Gordon Institute of Business Science
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The role of employee experience as a driver of performance

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A research project submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration

11 November 2019

ABSTRACT

With multiple generations in the workforce today, additional pressure has been placed on organisations to engage and drive performance in order to achieve organisational goals. The war for talent has added the need for organisations to remain competitive and meet individuals' needs and expectations. Individuals' needs vary, and the challenge lies in organisations being able to show up at moments of truth and cultivate memorable experiences, which will drive retention as well as performance.

Through a qualitative, exploratory study, this research aimed to identify the role of employee experience as a driver of performance. Through the use of purposive sampling, 17 interviews were conducted. The audio interviews were transcribed and coded through Atlas TI, using thematic analysis.

The key findings of the research observed that employee experience plays an important role in driving individual performance. The elements that contribute to a superior employee experience are similar to those elements that drive individual performance. An employee experience as a driver of performance model was the outcome of the study which demonstrates experience levers organisations could use to drive individual performance.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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11 November 2019

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1. CHAPTER 1 : THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

In larger, multinational organisations, multiple generations are working together, with each generation having their own expectations and needs, which they expect to be met by the employing organisations (Plaskoff, 2017). The way in which organisations historically engaged employees and won the war for talent has had to shift fundamentally because of changes in the world of work. Innovation, globalisation and technology have removed barriers and opened up a competitive global marketplace that requires a purposeful and mutually beneficial relationship between the employer and employees (Plaskoff, 2017).

Beyond the war for talent acquisition and retention there exists a competitive marketplace, in which organisations compete for customers' purchase and attention. Improving customer experiences and satisfaction will not only improve revenue and profitability immediately (Green, 2017), but will sustain the organisation during turbulent times into the future (Bradshaw, 2018). According to Heskett, Sasser, and Schlesinger's Service-Profit Chain model, employee experience drives customer experience, which in turn drives revenue and profitability (Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 2008).

1.2 Research motivation

To win the war for talent and remain competitive in the marketplace, organisations need to focus on three key objectives; namely, retention, engagement, performance and innovation (Caplan, 2014). Emulating Google by increasing the menu of tangible benefits to drive engagement, performance and satisfaction is proving inefficient in today's context (Plaskoff, 2017), as this fails to address employees' engagement needs and their resultant performance. Performance is strongly correlated with how the employees experience the organisation and feel their needs and purpose are being met (Pradhan, Panda, & Jena, 2017).

Recognising these challenges, organisations have had to restructure the way in which human resources (HR) management is delivered. Varying approaches in the past have included Taylorism to strategic HR management, and contextually, they have provided meaningful approaches to ensure employees' well-being and that their needs were met (Ulrich, 1997). Over the past decades, the HR management function has evolved in its perception of the employee and the employer-employee relationship. Originally, employees or workers were seen from a utilitarian perspective, where the employee was viewed as a 'cog', and the focus was on what tools were needed for the employee to perform their work, it was a transactional relationship (Morgan, 2017). Employees had jobs and employers provided work, and this meant that both needs were met. Fast-forward to today, when the new approaches in the field of HR management aim to reframe the employee-employer relationship (Plaskoff, 2017), known as the *Employee Experience*. Employee Experience, or EE, is defined as the employees' holistic perceptions of the relationship with their organisation, derived from all the encounters at touchpoints along the employee lifecycle (Plaskoff, 2017).

According to Morgan (2017), EE is the intersection of employee expectations, needs and wants, and the organisational design of those expectations, needs and wants. It advocates that the human resources effort has to be impactful at the different moments of truth, which employees experience in their organisational lifecycle with the aim of sustaining their engagement and performance (Plaskoff, 2017). Employees will have varying expectations, needs and wants at the different points in their employee journey, and EE is what they experience when evaluated against the organisational design of those needs, wants and expectations.

The lifecycle of an employee in an organisation as defined by Morgan (2017), includes attraction, recruitment, development and retention. Within each of these pillars are moments that matter to the employee, and it is for the organisation to meet the employees' needs and expectations in a meaningful manner. The result should then be that the employees display engagement and continued performance (Morgan, 2017), which the organisation seeks to drive and achieve. When an organisation fails to deliver on these expectations, the result is a workforce of disengaged employees, poor performance, and high labour turnover (Morgan, 2017).

1.2.1 Moments of truth in the employee lifecycle

The employee lifecycle provides the framework within which organisations have the opportunity to meet and exceed employee expectations through varied policies, programmes, processes and interactions. Talent attraction into an organisation goes beyond the financial benefits potential employees can yield. With an already limited global talent pool, organisations are forced to compete for the best talent to gain a competitive advantage (Schlechter, Thompson, & Bussin, 2015). Attracting top talent used to be a straightforward exercise, with the success rate being dependant on how much an organisation was able to pay for talent (Schlechter, Thompson, & Bussin, 2015). Today, however, potential employees are placing more value on organisational benefits other than money, linked to the search for purpose, the organisations' reputation and brand, and an environment where individuals can thrive (Schlechter, Thompson, & Bussin, 2015). As a result, the potential candidates for employment will have varied experiences depending on the total reward offering of an organisation.

Candidates' expectations vary, where some place high value on job security, while others seek flexibility of working hours and recognition (Schlechter, Thompson, & Bussin, 2015). The task for organisations is therefore, to create an experience during the interview that meets both financial and non-financial needs of potential employees in order to attract them. This means creating a package that as a standard, meets cost-related benefits, but factors in other elements employees value. Very often, at the top of that list is a positive work-life balance, a learning opportunity and career development (Schlechter, Thompson, & Bussin, 2015).

As companies recruit talent and candidates seek to work for global organisations that can offer them global career paths. Market dynamics fuelled by technology, globalisation and workplace behavioural shifts, are challenging organisations to design strategically innovative ways to acquire the best talent (Sahay, 2014). With the organisational landscape transforming, a new competitive advantage, linked to talent acquisition, is candidate centricity, which relates to deeply understanding the candidates' needs and fulfilling them better than anyone else (Sahay, 2014).

This philosophy transitions as the candidate becomes an employee. Employees want to work for organisations that provide the right tools and technologies, which will help them execute their role and enable performance (Green, 2017).

Employee retention and engagement as well as driving performance require a deliberate focus on talent development (Caplan, 2014). Historically, the focus with regard to talent development had been on high potential and high performers; however, more recently, market forces result in organisations being steered towards career development for all employees in the organisation (Caplan, 2014). The approach of continuous re-appraisal of skills from an experience perspective, requires rich feedback and agility, both formally and informally (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016). Accountability is at the centre of the talent development discussion. Employees seek accountability for their careers, while organisations, in this context, are required to provide the enablers for continuous learning, through varied job experiences, user-friendly technology, innovative course correction approaches, and continuous, rich feedback (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016). Organisations that engage their employees are those that are able to provide varied learning opportunities as part of their development suite (Green, 2017).

Talent retention refers to all the activities and methodologies that the organisation uses to prevent the departure of talented employees (Ott, Tolentino, & Michailova, 2018). There are direct costs, such as the recruitment costs, as well as indirect cost, such as loss of a skill, linked to the organisation's failure to retain talent (Ott, Tolentino, & Michailova, 2018). Therefore, it becomes challenging for organisations to acquire and maintain their competitive advantage if they experience high staff turnover and a failure to retain, not just top talent, but all talent (Ott, Tolentino, & Michailova, 2018). Fostering an engaging environment typically means employees will be motivated, will give their best to their roles and ultimately perform better and be less inclined to leave the organisation (Ott, Tolentino, & Michailova, 2018). By tightening talent retention activity, organisations are in a position to drive a superior EE.

The above framework or lifecycle demonstrates some of the key moments of truth within which the employer can drive employee performance. The revolution of performance management has alluded to a holistic approach to driving the

performance of individuals in the organisation (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016). Accountability from an employee perspective only serves to enhance the experience of different organisational processes and practices. The organisation's role is to ensure that it has practices that are agile and adaptable in order to meet the varying expectations of employees. By doing this, congruence is achieved between the expectations of the employer and the employee, and an engaging environment is created, which serves to drive performance.

1.2.2 Culture

The environment in which individuals are working plays a significant role in their well-being, but more so in their drive for performance (Christensen, 2006). Organisational culture affects the way employees feel, think and act in a workplace (Christensen, 2006) and is the collective mindset and way of working the employees bring to work on a daily basis (Green, 2017). Undesirable customer interactions and under-performing employees are costly for organisations, and such poor performance is partially the result of a lacking culture fit between an employee and the organisation (Green, 2017). The reality is that culture strategy will have a greater impact on an organisation than any marketing, business or operational strategies (Green, 2017). According to Peter Drucker, the well-known management guru, "culture eats strategy", meaning that organisational strategies will fail in the absence of an enabling culture (Coffman & Sorensen, 2013).

1.2.3 The service-profit chain

Due to competition, globalisation and technological transformation, organisations are no longer in a position to accept below-average performance. All the parts of the whole organisation – and that means all employees − are required to execute their roles efficiently in order to contribute to the overall organisational success. Such organisational success includes revenue, profitability and long-term sustainability (Bradshaw, 2018). The service-profit chain model means that in order to drive profitability and revenue, organisations are required to drive customer satisfaction and experience (Heskett et al., 2008), and this is achieved by ensuring that one's organisation is equipped with engaged, empowered and knowledgeable employees

(Green, 2017). A happy employee will result in a happier customer (Bradshaw, 2018) and as a result, provide the desired profitability as diagrammatically displayed by Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Principles of the service-profit chain model
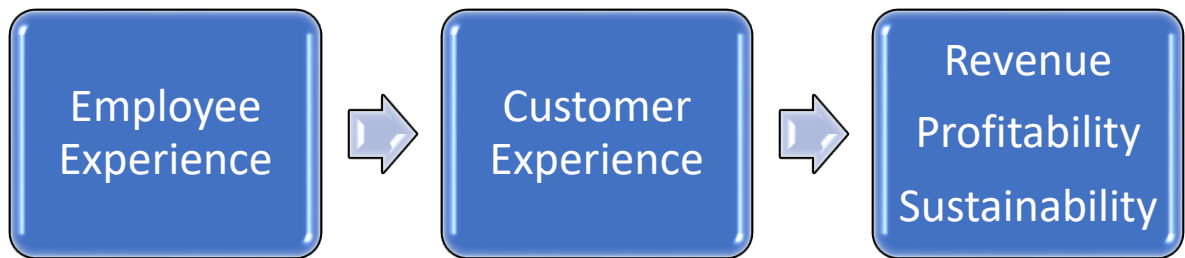
Source: Heskett et al (2008)

To achieve the desired organisational performance will require the enablement of performance drivers, while removing inhibitors and obstacles to performance. Delivery on expected customer experience and satisfaction will require deliberate performance management (Green, 2017).

The research problem to be addressed in the study is to explore the role of EE as a driver of performance in an organisation. This study will explore the various touch points or moments of truth within the employee lifecycle and try to establish how they serve as drivers of desired organisational performance. The research will investigate the construct of EE, explore its role within an organisation and provide an understanding of what the link is as a driver of performance.

While there are numerous data sets on performance measurement and management, there is little empirical data on how EE has an impact on an individual's performance at work. Literature on EE is currently limited due the newness of the topic in the HR field. As a result, there is currently very little empirical perspective available on the link between EE and performance. However, models such as the service-profit chain and literature relating to customer experience has begun to demonstrate the criticality of EE as a driver of results. Business results are achieved through driving performance (Green, 2017). Organisations can no longer ignore the link between the internal customer and the external customer, that is, employees and consumers of products or services. In order to satisfy customers and drive

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organisational performance, employees should be empowered, engaged / committed and knowledgeable (Green, 2017).

The purpose of this research is to address the gaps articulated above, namely, the business need to understand the relevance and importance of the employees' experience as related to performance. It is also to provide an empirical body of information to the topic of EE as linked to performance.

2.   CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Employee experience defined

According to Maylett and Wride (2017), EE is defined as the sum of the perceptions of the interactions employees have of their organisation. EE depends largely on perceptions and expectations, where perceptions determine the outcome of the experience (Maylett & Wride, 2017). According to Morgan (2017), it is the "intersection of employees' expectations, needs and wants and the organisational design of those expectations, needs and wants" (p. 6). It borrows methodologies of human-centred design and incorporates a design-thinking approach to the customer journey and customer experience, which have significantly affected loyalty and profitability (Plaskoff, 2017). EE utilises 'outside-in' thinking (Plaskoff, 2017), which begins with an understanding of the user or customer, and truly understanding their requirements.

Design thinking treats work as a life journey with the employee at the centre (Plaskoff, 2017). This journey has numerous milestones and touchpoints, and the quality of the employee's experience has a direct influence on their engagement and performance (Plaskoff, 2017). The EE approach differs significantly from the traditional HR approach in that the design of EE is a collaborative one and goes through iterations for improvement as well as experiments (Plaskoff, 2017).

2.2 Foundations of Employee Experience: reason for being, culture, technology and physical environments

In order to create a superior employee experience, Morgan (2017) argues that such experiences need to start with a compelling reason for being, which is the foundation of the three EE environments; namely, culture, the physical space and technology. While many organisations articulate their purpose linked to being a market leader and as drivers of shareholder value, it does not inspire and also does not drive action orientation within employees (Morgan, 2017). Organisations that leap-frog with regard to EE are those that connect what the organisation does to broader society and those affected (Morgan, 2017) and therefore, the organisation is focused on the

impact on the world. This in turn forces organisations to continuously think strategically and practically with regard to their impact on the ecosystem and world within which they operate.

The physical work environment plays a critical role with regard to EE. It includes the physical space such as the buildings, the art on the walls, workspace designs and offers flexibility with organisational values reflected (Morgan, 2017). People want to work in spaces that will energise and inspire them (Green, 2017), but also spaces that help employees to be creative, engaged with the work they execute and with the organisation (Morgan, 2017). The technological environment refers to the tools used by employees to execute their job (Morgan, 2017). It is the hardware, software, both simple and sophisticated platforms employees use to get the job done (Morgan, 2017). One may view the technological environment as the enabler to the future of work and the glue that powers the organisation (Morgan, 2017).

The cultural environment is the only one that is not visible to the eye. The cultural environment is about the feel of the organisation and what actions are taken by the organisation to create that feeling (Morgan, 2017). Morgan (2017) argues that in order to create the optimal culture, there exist ten attributes that are key to ascertaining such optimal culture, namely:

1. Is the company viewed positively?
2. Does everyone feel valued?
3. Do people have a legitimate sense of purpose?
4. Do employees feel that they are part of the team?
5. Does the organisation believe in diversity and inclusion?
6. Do employees refer others?
7. Does the environment enable the ability to learn new things?
8. Are employees treated fairly?
9. Are executives and managers also coaches and mentors?
10. Is the organisation dedicated to employee health and wellness?

The cultural environment is ultimately about how employees feel and are treated in their place of work. The below figure serves to diagrammatically represent the relationship between four constructs.

Figure 2: Interpretation of Morgan's (2017) foundations of employee experience
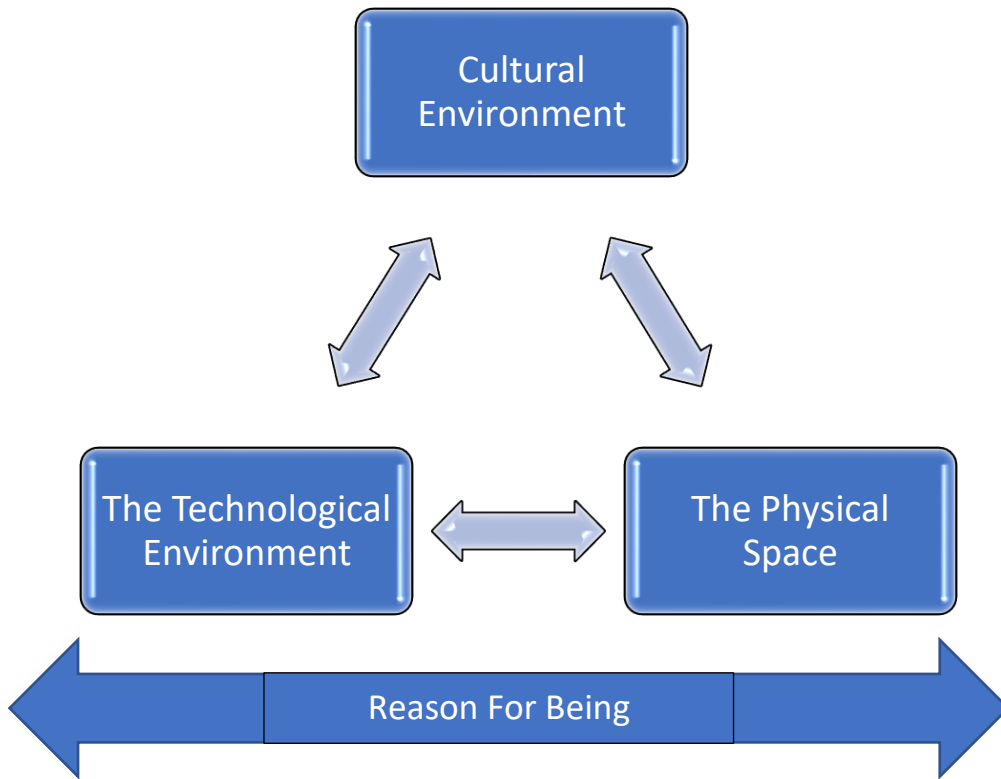
Source: Morgan (2017)

2.3 The evolution from utility to employee experience

2.3.1 Utility

In co-building the desired experiences together with employees, engagement and trust is built between the organisation and the employees (Plaskoff, 2017). The traditional HR approach used to see the employees in their utility roles, rather than co-builders of organisational success. In that context, work was about utility, the basic tools that an employer could provide employees to execute their roles (Morgan, 2017). In the past, this would have included a desk, paper, pen and a phone. It was about the bare minimum to execute one's tasks. The relationship between employer and employee was a transactional one; consisting of minimum pay for work completed (Morgan, 2017).

2.3.2 Productivity

Post the utility era came the productivity era, which placed new emphasis on the HR function. Productivity was the period of Taylorism. Taylorism was about the division of labour, structure of control over task performance and minimal interaction or employee-employer relationship (Littler, 1978). Taylorism is defined as the bureaucratisation of the structure of control and not the employment relationship (Littler, 1978). This period was about optimisation of and efficiency in the workplace. The productivity era was characterised by repeatable processes and managing and monitoring inputs tightly to improve productivity and outputs (Morgan, 2017). It was less about the employee and their engagement but rather about executing tasks efficiently to achieve maximum productivity.

2.3.3 Engagement

The following era was that of engagement. This era was a transformational one in that it was a shift from how organisations can extract value from employees and an evaluation of what employees are doing for the organisation to how organisations benefit employees (Morgan, 2017). The belief is that an engaged employee is a happier one and a productive one (Morgan, 2017), other authors have recognised that having highly engaged, productive employees leads to improved organisational performance and results (Gupta & Sharma, 2016).

Explored by Kahn in 1990, employee engagement has been defined as employees being physically, cognitively and emotionally attuned with their work and roles (Kahn, 1990). Later authors have described engagement as employees' behavioural, cognitive and emotional state targeted at positive organisational outcomes (Schuck & Wollard, 2010). It involves employees' readiness, capacity and desire to apply discretionary effort towards an organisation, personified through energy, dedication and passion towards the delivery of organisational goals (Gupta & Sharma, 2016). The era of engagement within HR was the shift from the organisation being the focus to the focus of the organisation being the employees and their contribution to the organisation.

2.3.4 Employee experience from engagement

Employee experience, or EE, unlike engagement is a long-term view relying on a continuous redesign of the organisation; it is something that is created and affected by both the employee and the organisation (Morgan, 2017). Employee engagement and employee experience are at times used interchangeably; however, it can be argued, contextually, that there are differences. Engagement can be seen as the short-term face-value actions organisations undertake to solve employee challenges and improve how the organisation works whereas EE has a long-term view that consists of iterations of employees experience by both the employee and employer to ensure sustainability (Morgan, 2017).

Some of the reasons why employee engagement has lost its relevance is because engagement has become an annual review (Morgan, 2017). It is typically measured once a year at a point in time (Morgan, 2017). A further reason is that engagement surveys place much focus on the effect rather than the cause (Morgan, 2017). It is a measurement of how people feel post an event or organisational occurrence. Such surveys are typically driven through a programme via the HR community (Morgan, 2017), and have become a people function key performance indicator rather than a method to listen to employees and actively respond to challenges.

The current era affecting employees and organisations is that of EE. This era is about co-creating and iterating with employees (Burrell, 2018); it is about the dynamic nature of the relationship between the organisation and the employee (Morgan, 2017).

2.4 Employee experience drivers

There are numerous factors that are causing the shift towards the EE framework. These include greater mobility, millennials' role in the job market and change in demographics, rapid innovation, technology, new behaviours and globalisation (Morgan, 2017). Mobility relates to access to people and information at all times, enabled by mobile devices (Morgan, 2017). Big Data, artificial intelligence (AI), and

robotics are just some of the new innovation and technologies organisations are engaging with to improve their processes and how they operate (Morgan, 2017).

The way in which organisations historically engaged employees and attracted talent had to fundamentally shift (Plaskoff, 2017) because of globalisation and the other changes in the job market. Organisations can now employ multiple generations with varying expectations, served by a single organisational framework (Morgan, 2017). A generation is defined as a group of people born within a specific birth-year range, who have experienced the same socio-cultural and historical context and as a result, have core values that are different from those born in a different time (de Waal, Peters, & Broekhuizen, 2017). These widely differing attitudes, ways of working, work values and ethics in the workplace can create tensions between the different generations (de Waal, Peters, & Broekhuizen, 2017).

Such tensions exist not only with each other, but also with the organisation, as the organisation is expected to meet all these generations' expectations and needs, although this may not always be possible. Organisations may find themselves leaning towards the provision of the needs and expectations of only one of the generations, and consequently may be viewed as being biased towards that generation or group, showing favouritism. Such bias leads to disengaged, disgruntled employees. It is predicted that by 2025, about 75% of the workforce will consist of millennials (born between 1982 and 1999) (Pahos & Galanaki, 2018). Despite such bias toward one generation, organisations will still be required to design and establish ways to respond to the needs of all employees, regardless of the generation they belong to (de Waal, Peters, & Broekhuizen, 2017).

Part of the necessary organisational response relates to the use of technology in order not only to remain competitive, but also engage and empower employees. Much of the modern employee experience takes place online, with expectations for digital learning and growth experiences growing, with a comparison being made regarding employees' best online user experiences (Raia, 2017). Standards for user experiences are set by skilled designers and user-experience experts, and the organisation's revenue motivations for delivering exceptional user experiences can only thrive if users, that is, employees are engaged and productive (Raia, 2017). By investing in improving digital learning and growth experiences for employees, a

positive experience is created, which boosts workplace productivity (Raia, 2017). Criteria for a good user-experience include usability, adoptability, desirability as well as value, meaning that the system is inherently useful (Raia, 2017). By ensuring that the digital learning and growth experience for employees is a superior one, employees will be less frustrated when executing their task, they will be more motivated and energised to perform.

