hierarchically unequal individuals in the decision-making process by allowing employees to participate in management meetings and activities. This initiative will ensure a greater understanding and will strengthen employee perceptions that they are making a difference in improving their situation within the organization (Känd & Rekor, 2005:26).

3.3.6 Acknowledgement

Danish (2010:159) refers to Vansteenkiste who argues that incentives, rewards and recognitions are the prime factors that impact on employee motivation. As employees engage in their working activities purposely for their own sake, their behaviour will be intrinsically be motivated when their activities are enjoyable and satisfactory. Gioia [sa] is of the opinion that verbal and written acknowledgement for a job well done together with monetary rewards and bonuses, praise and words of encouragement all contribute to employees' overall satisfaction with their job. This results in high

productivity, the potential for longevity and a high degree of satisfaction. She gives the following examples of practical ways to illustrate acknowledgement: Employee of the month parking space, a paid day off for the employee's birthday, a suggestion box with reward for the best suggestions, casual Friday.

In order to acknowledge employees' ideas and hard work, Sugarbird introduced various incentives, such as "Team of the month" and "Employee of the Month" (Van der Merwe, 2008). A photo of each employee was taken when the MDWT programme was introduced and these pictures were used by each team at their MDWT station.

The questionnaire included seven questions on acknowledgement. Figure 11 illustrates the respondents' perceived levels of satisfaction in this regard.

Figure 11: Acknowledgement

As indicated in Figure 11, the majority of respondents (92.1%) are of the opinion that Sugarbird does indeed acknowledge positive inputs from employees and that these achievements are recognised. In a response to the statement: "Sugarbird has a formal program for recognising staff members' achievements on the job", 100 % respondents indicated that they agree with the statement. 88.5% of respondents are of the opinion that Management gives recognition for work well done (65.4% are very satisfied and 23.1% are satisfied), indicating that 11.5% of respondents are unsatisfied in this regard (unsatisfied: 9.0%, very unsatisfied: 2.5%).

When respondents were asked if they are satisfied with the types of recognition being offered at Sugarbird, 59% indicated that they are very satisfied. 33.3% are satisfied, indicating that there is still room for improvement or variation. 6.4% of respondents were unsatisfied and 1.3% very unsatisfied.

(Syptak *et al.*, 1999:26) highlight the importance of recognition of both major and small accomplishments in the workplace. Two questions focussed specifically on Sugarbird's acknowledgement of major- as opposed to small accomplishments. According to the results (as illustrated by Figure 12), respondents are more satisfied with the acknowledgement of major accomplishments as opposed to small accomplishments.

Figure 12: Acknowledgement of Major versus Small Accomplishments

When comparing the results from the two gender groups regarding acknowledgement, the female respondents regarded the acknowledgement received from Sugarbird in a more positive manner than the males (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Acknowledgement: Female versus Male

Good work should be acknowledged immediately (Syptak *et al.*,1999:28). Respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction on the question: “Workers receive recognition in a timely, meaningful way”. The results as indicated in Figure 14 indicate that that the majority of respondents are satisfied in this regard.

Figure 14: Recognition in a timely and meaningful manner

3.3.7 MDWT programme

Since the introduction of the MDWT programme to Sugarbird in April 2007, no formal assessment was done to measure the impact of this initiative on the job satisfaction of employees. Van der Merwe (2008) is of the opinion that this programme has had a positive effect on the climate at Sugarbird and that productivity has also increased. The questionnaire included six questions which focused specifically on respondents' perception of this programme. Figure 3.15 illustrates that 83.8% of respondents associate in a positive manner with the MDWT programme (Very satisfied: 68.2%; Satisfied: 15.6%).

Figure 15: MDWT programme

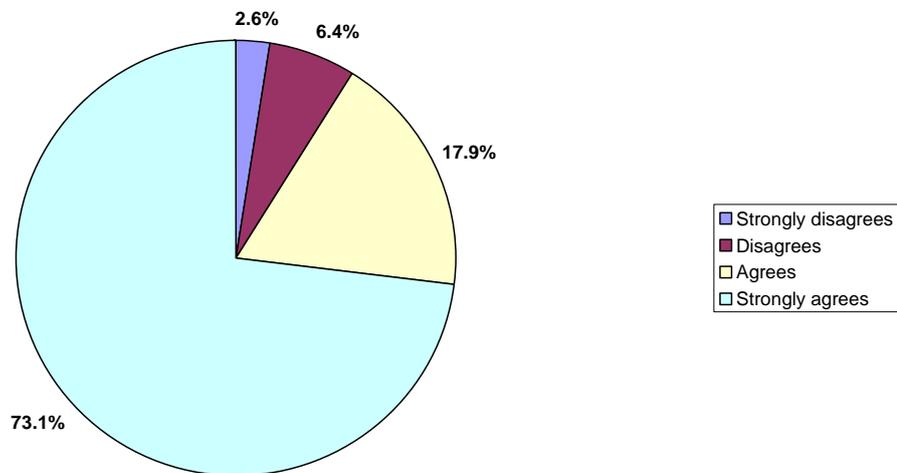
When comparing the female respondents' attitudes towards those of the male respondents, no significant discrepancy between attitudes are observed. Eighty three percent of females and 84% of all male respondents expressed positive attitudes towards the MDWT programme.