2.5 The optimal employee experience

In creating the optimal employee experience, organisations are creating agile talent practices (Burrell, 2018). For some organisations, this means bringing the customer centricity approach in relation to how they treat their employees (Burrell, 2018). Customers value responsiveness and speed, and similarly, the approach that should be undertaken when dealing with employees in that the interaction is speedy and responsive (Burrell, 2018). The caveat, however, is that these talent processes should be inclusive, considering the diverse needs of employees.

In order to provide a better understanding, it is critical to dissect this approach within the framework of the employees' lifecycle. For purposes of this research, the employees' lifecycle within an organisation as per Morgan (2017) includes talent attraction, recruitment (talent acquisition), talent development and talent retention. Talent attraction, in this context, refers to the activities aimed at attracting potential candidates to want to work for one's organisation (Schlechter, Thompson, & Bussin, 2015). Attracting talent in today's term now means that the organisation has to offer more than just financial or monetary rewards. Non-financial rewards are being prioritised by potential employees (Schlechter, Thompson, & Bussin, 2015). This includes the provision of a positive work-life balance, alignment to organisational purpose, varied learning opportunities, and providing real scope for considerable career advancement (Schlechter, Thompson, & Bussin, 2015). Employee contentment with these listed factors also contributes to better employee performance (Schlechter, Thompson, & Bussin, 2015).

From a recruitment perspective, there is an increasing realisation that engaging talent in innovative ways has become necessary in order to attract and recruit the

best talent globally (Sahay, 2014). This includes a user-centred approach. This approach means ensuring a seamless experience for potential employees as well as having a single point of contact when needing to engage with the organisation (Sahay, 2014). It further includes ensuring there is a culture fit between the candidate and the organisation, and this can only be assessed by the organisation (Sahay, 2014). If done properly, it eliminates any frustrations that may occur later due to a lack of organisational culture fit. The organisation will have to apply lean principles, eliminating waste within the recruitment process, which is also proving to be valued by candidates (Sahay, 2015). This includes avoiding unnecessary engagements, duplication of submission of documentation, meaningful interviews and lag times with regard to receiving feedback (Sahay, 2015).

Talent development relates to the learning opportunities and experiences an employer is able to provide for employees (Dalal & Akdere, 2018). The concept of continuous learning is not new, but rather more prevalent with the increase in numbers of people who have access to technology (Dalal & Akdere, 2018). People consume content on their phones and tablets now (Burrell, 2018), and platforms such as Udemy and LinkedIn learning have enabled the ability to learn anywhere and anytime. Traditional learning management systems are losing favour due to their unadaptable nature, while individuals require customised and tailored content (Burrells, 2018). Tools that will win employees' favour are those that are able to make intelligent personalised recommendations, based on an individual's competencies, skills and learning gaps (Burrells, 2018).

Baker, Kubal, and O'Rourke (2006) identified five key steps to retain talented employees; the first being that organisations need to acknowledge that there is a retention challenge, as well as a continuous competition for talent. Second, organisations should know what their employees are thinking, which can be achieved through the use of surveys and pulse surveys to sense-check the sentiment in the organisation (Baker, Kubal, & O'Rourke, 2006). Third, organisations should monitor employee opinions (Baker, Kubal, & O'Rourke, 2006) and this could be achieved through providing listening opportunities such as Hackathons and focus groups to stay close to what employees are thinking. Organisations should regularly revisit reward structures and remuneration philosophies to ensure that they are staying relevant in the market (Baker, Kubal, & O'Rourke, 2006), because it could be a costly

exercise to lose sight of changed reward structures and remuneration expectations as this could result in the loss of key performing talent. Lastly and most importantly, organisations should thank their staff; this translates into the orally or written message of appreciation, but also demonstrates this appreciation by affording employees learning and growth opportunities as well as other forms of recognition (Baker, Kubal, & O'Rourke, 2006).

2.6 Why employee experience is Important: The law of congruent experience

A significant characteristic of high-performing organisations is that such organisations aim to serve the customer as best as possible (de Waal & van der Heijden, 2016). In order to meet this need, organisations have recognised the criticality of their employees' behaviour in influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty (de Waal & van der Heijden, 2016) because happy employees will equal happy customers (Green, 2017). The result of a poor employee experience with the organisation is usually also poor customer service provided by such employee, which is linked to a lack of effort and dismal attitude from an employee (Green, 2017). Customer experience has been prioritised by many organisations as a key competitive advantage (de Waal & van der Heijden, 2016).

In recent years, however, there has been a shift in focus from the customer to the employee of the organisation (Morgan, 2017; Maylett & Wride, 2017). A winning customer experience is the direct result of employees' attitudes and behaviour (Heskett et al., 2008; Maylett & Wride, 2017). For most organisations, EE has not yet gained the necessary traction and as a result, such organisations have not connected the dots with regard to the congruence of customer experience and employee experience (Maylett & Wride, 2017). However, it is critical to create happy and engaged employees in an effort to inspire them in turn to provide better customer service (Green, 2017), which will result in improved overall organisational results.

EE has the ability to shift the needle within one's organisation, regardless of the measure one chooses to evaluate; revenue, growth, customer retention or other factors (Heskett et al., 2008; Maylett & Wride, 2017). The law of congruent

experience argues that employees will deliver a customer experience that matches their own experience in an organisation (Maylett & Wride, 2017). Employees who are disgruntled and disengaged will deliver an unsatisfactory customer experience (de Waal & van der Heijden, 2016). An amazing employee experience therefore will also deliver a superb, loyal and profit-generating customer experience (Maylett & Wride, 2017).

While customer experiences are significantly affected by employees' mindsets, the employees' mindsets determine the effort exerted to execute not only their role, but also the organisation's overall performance (Green, 2017). If organisations desire superior performance in the workplace, then EE should be a priority (Green, 2017). Successful organisations and leaders in driving performance and thus profitability, are those who invest in people and technology that enables employees, employ dynamic recruiting and development practices, and have compensation linked to performance through visionary leadership (Heskett et al., 2008). Employee satisfaction has multiple underlying experiences, which influence perceptions and effort exerted (Heskett et al., 2008).

2.7 The Service-Profit-Chain: As linked to employee experience

The service-profit-chain is a business management theory that posits and demonstrates employee satisfaction as one of the key levers or drivers of organisational profitability (Heskett, Jones, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997). Though the links are sequential in the model, employee satisfaction is the beginning of the customer satisfaction and experience journey. The model suggests relationships between profitability, customer loyalty, employee satisfaction, productivity and loyalty (Heskett et al., 2008).

Figure 3: The service-profit-chain model
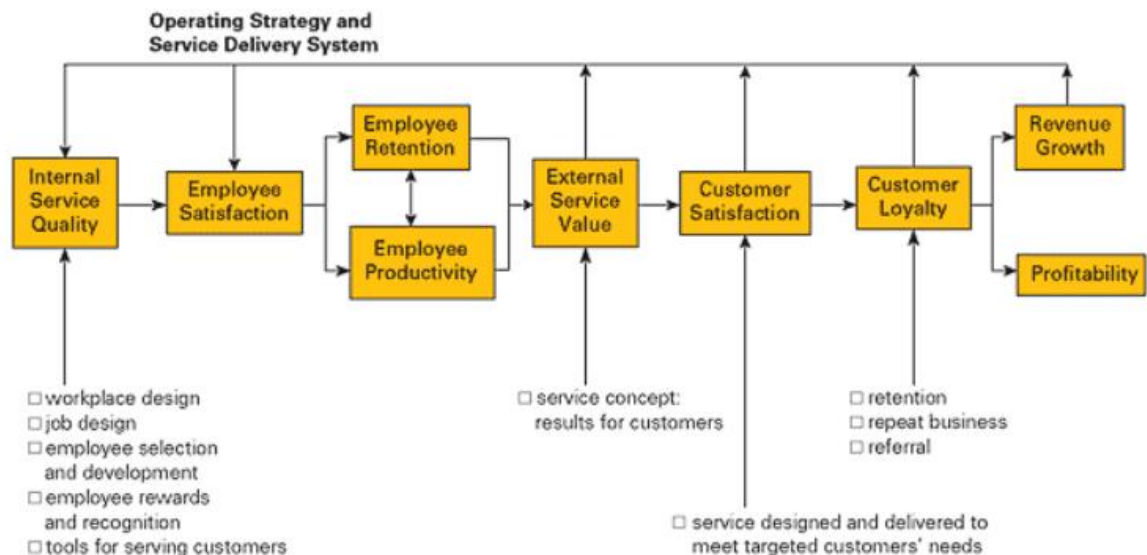
Source: Heskett el (2008)

The goal or outcome of the service-profit chain model is revenue growth and profitability of the organisation. The model argues that growth and profit are primarily the result of customer loyalty, which includes retention, repeat business and referrals (Heskett et al., 2008). Customer satisfaction drives customer loyalty and in turn, is driven by service value as perceived by the customer (Heskett et al., 2008).

Customers are value oriented and this value is the result received in relation to total cost (Heskett et al., 2008). Employee productivity drives this value, and is driven by

employee loyalty, which is seen by employee retention (Heskett et al.,2008). Satisfaction with the organisation, the work and the working environment supports employee retention and drives productivity (Heskett et al., 2008).

Employee satisfaction is driven by internal service quality (Heskett et al., 2008). Internal quality of the working environment relates to the attitudes and feelings employees have towards their work and the organisation (Heskett et al., 1997). It consists of:

- Workplace design, which is the actual physical environment,
- Job design, which relates to meaningful work,
- Employee recruitment and development with corresponding practices,
- Employee reward and recognition,
- Tools and technologies for serving and servicing customers (Heskett et al., 2008).

The above are the employee experiences that affect the customer experience that drive revenue growth and profitability (Heskett et al., 2008).

Figure 4: Interpretation of the service-profit chain model
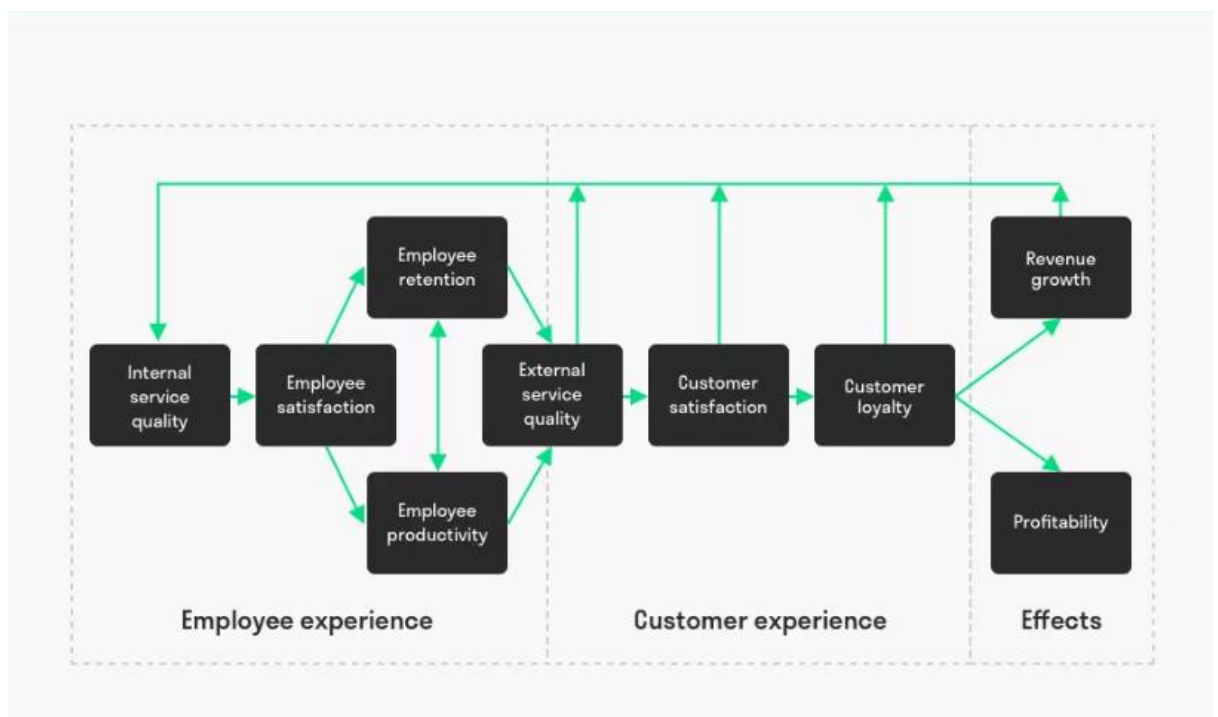
Source: Heskett et al (2008)

Leadership underpins the service-profit-chain model. Leaders who are both employee-centric and customer-centric will succeed in driving revenue growth and organisational profitability (Heskett et al., 2008). The success of the business is largely dependent on leaders being able to drive performance and cultivate employees into productive and passionate teams.

2.8 Defining performance at work

In order to maximise performance, organisations are required to leverage employees' strengths, while addressing weaknesses through training, development and empowerment (Green, 2017). It is critical that successful line managers are able to unleash employees' performance through training, empowerment and enablement (Green, 2017). Enabling and empowering employees will mean giving them "the tools, space and latitude to get the job done" (Green, 2017).

2.8.1 Performance management: A shift from the traditional approach

Effective performance management is no longer just about the appraisal process, but it requires the provision of ongoing coaching and feedback that drives continuous and sustainable performance (Jones, 2016). The traditional performance review typically involves a pen and paper exercise, tick boxes and evidence provision of actual performance. This approach has, however, proven to be ineffective and has led to employee disengagement not just with the process, but also with the organisation (Jones, 2016). It is acknowledged that line managers play a critical role in the performance management process (Farndale & Kelliher, 2013). However, the process has limited capability to build a strong organisation-employee-manager relationship (Jones, 2016). The process has been characterised as a one-time paper-processing event, with little or no accountability for line managers and employees to complete the process timeously. It also consists of poor goals being set at the beginning of the year, never to be looked at again (Jones, 2016).

The shift to a different approach to employee motivation translates to the availability of a continuous feedback mechanism (Farndale & Kalliher, 2013). Regular one-on-

one meetings are encouraged as the beginning of shifting the culture of performance management in organisations (Jones, 2016). Collaborative interactions between the line manager and employee relating to setting an agenda for tracking and adapting goals, providing coaching and exchanging meaningful feedback are the experience employees desire to sustain performance (Jones, 2016).

2.8.2 Performance: Introduction

Performance and the associated processes of empowerment and enablement begin with clearly articulated organisational goals and objectives (Green, 2017). These are then cascaded from senior levels of the organisation to ensure that the lowest level of employee is aligned in terms of their contribution to the goals (Green, 2017). Performance is driven by the desire to achieve the goals and objectives set by the organisation. The broader goals are broken into functional tasks which distributed amongst employees for delivery.

2.8.3 Performance, purpose and passion

With the rise in numbers of multinationals in South Africa, HR practitioners are increasingly exploring various approaches to ensure that employees perform at their best at work (Pradhan, Panda, & Jena, 2017). Studies have shown that motivation to gain task knowledge and consequently perform better, is influenced by the extent to which individuals experience passion for their roles and work role activities (Pradhan, Panda, & Jena, 2017). It is further argued that passion and positivity moderate the relationship between purpose and performance, and bring about continuous positive performance (Pradhan, Panda, & Jena, 2017). Research further supports this fact by stating that work passion enhances creativity in employees; it drives curiosity with regard to new sources of knowledge, and aids in building relationships internally and externally so that employees can tap into the latest insights in order to supplement individual performance (Pradhan, Panda, & Jena, 2017).

Individuals exist in an era of looking for purpose and meaning. This contextually allows them to live in the moment and perform to the maximum (Pradhan, Panda, & Jena, 2017). According to Leider (2015), when employees discover a purposeful

moment, they utilise the positive energy to perform their job in a better and more meaningful way. Purpose in this context involves applying knowledge and skills as best as one can to effectively execute one's role. One's values and talent are linked to discovering one's purpose in an organisation (Pradhan, Panda, & Jena, 2017).

2.9 Performance Barriers and Inhibitors

Organisations seek to drive performance in order to drive organisational success. However not all organisations are able to drive employee to achieve business results. There are numerous inhibitors and barriers that disable employees' performance. These barriers include a lack of clear goals, (Jones, 1993), insufficient time and conflicting demands a lack of the required facilities and tools (Emsley, 2003), poor flow of information (Jones, 1993), a coercive leadership style (Goleman, 2015) as well as bureaucracy and hierarchy (Mankins, 2014). Other barriers to performance include a lack of transformation (Rasool, Kathir, & Nadir, 2018) and diverse teams and a lack of accountability and transparency (Pearson & Sutherland, 2017).

2.9.1 The lack of clear goals

Many organisations experience a discrepancy between desired performance and actual performance from employees (Jones, 1993). Communicating goals in a clear manner to employees is one way that has been identified to improve performance (Emsley, 2003); however, this is not the only method. The lack of goal clarity produces counter-productive behaviours (Jones, 1993), which wastes resources and detracts from organisational success. The lack of clearly communicated goals also results in high labour turnover, underperformance as well as disengaged employees (Emsley, 2003). Lastly, the underutilisation of available talent poses a significant challenge, especially among young graduates, as this leads to frustration that the skills recently learned at university are not seen to be of use to the organisation (Jones, 2003) and thus no clear goals are perceived for themselves or the organisation.

2.9.2 Lack of time linked to conflicting demands

The lack of time as well as conflicting demands on time lead to lowered employee performance (Jones, 1993). When employees are overworked or under unreasonable pressure, their overall performance also declines and as a result sub-optimal work is produced (Emsley, 2003). Direction and what is required for delivery should be prioritised to ensure that employees are clear on what is most important and will deliver the most value.

2.9.3 Lack of resources and poor facilities and tools

Inadequate work facilities and tools are another barrier to performance (Emsley, 2003). This relates to poor facilities as well as ineffective tools to execute work. When one has to work in an environment that is sub-standard and not suited to achieving optimal results, then the focus is on the environment rather than the execution of the task (Emsley, 2003). Basic hygiene factors such as the environment should be taken care of by the organisation.

2.9.4 The lack or poor flow of information

Insufficient information is another hindrance to performance (Jones, 1993). The lack of information results in a task not being completed or poorly executed, this of course is dependent on the type of information required. It is crucial that an employee is given all the necessary information to execute their roles effectively (Jones, 1993. This could include information from a leader, peer or anywhere within the network of delivery or supply chain.

2.9.5 Coercive leadership style

A coercive leadership style is detrimental to employees' performance. A coercive style operates through bullying, inciting terror and fright in employees or even blackmailing and threatening employees to execute and deliver tasks (Goleman, 2015). Coercion will result in low morale and at time paralysis to perform (Goleman, 2015). A coercive style destroys pride and while high performers are motivated by more than only money, they also seek job satisfaction from a task well done (Goleman, 2015). It is thus critical that leaders who desire the achievement of

organisational results through performance refrain from this style and seek more collaborative, consultative approaches to leading teams.

2.9.6 Bureaucracy and hierarchy

Organisations that have multiple layers and approval processes create unnecessary bureaucracy in organisations. Such bureaucracy and hierarchy creates delays for customers, but also leaves employees feeling disempowered and demoralised (Mankins, 2014). Decisions or direction in bureaucratic organisations can take days, even weeks, due to red tape (Mankins, 2014). This inhibits and acts a barrier to performance. Employees may be seen to be underperforming; however, the root-cause of their poor performance may be linked to challenges they experience because of the bureaucratic nature of the organisation.

Hierarchy relates to multiple layers within an organisation. Unnecessary line managers' lower efficiency creates additional administrative work and reduces the organisation's productivity (Mankins, 2014). This also acts as a barrier to performance in that additional administrative work will create delays in the delivery of output. A delay in output results in unhappy customers and decreased organisational productivity.

2.9.7 The lack of diversity and transformed teams

Diverse workforces have been listed as a competitive advantage that will serve organisations aiming to win in multiple markets and on a global scale (Darwin & Palanisamy, 2015). Gender, age and ethnicity are just some of the gender dimensions that − if balanced in an organisation − will have a positive impact on organisational performance (Darwin & Palanisamy, 2015). Balance in this context refers to ensuring the organisation has a healthy mix of young and old individuals, males and females and people with different socio-cultural backgrounds.

Workforce diversity increases employee participation and individuals' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to perform (Darwin & Palanisamy, 2015). Organisations that leverage their diverse human resources will be profitable and will perform better in that new ideas and innovation are enabled (Rasool, Kathir, & Nadir, 2018). Diversity

in the workplace involves creating an environment where individuals' similarities and differences are valued and as a result, individuals are able to realise their maximum potential (Rasool, Kathir, & Nadir, 2018). Whilst the study by Rasool, Kathir, and Nadir (2018) found that by embracing diversity and creating environments where similarities and differences are valued, organisations and individuals perform better, a study in Singapore found that age, gender and ethnicity did not have a significant impact on performance (Darwin & Palanisamy, 2015).

2.9.8 Lack of accountability and transparency

Strategy is the driver of organisational performance and includes the goals upon which employees can act and deliver against (Berggren & Bernshteyn, 2007). Organisations are driving performance through increased efficiency delivered by increased transparency (Berggren & Bernshteyn, 2007). This relates to transparency of the strategy as well as the processes and information required to execute the strategy.

An absence of a breakdown of individual objectives results in weaker performance and failure to execute the strategy (Berggren & Bernshteyn, 2007), while a strong link has been established between performance and accountability (Pearson & Sutherland, 2017). Accountability is central to individuals' performance (Pearson & Sutherland, 2017). As a result, the lack of transparency and accountability, assigned when based on individual objectives, is a barrier to performance.

2.10 Performance enablers

Enabling employees and teams, leaders and organisations need to provide the development and training that builds on areas of development (Green, 2017). Enabled employees will further require being provided with the necessary tools, resources and information vital to perform (Green, 2017). Feedback is critical and serves as a recognition and course correction mechanism (Green, 2017).

2.10.1 Leadership

Company values define how employees should achieve their goals, which is half of the performance equation (Green, 2017). The other half of the equation lies in line managers and leaders helping employees achieve their desired levels of performance (Green, 2017) through pace-setting and affiliative leadership, which includes setting high standards for performance, while creating harmony and building bonds within the team (Goleman, 2015). Coaching is crucial to enabling performance (Goleman, 2015). Leaders who will get the desired results are those who are visionary and able to take employees on the journey with them and inspire performance (Goleman, 2015).

2.10.2 Learning and development

Employee experience, financial results and customer satisfaction scores and feedback are correlated to the value of continuously training employees (Green, 2017). Training does not purely relate to technical upskilling but should be used to teach employees to allow themselves to be creative, open to new ideas and solution-focused (Green, 2017). Training creates the right organisational culture and cultivates a learning culture (Green, 2017).

Organisations such as Starbucks in the US have harnessed the value of driving a continuous learning experience (Green, 2017). They describe the process of training and development as a habit of self-discipline, which supports the organisational strategy, drives customer satisfaction, and cultivates empowered and engaged peers and colleagues (Green, 2017). Through learning and personal development, employees are knowledgeable and empowered and consequently able to perform better.

2.10.3 Tools and resources

The organisation and its leaders have the responsibility to ensure that employees have the necessary tools to execute their roles and jobs (Green, 2017). Tools in this case refers to the physical tools, technology as well as the time to deliver (Green, 2017). This includes the funding and support of projects, combined with the

appropriate and adequate human resources (Green, 2017). In the absence of adequate resources and tools, performance is limited or non-existent.

2.10.4 Access to information

Historically, the efficiencies of organisations and their management were influenced by the level of information they had, as information was difficult and expensive to gather. However, in today's world, the internet empowers both employers and employees to have fast, easy access to information. Various new laws have also added to the right to information for employees and the wider public in an effort to achieve transparency, credibility, and ethical and legal operations. Such easy access to information should also empower employees and thus encourage performance (Green, 2017).

Individuals are expected to make it their responsibility, once they are empowered with information, to execute their roles in a manner that drives performance (Green, 2017). Within an organisation, it is not only the legally required information that is important and imperative for all organisations to disseminate, the right type of information and the correct amount of information communicated to employees in the right manner enables decision-making and accelerates the way employees will be able to implement the decisions and consequently, deliver the desired performance.

2.11 Conclusion

According to Morgan (2017), employee experience is the "intersection of employees' expectations, needs and wants and the organisational design of those expectations, needs and wants" (p. 6). It borrows methodologies of human-centred design and incorporates a design-thinking approach to the customer journey and customer experience, which have significantly affected loyalty and profitability (Plaskoff, 2017). In order to create a superior employee experience, Morgan (2017) argues that such experiences need to start with a compelling reason for being, which is the foundation of the three EE environments; namely, culture, the physical space and technology.

The optimal or superior experience is driven by personalised development opportunities, remuneration, the brand of the organisation, alignment to organisational purpose, leadership, scope for career advancement as well as the building where employees are situated. Driving a superior employee experience has been viewed as critical to enabling a superior customer experience and driving organisational performance by the Service Chain Profit model. (Heskett et al, 2008). As a result, if organisations are to win with customers and consumers, the focus should be on the employee and their needs.

Organisational performance is driven by individual performance in the organisation. In order to maximise performance, organisations are required to leverage employees' strengths, while addressing weaknesses through training, development and empowerment (Green, 2017). It is critical that successful line managers are able to unleash employees' performance through training, empowerment and enablement (Green, 2017). Enabling and empowering employees will mean giving them "the tools, space and latitude to get the job done" (Green, 2017).

It is also critical to be aware of the potential barriers that inhibit optimal performance such poor leadership, a lack of diverse teams, poor facilities and tools, a lack of accountability and bureaucracy. Enablers of optimal performance include those factors that will lead employees to apply discretionary additional effort when executing a task and include positive leadership, a motivating culture, learning and development, and appropriate tools and resources. It is therefore important for organisation to keep a close eye on those factors that will derail performance whilst leveraging and focusing on those enablers of performance, in order to achieve business results.

3.   CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Saunders and Lewis (2018) define a research question as an inclusive question or series of questions that address the research inquiry. The overall research question for this study is as follows:

How can employee experience (EE) drive an employee's performance?

The two constructs at play are employee experience (EE) as well as employee performance. The research question seeks to understand the multi-dimensional elements of employee experience and to provide an understanding of how this drives the second construct, employee performance. The overall question seeks to explore the concept of EE and to establish its role as a driver of performance.

In order to answer the above, the following sub-questions will be answered.

3.1 Question 1

How do we define employee experience in the organisation?

The objective of this question is to gain an understanding what is meant by employee experience as it is a relatively new construct in the HR field. The objective is further to define the ideal employee experiences. The question further extracts the actual lived experience of employees against their own definition.

3.2 Question 2

What contributes to a good or superior employee experience?

The objective of this question is to explore and understand what the optimal employee experience includes and what the levers are to drive such an experience. This relates to the factors that not only attract, energise and engage employees about

an organisation, but also contribute to retaining them. This question also attends to those factors that drive a sub-optimal experience and lead to employees leaving the organisation. This provides a well-rounded view of drivers and detractors regarding a superior employee experience, leading to better performance.

3.3 Question 3

What are the current barriers to performance?

The objective of this question is to understand what barriers and experiences exist with regard to employee performance, and consequently hinder superior performance. This question aims to provide an understanding of what employee performance means, followed by an indication of those factors that prevent employees from performing at their best. It explores experiences, processes and practices that result in below-par performance. The results from this question serve to form a holistic view on what drives or inhibits desirable employee performance. By understanding these factors, organisations will be able to understand what to avoid or eliminate in the organisation and how to be in a better position to drive superior employee performance and retain talented employees.

3.4 Question 4

How does improving employee experience (EE) improve employee performance in the organisation?

The objective of this question is to understand how employee performance can be improved. It explores the employee experiences that enable optimal performance for individuals and teams. In understanding these enablers, organisations will be able to leverage organisational processes and practice to drive desirable performance.

4. CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is the research methodology used to conduct this study. The literature review revealed that there was insufficient evidence of the role of employee experience on performance. Therefore, the focus of this study is to close this gap and provide an exploration of the role of EE as a driver of employee performance and thus, of organisational success.

4.2 Philosophy: Interpretivism

The chosen research philosophy was interpretivism. Interpretivism focuses on understanding the meanings, purposes and intentions people give to their own actions and the actions of others (Given, 2008). The reason for this choice was that interpretivism views humans as social actors and consequently, the different gathered contexts are open to interpretation (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Interpretivism is borne out of phenomenology and social interactionism, where the former relates to the way in which humans make sense of the world around them. The latter posits that humans are in a continuous process of interpreting the world around them and interpret the actions of others to adjust their own meanings and action (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009).

For this research, a qualitative study consisting of in-depth interviews was conducted to gain an understanding of how employees of an organisation interpret their employee experiences. Insights were gathered relating to the perceptions of the organisation compared to the employees' own needs and how these perceptions drove employee performance. The discussions held with individuals provided meaningful and richer insights, which would not have been able to be drawn from a quantitative approach.

4.3   Approach: Inductive

An inductive approach was utilised in this study because it provided a systematic set of procedures used for analysing qualitative data. This produced reliable and valid findings (Thomas, 2006). The purpose of an inductive approach is to condense raw textual data into a summary format, establish clear links between the research objectives and a summary of findings derived from the raw data, and develop an underlying framework of experiences that are evident in the data (Thomas, 2006).

In the context of this research, the research raw data were translated into codes that could be categorised and provided links between the questions and objectives of the study. Rich text data from the interviews were used to connect the findings. Given the exploratory nature of the topic, where the interplay between employee experience and performance is relatively nascent from an empirical standpoint, it was appropriate to use inductive reasoning as opposed to deductive reasoning, which uses sequential stages to test a theoretical proposition (Saunders & Lewis, 2018)

4.4   Methodological Choices

The study was a qualitative study, which is synonymous for a data collection technique or categorising of data that generates non-numeric data and makes use of words (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The most suited methodological choice for this research was the mono method. It was best suited because through in-depth interviews, exploration was enabled, insights gained, and the collection of rich data occurred. Data were analysed through coding and categorising the data. Whilst the research may be conducted quantitative study, this research sought to draw rich data and insights on a nascent topic. A quantitative study was not chosen because it does not allow for much interpretation and is only as good as the questions asked (Denscombe, 2008). Quantitative methods are unlikely to elicit rich data as presented by the finding gathered through the deliberate research question in order to provide greater understanding of the constructs and topic.

4.5   Purpose of Research Design: Exploratory

The purpose of this research design was exploratory. Exploratory research was chosen because there was a gap in literature due to the newness of the EE topic and limited empirical research being available linking it to employee performance. An exploratory study was chosen to seek insights and understand what factors are at play in organisations, regarding employees' expectations, needs and experiences and how these linked to their performances. It was useful to ask in-depth questions and assess phenomena in a new light (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). In-depth questioning of participants' lived experience against performance arose through an exploratory approach. Participants were provided the opportunity to explore the two main constructs; namely, EE and performance. They were also able to describe the interplay and outcome of this interplay in driving their performance.

4.6   Strategy

The research strategy employed a narrative approach. This approach involved the use of interviews and had limited structure (Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2013). Because it had no starting and finishing point (Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2013), this approach enabled participants to share their story and experience based on the discussed dimensions. This approach was deemed suitable because it allowed for the provision of a detailed understanding of the context and in this instance, the employees' experience.

4.7   Time Horizon

Due to the timelines, this research was a cross-sectional study, which investigated a particular phenomenon at a specific point in time (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). It investigated EE as a driver of employee performance at a point in time, 2019. Due to the limited time available for the research, the study could not be longitudinal and thus, did not evaluate or study changes over a period of time.

4.8 Research Methodology and Design

The research consisted of 17 semi-structured in-depth interviews. This chosen technique enabled the listing of categories and questions. Responses varied to due varying tenure, job level and experience of the organisation. This variation was sought in order to provide a holistic rich sample of data from different people with different experiences.

4.8.1 Population

A population is defined as a complete set of group members (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). The population for this study was all employees currently employed within the knowledge economy. This means that the selected group of individuals were knowledge workers. A limitation of the study was the lack of blue-collar workers or manual labours and as a result, the findings of this study cannot be generalised.

4.8.2 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis was the individually selected employees as they expressed their experience and how this is linked to their performance at the organisation.

4.8.3 Sampling method and size

According to Saunders and Lewis (2018), a sample is a sub-group of all group members or the population as a whole. There are two types of sampling, probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling includes a variety of sampling techniques for selecting a sample at random from a complete list of the population, whereas non-probability is defined as a variety of sampling techniques for selecting a sample when one does not possess a complete list of the population (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

The sample was limited to one organisation, which consists of multiple business entities that fall within the financial services sector. It consists of health insurance,

short-term insurance, long-term insurance and multiple support functions such as Marketing, Human Resources (HR), Information Technology (ICT) and Finance. The selected individuals were knowledge workers within the organisation. One organisation was chosen for the sample in order to mitigate against variance.

This study employed non-probability sampling. The technique that was used was purposive sampling, which is a type of non-probability sampling in which the researcher's judgement is used to select the sample members based on a range of possible reasons and premises (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Purposive sampling was chosen because maximum variation of participants was required to ensure that as many different people's experiences were captured and thus, ensure the reliability of the study. Diversity and variation of participants occurred along the following dimensions:

- Gender,
- Role level,
- Business unit type,
- Race.

The sample included 17 individuals who were selected based on the above categories as per table below. The business unit type has been excluded to ensure confidentiality.

Table 1 Summary of participants' demographics

Participant	Gender	Levels	Race
D1	Female	Divisional Manager	Foreign National
D2	Female	Associate Specialist	African
D3	Female	Manager	White
D4	Female	Specialist	White
D5	Female	Executive Associate	African
D7	Male	Deputy General Manager	White
D8	Male	Director	White
D9	Male	Deputy General Manager	African
D10	Male	Deputy General Manager	Coloured
D11	Male	Divisional Manager	Indian
D12	Female	Team Leader	White
D13	Female	Specialist	African
D14	Female	Senior Specialist	White
D15	Male	Divisional Manager	African
D16	Male	Manager	White
D17	Male	Divisional Manager	White
D18	Male	Staff	African

4.8.4 Measurement instrument

The study was explorative in nature, the research instrument utilised was in-depth face-to-face interviews, complemented with open-ended questions available in interview guide in appendix A, which allowed the participants to elaborate, where necessary and provide extensive detail. This provided the flexibility to explore the

theme under discussion and to probe further, where necessary (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Interview questions were structured based on the research question in order to answer the objectives of the study. The research questions were then mapped to interview questions which provided responses to the research questions of the study as demonstrated by Table 2.

Table 2: Mapping of research questions to interview questions

Research Question 1: How do we define employee experience in the organisation?
1.1 What is your understanding of the concept of EE in organisations?
1.2 Based on your understanding, what has been your experience of the organisation as an employee?
1.3 What experiences have energised you from the time you entered the organisation to date?
Research Question 2: What contributes to a good or superior EE?
2.1 What about the organisation attracted you to it?
2.2 What made you excited about joining the organisation?
2.2 What factors have made you stay with the organisation?
2.4 What factors would make you leave the organisation?
Research Question 3: What are the current barriers to your performance?
3.1 What is your understanding of the concept of performance?
3.2 What experiences have inhibited your performance?
3.3 What processes and practices have inhibited your performance?
Research Question: 4: How does improving EE improve performance in the organisation
4.1 Elaborate on some the experiences that have positively contributed to your performance in the organisation?
4.2 What else could be done or eliminated to drive your performance as an individual?

4.8.5 Pilot interviews

Three pilot interviews were conducted prior to commencing the research. The pilot interviews were conducted to provide the researcher with the opportunity to review the data received and check if the questions were addressing the objective of the study. They were also conducted to evaluate any limitations of the study, identify

challenges and apply course corrections if and where necessary. Upon completion of the pilot interviews, it became evident that a gap existed in the understanding of what performance meant; thus, a question on the definition of performance was included.

4.8.6 Data gathering process

The data gathering process consisted of three key milestones:

1. Interview Guide Design

   This process took place prior to ethical clearance. Signoff from the supervisor as well as the ethic committee, as per appendix B, was then obtained to ensure that none of the participants would be harmed as a result of their participation in the study. The development of a consent form formed part of the design and was for participant consent in the study, available in appendix C.

2. Sample Preparation

   Contact was made by phone with all selected participants to clearly articulate the purpose of the research. This was followed by an email invitation to the participants with the attachment of the research questions and the consent form prior to meeting in person, to conduct the interview.

3. Interviews

   The interviews were conducted in the months of July to August 2019. Interviewing was dispersed due to the changing availability of participants. Prior to the commencement of the interview, consent was requested to record the interviews. All 17 participants agreed to the recording of their interviews. The interviews were recorded with additional notes taken by the researcher. The interviews were semi-structured and based on the questions as linked to the research questions. All interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis

at the participants' place of work in a private room to further ensure confidentiality.

4.8.7 Analysis approach

4.8.7.1 Preparing the data

The recordings were transcribed using a tool called Temi.com. Once a first draft was produced, the researcher reviewed each document individually, while listening to the recordings. This was done to ensure that the data were correctly transcribed and to correct the transcribed document, if and where necessary. According to Saunders and Lewis (2018), it is critical to prepare the data by ensuring consistency of the text and ensuring that it is displayed in a structured manner, allowing for commonality, similarities and difference to be identified.

4.8.7.2 Coding and categorisation

Computer-aided qualitative data analysis software called ATLAS.ti was used for the analysis of the gathered data. According to Saunders and Lewis (2018), this involves developing theory propositions, which includes identifying interrelationships in the data provided by participants. For this study, the researcher was able to identify what participants defined as their 'moments of truth' in their experience of the selected organisation and how this shaped their performance.

Coding and categorisation were conducted by the data analysis tool. Coding involved open coding, which included making notes and headings, followed by identifying categories and dominant themes (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Categories were created by repeatedly reading the responses and making abstractions from the researcher's content findings (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009).

4.8.7.3 Building theory by observing patterns

This included developing meaning categories or codes to describe data collected and deciding on which unit of data was appropriate and relevant (Saunders & Lewis,

2018). Relevant categories were attached to the units of data. The researcher made use of both thematic and content analysis. Content analysis was used to make inferences by identifying specific characteristics within the text in an objective and systematic way (Kranz, 1970). Thematic analysis involved analysing, identifying and reporting on the themes and patterns in the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.9 Data Validity and Reliability

For research to be believable and trustworthy, it is important that it meets validity and reliability criteria (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Validity is defined as the extent to which data collection methods accurately measure what they are intended to measure and that the research findings are really about what they profess to be about (Saunders & Lewis, 2018, p. 134). Reliability is defined as the extent to which data collection methods and analysis produce consistent findings, with consistency being the degree to which:

- The measures are used to produce the same results at a different time;
- When using the same methods in the same way, other researchers will produce similar results;
- Those interpreting the results will clearly see how the conclusion was reached (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

In order to ensure validity of the research, interviews were recorded, combined with additional notes being taken and reviewed by the supervisor. The pilot study was used to ensure that the questions were appropriate and measured what they were meant to measure, which in this case was EE as a driver of employee performance. To ensure the reliability of the study, the interview guide comprised a standard set of questions that were used for all participants. Documentation of responses through recordings and notes also aided in ensuring there was consistency and that the methods were repeatable.

Subject selection bias was eliminated by ensuring that there were clear criteria set for sampling. Subject selection bias refers to biases that result in selecting research

participants who may be unrepresentative of the research population (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Subject error bias was eliminated by ensuring that all participants were interviewed at a time suitable to them during the day. Subject error is when measurement may take place at different times, day and night shifts, thus affecting the results (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

4.10 Limitations of the Study

The study provided insight into the role of EE as a driver of employee performance. There were limitations that may have hindered the analysis and theoretical generalisation; such limitations included the following:

- Due to time constraints and the context of the paper, the study was conducted in a defined period (over two months) and reflect results at a point in time.
- The study was limited to one organisation and as a result, the findings are not generalisable.
- Due to the study being limited to one organisation in the financial sector, sectoral generalisations cannot be made.
- The study consisted of knowledge workers and excluded blue-collar workers and manual labourers and as a result cannot be generalised.
- Participants were mostly at management level as per the Department of Labour's definition of a manager, and as a result, the findings cannot be interpreted to include junior employees or unskilled labour.

5. CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter serves to present the research findings based on 17 interviews conducted in the selected organisation.

5.1.1 Sample Analysis

The demographics of the participants are articulated in the below Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of participants' demographics

Respondent	Gender	Levels
D1	Female	Divisional Manager
D2	Female	Associate Specialist
D3	Female	Manager
D4	Female	Specialist
D5	Female	Executive Associate
D7	Male	Deputy General Manager
D8	Male	Director
D9	Male	Deputy General Manager
D10	Male	Deputy General Manager
D11	Male	Divisional Manager
D12	Female	Team Leader
D13	Female	Specialist
D14	Female	Senior Specialist
D15	Male	Divisional Manager
D16	Male	Manager
D17	Male	Divisional Manager
D18	Male	Staff

The sample comprises nine males and eight females, refer to figure 4. Participants occupy different roles at different levels across the organisation. The organisation consists of two level/grade tracks, which refers to either specialist or management as listed below in ascending order:

- Staff
- Team Leader or Associate Specialist
- Manager or Specialist
- Divisional Manager or Senior Specialist
- Deputy General Manager or Principal Specialist
- General Manager or Chief Specialist

Figure 5: Breakdown by gender
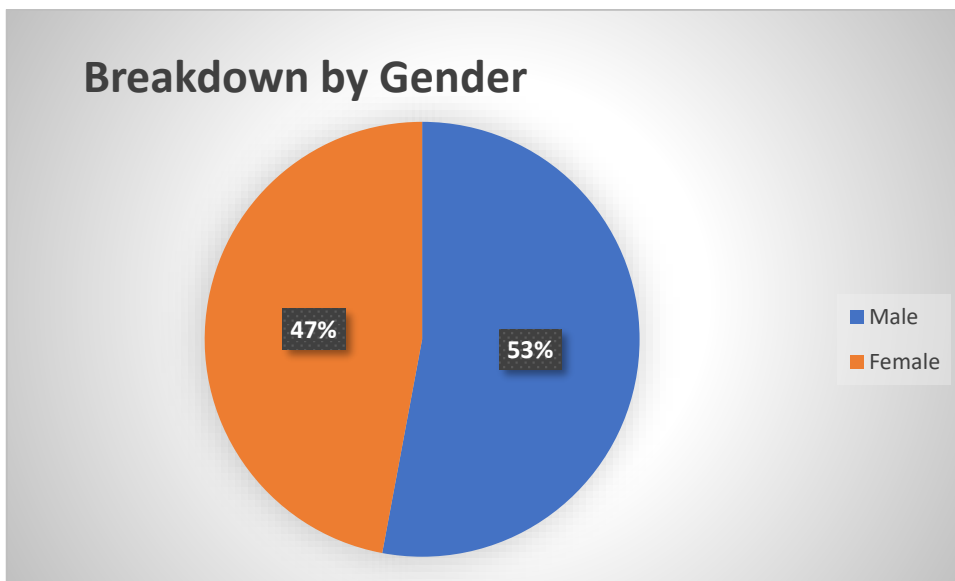
5.1.2 Research questions and emerging categories

The research was executed through conducting face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. Participants were asked questions as per the interview schedule to explore the assigned research questions, refer to Table 4 below. The aim of the research questions was to explore the role of EE in driving employee performance.

Table 4:Research questions mapped to interview questions

Research Question 1: How do we define employee experience in the organisation?
1.1 What is your understanding of the concept of EE in organisations?
1.2 Based on your understanding, what has been your experience of the organisation as an employee?
1.3 What experiences have energised you from the time you entered the organisation to date?
Research Question 2: What contributes to a good or superior EE?
2.1 What about the organisation attracted you to it?
2.2 What made you excited you about joining the organisation?
2.2 What factors have made you stay with the organisation?
2.4 What factors would make you leave the organisation?
Research Question 3: What are the current barriers to performance?
3.1 What is your understanding of the concept of performance?
3.2 What experiences have inhibited performance?
3.3 What processes and practices have inhibited your performance?
Research Question: 4: How does improving EE improve performance in the organisation
4.1 Elaborate on some the experiences that have positively contributed to your performance in the organisation?
4.2 What else could be done or eliminated to drive your performance as an individual?

Post data gathering, the emerging categories under each research question were derived which are represented as per the below.

Table 5: Emerging categories

Research Question 1: How do we define EE in the organisation?
Definition and Understanding of EE
Experience of Organisation
Research Question 2: What contributes to a good or superior EE?
Attracting factors as enablers of EE
Drivers and energisers as enablers of EE
Detractors to a superior EE
Retention factors as enablers of EE
Research Question 3: What are the current barriers to performance?
Definition of performance
Barriers or inhibitors to performance
Research Question: 4: How does improving EE improve performance in the organisation
Drivers of performance
Experiences that improve performance

The data for purposes of this research are presented according to the research questions and emerging categories articulated in Table 5.

5.1.3 Data saturation tests

A sample of 17 interviews were conducted and recorded. In order to test for code saturation, a record was kept of new codes that were introduced as each interview was analysed. The data saturation was reached as per below figure by the 15th interview. 98% of the codes were reached by the 15th interview (217 out of a total of 221 codes). A total of 221 codes were generated from the study. This confirms that coding saturation was reached and that additional interviews would have not introduced many new codes.