Figure 16: MDWT programme: Female versus Male

One question specifically asked respondents to rank their opinion regarding the success of the MDWT programme. Seventy eight percent of respondents are very satisfied with the success of the MDWT programme, while the remainder of the respondents (12.8%) are satisfied. For this specific question there was thus not a single person who regards the MDWT programme as a failure. It is however interesting to note that the majority of respondents is of the opinion that there is still scope for improvement in the MDWT programme. In response to the question "There is still room for improvement in the MDWT programme", respondents responded as follows:

Figure 17: MDWT programme: Scope for improvement

"There is still room for improvement in the MDWT programme"



It would seem as if respondents are satisfied with the MDWT programme and that they acknowledge its value. The MDWT programme is currently an integrated programme at Sugarbird and employees definitely took ownership of the programme and the associated processes. Therefore the sentiment that the MDWT programme can still be improved should be viewed in a positive light and employees should get the opportunity to give their input in this regard.

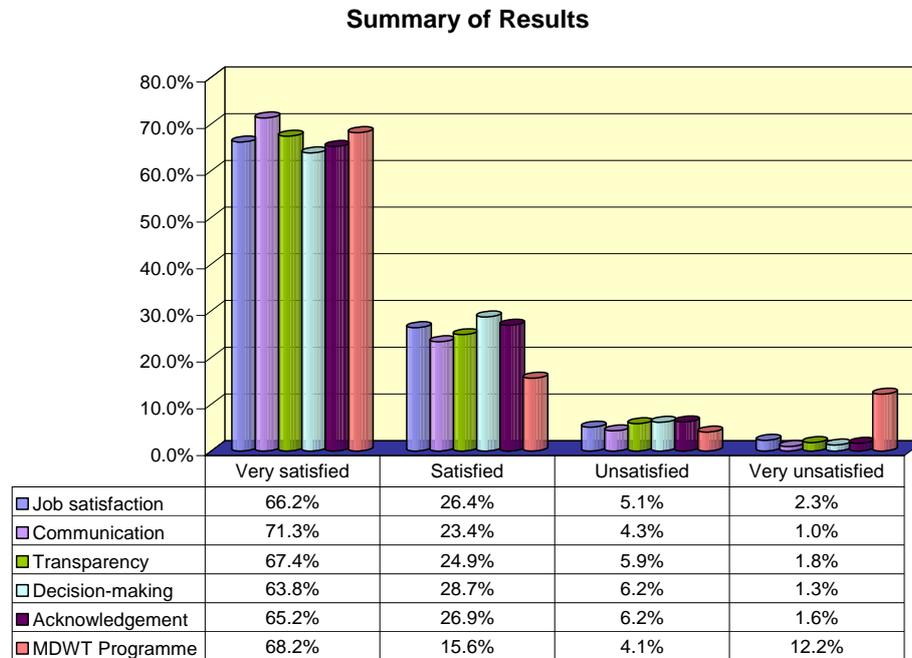
3.4 SUMMARY

Figure 18 presents an overall summary of results and indicates the following:

- 1) The majority of subjects are very satisfied with their work, communication, transparency, decision-making, acknowledgement and the MDWT programme.
- 2) When comparing all factors, communication could be regarded as the factor with which the subjects are most satisfied.
- 3) It is interesting to note that although the majority of subjects indicated that they are satisfied with the MDWT programme, Figure 18 indicates that

there is still significant room for improvement in this programme. Refer to Figure 17 for more specific details.

Figure 18: Summary of Results



In conclusion, Chapter three has highlighted the research methodology and has analysed all data to interpret results. The results were overwhelmingly positive and indicated that the majority of subjects experience high levels of job satisfaction and are also satisfied with the following contributors of job satisfaction: Communication, transparency, decision-making and acknowledgement. As illustrated in Figure 18, the majority of employees are very satisfied with the MDWT- programme, but are of opinion that there is still room for improvement.

The following chapter will focus on conclusions and will make some recommendations for future research. Possible interventions to further improve job satisfaction of employees will also be discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study focused on the impact of the MDWT programme on job satisfaction of employees at Sugarbird. Attention was placed on job satisfaction, communication, transparency, decision-making and recognition within the MDWT programme.

The goal of this study was to evaluate the impact of the MDWT programme on job satisfaction of employees at Sugarbird. In order to reach this goal, the following objectives were identified:

- To undertake a thorough literature study on the impact of factors such as communication, transparency, decision-making and acknowledgement on job satisfaction of employees.
- To explore the initial goals, contents and roll-out of the MDWT programme at Sugarbird.
- To explore the impact of the MDWT programme on the job satisfaction of employees at Sugarbird through an empirical study.
- To draw conclusions and make recommendations regarding the use of the MDWT programme at Sugarbird.