Figure 6: Data saturation results

DATA SATURATION TEST RESULTS

(Bar chart. Y-axis: "Number of New Codes Introduced" from 0 to 40. X-axis: "Interviews Conducted" from D1 to D17. Values: D1=36, D2=22, D3=15, D4=23, D5=17, D6=17, D7=15, D8=15, D9=10, D10=12, D11=12, D12=10, D13=8, D14=5, D15=2, D16=2, D17=0)
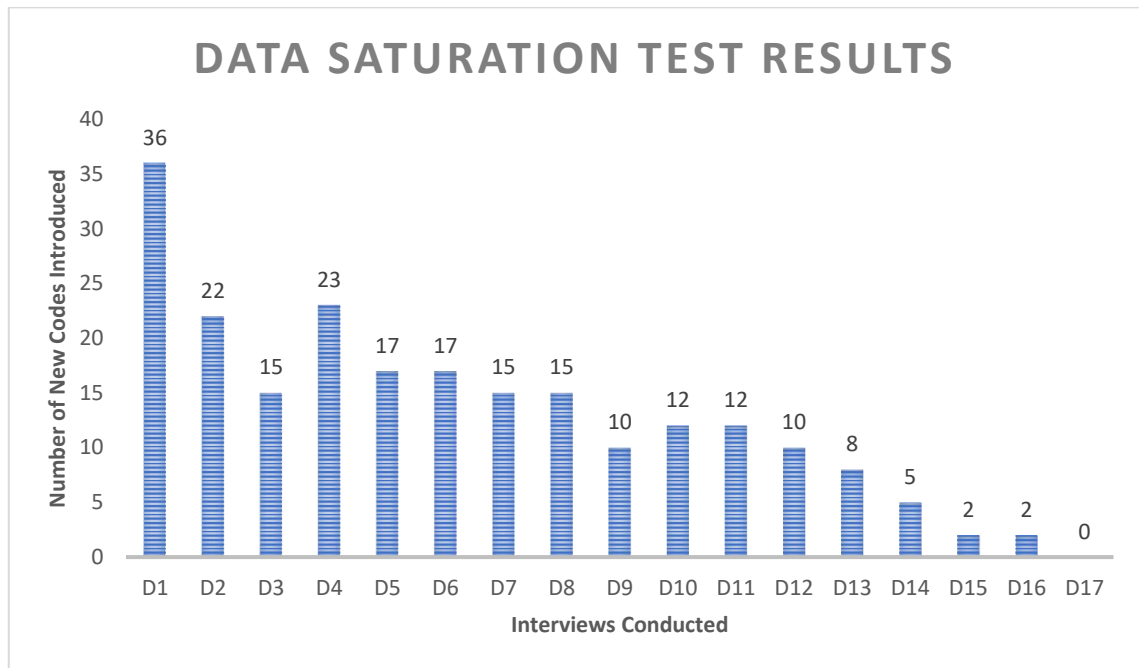
5.2 Research Question 1

How do we define employee experience in the organisation?

Research question 1 sought to address how EE is defined in the organisation. This considered participants views and understanding of the concept of EE. Participants were further asked to articulate their experience of their current organisation to provide a view of what they understood the construct to mean as well as explore the lived experience of the organisation.

5.2.1 Definition of employee experience

Participants in the study have wide-ranging views of what employee experience means; it is thus notable how varied the possible definitions and understanding of the construct are. Some participants used the employee experience construct interchangeably with employee engagement. Others defined it as culture, leadership, performance, systems and policies, values and value proposition as well as growth

and development. One participant established the relationship with customer experience and added that lens to the definition.

5.2.1.1 Employee experience defined as culture

The most common definition given for employee experience is culture or the engagement with an organisational culture, with six occurrences. Participants understand it as meaning how individuals engage with the environment where they work, but also how they perceive the culture and its corresponding manifestation. Innovative is one way in which this particular culture is defined for the selected organisation.

D 1:

"I understand it as the way you engage with the culture in a particular organisation and what you or your experience is of working in a particular place, so to speak."

D 4:

"My concept of employee experience, I guess has to do with personally my experience of the organisation, the culture of the organisation."

D 5:

"I think my understanding is maybe threefold. So, the first is around culture. So, the employee experience speaks to the culture of the organisation and how one perceives a culture."

D 7:

"The culture, it's quite particular… I suppose you could probably say that our holistic culture is one of an innovation-driven organisation, where innovation is king."

D 9:

"…It's an individual's experience. How the culture manifests for that particular individual."

D 11:

> *"Then obviously getting into kind of the role itself and kind of the culture of the company, you find that again is quite an innovative place."*

While some view the culture and engagement with that culture as what employee experience entails, other participants understand it to be similar to employee engagement.

5.2.1.2 Employee experience defined as engagement

Participants draw the comparison between employee experience and engagement as being identical, articulating that the measurement of both is captured in an employee engagement survey.

D 12:

> *"I think we're talking about in general, just I think the same things that we're sort of measuring from an engagement perspective. If we were talking about like the engagement survey."*

D 15:

> *"…staff engagement survey, where an employee is asked various questions … I'm coming from, are they happy to come to work? Would they recommend their family members, friends, you know, for that specific one present? And then there's a question that relates to their relationship with your immediate manager and supervisor, team leader et cetera, if they feel that they bat for them, if they feel that they give them an opportunity."*

The nature of the relationship between the employee and the organisation as well as with the leadership and their engagement with leadership are believed to be what engagement and experience surveys seek to understand. While the above are constructs relating to the organisation as a whole, some participants refer to employee experience in the context of the nature of the relationship with the organisation and what the relationship consists of, namely, feedback and exposure:

D 13:

"I think holistically or as an overview, it should involve how your employer sees you, how you see yourself in, in, in that employment zone or employee space. Yeah. It can be like an isolated thing. It has to be an ideology or a concept that is shaped by you and your employer."

D 18:

"I would assume it is feedback, basically what the staff employees have to say, the environment they work in, the nature of the work itself, the people and just the overall experience of the company and the day-to-day experience of their work."

Feedback is what employees want to receive back from leadership about the work, and what they expect to be able to feed back to the leadership about their work and the environment, while exposure relates to how the employees and the employer view and experience each other. This includes exposure to senior members of the organisation, exposure to other departments as well as exposure to strategic work.

5.2.1.3 Employee experience defined as leadership

Some participants articulate employee experience in the context of leadership and how employees experience leadership, leadership behaviour and styles within the organisation. Leadership behaviours are seen to be the determinants of employee experience.

D 5

"The second one is around leadership. So, I would think that the leadership or who leads and how they lead, and the style of leadership is an important aspect."

D 14

"…And then of course the leadership. So, it's kind of all-encompassing with a number of different variables."

5.2.1.4 Employee experience defined as growth and individual development

A number of participants frame the concept of employee experience in relation to how individuals grow and are propelled in their career as well as the individual development that is received from the organisation. Such growth could be upwards or laterally and should be measurable. As a result of this expected growth and opportunities provided by the organisation, employee experience is defined for the individual.

D 16:

> *"… meetings with your team, with your managers and as you go through your current work, how you work with individuals, your growth possibilities in terms of, of prospects to move laterally, upwards."*

D 5:

> *"And the third one would be growth. And how one, how one is propelled to grow. And secondly perhaps, how one is sort of measured in how they would grow in an organisation."*

D 9:

> "*How are they given opportunities to progress in the company? How are the companies sort of like help the person to reach out and be the best that they can be in whatever role that they basically are playing in the company."*

5.2.1.5 Employee experience defined as performance

The study's focus is on the role of employee experience as a driver of employee performance; however, some participants view employee experience as being synonymous with performance. They deem it as being intertwined with the process of setting strategy-aligned goals and how employees deliver and adapt, based on those goals and the nature of the organisation. Closely linked to employee experience as performance is the ability to influence others and the situation in order to deliver against expectations.

D 10:

> *"Ultimately, what happens is at the beginning of a financial year, companies set their targets and they need a team of people to ultimately go and achieve those targets. But in order for them to do that, they need to work together to overcome obstacles, ultimately improvise wherever necessary. And in achieving those targets, they ultimately get some kind of experience. And what you find then is the following year, there's a review of what you achieved the previous year and ultimately you improve certain things, you tweak certain things…So for me, even at a company level, experiences about what you've achieved or not achieved and how you can ultimately go forward."*

D 4:

> *"And I think it hinges on a person's ability on how they also perform and how they want to progress within the organisation. Obviously, with influencing factors in certain environments that are presented to a person."*

5.2.1.6 Employee experience defined as value and value proposition

One of the founders of the organisation describe employee experience as linked to the value proposition and the values of the organisation. This is the belief that organisational values and a leadership charter will ultimately shape the experience of employees. As such, this link to the value proposition is the defined employee experience. The value proposition is intimately linked to what the organisation can do to attract and retain talent, and it is those experiences that are being defined as employee experience.

D 8:

> "I suppose it starts with the employee value proposition, right. And that starts with values. So specifically, in the organisation's context, I think the values will determine the experience and on top of that, the leadership charter."

D 11:

> *"So, my perspective on employee experience within organisations is it actually underpins a big part of what the company stands for and the value*

proposition that companies can offer potential employees in order to attract and retain talent."

5.2.1.7 Employee experience defined as customer experience

Participant D 16 is the only participant who describes the relationship between employee experience and customer experience, defining the role of employees as being both to serve internal and external customers to drive the right experiences. Investing in employees for this participant is at the core of an employee experience and drives a desirable customer experience.

D 16:

> *"The primary concern for us as a business is to serve our customers. And to serve our customers, whether it be internal or external to the best of our ability, and if we are not serving our customers, then our business is not going to grow. We're not going to make the shareholders happy. So, number one is employees and investing in the performance and growth and skillsets and having enough internal conversations and mentors. Again, and investing in employees and not the shareholders makes happy customers, which will then be seen as a third rank, as Richard Branson says, we'll make the business a success. We are also very good about making our customers happy with our products. And we need to look at that from a shared value model, from an internal perspective to make employees happy."*

5.2.1.8 Employee experience defined as organisational systems and policies

Systems, policies and processes are also defined as part of the employee experience; however, the culture of the organisation forms the boundary or framework for this definition. Organisational systems and policies shape the experiences of employees.

D 7:

"A couple of things. One is like the systems and processes and policies that are put in place in the organisation and how they fit into an interact within the confines of the culture of the organisation."

5.2.1.9 Conclusion on the Definition of Employee Experience

Though varying views exist regarding what employee experience is, it is evident from the feedback received from participants that employee experience is centred around how individuals within an organisation experience the multiple facets of an organisation. It can be defined as how employees of an organisation perceive the culture, leadership and personal development in order to offer a meaningful value proposition that drives performance. It is articulated in the context of organisational values and the value proposition offered to employees by the organisations. At the centre of the construct is the nature of the relationship between the employer and employee and how expectations are met for both parties.

5.3   Research Question 2

What contributes to a good or superior employee experience?

Research question 2 provides an understanding of what contributes to a superior employee experience. Enablers to a superior employee experience are those that will attract, energise and retain employees. Factors that would result in an employee leaving an organisation are referred to as those that provide a sub-optimal employee experience and are detractors to a superior employee experience.

5.3.1 Enablers of a superior employee experience

In order to define a good or a superior employee experience, participants were asked to elaborate on the following sub-questions:

- What has attracted them to the organisation?
- What has energised and driven them within the organisation?
- What factors would detract from a superior experience resulting in them exiting the organisation?
- What factors have made them stay with the organisation?

The requirement was to share what attracted them to the organisation and these would be factors internal or external to the organisation. These are the factors based on assumptions made by potential employees, while they are being recruited or viewing the organisation from the outside. The explorations of these factors highlight that participants claim to have been attracted to the organisation due to the following:

- The brand and people of the organisation;
- Innovation and leading technology;
- Job security;
- Culture of the organisation
- Alignment to the organisational purpose;
- Development including meaningful work, compelling challenges and opportunities for growth;
- Remuneration and good organisational performance track record;
- Leadership;
- The building and physical environment.

5.3.1.1 The brand and people of the organisation

The brand (reputation) and the people of the organisation are commonly listed by the participants as the factor that attracted them in the first place to the organisation. It is also viewed as an energiser and driver of a superior experience. Participants are excited to work with the best in the industry and contribute to building the already established brand.

D 2:

"I just got excited because of the company, the brand."

D 11:

"I think you always think of this organisation as the cream of the crop…So if you look at the other big competitors, they don't stand out from the perspective of being top of the mind for people."

D 5:

"And the second is just simply the brand. Right. So, having this organisation as a brand or a company that you have worked for can serve you well in whatever you want to do in the future."

D 11:

"And so that level of kind of pace and the speed to market and the way they do marketing. You can think of this as kind of like the Apple of insurance in South Africa because the quality of the marketing that goes into building the brand equity is extraordinary compared to the competitors. And I think that's what for me as well was attractive."

D 16:

"But the fact it was a very big brand name. It has a very good reputation to work for and still has in some sectors and it's a very good name on your CV to have when moving."

D 18:

"But having been inside and hearing from the outside, it's the brand itself. Like when you see a brand often enough, especially like our new social media platforms and your TV as well. And then you sort of become familiar with it. It's definitely the brand that, that's one thing that people want to associate themselves with."

D 7:

"The people and the leadership."

D 13:

"I think one of the things that actually stands out is the calibre of the people that they have. They have very good people, you know, from different disciplines like your actuaries and your data scientists. You get to have that available to all these different people in one building. That is a win for me."

D 15:

"And who would not want to work for the Steve Jobs of South Africa. I mean the CEO is amazing. And of course, he had a big part, I would say for me coming here, but I mean this organisation is the leader in the industry in terms of their systems and the brains the top, top, top, top brains in our country are at the organisation."

5.3.1.2 Innovation and Leading Technology

Described as the *Apple* of the particular industry, what makes it attractive to the participants is the speed to market, innovation and being known as the industry leader with regard to cutting-edge technology. Although this is not the highest-ranking factor or demanded of organisations in the financial services industry, this organisation is known for taking the lead with regard to the latest technology, outperforming industries such as media / entertainment. The pace of innovation and the actual innovation that the organisation drives energises people and drives a superior experience.

D 5:

"So, I think what attracted me to coming here was that like innovation or the constant … or to be surrounded by people who are constantly thinking about things."

D 13:

"You know what, I think in terms of technology they are one of the few organisations, especially in the industry that are very forward and ahead in terms of technology. So, there are technologies, they actually use some of the best tools I've seen. And I've worked for vast organisations, including your media…So everybody wants to have the latest and the greatest tool or technology. But for … like an organisation like this to be in the financial industry, where you do not really, you do not really need to have the best or you know, the latest, they actually do that quite well."

D 8:

"*I think the innovation and the people. And I've been very lucky that I've managed to surround myself with people who are really, really good at their jobs and they've been with me a long time.*"

D 14:

"*I think the innovation, the pace at which this can be moved … and there's a lot of innovation, a lot of change.*"

5.3.1.3 Job Security

Prior to being employed by the selected organisation, most of these participants have either been unemployed or seeking employment. Therefore, they had been looking for the security of a salary and/or a bonus on a guaranteed date. Part of the job security of being employed in this organisation includes the additional benefits such as medical aid and access to a pension fund at retirement. Thus, a major attracting factor to joining this organisation is very basically about finding a job and this organisation provided this opportunity.

D 1:

"*Well, actually to be quite fair, I've never sought out the organisation both times round. So, the first time I came to the organisation, I was young, and it was the first job and it was a job, and then it turned out to be a fantastic place.*"

D 9:

"*It really wasn't an attraction. It was more, it was more of a need at the time, I needed to find something because I hadn't been working for about a month.*"

D 14:

"*I'd come back from London and be looking for a job for nine months at the time. It was kind of the only opportunity available to me at that point in time.*"

D 17:

"…Having a fixed salary… must be honest … at the time because I had my own business and then people paid late, and cheques bounced. It is not a nice feeling and you get to the end of the month."

D 18:

"Honestly, I was looking for a job, I was looking for a job."

D 2:

"I took the offer because … there was a pension fund."

5.3.1.4 Culture of the organisation

The culture of the organisation is also listed as being an attracting factor. The organisation's culture is defined as being dynamic, innovative and fast-paced and therefore, it is exciting for participants to join the organisation. Within the culture, what further excites participants are the ethical structure and the policies in place, which ensure individuals are treated with respect, paid on time and that they have a fair, transparent framework for growth. Other emerging factors linked to the 'how the organisation executes experiences' and culture include exposure to and openness of executives, drive and tenacity regarding the business case, and an entrepreneurial start-up mindset in a fast-paced organisation.

The entrepreneurial mindset start-up mentality and fast pace of the organisation contributes extensively to the drive and tenacity with which the business case is delivered. The exposure and openness of executives further enables a superior experience in that individuals feel supported and heard by executives. The close proximity of executives in the earlier years of the business enables easier communication and collaboration with executives.

D 10:

"I'm a person who likes to break things and see, you know, how far I can push the envelope. So, the organisation almost allowed me to be myself in a way. So, the culture for me fits me down to the ground. The culture for me is vitally important. What I mean by culture is what I'm allowed to do and how

I'm allowed to express myself. I have had offers from external companies, and I've been quite mindful of the fact that before I even consider a financial offer, I've asked the companies to allow me to visit them. You know, let me get a look and feel for what you guys are about…"

D 12:

"So to move from an organisation that's very small and very like one person thing, to an organisation that would pay on time, that there was an opportunity for growth, that there was, you know, ethics and things that play a part in that you're not going to be treated like, however."

D 7:

"And that's what excites me about … here at the organisation. We can build things, we can, we can see things through to completion. If it's, if it's the right thing, it's one of our principles, right. There's a, you know, the business case must prevail."

D 1:

"Initially it was because it was this exciting start-up…And so I think it has always been the entrepreneurial aspect of it….Few people had heard of it, believe it or not, in the … back in the day, it was essentially on two floors and you've got to do, you had a wide exposure to a very broad range of stuff. You had exposure to the executives, very literally sat three doors away."

D 9:

"So that for me was energising, just being exposed to different things. And in different types of projects and opportunities."

D 15:

"Our execs' openness. It's … I really appreciate the fact that you can go to the CEO's office and knock and have a conversation and share ideas and you know, share your frustrations as well…and I was given that opportunity to observe, to see, okay, have a look, tell us what you think and if you wanted to implement or choose things, you know, you have our support."

D 7:

"I think the pace is very … it's energising, it's very fast paced. Everybody is given sort of a mandate almost to, to deliver. There's no instance where there shouldn't be any instance where somebody is not feeling empowered to be able to deliver at their own pace, which as long as that pace is a fast pace."

5.3.1.5 Identifying with the organisational purpose and mission

Participants feel quite strongly about the social purpose of the organisation, which they regard as being a force for social good. The organisation is viewed as wanting to make a difference to the country, to businesses and the industry as a whole, and because of this positive image, participants want to be employed by them.

D 7:

"And I truly believe in his purpose. You know, the making people healthier and enhance to protect their lives."

D 4:

"We are here to make a difference. The organisation was here to make a difference to South Africa, to the industry and to staff and to businesses and teach businesses how to do things differently and how we broke away from conventional traditional methods."

D 8:

"But you know right at the beginning, when we put the values stuff for the first time, we also said that we wanted to be an aspirational company and wouldn't it be nice if you were sitting in a restaurant and the table next to you talk to you about this amazing company that's amazing doing things. Then if you build on that now − being a force for social good − that resonates I think at least with the people that I work with and gives them a sense of purpose."

5.3.1.6 Development including meaningful work, compelling challenges and opportunities for growth

Participants are driven by watching their own people grow and excel in their roles and careers. This is what drives their superior experience, seeing people in their teams move up the corporate leader into senior roles and being able to reward themselves with material desires and needs. Besides others' growth, their own personal growth also drives a superior experience and leads them to perform better. This comes with an understanding that there are many opportunities available in the organisation and it is up to them as individuals to deliver and exceed expectations. Participants believe that there is still an openness in the organisation, which allows individuals to undertake non-traditional roles, or roles they have not necessarily studied for at university. The organisation is viewed as open to allowing individuals to consider different career paths and work in different functions in order to learn new skills and grow.

D 8:

"So, the most exciting thing for me is … has been seeing people who started as … like desktop engineers or be pulling cables through the roof and now today, they're running very big storage arrays. They're running a big server in server farms … to see these young people grow has been fantastic."

D 12:

"Seeing my people grow is by far the thing that energises me the most. So, it's getting a message, you know, late at night to say just, you know, thank you so much for that conversation… if we hadn't had some really difficult conversations in the beginning, this wouldn't have happened. You know, like those, those are the things that energise me."

D 10:

"My personal growth, that's what energised the most. And I say that because in my own personal opinion, my personal growth has been quite rapid. You know, I got promoted after being at the company for a year. The team leader,

I've been probably about three years after that, I was a manager, maybe five years or so. After that I was a divisional manager, but that came with the growth of the company. So, you can see their rapid growth of the company has ultimately taken me along on the journey. But for me that was by design because I made it my mission to participate, be of service and play a significant role where I am needed within the company. So, the level of growth that I've actually experienced within the company has been, I think my highlight."

D 12:

"And also, they spoke so much in those beginning days, about six months, we can move you every six months. Technically, you can move, you know. And that really, really excited me."

D 18:

"The willingness to succeed. I think if you are in a space where you see a lot of growth, like well obviously when you're coming in you don't see it, you hear about it, a lot of growth…So during the internship induction that also like drilled into you in terms of the sky's the limit if you want to achieve A, B and C, it is possible."

D 11:

"*Just the newness of things. So yes, the role that I moved into was a very non-actuarial role. So just learning about different aspects in a completely non-traditional environment that actually is … would pretty much never have anything to do with … was interesting."*

D 18:

"*And the biggest one I would say is the flexibility in terms of career. You can come in and do one thing, having studied one thing, but change or something that's encouraged … which is what I did personally. Potential growth, potential growth and potential growth…You're not necessarily, you could be in a certain career path, but that doesn't mean you can sort of like detour off, but still be making like an upward …"*

Value is also placed by participants on the ability to do and be part of meaningful work and therefore, meaningful work is regarded as an enabler of superior employee experience. Meaningful work is claimed as an attracting factor and this includes a compelling challenge or just being challenged to deliver a piece of work. The perception of an abundance of opportunities, working on projects, with engaging people, and learning new technologies all contribute to a superior experience. Individuals want to see value in what they are contributing and while they are learning new things. The ability to be involved in strategy formulation and influence the strategy across various business models makes the employee experience superior.

D 3:

"… but for me it's more about what I do at work. So, if I see value in what I'm doing, then I am lucky because I mean I can then I think that energises me."

D 5:

"I think it's the projects that I've gotten to work on."

D 9:

"But what energised me was when I was given projects that were far reaching outside of technology infrastructure, meeting business architects from other product houses, engaging with people that were actually doing software engineering. And also learning about new technologies that we're bringing into this environment that we're not necessarily technology infrastructure facing. So just learning new things energised me."

D 4:

"Making a difference, making, helping with strategies, getting involved with different strategies, getting involved with different business models that energises me."

D 1:

"And the challenge was compelling, so I stayed, like I got to start a new department."

D 17:

"And I get energised. Like I'll show you and I will show you even, and I'll prove you wrong. If I was wrong then, by all means I would apologise. But if I get these challenges…"

D 18:

"Opportunity, opportunity, opportunity. I feel like the opportunities there."

5.3.1.7 Remuneration and a good organisational performance track record

Remuneration and a good track record of organisational performance are also factors that attract individuals to the organisation. The size of the salary as well as the potential for bonuses make the organisation desirable, including all the basic needs and wants that can be met by being employed by the organisation, such as the ability to purchase amazing cars and houses. Participants find comfort in the fact that are paid adequately during tough economic conditions and that the organisation continues to declare profits year on year.

D 2:

"I was told that you're … with your first salary, that you'll be able to buy a car cash. Well that's what I was told. Told that people live in amazing houses, they're paying good salary and all of that."

D 13:

"Can I say the money?"

D 17:

"A bonus. So, as long as I can make sure I contribute and I help that those levels are higher, that I can get return on investment. That was exciting because they did reward you."

D 17:

"And then you saw that the company was doing well, and the company was growing… But just the fact that it was going places … they had a good track record."

5.3.1.8 Leadership

An inspiring leader or senior manager is critical to enabling a superior employee experience. The energy, inspiration and motivation such a leader exudes inspires employees to want to do well and stay in the organisation. Participants also value being selected to attend prestigious leadership courses that will set them up to become successful leaders in their own rights in future.

D 4:

"Leadership has energised me."

D 14:

"I've worked in a variety of different teams, so that for me has been energising … with different people, different leaders. And then of course the actual overall executive leadership at the organisation. I mean, I think that energises me as well."

D 16:

"Then from an experience of being able to go on various leadership courses and being selected as a, as a future leader."

D 4:

"The CEO always inspired me. Every time I see him, I'm always inspired. He's got an incredible energy about him that's so positive that you just want to even just stand next to him and be caught up in that energy….The way he has surrounded himself with great minds, inspiration himself. He is a hugely motivational speaker and an inspirational speaker. And he motivates the staff. He motivates the people around him to motivate the staff. So, he always puts people first, his staff first and how he can grow the company."

D 7:

"But the few interactions that … direct interactions I've had with him and the times that I've heard him speak, he's just somebody who inspires positivity and the desire to get on board."

5.3.1.9 The building and physical environment

Participants are excited and energised by the building and the physical environment. The building aligns to agile principles, allowing for dynamic workspaces and easier collaboration.

D 2:

"So, the building and the environment, just how people were dressed. The casual look and people look so important with their laptops."

D 13:

"The building. It's very beautiful, but I mean, even in the interviews, I think they sell it very well."

D 18*:*

"…obviously the building because now there's this building."

5.3.2 The polarised nature of dimensions of a superior employee experience

Some of the factors that emerge as enablers also emerge as detractors to a superior employee experience. Detractors in this context are those factors or experiences that would drive an employee to leave the organisation or consider leaving. A detractor or negative experience can result in an individual wanting to remove themselves from such an experience and this is achieved by exiting the organisation. It is critical that organisations are aware of those factors that would make individuals exit an organisation. Participants state many reasons for leaving an organisation, but ultimately, such consideration turns to action if employees have sub-optimal experiences. What is noteworthy is that five of the nine factors that emerge as

enablers, emerge as detractors of a superior employee experience and can thus be said to be binary and polarised in nature. These include;

- A toxic culture;

- Digression from the organisational purpose and mission;

- Poor leadership;

- A lack of development and meaningful work;

- Declining innovation.

5.3.2.1 A toxic culture

While individuals are driven and energised by the culture of the organisation, it is also an element that could make some people leave. Not enjoying the culture and the culture beginning to feel toxic definitely has individuals thinking about exiting the organisation.

D 1:

"And if there's something that's gonna make me leave, it's probably that I'm not enjoying the culture as much as I used to."

D 16:

"The culture specifically there, but the toxicity in the culture, in the fact that as I said, a lot of things have been diluted."

5.3.2.2 Digression from the organisational purpose and mission

Individuals state that one of the elements that attracted them and kept them at the organisation is alignment to the organisational purpose, which is being a force for social good. Should the organisation change its mission or purpose, then some individuals would consider leaving the organisation. This would detract from having a superior employee experience.

D 9:

"If the organisation firstly changed their mission … If they changed that mission − that would no longer resonate with me. I'm, I'm very big about doing things that fulfil me before they fulfil anything else. And it gives me the opportunity through its mission. So, it's very fulfilling for me when I see people developing. If we changed, if we changed our mission and changed the persona of the company to that of not being a family-oriented type of a business − that definitely would no longer be an attractive value proposition."

5.3.2.3 Poor leadership

Poor leadership or an incompetent line manager are articulated as a reason one would consider exiting the organisation. A leader who fails to provide direction, support and guidance would increase the turnover of the organisation. This would drive a negative experience for participants. The lack of a well-communicated CEO succession is also listed as a potential reason. In the absence of the current inspiring leader and no visibility of another inspiring successor, one participant feels this would definitely be a consideration to leave the organisation.

D 14:

"I think if I wasn't happy with the work that I was doing and to the person that I was reporting to, the leader that I might be working with and the team I was in."

D 5:

"I would leave, I think if I worked for … if I were to change my reporting structure in a way that I worked for someone who I feel I think is mediocre, I would consider leaving."

D 3:

"A really bad boss can really make me upset. If I see it as a really bad boss."

D 12:

"I think it's leadership."

D 2:

"...leadership with the no direction."

D 10:

"I'm going to be very honest. At the last … the previous meeting that the CEO had with the staff, I asked him a very specific question that to date he still hasn't answered, which is, whew, what is your succession plan…I think the big challenge is going to be finding the right person, whatever that means to replace him. And if they don't, I think that's what could ultimately lead to me leaving the organisation."

5.3.2.4 A lack of development, meaningful work and other opportunities

The lack of development in the form of limited opportunities as well as a lack of meaningful and challenging work would encourage individuals to exit the organisation as this detracts from a superior employee experience. The lack of development would result in potentially reaching a glass ceiling. It is also critical to note that respondents also feel that if a better opportunity arose from another organisation, they would leave the organisation.

D 11:

" I think just, career progression, if I feel like I've reached a point where I'm deserving of kind of the next move up the corporate ladder or whatever the case is. And if I don't feel like I'm getting that, then that might make me think twice as to why is it not happening? Is it me or is it the environment? Or is it my team or like, or my boss would like, what is it, you know, that might kind of make me start thinking."

D 5:

"If I felt like I wasn't growing my career anymore, if I felt that like I had reached the glass ceiling, I would leave."

D 17:

"So, it has to be a very good opportunity with new challenges because people are people and if I want to get away here with some nasty ugly people, I'm just going to get the same and the next corporate. So that, that's the biggest thing."

D 14:

"If I am not challenged, so if I'm in a role that's not challenging me or … and just coming to work and like looking at the clock, watching and thinking I can't wait to leave. I can get bored quite easily. So, I need to constantly be challenged and stimulated."

5.3.2.5 Declining innovation

Though not a dominant factor, a participant articulates that why they had left the organisation initially was due to declining innovation. The lack of excitement and novel concepts lead to the initial exit and had detracted from the experience of the organisation.

D 1:

"It felt like innovation had come to a full stop. And remember, this time I had been there since 97. So, when I joined two years later, the division was launched, and it was like a great novel concept. When I joined it, in the medical savings account was the excitement, then came Vitality, after that then came the life company and after that it didn't feel like … for years there was nothing new."

5.3.4 Retention factors as enablers of a superior employee experience

Retentions factors were explored in the context of the experiences that would make people stay with the organisation. Multiple factors are listed as enablers of employee experience in the context of what will lead and encourage participants to stay in the organisation. These factors are worth considering as these are the factors that will keep individuals engaged with the organisation and enable a superior employee experience. It is noteworthy that this are similar to those that would attract individuals. It is evident that what attracted individuals to an organisation is largely what would make them stay with the organisation. These enablers from a retention perspective include:

- Job security;

- Culture of the organisation

- Alignment to organisational purpose and mission;

- Development, including meaningful work, opportunities and compelling challenges;

- Leadership;

- Remuneration.

5.3.4.1 Job security

Job security in the context of the current poor state of the economy is an important retention factor. Participants are looking for job security due to the tough times the country is experiencing. The organisation seems to be performing well financially and as a result, it is providing that security during tough economic conditions. This is one of the reasons to stay with the organisation.

D 15:

> *"Well, just on the bleak outlook within our country, the company has done well."*

D 2:

"I think it's a comfort that I'm going to retire with something."

D 17:

"I think it's still the consistency and the stability because there were a lot of companies also that even when we fluctuated with finance that went up and down."

D 5:

"So, what's keeping me here? Yes, exactly. The economy."

5.3.4.2 Culture of the organisation

The organisation's culture has been described as one that is fast paced, with minimal bureaucracy experienced by some. It is one in which people feel free to express and voice their opinion. The organisational culture is exciting and ever-changing. Participants experience a lot of energy and draw from the energy of others in the organisation, and as a result choose to stay. While very dynamic, the organisation allows for flexibility, and individuals are able to manage their multiple roles of being a parent or student over and above being permanently employed. People choose to stay and enjoy their time with the organisation largely because they align themselves with the organisation's culture.

D 1:

"I think, you know, you asked me a little while ago if it was only the challenge that made me stay. I suppose it was a combination of the challenge and a culture that I'm used to, I've always been aware that our culture's very specific to people that you know that enjoy a very fast-paced environment."

D 10:

"So, for me, the culture I've never experienced any bureaucracy, believe it or not. Maybe because I make up my own rules as I go along in any case, but I've always found that I could participate, express myself, voice my opinion.

> *So, for me the culture has actually been the key determining factor that has kept me here."*

D 3:

> *"And it's, it's just kind of an exciting company because it's never the same."*

D 8:

> *"I could have, but you know, this organisation has got an energy, which is I think, the energy I think comes from the pace and the innovation. And if you can, as a leader, get that down to the people who work with you, then that energy's very pervasive."*

D 14:

> *"…lot of large … reason why I have stayed is the flexibility in terms of allowing me to have a very good work balance. I had both my children when I, well in my tenure here. So that's, you know, just having, just knowing that I'm able to balance that has made it easy to stay."*

5.3.4.3 Alignment to the organisational purpose and mission

Participants align and identify with the mission, purpose and organisational values their organisation stands for and as result, staying with organisation is easy. The organisation and its employees pride themselves of the purpose and mission they stand for and this is closely tied to their feeling that they are contributing to the country's success. Participants voluntarily and easily accept the values of the organisation and align these values with their personal values, providing them with the desirable employee experience they enjoy.

D 15:

> *"You know this organisation cares about the country. South Africa is very close to my heart. I think we also have a role to play to ensure that we … you know, we give hope to the disenfranchised and you know, the downtrodden. So, for me that's important."*

D 11:

"But then, after you kind of see what they're about and how things actually work; you realise that the reason why they are grounded or you kind of push those values so hard. It's because it's important to stay true to that core purpose. I don't think I remember the values of any other organisation I've worked for. The only one is this organisation and it's because they're still kind of purpose-driven in that sense. So yeah, so I think finding that purpose and making, being able to make a difference is important for me."

5.3.4.4 Development including meaningful work, opportunities and compelling challenges

Participants claim they want to stay with the organisation because the work is meaningful and compelling. They enjoy the adrenaline, but also the autonomy and empowerment in executing their work and roles. Working directly with decision-makers and being exposed to the strategy has kept individuals from leaving the organisation as the company provides desirable employee experiences. Opportunities to develop others while developing oneself is a reason to stay.

D 1:

"I was given free rein to do as I pleased as I thought, create my own team, put… So, it was absolutely an empowering challenge and gave me great exposure to various parts of the business. So that's why I stayed."

D 1:

"Compelling challenges."

D 2:

"I just enjoyed the challenges as well that came along. It's very difficult to survive the organisation, so I enjoy the adrenaline."

D 5:

"… I think what's keeping me here is who I get to work with. So, I think if I was working in any other, in any other role or in any other position that didn't expose me to the real decision-makers of the business, I'd be frustrated. So, because of the fact that I work directly with key decision-makers in the business keeps me here."

D 9:

"I think just working with our executive team, being exposed as a project manager."

D 9:

"And being given the opportunity to actually put something together that would help people, you know, diversify their understanding of people is something that has actually really kept me here and obviously being promoted."

D 3:

"And then having been here, I guess I can add value to add for the people coming in because they are young, I have experience."

D 16:

"The fact that it's a fantastic well-known organisation with global reach and the opportunity to work globally, with all that … stage that had … I suppose it's what's keeping me in some way as well as the global aspect."

5.3.4.5 Leadership

Leadership is highlighted as a major reason why people stay. Leaders who are humble, have integrity, are empathetic and understand people are those who will retain people and provide a pleasurable employee experience.

D 9:

"Once again, just exposure to opportunities, being led by people who understand people. And, and when I say that I don't mean it, you know, just for the sake of saying it. I think the people that I have worked with that have managed me in this space have truly wanted to understand."

D 12:

"The same thing as like, I think kept me for a long time of the things that would make me leave. So, leadership is a, is a huge one."

D 4:

"I think once again it's also how humble our leadership is. I think for me having humble leadership is very, very important. And the CEO always advocates humble leadership, integrity, all the leadership values. But that at the top is humility."

D 10:

"Believe it or not, it is his humility. And also, I've been quite fortunate over the 19 years that I've worked with the company. I even said it to one of my colleagues listening, the CEO's emails evolved over the years, you know, from very specific, you know, in an actuarial fashion. You know, to the point to the … that the sentences are now long emails, you know, like he's speaking to his friend, like he's speaking to his buddy. It's something that I don't think is common to a lot of CEOs. So, you speak from the heart and when you bump into the man in the lift, when you interact with him he is just another guy."

D 14:

"So, I stayed for the people and the people that I work with. I mean, I worked with one leader for six, seven years. I'm a very loyal employee, so I resonate with a certain person…"

D 12:

"The same thing as like, I think kept me for a long time of the things that would make me leave. So, leadership is a, is a huge one. And the treatment of

people. The, when, when I come to you and I say people are going through
things, a lack of empathy because we're just sometimes so driven by metrics,
by budgets, by those sorts of things, which are important."

5.3.4.6 Remuneration

In comparison to the market, one participant is adamant that they are earning 'a
fortune', and this is reason enough to stay with the organisation.

D 3:

"So, I think I've been lucky in, okay, so remuneration would be one thing,
because I think right now I'm earning a fortune."

5.4 Research Question 3

What are the current barriers to performance?

Research question 3 sought to address the barriers to employee performance. In
order to understand these barriers to performance, it is critical for employees to
define and articulate what they understand by the construct of employee
performance. In responding to the perceived barriers to employee performance,
practices, processes and experiences that inhibit performance are highlighted.

Participants were asked to define performance in order to establish the
understanding of the construct. They were also asked to elaborate and explore the
barriers and inhibitors of performance.

5.4.1 Definition of performance

Participants were asked to define performance and elaborate what they understood
by the construct employee performance. Participants describe it as the ability to
deliver, and to deliver against expectations. Delivery is the primary objective with
regard to performance. They state that goals are where it begins; by having clear

goals, employees are able to deliver and meet those goals. They also define performance as achieving key performance indicators as set out by the organisation. This enables the measurement of performance because a standard has been defined.

It is about "shifting the needle and moving the dial within the organisation". Shifting this needle might not be directly linked to the customer; however, there is an understanding that everyone's role or task contributes to the overall objectives, which ideally includes increasing customer satisfaction. In executing one's role and task, there is an understanding that performance is about total investment in achieving the target. This means exerting the right amount of energy and motivation in order to meet those objectives.

Figure 7: A definition of performance

5.4.1.1 The ability to shift the needle in what one does

One participant viewed performance as the ability to shift the needle where delivery is concerned. They viewed it as the ability to move from a point, whilst measuring milestones, to get to another point. It is about measuring where one is today in terms of performance and what has been delivered and moving forward.

D 9:

"For me that is … performance is something that, that pushes the needle towards meeting a greater organisational objective. So, for me, as a, as a person in the technology space, I'm not in business, so I can't measure companies that is, I mean customer satisfaction. I can't, my projects cannot measure how the customer perceives the company, but if I do something from a technology perspective and we meet a launch or we meet a deadline to actually publish something new to the … to the market, that for me is performance because I've met my, my milestones within my locus of control. And those are, they should push the needle in a lot of the company to actually deliver on their promise to the customer."

5.4.1.2 Meeting of key performance indicators

Participants viewed performance as the ability to meet key performance indicators. This includes goals that have been set that would contain measurable key performance indicators.

D 12:

"I think performance in terms of the norms of how we understand it would be, are we meeting our KPIs that had been set up for us."

D 9:

"When you set goals and those goals have milestones aligned to them, those milestones may be dates, those milestones, maybe certain objectives that must be achieved within the particular milestone, meeting those targets or performing to a level that is satisfactory to meet those targets."

5.4.1.3 Delivering against expectations

Performance is also viewed as the ability to consistently deliver above expectations. Participants viewed performance is involving being efficient about delivery and failure to deliver is considered non-performance. Further noted is the delivering against expectation should not lead to burning oneself out.

D 7:

"Delivering on or above expectation consistently without burning yourself out."

D 18:

"Performance being efficient at what you have to be doing, being efficient on what you have to be doing and delivering. I think delivery is primary. Like if you're not delivering, then you are not performing, but if you are delivering and adding added value, you know, I think that's like, that's what I regard as … performance is what you do above what is required."

5.4.1.4 Goals and the ability to meet those goals

Performance was viewed by participants as the ability to meet organisational goals. These goals include jointly agreeing strategy as well as setting the direction for the organisation. It include setting milestones against the goals in order to measure progress.

D 8:

"The concept has to start with sort of jointly agreed strategies and directions. So, if you don't have a goal and even if it's a short-term one, then your performance is kind of just not going to work."

D 9:

"When you set goals and those goals have milestones aligned to them, those milestones may be dates, those milestones … maybe certain objectives that

must be achieved within the particular milestone, meeting those targets or
performing to a level that is satisfactory to meet those targets."

5.4.1.5 Meeting deadlines

Participants viewed performance as the ability to meet deadlines and to exercise drive with regards to what needs to be delivered.

D 2:

"Performance is being able to, it's to be like be energetic, meet your deadlines and push on in terms of what needs to be delivered."

5.4.1.6 Total investment

Participants also viewed performance in the context of what is required to achieve it. They viewed it as investing ones' energy whole-heartedly in order to achieve the desire goal. It is viewed as being of service to the customer or organisation.

D 10:

"When it comes to performance, my take on performance has always been do it whole-heartedly or don't do it. So, for me, performance is about giving your all, it's about being of service."

5.4.1.7 Conclusion on the definition of performance

Performance is therefore defined as the exertion of discretionary effort to deliver against expectations or set goals as aligned to the organisation's purpose. Goals are viewed as the starting point, with key performance indicators used for measurement of achievement of those goals. It about delivering against expectations and meeting deadlines. It further involves whole-hearted investment and commitment to delivering a task and against expectations. This to some extent also involves being of service

to the customer or organisation and ensuring that one fully delivers against objectives and goals.

5.4.2 Barriers to performance

Barriers that are identified in this context, are those processes, practices and experiences that inhibit, slow down and prevent individuals from performing to their full potential. Identified barriers to performance are structural, interpersonal, organisational or related to leadership problems. These will be discussed in that context.

5.4.2.1 Structural barriers

Structural barriers are related to the structures, processes and practices within the organisation that prevent employees from delivering against expectations. Table 6 provides the structural barriers identified by participants in the study.

Table 6: Structural barriers to performance

Structural Barriers	Data Frequency
Bureaucracy	5
Promotions process not clear	3
Budgeting process	2
Hierarchical levels	2
Lack of minorities' mobility	2
Role Pressure	2
Lack of control over KPIs	1
Lack of knowledge sharing	1
Lack of meaningful work	1
Lack of transformation	1
Not understanding the work	1
Poor data quality	1
Quality of performance appraisals	1
Silos within the organisation	1

During the participants' responses to reasons for potentially leaving the organisation, they state that the organisation has changed, has grown to such an extent that it is now more bureaucratic than before. It is therefore not surprising that they also state that the hierarchy of the organisation and accompanied bureaucracy inhibit employees from performing at their optimum when there is the challenge of red tape, multiple committees and sign off processes, which delay the execution of work and thus hinder performance. This is exacerbated by line management who are not open to trying new things and as a result inhibit performance. Silos are further enhanced by this hierarchy, which also inhibits performance.

The lack of control over key performance indicators due to the structure and process further acts as a barrier. If employees do not have control over the targets or the measurement tool, they find it difficult to perform. Role pressure and the lack of knowledge-sharing are also believed to be barriers to performance in that the stress of operational roles or lack of capacity leads individuals to underperform. The lack of knowledge in this case refers to not having enough relevant information to execute one's role.

D 5:

> *"So, the processes of … I report to this person, then this person who posts that person, but person at, you know, three levels up has never actually spoken to persons levels down about this … is where you're trying to go. And so, they'll never have that understanding anyway. That, that, that, that's that hierarchical structure. That's what we did is hierarchical way of doing business is archaic and it's not helpful."*

D 5*:*

> *"I think also it's … as much as we are an organisation that's innovative, if things happen fast, it's when there's a lot of loopholes to get to a particular outcome. So, I can sit here and know exactly what must happen at the end of this process. But it has to jump through three sign-off processes … has to be seen by these people."*

D 13:

> *"I think red tape more than anything. I think if, if you have an idea, if you as a manager, I think most managers are afraid of things they've never seen or*

experienced before. So, they will just say no because I've never seen this, or I've never done this. And I don't want to see … like if managers understand that they hire specialists for their knowledge, for the expertise and their skill and actually allow people, you know, within, within allowed parameters to go and do their whatever, actually execute their plans."

D 7:

"The role is to make sure that we have excellent consistent experiences. Our members have excellent consistent experiences regardless of the product and regardless of the channel, that's what we want to achieve. I think that the budgeting process, as we currently work, is a massively limiting factor on making sure that that happens."

D 16:

"People keep information. There's not a culture of knowledge-sharing and we need to move more into a knowledge-sharing organisation, almost reward people for knowledge-sharing because we have an extremely deep knowledge pool and a very wide knowledge pool and a lot of aspects, but it's never been recorded."

The lack of transformation as well as a clear promotion process inhibits performance in that minorities (at the current stage) do not see a fruitful career path to the executive level because they do not see any people of colour at those executive levels. This can be demotivating for minorities and results in limited or no drive for performance.