In order to accomplish the goal, the researcher decided on a quantitative approach to establish a statistical knowledge base which allowed the researcher to systematically evaluate the following components of job satisfaction: communication, transparency, decision-making and acknowledgement.

An empirical study was done during which a self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from the Sugarbird employees. The theoretical information and the empirical data were integrated and certain interpretations were made.

This last chapter will serve as the final evaluation of the research process and results. In order for the researcher to provide an effective research report, certain conclusions and recommendations will be made.

4.2 CONCLUSIONS

The majority of employees are satisfied with their jobs at Sugarbird and are of the opinion that the MDWT programme is a success.

Employees are in general satisfied with the communication strategies within Sugarbird and it is positive to note that the majority of employees trust their supervisors. However, there is an indication that a group of employees are not fully convinced that they are comfortable to discuss grievances with their supervisors.

When evaluating transparency, the majority of employees stated that they are satisfied with the manner in which transparency is dealt with at Sugarbird. It should however be noted that there is a discrepancy between the two genders' attitude towards this component of job satisfaction (more female employees are very satisfied with transparency than their male counterparts).

Participation is one of the key components of the MDWT programme. In this regard participative decision-making plays an important role. An overwhelming majority of employees are of the opinion that the opinion of workers is important in decision-making regarding day-to-day activities, indicating that the MDWT programme is successful in the involvement of employees in everyday decisions. When focusing on general opinions of employees, a significant number of employees indicated that their opinions are not being heard.

All employees indicated that Sugarbird has a formal incentive programme to recognise employees' achievements and the majority of employees indicated that Sugarbird does indeed acknowledge positive inputs from employees. The majority of employees are of the opinion that management gives

recognition for work well done, with only a number of employees who stated that they are unsatisfied. There is a strong discrepancy between the acknowledgment of major- versus small accomplishments as employees are of the opinion that major accomplishments are more easily recognised. Female employees are generally more satisfied with acknowledgement than their male counterparts.

The majority of employees at Sugarbird regards the MDWT programme as successful and acknowledge its value. The majority of respondents are of the opinion that the MDWT programme is an important way of communicating with management and indicate that they can make a difference at Sugarbird through the MDWT programme. Although responses are predominately positive, the majority of employees are of opinion that there is still room for improvement within the MDWT programme.

All results indicate that the MDWT programme does have a positive impact on job satisfaction and that employees have taken ownership of this initiative. Research results confirm Van der Merwe's sentiment that the MDWT programme did indeed improve job satisfaction and also highlights certain areas for possible intervention. Recommendations in this regard are discussed in the following section.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are as follows:

- Supervisory training backed with an awareness campaign should equip supervisors to deal with challenges with regards to trust. It would further inform employees about the importance of a supervisory system in minimizing work related stress as well as personal challenges.
- Specific attention should be given to the supervisory practices and communication strategies within each department concerning transparency, decision-making as well as acknowledgement issues.

- Specific mechanisms should be introduced into the MDWT programme which allows employees to be involved in the making of general decisions.
- A formal feedback structure could be introduced to increase the perceived involvement in decision-making.
- Recognition by management for work done well needs to be included within the formal feedback structure.
- A follow-up workshop or similar initiatives should be undertaken to explore possible manners in which improvement within the MDWT programme could be addressed.
- Follow-up workshops within departments should be held to explore and address transparency, decision-making as well as acknowledgement issues.
- Special attention should be given to supervisory training to equip supervisors with the skills to convey important job-related as well as personal information through to both managers and employees in a trustworthy manner.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Due to the fact that this document is only a research project in stead of a full research thesis, there are still areas that could be improved. Experts and researchers within the field of organizational behaviour and business management differ extensively in their individual definitions of job satisfaction and the factors that impact on it. It should be noted that the components described in this research project as possible contributors to job satisfaction were included in this study based on the results from an internal climate

survey in April 2007. These results identified communication, transparency, decision-making and acknowledgement as possible contributing factors to low job satisfaction at Sugarbird. Therefore these factors should not be regarded as the only possible contributors to job satisfaction and it is recommended that other factors which are identified in research should also be investigated.

As some of the divisions are predominantly more male than females (and vice versa), the phenomenon of transparency, decision-making as well as acknowledgement could possibly be explained through further divisional surveys.

4.5 SUMMARY

Focussing on the research question “Does the MDWT programme have a positive impact on job satisfaction?” the results of this study indicate that the MDWT programme does indeed have a positive impact on job satisfaction. The majority of employees are satisfied with communication, decision-making, acknowledgement, transparency as well as the MDTW programme in general. There are certain aspects which are identified as possible areas of concern and recommendations to address these are outlined in the previous section.

In conclusion, the researcher is of opinion that this research project is a success as the goal and objectives have been accomplished and that the results will benefit Sugarbird to further streamline the MDTW initiative in order to further increase job satisfaction as well as productivity.

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ANNEXURE A: Written consent from vd Merwe



Blank – vd merwe



ANNEXTURE B: Consent letter



Consent afr



Consent eng



ANNEXTURE C: Questionnaire