D 6:

"*So, I think what does impact the experience and performance, and it will always impact the experiences of minorities in organisations such as this is not seeing people who look like you exist positions that you want to occupy one day.*"

5.4.2.2 Organisational Barriers

Organisational barriers are related to internal organisational dynamics and processes as inhibitors of performance. Table 7 provides the organisational barriers identified by participants in the study.

Table 7: Organisational barriers to performance

Organisational barriers	Data Frequency
Lack of recognition	2
Restructures	2
Unintegrated, disjointed legacy systems	2
Change within the organisation	1
Declining calibre of people diminishing the customer and employee experience	1
Lack of departmental stability	1
Lack of relevant training content	1
Internal company politics	1
Preference given to critical skilled	1
Scale of the organisation	1
System impact on customer experience	1

Identified organisational barriers are largely related to inefficient to processes and systems that exist within the organisation. Further highlighted as a barrier is the non-integrated legacy system that affects customer experiences and performance. The size of the organisation is also highlighted as a barrier to performance with conflicting types of operation: the organisation operates as a start-up / in an entrepreneurial style, while the complexity and size slows down agility and the ability to respond to the environment and customers.

As the organisation has grown and evolved over time, company politics have also become a barrier to performance. The lack of departmental stability, continuous change and restructuring have become a barrier in that individuals struggle to cope

with the pace and consequences of such operational changes. The lack of recognition is also a barrier because of the size of the organisation, successful work at times goes unnoticed and this does not inspire the wish to perform or exceed expectations in one's roles.

D 1:

"And then also sometimes the lack of recognition, where your efforts kind of feel lost in the system and pointless. That also impacts on performance."

D 11:

"I think it's true, the politics sometimes get in the way of just getting things be done. And you know, egos also kind of get in the way of those things. And it's not … everybody's the same, but I think sometimes that can be destructive because it creates unnecessary bureaucracy and considerations that if you were just staying to do the work and kind of putting your best foot forward every day, and there wouldn't really be a need for that, but understand that business and politics go hand in hand."

D 3:

"And then maybe changes. So, when changes haven't been very nice. So, so just say restructure. And by way of example, that's also been a bit of a downer."

D 17:

"Now there's a lot of people that are just numbers and one thing that I think they should bring back, which they did in the old days."

D 15:

"I think systems, I just feel the times that we, because we need to be launching a new product. We have launched a product about … doubt we have launched half-baked half cooked and as a consequence, you know, it has a ripple effect on operations and now we'll need to know QCS. So, in cases of basically defects, so we don't have systems to fix it and you know, visit that might have an impact on, on our client experience."

D 9:

> *"I think what has inhibited perhaps progress or growth or perhaps one being able to achieve certain things is the instability that we experienced for a period of two years."*

5.4.2.3 Interpersonal barriers

Identified interpersonal barriers relate to how work is being executed and how individuals perceive the environment, work and their peers. Table 8 provides interpersonal barriers to performance as identified by participants in the study.

Table 8: Interpersonal barriers to performance

Interpersonal Barriers	Data Frequency
Lack of accountability	1
Lack of transparency	1
Not having a voice at ExCo level	1
Unfairness in the promotion process	1
Working with people with no drive	1

Due to the pressure in the working environment, collaboration is one way in which employees can and should to succeed. The lack of accountability by individuals, however, and trying to pass one's work onto someone else is in itself a barrier to performance and hinders the drive to succeed. Individuals are forced to complete their own work as well as others' work in order to deliver and this hinders performance due to capacity limitations.

The lack of transparency and perceived unfairness regarding the promotion process is also a barrier in that individuals are not clear regarding the target or goal post to achieve in order to qualify for promotion and as a result, are not inspired to perform or want to move roles. Working with other people in the team who have no drive or ambition also serves as a barrier to one's own performance**.**

D 8:

"…there's a lot of pressure in the organisation. It is easy to try and bat the ball back to someone else. And I said, well I cannot do this because you need to first of all give me something and that just takes the collaboration out of it. You have to be willing to collaborate and go out of your way."

D 4:

"The one process that did inhibit my performance was no transparency. When I moved to my … When I moved to a department, and I was told that this job consisted of … this is a job spec that the JD, the job description, and when I started working there, it wasn't like that at all."

D 7:

"… historically I would have, I had more of a voice I think at the executive level."

5.4.2.4 Leadership barriers

Identified leadership barriers relate to the behaviours, attitudes and styles of leaders that become barriers to performance. Table 9 provides leadership barriers to performance identified by participants in the study.

Table 9: Leadership barriers to performance

Leadership Barriers	Data Frequency
Lack of direction and personal issues	3
Poor Leadership	3
Conflict with a line manager	1
Lack of cascading leadership principles	1

Lack of empathy	1
Lack of strategic understanding	1
Micromanagement	1
Inability to prioritise	1
Understanding of managers of external factors that inhibit performance	1

Poor leadership is articulated as a barrier to performance. Leaders who lack empathy and fail to understand employees' difficult circumstances hinder performance. Employees struggle to articulate those circumstances, especially if they know that the leader is not empathetic. A lack of clear direction and making any conflict a personal one will also hamper performance. One participant who is one of the original founders of the business, states that he has been able to bounce back from conflicts because he never took them as being personal.

Being able to understand the strategy of the organisation and able to prioritise is critical as a leader. In the absence of this ability, teams lose direction and fail to deliver against the objectives. Micromanagement and conflict with a line manager is another barrier to performance. Employees believe that once they are being micromanaged, the focus then shifts from delivering against expectations to wanting to emulate the behaviour desired by the leader, that is, employees then change act like them which detracts from achieving the goal.. When leadership is positive and energising, this is an encouragement to employees and drive performance. The opposite is the case, where the leader lacks the optimal leadership qualities.

D 7:

"I think that the prioritisation and how work is prioritised is a massively limiting factor on how we can, how we can achieve that and has always been, it's just changed the way that it's the way that it's a limiting factor."

D 17:

"…you had executive management who hampered my growth or opportunities because they didn't understand the business."

D 16:

"There are no true leaders, where a leader will always be with you, whether you are up or down and the manager will say what give you a high five. Well done…But as soon as your performance decreases though, they will lambaste and they'll kick you in, you're down and almost jump on you. And unfortunately it's been a bad experience in a few of the departments that I've been in because I have worked in many different departments in this area, whereas opposed to true leadership, well when you are down, they'll pick you up by the scruff of your neck and support you and really grow you back into the individual that they know you can be in the way that you've been performing."

D 18:

"It would have to be micromanagement. I'm not a person that can operate efficiently under micromanagement because people do things differently. So now it's sort of like changes the way you think as well because you need to think like that person."

D 8:

"I think it's with his lack of direction and personal, personal issues get in the way."

D 16:

"…as soon as you don't do your job … they don't realise it, by kicking when you down. And not understanding what the root cause is because it could be family issues or whatever the case is. That's going on. Nobody ever makes the time to empathise."

5.5 Research Question 4

How does improving employee experience improve performance in the organisation?

In light of what participants are sharing regarding optimal employee experiences as well as barriers to performance, it is critical to obtain a view of how the organisation could improve and drive performance to the next level. Research question 4 addresses the ways to improve and drive performance through experiences, processes and practice.

5.5.1 Drivers of performance

The categories identified from the interviews conducted lead to the conclusion that leadership and leadership support, organisational processes, organisational structures and organisational culture are key to driving performance. The most effective and consistent driver of performance is leadership and support as per the table 10 representation below.

Table 10: Drivers of performance

Drivers of Performance	Data Frequency
Leadership and support	25
Organisational processes	13
Organisational structures	13
Organisational culture	12

5.5.1.1 Leadership and leadership support

Leadership and leadership support is crucial to drive performance. Leaders who provide guidance and allow employees the opportunity to fail, drive performance of followers . Leaders who empower and support their followers will also drive individuals to perform. Allowing autonomy and full ownership of projects results in followers wanting to exceed expectations. Trust is highly valued from a leadership perspective. Trust includes the leader trusting individuals to perform as well as the employee trusting that their leader has confidence in their ability. These are the sentiments echoed by participants in this study.

Support shown by a leader is at the core of the experience of driving performance. Participants feel that anything is possible if one's leader provides the necessary support, guidance and direction. Leaders who will drive performance are those who will mentor and provide exposure for team members.

D 2:

"I had a whole lot of weakness there, but the transformation manager was, because she's just been around that environment. So, she was able to provide proper guidance and all of that."

D 12:

"I think, you know, we spoke about … I spoke a lot about leadership, and I think for me that's, that's it. It's about trying to be the best leader I can be to lead my people. To perform in the best way … they who … they can, sometimes that's not always … sometimes their goals and their visions might not always have the organisation in mind, but we can still as leaders use that to the best of our abilities to help them achieve their future goals."

D 3:

"So, I think that was also good. Anyway, he pushed a bit as well. I don't know if I did every day as I was supposed to, but he pushed. So, I think it's those people who believe in you that actually help you on your way with actually realising that you're actually doing something."

D 1:

"And so, I knew very early on that I had the support in the backing to do that. And so was able to establish and entrench the team unlike in other roles that I've had … where you're supposed to achieve something, but you don't necessarily have the backing."

D 3:

"I had one boss, she was amazing, and she just put up with me, so difficult and she really was just like you can do it, it's fine."

D 10:

"I had a conversation with the then CEO and the CIO. And I told them, you know, these are my constraints. They simply said, tell us what you need, we'll give it to you, and we'll get it done. And it was, I think, very important for me to realise that there are still people within the organisation that, you know, are there to help you to make things happen and to work with you."

D 15:

"Now, this would not have been possible until you have the support. No questions was asked. They said, okay, you run with it, you know, and we trust your judgement and it will send it to, it's a good story that at times, and I also think that I was liberated because I was given an opportunity you know, to run with a project of this magnitude without any control. So, it was my project, it was my baby……Just feeling that if we say that we are a company that's innovative, we really need to back our people."

D 17:

"So, I am saying there should, there should just be clarity and then they should just trust the guys who do the work."

5.5.1.2 Organisational processes

Organisational processes that drive performance are categorised to include recognition, individual development, one-on-one discussions, opportunities as well as role clarity.

While acknowledging the importance of monetary recognition through incentives and bonuses, participants express the need for more non-monetary recognition as a way to drive performance. This includes the Star Awards as known in the organisation, a pat on the back and a simple thank you for a job well done, particularly if such recognition also takes place in front of other team members.

Having personalised focused development plans is also expressed as a way to drive performance. Development includes providing role clarity as well as opportunities for

individuals to grow and develop. Investment in employees' performance is also deemed important. This includes providing focused, meaningful learning opportunities as well as mentorship opportunities. It includes having clear and regularly revisited career paths and learning opportunities that are open to everyone and all employees are aware of. This demonstrates, for participants, the organisations commitment to them as individuals.

This could be through structural processes such as mentorships. The need for continuous engagement through one-on-one discussions is another way how personal performance can be driven. One-on-one meetings or discussions could be formal or informal; however, participants believe that regular checks and feedback are required to drive performance.

D 5:

"I think for others it is a real investment in their growth. In the organisation or at least a reinforcement that their growth is largely dependent on the moves that they make in the organisation. So, no one, no one is responsible, I find for anyone else's growth in this organisation."

D 4:

"Is there career learning, sorry, is there a career path for me and it's not just getting performance managed all the time."

D 14:

"I think I'm looking at my personal career growth. I like to engage more or perhaps mentorship is one in terms of having a mentor but to engaging in leadership programmes."

D 16:

"There's not enough done for mentoring as well. And not enough, not enough access to mentoring. And something that has been suggested is that we have

a mentor network that you can go on. I'm looking for these skills and we'll match you according to whether it be your Meyers Briggs personality types…"

D 4:

"I think getting recognised for successful project implementations that makes you perform even better on the next project."……"But for me, if you're a good performer, somebody acknowledges that … you're going to perform better. I think that's a natural, people wanting that acknowledgement to feel special and know they have done and achieved something well."

D 8:

"Just recognition. Sometimes it's that simple. For example, I try and get all of my direct reports to do the same. Is that … if someone gets a dazzle moment on the team, drop them an email directly or just stop past their desk and say that was great."

D 11:

"And I think also just the value proposition itself, like things, like the recognition programmes and so forth, they, they make a difference because it's something aspirational or something that people want like Star Award for example. And I think that also helps to motivate you to keep the experience alive."

D 12:

"So, I think just probably the fact of like someone recognising that, Oh wow, you're doing good. Just somebody patting you on the back and saying, wow, well done for that. So, the recognition in that perspective as opposed to it needing to be something mandatory or I'm not going to do it if I can put it like that."

D 13:

"They will actually, even, I don't know how these Star nominations or Star Awards work, I think it's like a trip, more than money, but they do recognise hard work and excellence and so forth and so on."

D 13:

"In my area, they don't mind sending us to conferences or to you know, courses. So, the ability or the capability of us learning or, unlearning what we know to learn something new. They do it quite well here."

D 16:

"When I was in one particular department, I was constantly supported. There were constant one-on-one's and I was constantly driven to think about things differently."

5.5.1.3 Organisational structures

The physical environment, including the building that individuals are located in is also listed as a driver of performance. The organisation has measured the varying elements in the environment and with a change to a "greener" building, productivity of employees has notably increased.

Beyond the physical environment, most importantly and structurally, an agile mindset as well as the autonomy that breaks through hierarchy, to set one's own key performance indicators are seen to be necessary to drive performance. This agile mindset and autonomy involves embracing new ways of thinking and allowing individuals to set their own standards of performance. This is seen as key to driving performance. Transformation which means diverse teams for this study, is also listed as a driver of performance, in that some individuals want to see minorities promoted, recognised and rewarded for doing well, based on merit and not on a legislative stipulation. Diverse teams will enable superior performance, in that minorities and participants will want to perform if they see other minorities move up the corporate ladder.

Participants believe that performance begins with clear goals and objectives, which are then broken into tasks to drive performance. Goals allow big picture thinking and alignment for all within the organisation. Leading towards the goals and incorporated in the tasks should be challenging work, which will drive individuals to perform and

improve performance. Direction and clarity from leadership is viewed as a way to improve performance. Being clear on targets and goals is crucial in driving employees towards those goals. Providing context will help enhance the experience because employees are then able to understand the bigger picture and deliver against it.

D 2:

"The experience that would impact my performance, I think it'll have to go back to leadership. You have to know what you want because if you say something today, you say something else tomorrow, then you are confusing, then like, then you become demotivated. So, it's important for leaders, it's important for the leadership to know what they want. So, if you say today, this is what we're doing tomorrow, please, we need this done. Let's just stick to that before we change again."

D 3:

"I like the context so don't give me a part of what I need to be doing."

D 8:

"I think the physical environment does make a big difference. So, we did some measurements actually between the old building and this building and we have seen some productivity improvements just by virtue of the building."

D 9:

"Because if I feel like I'm being rewarded for good performance, I think, I think I'd actually want you to perform even better."

D 1:

"When you see someone who's really done well and being recognised for that as opposed to things that feel like we are just balancing the numbers here is also a great motivator because I don't want to be recognised in a way that says we are balancing numbers as opposed to you are fully competent and you have delivered on this particular task… for me it's seeing women

and people of colour being able to rise in the organisation in, in ways that are non-token also enables me and drives me to perform better."

D 13:

"I was … I've been actually very lucky and allowed that freedom in that space and all my KPIs, I think I set my own KPIs. So, it is easy for me to sort of reach them because this is what the skill, this is like a specific skill they needed, and they actually were lacking in that. And in a year, we managed to do a lot of things and a lot of catching up."

D 9:

"I think we could embrace a little bit more, maybe a little bit, but we could actually embrace new ways of thinking, new ways of working. You know, the, the, the agile mindset I am not talking about the process, but just the mindset."

5.5.1.4 Organisational culture

The organisational culture of an organisation emerges as a driver of performance. A culture that is empathetic, flexible, celebrates successes, allows for failure, embraces diversity and fosters accountability is valued as a driver of performance. When projects have been delivered well in order to drive further performance, celebrating successes is deemed critical. Seeing others progress helps further drive individuals because they too, start to see that mobility within the organisation is possible and as a result they perform better.

Participants identify numerous factors and approaches the organisation could explore to improve employees' performance. An important factor within the culture includes allowing for failure, resulting learning and providing feedback. Participants feel that being encouraged to fail forward and being given the opportunity to recover from setbacks will drive their performance further because they will learn from errors made. Feedback needs be constructive and will drive performance.

Participants identified feeling a sense of accountability and being an integral part of the organisation's purpose and mission as a driver of performance. Knowledge of and accountability for goals in the organisation as well as personal ambition, drives participants even further to contribute and consequently, perform. Communication, transparency and few secrets has enabled a culture and environment that is trusting, fair, open and honest, and as a result will improve performance.

As part of the culture, participants reveal that it is necessary to identify with the organisation's ambition. By identifying with the shared values, mission and goals, one will strive to achieve them with an understanding of what needs to be done to fit in. By everyone believing in the same goals and ambition of the organisation, individuals will intrinsically drive their performance to achieve that goal or ambition.

D 2:

"Give someone an opportunity to fail. If they're doing something new, give them that opportunity to fail because you can't just be on the spot like 100% all the time. So, you do something first and then you fail. You do it second time."

D 15:

"If a person makes a mistake, you know, then we learn from it. I think, you know, people are scared to make decisions. You know, people are scared to think outside of the box."

D 3:

"I think if you're feeling, if you're getting positive feedback and you are really happy about what you're doing, and you buy in as your performance will be better on the other side."

D 13:

"So, in terms of the things that they do well, I think, I mean I've, I've seen around they actually do celebrate wins. So, if there was a project and it was

delivered well within all the scope, budget or timelines, they will go out and celebrate that."

D 9:

"Are we giving value to the customer? Is the customer deriving value out of this? Are we measuring this value effectively? Are we testing this out with the customer? Are we hearing the customer? If we adopt that mindset, I think that's something that could actually help us to reach you know, a different space in performance."

D 6:

"So I don't think it's, it's not, it's not always at the top of your mind, it's not always prevalent, but I think it does play a massive role in how you progress or how you see your own progression and in how you view the overall organisation's seriousness around transformation and diversity."

D 15:

"But we need to be flexible. We, we need to think, you know, I always like to compare ourselves against other successful companies. For instance, why aren't people working from home? I mean, space is limited…give your staff an opportunity to go to their kid's rehearsal to do some … around some errands if they have to. You know, as long as they are accountable, and they know what is expected. Absolutely. I'm a big fan of, I'm a big fan of letting people, you know, set their boundaries, support them."

D 8:

"And then again, those common goals. So, you know, things like pay, I don't think it has an influence, but I think the things that are much more important identifying with the, you know, those big goals that the CEO sets 2023 ambition or the 2018 ambition. I think that is so, so important for people to feel that part of that."

D 11:

"But I'd say if we kind of can just be open, honest, and frank with those that we work with and be true about our intentions about things, then those obstacles would be cleared."

D 17:

"More communication, more openness and less secrets."

5.5.1.5 Conclusion to Research Question 4

Based on the feedback from participants, leadership and support from leadership, organisational structures, organisational processes and organisational culture were identified are key drivers of performance. These include processes and factors that will drive individuals to deliver against expectations and want to exert discretionary effort.

Leadership and support was identified as the most effective and consistent driver of performance. Leaders who provide guidance, direction and empower employees drive individuals to perform. Trust is a critical factor that drives the desire to perform. Organisational processes that drive performance include individual development, recognition, one on one discussions as well as providing opportunities. The building and physical environment forms the organisational structures that drive individual performance. Participant seek and environment that encourages creativity, innovation and collaboration. Lastly, the organisational culture drives individual performance in that a culture that empathetic, celebrates success, embraces diversity encourages individuals to exert effort in the delivery of their tasks.

5.6 Conclusion

The study defines employee experience as centred around how individuals within an organisation experience the multiple facets of an organisation. It can be defined as how employees of an organisation perceive the culture, leadership and personal

development in order to offer a meaningful value proposition that drives performance. It is about meeting employee expectations from an organisational perspective.

The study identified key enablers of a superior employee experience in the organisation. These include the organisational culture, alignment to the organisational purpose, innovation and leading technology, remuneration, development which includes meaningful work and growth, the building or physical environment, leadership, job security as well as the brand and the people in the organisation. These enablers are those factors that would ensure that an individuals' needs are met in the organisation. By ensuring these factors are present and of a particular standard, participants believed that this would provide a superior employee experience which would aid employee attraction, retention and engagement in the organisation.

Performance was also defined as a result of the study as the exertion of discretionary effort to deliver against expectations or set goals as aligned to the organisation's purpose. Goals are viewed as the starting point, with key performance indicators used for measurement of achievement of those goals. It is about delivering against expectations. Drivers of performance include leadership and support, organisational processes, organisational structures and organisational culture. These drivers of performance are those factors that will encourage individuals to exert discretionary effort in their roles whilst employed at the organisation.

6.   CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter consists of a discussion of the finding articulated in Chapter 5. The findings were the result of interviews held with 16 employees of the organisation with regard to the role of employee experience as a driver of performance. The findings will be reviewed in correlation to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The discussion will provide insight into the problem identified in Chapter 1, and findings achieved by using the methodology outlined in Chapter 4.

6.1 Discussion of Findings for Research Question 1

How do we define employee experience in the organisation?

Question 1 aimed to extrapolate a definition for the term 'employee experience'. It intended to test and articulate the understanding of the construct of employee experience as this was a new approach to human resources management. Participants were also asked to discuss their lived experience of the organisation based on their understanding of the term.

6.1.1 Defining employee experience in the organisation

Participants in the study had wide-ranging views of what employee experience meant. Participants understood the term as referring to the manner in which individuals engage with the environment where they work, but also how they perceive the culture and its corresponding manifestation. This finding was very consistent with Morgan's (2017) view of employee experience. The cultural environment was described as being about the feel of the organisation and what actions are taken by the organisation to create that feeling (Morgan, 2017). Morgan (2017) argues that in order to create the optimal culture, there exist ten attributes that are key to ascertaining such optimal culture, namely:

1. Is the company viewed positively?
2. Does everyone feel valued?
3. Do people have a legitimate sense of purpose?
4. Do employees feel that they are part of the team?
5. Does the organisation believe in diversity and inclusion?
6. Do employees refer others?

7. Does the environment enable the ability to learn new things?
8. Are employees treated fairly?
9. Are executives and managers also coaches and mentors?
10. Is the organisation dedicated to employees' health and wellness?

The cultural environment was believed to be about how employees feel and are treated in their place of work (Morgan, 2017). While some participants viewed the culture as what employee experience entails, other participants understood it to be similar to employee engagement. Engagement was described as an approach and view in itself and not as being employee experience. Employee engagement was felt to be the evolution of employee experience. Employee experience, or EE, unlike engagement is a long-term view relying on a continuous redesign of the organisation; it is something that is created and affected by both the employee and the organisation (Morgan, 2017). Employee engagement and employee experience are at times used interchangeably; however contextually these terms can mean different things and participants also used it interchangeably. Engagement can be seen as the short-term face-value actions organisations undertake to solve employee challenges and improve how the organisation works (Morgan, 2017).

Within the organisation's culture, employee experience was further framed within the bounds of organisational policies and systems. Systems, policies and processes were defined as part of the employee experience; however, the culture of the organisation formed the boundary or framework for this definition. Organisational systems and policies shape the experiences of employees and this is the technological environment referred to by Morgan (2017). The technological environment refers to the tools used by employees to execute their job (Morgan, 2017). It is the hardware, software, both simple and sophisticated platforms employees use to get the job done (Morgan, 2017). Positive and negative sentiments exist regarding the organisational systems which are described as archaic in that they limit agility but also leading edge, in that for financial service sector organisation, the organisation is ahead of the curve versus competitors.

In the study, employee experience was further defined as linked to customer experience. The employees' role in this context was defined as being both to serve internal and external customers to drive optimal customer experiences.

Organisations have recognised the criticality of their employees' behaviour in influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty (de Waal & van der Heijden, 2016) because happy employees will equal happy customers (Green, 2017). Participants were aligned to this view in that they held the belief that if the organisation drives their experience better positions them to deliver customer satisfaction. This could be both the internal and external customer. Participants echoed that if they experience all the dimensions that drive a superior experience for them, they are encouraged to performance better. As a result, it is critical for the organisation to focus on their own experience.

The result of a poor employee experience with the organisation usually is reflected in poor customer service provided by such employee, which is linked to a lack of effort and dismal attitude from an employee (Heskett et al.; 2008; Green, 2017). Investing in employees should be at the core of an employee experience and therefore also drive a desirable customer experience for participants. The shift in focus from the customer to the employee of the organisation recognises that a winning customer experience is the direct result of employees' attitudes and behaviours as well as meeting their development needs (Heskett et al., 2008; Maylett & Wride, 2017).

Participants framed the concept of employee experience in relation to how individual employees grow and are propelled in their career as well as the development of employees that is received from the organisation. In creating the optimal employee experience, organisations are expected to create agile talent development practices (Burrell, 2018). Participants rallied for an agile mindset in the implementation of individual development, implementation of one on ones as well as learning and growth opportunities. Schlechter, Thompson, & Bussin (2015), take this to include provision of a positive work-life balance, varied learning opportunities, and providing real scope for considerable career advancement. Employee contentment with these listed factors also contributes to better employee performance (Schlechter, Thompson, & Bussin, 2015) and participants believed if these needs were met, it would drive discretionary effort in the execution of tasks for them.

Leadership was further highlighted by participants as an essential element of employee experience. Some participants articulated employee experience in the

context of their organisation's leadership and how employees experience leadership, leadership behaviour and styles within the organisation. Leadership behaviours were seen to be the determinants of employee experience by participants. Participants shared that their experience in the organisation is driven by how leaders empower and trust them. It about how leaders lead and what style and behaviour are enacted in the environment on a daily basis. This sentiment was echoed by the Service-Profit-Chain model in that leaders who are employee-centric will succeed in driving revenue growth and organisational profitability (Heskett et al., 2008). The success of the business is largely dependent on leaders being able to drive performance and cultivate employees into productive and passionate teams (Heskett et al., 2008).

6.2 Discussion of Findings for Research Question 2

What contributes to a good or a superior employee experience?

Question 2 aimed to provide an understanding of what contributes to a superior employee experience. Enablers to a superior employee experience were believed to be those that will attract, energise, retain and drive employees' performance. Factors that would result in an employee leaving an organisation are those that employees believed provided a sub-optimal experience. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate a case for the multiple dimensions discovered in the study as drivers of a superior employee experience.

6.2.1 A Case for culture as an enabler of a superior employee experience

The culture of the organisation was listed as being an attracting factor as well as a driver and energiser for participants. In order to create a superior employee experience, Morgan (2017) argues that such experiences need to start with a compelling reason for being, which is the foundation of the three EE environments; namely, culture, the physical space and technology. The organisation's culture was defined as being dynamic and therefore, it was exciting for employees to join the organisation. The organisation is fast paced, and in the past had minimal bureaucracy which energised individuals and drove them to stay. However, as the organisation grows, bureaucracy, red tape and hierarchies seem to be emerging.

Organisational culture affects the way employees feel, think and act in a workplace (Christensen, 2006) and is the collective mindset and way of working the employees bring to work on a daily basis (Green, 2017). What had excited employees about the organisation was the ethical structures and the policies in place in this organisation, which ensured that individuals were treated with respect, paid on time and that they had a trusted, fair, honest and transparent framework for organisational and personal growth. There was a mutual understanding of policies, processes and a recognised organisation-aligned manner of working amongst employees.

Undesirable customer interactions and under-performing employees are costly for organisations, and such poor performance is partially the result of a lacking culture fit between an employee and the organisation (Green, 2017). Culture strategy will have a greater impact on an organisation than any marketing, business or operational strategies (Coffman & Sorensen, 2013). In this study, employees in this organisation chose to stay and claimed to enjoy working for the organisation largely because they aligned themselves to the culture and felt that they were a fit for the organisational culture, this fit to the organisational culture is critical as identified by Coffman & Sorensen, (2013).

However, as the organisation is growing, the changing culture also was one of the reasons why some individuals may consider leaving. Having changed from an entrepreneurial character to a large company with creeping bureaucracy, red tape and hierarchies, some employees no longer felt they were seen as individuals with individual needs. Also, a toxic culture seemed to be present in some divisions and this would drive an undesirable experience and as a result, individuals would consider exiting the organisation. This ultimately jeopardises organisational success because according to Peter Drucker, a business management guru, "culture eats strategy for lunch", meaning that organisational strategies will fail in the absence of an enabling culture (Coffman & Sorensen, 2013), and this means that organisations will fail in the absence of an enabling culture. It is critical to note the polarised nature of organisational culture in this study. Whilst the positive, entrepreneurial culture was the factor that attracted and retained employees in the past, as the organisation grows, the culture seemed to be changing and this can lead to some employees wanting to leave the organisation.

6.2.2 A Case for leadership as an enabler of superior employee experience

An inspiring leader or senior manager is critical to enabling a superior employee experience. Participants viewed the energy, inspiration and motivation a leader exudes inspired employees to want to do well and stay in the organisation. Participants further valued being surrounded by intelligent minds and like-minded individuals who treated each other with respect. Leaders who are both employee-centric and customer-centric will succeed in driving employee experience, which in turn will drive revenue growth and organisational profitability (Heskett et al., 2008). A visionary, enabling and inspiring leadership style will drive leader success (Goleman, 2015).The success of the organisation will be largely dependent on leaders being able to drive performance and cultivate employees into productive and passionate teams.

Leadership as an enabler of employee experience was also polarised in nature. Poor leadership or an incompetent line manager were articulated as a reason one would consider exiting the organisation. A leader who fails to provide direction would increase the staff turnover of the organisation (Goleman, 2015). This would drive a negative experience for participants. In the absence of the current inspiring leader and no visibility of another inspiring successor, it was also felt that this could damage the organisation's reputation and culture and would definitely be a consideration to leave the organisation. Thus, whilst leadership enables a superior employee experience, it could also be a detractor to experience, because leaders are custodians of employee experience (Maylett & Wride, 2017).

6.2.3 A case for growth and development as an enabler of a superior employee experience

Participants were driven by watching their own people grow and excel in their roles and careers. Varied dynamic learning opportunities, in the form of mobile (LinkedIn) or formal classroom settings, that seek to close participants development gaps were valued. This was what drove their superior experience, seeing people in their teams

move up the corporate ladder into senior roles and being able to reward themselves or being rewarded with material desires and needs. Dalal & Akdere, (2018), define talent development as including learning opportunities and experience an employer can provide. It is emphasised that for such learning to be valued it should be mobile, continuous (Dalal & Akdere, 2018), in light of the fact that many users and employees prefer to consume content on their phones or tablets (Burrell, 2018). Besides others' growth, their own personal growth also drove a superior experience and led them to perform better. This came with an understanding that there were many opportunities available in the organisation and it was up to them as individuals to deliver and exceed expectations. The ability of an organisation to provide learning opportunities and growth for individuals definitely drove a superior employee experience (Green, 2017).

6.2.4 A case for meaningful work and compelling challenges as an enabler of a superior employee experience

Value was also placed by participants on the ability to do and be part of meaningful work and this was regarded as an enabler of superior employee experience. Working on projects, with engaging people, and learning new technologies all contributed to a superior employee experience. Job design which includes meaningful work is one of the factors that contribute to superior internal service quality which drive a superior employee experience, according to Heskett et al (2008). Individuals wanted to see value in what they were contributing and while they were learning new skills. The ability to be involved in strategy formulation and influence the strategy across various business models made an employee experience rewarding and superior. The challenge should be a compelling one to attract and retain employees. Otto, Tolentino & Michailova (2018), advocate superior, personalised learning and growth opportunities as retention factors that will drive an engaged workforce and pleasant experience from a development perspective.

Noteworthy are the structural reasons that drove a sub-optimal or negative experience, which could lead to employees wanting to leave the organisation in this context. This was because over time, the organisation had started to have many layers and had become hierarchical and bureaucratic. Bureaucracy made it often

difficult to obtain and lead meaningful and compelling work, to be fully involved in decision-making, contributing to the organisation through meaningful input and get feedback.

6.2.5 A case for alignment to organisational purpose and values as an enablers of a superior employee experience

Organisations articulate their purpose linked to be a market leader and as drivers of shareholder value, it does not inspire and also does not drive action orientation within employees (Morgan, 2017). Organisations that leap-frog with regard to EE are those that connect what the organisation does to the broader society and those affected (Morgan, 2017) and therefore, the organisation is focused on the impact on the world. This in turn forces organisations to continuously think big and beyond their immediate output.

This sentiment was echoed by participants who felt quite strongly about the social purpose of the organisation, which they regarded as a force for social good. The organisation was viewed as wanting to make a difference to the country, to businesses and the industry as a whole, and because of this positive image, participants wanted to be employed by the organisation. Morgan (2017), describes this as the reason for being and individuals exist in an era of looking for purpose and meaning (Pradhan, Panda & Jena, 2017) as a result in order to drive a superior experience, participants seek to identify with the organisational reason for being. It is also noteworthy, that while the organisation's purpose was what enabled a superior employee experience in the organisation, participants felt that if the organisation were to change its mission and purpose, they would no longer be able to align themselves with the organisation and would consider leaving.

6.2.6 A case for physical environment as an enabler of a superior employee experience

Participant were particularly proud of their physical environment, stating that the building stands out in the Sandton business district. The building is one that

encompasses agile principles, allowing individuals to work flexibly and collaborate with ease. Morgan (2017) argues that the physical work environment plays a critical role with regard to EE. It includes the physical space such as the buildings, the art on the walls, and offering flexibility with organisational values reflected even in the physical environment.

Employees want to work in spaces that will energise and inspire them (Green, 2017), but also spaces that help them to be creative, engaged with the work they execute and with the organisation (Morgan, 2017). With minimal anchored spaces, the environment in this organisation is structured in such a way that one is able to work in different spaces every day, allowing for creativity, innovation and cross-functional work and employees enjoy this benefit.

6.2.7 A case for remuneration and security as an enabler of a superior employee experience

The current poor state of the economy in South Africa, coupled with the organisation financially performing well despite these tough economic conditions in the country, was identified as the reason for staying with the organisation. A job and an income were viewed as a basic requirement for individuals to survive and this is a utilitarian view expressed by Morgan (2017). One can argue that this was a hygiene factor, a pre-requisite for any employee experience. Participants were looking for job security due to the tough times the country is experiencing. The organisation was believed to be performing well financially and as a result providing that desired security during tough economic conditions.

Prior to being employed by the selected organisation, most of these participants had either been unemployed or seeking employment. Therefore, they had been looking for the security of a salary and/or a bonus on a guaranteed date. Part of the job security of being employed in this organisation included the additional benefits such us medical aid and access to a pension fund at retirement. Whilst this factor was purely aligned with the utilitarian approach to human resource management, it was seen as an enabler of a superior employee experience.

The traditional HR approach used to see the employees in their utility roles. In that context, work was about utility, the basic tools that an employer could provide employees to execute their roles and receive pay for work done (Morgan, 2017). The nature of the employer-employee relationship was transactional (Morgan, 2017). The size of the salary as well as the potential for bonuses made the organisation desirable, including all the basic needs and wants that were met by being employed by the organisation. The above enabled employee experience.

6.2.8 A case for innovation and technology as an enabler for superior employee experience

Described as the *Apple* of the particular financial services industry, this aspect made the organisation attractive to the participants because of its speed to market, innovation and being known as the industry leader with regard to cutting-edge technology. The technological environment refers to the tools used by employees to execute their job (Morgan, 2017). It is the hardware, software, both simple and sophisticated platforms employees use to get the job done (Morgan, 2017). This technological environment played a critical role for participants in enabling a superior experience. Raia (2017), notes that modern employee experiences takes place online with growing expectations of digital engagement and by providing a positive technology experience, the organisation boosts productivity.

The organisation was described as having an entrepreneurial mindset, which enabled innovation. Although up-to-date technology is not the highest-ranking factor or demanded of organisations in the financial services industry, the organisation under investigation was known for taking the lead with regard to the latest technology, outperforming industries such as media / entertainment. One may view the technological environment as the enabler to the future of work and the glue that powers the organisation (Morgan, 2017) and in this context, the enabler of a superior employee experience.

6.3 Discussion of Findings for Research Question 3

What are the current barriers to performance?

The aim of this question was two-fold, first, to understand participants' definition of performance and in that context, second, to extrapolate the barriers and obstacles that exist with regard to employees' performance.

6.3.1 Defining performance in the organisation

Participants were asked to define performance and elaborate what they understood by the construct employee performance. Participants described it as the ability to deliver, and to deliver against expectations, where delivery was the primary objective with regard to performance. They stated that goals were where it began; by having clear goals, employees were able to deliver and meet those goals and Green (2017) agrees and states that performance and the associated processes of empowerment and enablement begin with clearly articulated organisational goals and objectives.

Participants articulated performance as the delivery of against expectations, meeting deadlines and apply effort to deliver objectives and tasks which is similar to Green's (2017) definition of performance being the delivery of tasks that will achieve organisational goals. They discussed the importance of feedback and being allowed to fail, and course correct. Farndale & Kalliher (2013), stress the importance of continuous feedback in the context of performance whilst Jones (2016), claims that meaningful feedback is part of the desired experience employees seek in a performance management process.

Performance was believed to be about "shifting the needle and moving the dial within the organisation", according to participants. Shifting this needle might not be directly linked to the customer; however, there was an understanding that everyone's role or task contributed to the overall objectives, which ideally included increasing customer satisfaction. In executing one's role and task, there was an understanding that performance was about total investment in achieving the target. This meant exerting the necessary amount of energy, passion and motivation in order to meet those objectives. Studies have shown that motivation to gain task knowledge and

consequently perform better, is influenced by the extent to which individuals experience passion for their roles and work role activities (Pradhan, Panda, & Jena, 2017).

Performance was therefore defined as the exertion of discretionary effort to deliver against expectations or set goals as aligned to the organisation's purpose. Goals were viewed as the starting point, with key performance indicators used for measurement of achievement of those goals. This is similar to Green's (2017) work which concludes that performance and the associated processes of enablement an empowerment begin with clearly articulated organisational goals and objectives. It about delivering against expectations and meeting deadlines. It involves whole-hearted investment and commitment to delivering a task and against expectations. This to some extent also involves being of service to the customer or organisation and ensuring that one fully delivers against objectives and goals.

6.3.2 A Discussion on the barriers to performance

Barriers that were identified in this context, were those processes, practices and experiences that inhibited, slowed down and prevented individuals from performing to their full potential. Identified barriers to performance were structural, interpersonal, organisational or related to leadership problems. These will be discussed in that context.

6.3.2.1 Structural barriers

Structural barriers were related to the structures, processes and practices with the organisation that prevented participants from delivering against expectations. During the participants' responses to reasons for potentially leaving the organisation, they stated that the organisation had changed, had grown to such an extent that it was now more bureaucratic than before. Organisations that have multiple layers and approval processes create unnecessary bureaucracy in organisations (Mankins, 2014).

Bureaucracy and hierarchy create delays for customers, but also leave employees feeling disempowered and demoralised (Mankins, 2014). Decisions or direction in

bureaucratic organisations can take days, even weeks, due to the red tape (Mankins, 2014). This inhibits and acts as a barrier to performance. Employees may be seen to be underperforming; however, the root-cause of their challenges could be due to the bureaucratic nature of the organisation. Such structures also inhibit creativity, innovation and voluntary input by employees.

Hierarchy relates to multiple layers within an organisation. Unnecessary line managers' perceived lower efficiency created additional administrative work and reduced the organisation's productivity (Mankins, 2014). This also acted as a barrier to performance in that additional administrative work created delays in the delivery of output. It followed therefore that participants stated that the new structures and new hierarchy of the organisation, and the accompanied bureaucracy, inhibited employees from performing at their optimum when there was the challenge of red tape, multiple committees and sign off processes, which delayed the execution of work and performance.

The lack of control over KPIs − due to the structures and processes − further acted as a barrier. A structure that had multiple layers and control towers meant that decision-making was a long-winded process, which affected individuals' performance (Mankins, 2014). Where participants were not able to give input regarding targets and did not have control over the targets or the measurement tool, they found it difficult to perform according to targets.

Role pressure and the lack of knowledge-sharing was also believed to be a barrier to performance in that the stress of operational roles or lack of capacity led individuals to underperform. The lack of time as well as conflicting demands on time led to lowers employee performance (Jones, 1993). When employees are overworked or under unreasonable pressure, their overall performance also declines and as a result sub-optimal work is produced (Emsley, 2003).

The lack of knowledge in this case referred to not having enough information or access to relevant information to execute one's role. Insufficient information had been identified as another hindrance to performance (Jones, 1993). The lack of information results in a task not being completed or poorly executed, this of course is dependent on the type of information required.

The lack of transformation which meaning not having sufficiently diverse teams as well as a clear promotion process inhibits performance in that minorities (at the current stage) did not see a fruitful career path to the executive level because they did not see any people of colour at those executive levels. This was believed to be demotivating for minorities and could result in limited or no drive for performance. Diverse workforces have been listed as a competitive advantage that will enable organisational success by Darwin & Palainsamy (2015). This is because organisations that leverage their diverse teams and human resources will be profitable and perform better in that new, different and novel ideas are enabled in such teams (Rasool, Kathir & Nadir, 2018). It is therefore crucial for organisations to be cognisant of the make-up teams and important that they strive for diverse teams.

6.3.2.2 Organisational barriers

Organisational barriers were described as internal organisational dynamics and processes that act as inhibitors of performance. Identified organisational barriers were largely related to inefficient processes and systems that exist within the organisation. Highlighted as a barrier was the non-integrated IT legacy system that affected customer experiences and performance. When employees have to work in an environment where tools are outdated, sub-standard and not suited to achieving optimal results, then the focus is on the environment and the functioning of the tool rather than the execution of the task (Emsley, 2003). As the IT system tended to fail to deliver what it was intended to do and was not integrated to the whole organisational network, it resulted in manual interventions, delayed processing and thus underperformance of employees and thus, the organisation in those instances. Raia (2017) rightfully points out that inefficient and sub-optimal technology creates frustrations for employees and impacts their ability to perform.

The size of the organisation was also highlighted as a barrier to performance with conflicting types of operation. Originally, the organisation operated as a start-up / in an entrepreneurial style, while the growth of the organisation resulted in new structures, complexity and a more cumbersome size, which slowed down agility and the ability to respond to the environment and customers in a fast turnaround time.

As the organisation had grown and evolved over time, company politics had also become a barrier to performance. The lack of departmental stability, continuous change and restructuring had become a barrier in that individuals struggled to cope with the pace and consequences of such operational changes. The lack of recognition by management for work well done had also become a barrier − because of the size of the organisation, and successful work at times went unnoticed. This does not inspire the wish to perform or exceed expectations in one's roles.

6.3.2.3 Interpersonal barriers

Identified interpersonal barriers related to how work was being executed and how individuals perceived the environment, work and their peers. Due to the pressure in the working environment, collaboration is one way in which employees can and should to succeed. The lack of accountability by individuals was believed by some to be a barrier to performance and drive to succeed. Accountability is central to individuals' performance (Pearson & Sutherland, 2017). As a result, the lack of transparency and accountability assigned based on individual objectives was listed as a barrier to performance.

The lack of transparency and perceived unfairness was also a barrier in that some individuals were not clear regarding the target or goal post to achieve in order to qualify for promotion or awards, and as a result, they were not inspired to perform; some even wanted to move roles to be able to qualify for promotion or awards. Organisations that will win in the marketplace are those driving performance through increased efficiency delivered by increased transparency (Berggren & Bernshteyn, 2007).

6.3.2.4 Leadership Barriers

Identified leadership barriers relate to leaders' behaviours, attitudes and styles that became barriers to employee performance. Leaders who lack empathy, are coercive, do not empower or motivate, do not give feedback or recognition, who micro-manage and fail to understand employees' sometimes difficult circumstances emerged as a hinderance to employee performance. Coercion as a leadership style will result in

low morale and at times even cause paralysis to perform, employees seek inspiring and visionary leadership in order to perform (Goleman, 2015). A coercive style destroys pride and while high performers are motivated by more than only money, they also seek job satisfaction from a task well done (Goleman, 2015).

A lack of clear direction and making any conflict a personal one will also hamper performance. One participant − who was also one of the original founders of the business − stated that he had been able to bounce back from conflicts because he never took them as being personal. However, this did not seem to be the case anymore with some of the newer leaders.

Micromanagement and conflict with a line manager was also believed to be another barrier to performance. Employees believed that once they were being micromanaged, the focus then shifted from delivering against expectations to wanting to emulate the behaviour desired by the leader, that is, employees then changed to act like the leaders. When leadership was positive and energising, this was an encouragement to employees. The opposite was the case, where the leader lacked the optimal leadership qualities.

6.4 Discussion of Findings for Research Question 4

How does improving employee experience improve performance in the organisation?

6.4.1. A discussion on drivers and experiences that improve performance

In light of what participants had shared regarding optimal employee experiences as well as barriers to performance, it was critical to obtain a view of how the organisation could improve and drive performance to the next level. Research question 4 addressed the ways to improve performance through experiences, processes and practice.

6.4.1.1 A case for leadership and support as a driver of performance

Leadership and support from leaders emerged as drivers of performance. Trust and empowerment of employees were valued as the key components of driving performance. Participants believed that if a leader demonstrated trust, one would not want to break that trust and put in discretionary effort to shift the needle and deliver against expectations. A leader who provided support, guidance and direction would also drive superior performance in that the goals and tasks were clear, while providing the autonomy to execute the identified task. Company values defined how employees should achieve their goals, which was half of the performance equation (Green, 2017). The other half of the equation rested with line managers and leaders helping employees achieve their desired levels of performance (Green, 2017) through pace-setting and affiliative leadership, which included setting high standards for performance, while creating harmony and building bonds within the team (Goleman, 2015).

6.4.1.2 A case for culture as a driver of performance

The organisational culture of an organisation emerged as a driver of performance. Participants identified the organisational culture as empathetic, flexible, celebrated successes, allowed for failure, embraced diversity and fostered accountability, and this drove their individual performance. There exists a collective mindset amongst participants and a way of working which drives how they interact This sentiment was echoed by the literature in that the environment in which individuals were working played a significant role in their well-being, but more so in their drive for performance (Christensen, 2006). Organisational culture affects the way employees feel, think and act in a workplace (Christensen, 2006) and this forms the collective mindset and way of working the employees bring to work on a daily basis (Green, 2017). As result, in order to deliver excellent results in this organisation, the culture of this organisation is a dimension that plays an important role.

Seeing others progress helped further drive individuals to better performance because they too, started to see that upward mobility within the organisation was possible and as a result, they performed better. Minority groups were said to look for being recognised as being of value, being recognised for their difference, but also for

their contribution as individuals in the organisation. Workforce diversity increases employee participation and individuals' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to perform (Darwin & Palanisamy, 2015). Organisations that leverage their diverse human resources will be profitable and will perform better in that new ideas and innovation are enabled (Rasool, Kathir, & Nadir, 2018). Diversity in the workplace involves creating an environment where individuals' similarities and differences are valued and as a result, individuals are able to realise their maximum potential (Rasool, Kathir, & Nadir, 2018).

6.4.1.2 A case for organisational processes including development as a driver of performance

Organisational processes and experiences that drive performance were categorised to include recognition, individual development, one-on-one discussions, opportunities as well as role clarity. Employee experience, financial results and customer satisfaction scores and feedback were correlated to the value of continuously developing employees (Green, 2017). Having personalised, focused development plans was also expressed as a way to drive performance. Training and development create the right organisational culture and cultivate a learning culture (Green, 2017), which drives performance. The need for continuous engagement through one-on-one discussions was described as another way that personal performance can be driven. One-on-one meetings or discussions could be formal or informal; however, participants believed that regular checks and feedback were required to drive performance. Feedback was described as being critical and served as a recognition and course correction mechanism (Green, 2017).

6.4.1.3 A case for organisational structures including the physical environment as a driver of performance

The physical environment, including the building that individuals were located at was also listed as a driver of performance. The organisation had measured the varying elements in the environment and with a change to a "greener" building, productivity of employees had notably increased.

Beyond the physical environment, structurally, an agile mindset as well as the autonomy to set one's own key performance indicators were seen to be necessary to drive performance. This agile mindset and autonomy involved embracing new ways of thinking and allowing individuals to set their own standards of performance. This was seen as key to driving performance.

Transformed and diverse teams was also listed as a driver of performance, in that some individuals wanted to see minorities promoted, recognised and rewarded for doing well, based on merit rather than a legislative stipulation. For participants it was critical to see people that look like them across the organisation. This further included participants wanting to see minorities move up the corporate ladder and hold strategic decision-making positions. Gender, age and ethnicity were just some of the diversity dimensions that will have a positive impact on organisational performance if balanced in organisation (Darwin & Palanisamy, 2015).

6.5 Conclusion

What was evident from the study was the factors that drove a superior experience were similar to those factors the drove performance. The study further demonstrates that in order to drive employee performance, organisations should drive employee experience. The dimensions that enable employee experience are similar dimension that drive performance and rest within the constructs of leadership and support, organisational process, organisational structures and organisational culture. Noteworthy is the fact that job security and the brand and people of the organisation are the only factors that exclusively drove a superior experience and not necessarily employees' performance as demonstrated by the figure 8.

Figure 8: A comparison of enablers of EE and drivers of performance
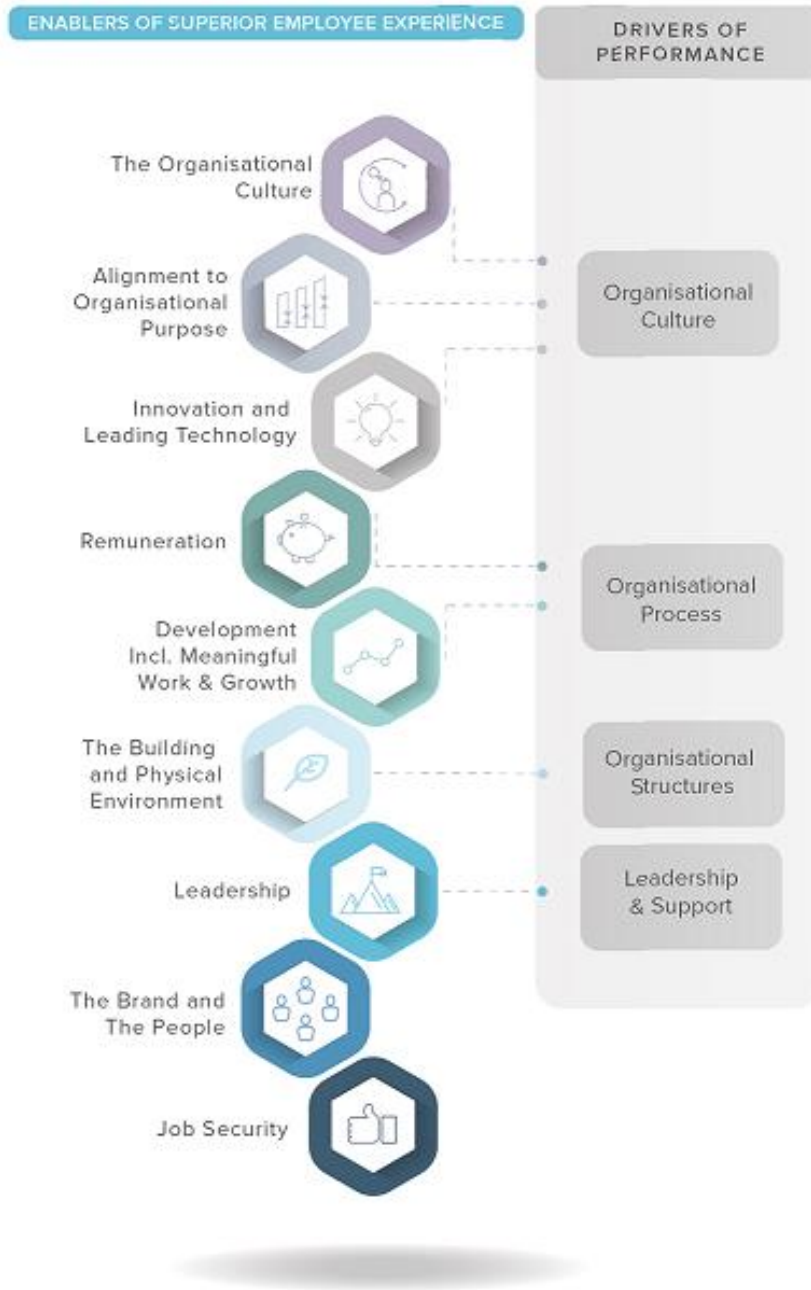
7.   CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the findings from the data in relation to the literature review in Chapter 2 and the research questions. This chapter aims to consolidate the discussion and results in a cohesive set of principle findings so as to meet the research objective. Based on these key findings, the chapter offers implications to business leaders. The limitations of the research are outlined, and the chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

The objectives for this study were to establish the role of employee experience as a driver of performance.

7.2 Principal Findings of the study

7.2.1 Definition of the constructs: employee experience and performance

Based on the study findings, employee experience can be defined as how employees of an organisation perceive the culture, leadership, and personal development. It includes the suite of factors organisation can leverage in order to offer a meaningful value proposition that drives performance. It is articulated in the context of organisational values and the value proposition offered to employees by the organisations. At the centre of the construct is the nature of the relationship between the employer and employee and how expectations are met for both parties. Closely intertwined with the driving the customer experience, it has been demonstrated that in order to drive profitability and growth for an organisation, leaders need to focus on driving the right employee experience. This will deliver value for the organisation. The service chain profit model by Heskett et al., (2008) have advocated this approach by postulating that in order to drive profitability, organisations should be focusing on the employee experience in the organisation.

Performance, on the other hand, was defined in this study as the ability to deliver, and to deliver against expectations. Delivery was the primary objective with regard

to performance. Findings were that goals are where it begins; by having clear goals, employees were able to deliver and meet those goals, while Green (2017) supported this finding by arguing that performance and the associated processes of empowerment and enablement begin with clearly articulated organisational goals and objectives. These are then cascaded from senior levels of the organisation to ensure that even the lowest level of employee is aligned in terms of their contribution to the goals (Green, 2017). Delivery of the tasks that will achieve the goals is performance (Green, 2017).

7.2.2 A summary of enablers of a superior employee experience

Participants valued multiple dimensions within the organisation that drive a superior employee experience. These dimensions include:

1. The brand and people of the organisation;
2. Innovation and leading technology;
3. Job security;
4. The culture;
5. Alignment with the organisational purpose;
6. Development, including meaningful work, compelling challenges and opportunities for growth;
7. Remuneration and good organisational performance track record;
8. Leadership;
9. The building and physical environment.

These factors were viewed as the key levers in the organisation that will attract, energise and retain employees in the organisation. Enablers of a superior employee experience were those factors that drive a superior employee experience for individuals in the organisation. It is critical to note that five of the enablers, namely, culture, alignment to the organisational purpose, development, leadership and innovation were polarised in nature. This means that if executed well, they will drive a superior employee experience; however, if they are not present or are of a poor quality, they become a detractor to a superior employee experience and can cause disengagement which results in staff turnover. Depending on the quality of the dimension, they can promote a negative or positive employee experience.

The brand and people of the organisation were strong enablers in that individuals were attracted to the reputation of the organisation and the calibre of people that work in the organisation. It is critical to note that whilst the brand and the people drove a superior experience, this does not necessarily drive performance. The innovation and technology employed by the organisation was viewed as leading edge in the industry as well as in the organisation and this was what further enabled a superior experience of the organisation. However, employees also battled with the legacy system and found this to be a barrier to performance. Job security was valued as an enabler because the organisation continued to produce good financial results despite the tough economic times and provided benefits that employees valued.

The organisational culture is a critical factor in that individuals were energised and retained by the type of culture that existed in this organisation, which was described as a making positive difference to society as well as being dynamic, fast-paced, flexible, embracing diversity, driving accountability and being innovative. These qualities were what enabled a superior employee experience. Closely linked to this, as an enabler was the alignment to the organisational purpose and mission, which was being a force for social good in society. A superior experience was enabled because employees felt a sense of belonging and strongly believed in the organisation's mission and purpose. This, however, also formed the basis of a potential barrier to performance, if ever the purpose or mission were to change.

Individual development also enabled a superior experience. It was enabled through exposure to meaningful work, compelling challenges and diverse learning opportunities. Individuals valued the growth of their team members as well as their own growth provided by the organisation and therefore, experienced the organisation positively. Competitive remuneration as well as the assigned benefits enabled a superior experience in that individuals felt they are paid fairly or even extremely well.

The right type of leadership was described as being critical in its role of an enabler or barrier to performance and to employee experience. Leaders who trust, mentor and empower individuals enable a superior employee experience. Individuals enjoy working with leaders who provide guidance, support and direction, and are able to lead teams to achieve the organisational goals. Lastly, but still important was the building and the physical environment of the organisation as being an enabler of

employee experience. Working in an environment where individuals are able to innovate, collaborate and create, emerged as an enabler of employee experience. The spaces in the building helped promote productivity, which further enabled a superior employee experience.

7.2.3 Drivers of performance

The drivers of performances are grouped into organisational culture, organisational processes, organisational structures as well as leadership and support. Drivers of performance were those factors and dimensions that will drive individuals to apply discretionary effort in order to deliver against the organisation's goals and expectations.

Leadership was viewed, as a driver of performance in that how employees experience their leaders will determine how much discretionary effort will be invested to achieve the targets and goals. Leaders who provide support, guidance and direction will drive performance. Such leaders also have to drive accountability within the teams and embrace diversity. Leaders who back their teams and empower them will drive discretionary effort. Trust and feedback are critical to achieve the above.

The organisational culture also has ability to drive performance. A culture that embraces diversity, drives accountability and is dynamic will drive individuals to apply discretionary effort and motivates them to achieve the organisational goals. A culture that embraces diversity by view similarities and differences as a competitive advantage energises individuals, drives discretionary effort and performance.

Successful organisational processes and policies further drive employee performance. These processes, in this context, include individual development, one-on-one meetings, recognition programmes as well as providing feedback on performance. Development drives performance in that individuals are provided with meaningful work, compelling challenges as well as deliberate growth opportunities. These opportunities stretch individuals and require discretionary effort and performance.

Organisational structures that drive individuals' performance include the building and the physical environment. Spaces that allow agility, innovation and collaboration drive performance.

7.3   Conclusion

Employee experience is a driver of an individual's performance. The factors that enable employee experiences are similar factors that drive performance.

Figure 9: Employee Experience as a Driver of Performance Model

Source: Authors Own

Based on the study and figure 8, one can conclude that a culture that is purpose driven, driven by innovation and technology, embraces diversity and celebrates success while providing room to fail, drives performance. The culture of an organisation is about how people collectively think, act and feel (Christensen, 2006)

and is about the feel of the organisation created by the organisation (Morgan, 2017). It emerged than an enabling culture is a key driver of both employee experience and employee performance.

Leadership has emerged as both a driver of a superior employee experience and a driver of performance. Leadership that is supportive, provides guidance and direction, fosters trust, gives autonomy and mentors followers drive a superior experience and drive performance. Leaders who are employee centric will drive performance and business results (Heskett et al., 2008). The success of the business is largely dependent on leaders being able to drive performance and cultivate employees into productive and passionate teams.

Individual development, meaningful work, feedback, one on ones and remuneration are organisational process that drive performance. Development of individuals demonstrates investment in employees by the organisation (Burrell, 2018) and as a result is a lever organisation can use to drive a superior experience and consequently performance. Feedback is crucial in the maintenance of the relationship between the employee and employee. Regular one on one meetings are encouraged as the beginning of a shifting culture of performance in organisations (Jones, 2016). Collaborative interactions including exchanging feedback are the processes and experiences employees desire to sustain performance (Jones, 2016).

Lastly, organisational structures that drive performance consist of the building, workspaces, diverse teams and physical environment. Workspaces and an environment that employees an agile mindset encourage creativity, innovation and collaboration, all of which are necessary to achieve superior performance. The physical environment plays a critical role in that people want spaces that will energise and inspire them (Green, 2017) which will drive creativity and engagement (Morgan, 2017). It is also critical to ensure that in order drive performance, structural barriers such as hierarchy and bureaucracy are eliminated and managed tightly. Unnecessary layers and processes delay the flow of information and decision-making (Mankins, 2014) and consequently performance.

Employee experience has the ability to shift the needle within an organisation, regardless of the measure one chooses to evaluate, revenue, growth or customer retention (Maylett & Wride, 2017). The findings of this research have established that by driving a superior experience for employees, organisations are able to drive

performance . This will aid leaders and organisations in achieving profitability and business results. Leaders hold the key to driving superior organisational processes, deploying optimal organisational structures and creating a culture that contains experiences that will drive performance.

7.4 Implications for Management and Business Leaders

In order to drive a positive organisational performance, it is critical for management and business leaders to drive a superior employee experience, which in turn drives individual performance and as a result the organisational results.

This can be achieved by ensuring the following:

- Leaders and managers in organisations empower, trust and mentor team members, while fostering an inclusive, affiliative leadership style.
- The organisation offers learning opportunities and personal development plans that will meet both individual and organisational expectations.
- The organisation deploys meaningful work and offers compelling challenges to employees in order to stimulate and retain their talented staff.
- Bureaucratic processes and hierarchical structures do not hinder the culture of the organisation as the organisation grows.
- The organisation invests in the physical environment and building, ensuring that agile principles are employed that will foster innovation, creativity and collaboration across divisions.
- Tools and systems are up-to-date and enable networking and knowledge sharing across the organisation.
- Leaders are trained to be able to adopt the optimal leadership styles and thus enable an organisation-wide buy-in to the company's strategy, vision, mission and differentiation.

7.5 Limitations of the Research

The study provided insight into the role of EE as a driver of employee performance. There were limitations that may have hindered the analysis and theoretical generalisation; such limitations included the following:

- Due to time constraints and the context of the paper, the study was conducted over an extended period of time (over two months) and reflects results at a point in time.
- The study was limited to one organisation and as a result, the findings are not generalisable.
- Due to the study being limited to one organisation in the financial sector, sectoral generalisations cannot be made.
- The study consisted of knowledge workers and excluded blue-collar workers and manual labourers and as a result cannot be generalised.
- Participants were mostly at management level as per the Department of Labour's definition of a manager, and as a result, the findings cannot be interpreted to include junior employees or unskilled labour.

7.6 Suggestions for Future Research

It is recommended that the study be extended to a larger population and not just one organisation to determine the role of employee experience as a driver of performance. It is also recommended that the study be diversified by industry or sector. This will serve to further prove that employee experience has a role to play with regard to driving performance, regardless of the nature of the organisation. Due to the nature of the purpose of this study, it was conducted at a point in time, a recommendation would be studying the role of employee experience over time. The recommendation is that a longitudinal quantitative study be conducted. This should measure the impact of employee experience on performance and to understand what measurement metrics organisations could focus on.

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APPENDIX A: Interview Questionnaire

Interview Questionnaire:

1.1.   What is your understanding of the concept of employee experience in organisations?

1.2.   Based on your understanding, what has been your experience of the organisation as an employee?

1.3.   What experiences have energised you from the time you entered the organisation to date?

1.4.   What about the organisation attracted you to it?

1.5.   What made you excited you about joining the organisation

1.6.   What factors have made you stay with the organisation

1.7.   What factors would make you leave the organisation

1.8.   What experiences have inhibited performance?

1.9.   What processes and practices have inhibited your performance?

1.10.   Elaborate on some the experiences that have positively contributed to your performance in the organisation?

1.11.   What else could be done or eliminated to drive your performance as an individual?

APPENDIX B: Ethics Approval

Gordon Institute of Business Science
University of Pretoria

07 August 2019

Nomaswazi Ngwane

Dear Nomaswazi

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been approved.

You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.

Please note that approval is granted based on the methodology and research instruments provided in the application. If there is any deviation change or addition to the research method or tools, a supplementary application for approval must be obtained

We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

Kind Regards

GIBS MBA Research Ethical Clearance Committee

APPENDIX C: Consent Form

Consent Declaration:

I am currently student, completing my research in partial fulfilment of an MBA at the Gordon Institute of Business Science. The research I am conducting focuses on the role of employee experience on performance of individuals in organisations.

Please note that the interview will take 45 minutes to an hour and will help me understand your view of the role of employee experience in driving performance. It is wholly understood that these are your views as respondent and will be treated as such.

Your participation is voluntary, and should you have any questions or concerns post the interview I am available to discuss further. Below are my contact details:

Researcher: Nomaswazi Ngwane

Email: 18370676@mygibs.co.za

Tel: 0722856840

Name of Participant (Optional):_____
Signature of Participant:_____ _____
Participant Title:_____ _____
Date:_____
Signature of Researcher_____

APPENDIX D: List of codes

Code	Grounded	Code Groups
Accountability as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Added Benefits as an attraction	2	Attracting Factors as Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Additional elements of performance as performance for leaders	1	Drivers of Performance
Agile and Collaboration as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Agile as performance	1	Definition of performance
Agile Mindset as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Allowing for failure to Improve/drive performance	2	Drivers of Performance Experiences that improve performance
An inspirational CEO as an energiser	2	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Attuned leadership as a retention factor	2	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Autonomy as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Autonomy to set own KPIs as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Bad line management as an exit reason	2	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Bad line manager qualities as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Basic need as an attraction	5	Attracting Factors as Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Being comfortable to say 'I dont know' as positive performance experience	1	Additional information
Being fired as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Belief in the purpose as an attraction	1	Attracting Factors as Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Bias to critical skills in relation to positive experience	1	Additional information
Budgeting process as performance inhibitor	2	Barriers to performance
Bureaucracy as a negative experience	1	Barriers to performance

Code	Grounded	Code Groups
Bureaucracy as performance inhibitor	4	Barriers to performance
Career paths and growth as employee experience	2	Definition of Employee Experience
Celebrating wins as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Centralised budgeting to drive innovation as a way to improve performance	1	Experiences that improve performance
CEO succession as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Challenging work as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Change as a performance inhibitor	1	Barriers to performance
Changing culture impacting customer experience	1	Additional information

Code	Grounded	Code Groups
Compelling challenge as a retention factor	2	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Compelling challenge as an attraction	2	Attracting Factors as Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Conflict with a line manager as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance
Context as a way to improve performance	1	Experiences that improve performance
Culture and engagement with it as employee experience	6	Definition of Employee Experience
Culture as a propeller of personal growth	2	Additional information
Culture as a retention factor	2	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Culture as an attraction	2	Attracting Factors as Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Culture as an exit reason	2	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Customer experience as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Customer experience as linked to employee experience	3	Definition of Employee Experience
Declining calibre of people diminishing the customer and employee experience	1	Barriers to performance Additional information

Code	Grounded	Code Groups
Decreasing innovation as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Delivering against expectation as performance	1	Definition of performance
Delivery as performance	2	Definition of performance
Demanding nature of the organisation	1	Actual Organisational experience description
Desire for impact as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Digression from the purpose and mission as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Digression from the purpose as an exit reason	0	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Direction and Clarity from Leadership to improve performance	1	Experiences that improve performance
Disappearing entrepreneurial nature due to growth as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Disrespect as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Diversity as a driver of experience and performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Diversity as a driver of performance	0	Drivers of Performance
Drive and Tenacity around business cases is exciting	1	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Dynamic nature of the organisation as an attraction	1	Attracting Factors as Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Elimination of bureaucracy as a way to improve performance	1	Experiences that improve performance

Code	**Grounded**	**Code Groups**
Elimination of people as a way to improve performance	2	Experiences that improve performance
Elimination of politics to drive performance	2	Drivers of Performance
Embrace different thinking styles as a way to improve performance	1	Experiences that improve performance
Empathy as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Employee Engagement as employee experience	2	Definition of Employee Experience

Employer-employee relationship as employee experience	2	Definition of Employee Experience
Empowerment as a driver of performance	2	Drivers of Performance
Enhancing the customer experience as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Entrepreneurial nature as an energiser	1	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Ethical structures and policies as an attraction	1	Attracting Factors as Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Exciting nature of the company as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Executives openness as an energiser	1	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Exposure as an energiser	2	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Exposure as employee experience	1	Definition of Employee Experience
Exposure to Executives as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Fairness in policy application as a way to improve the experience	1	Experiences that improve performance
Fast pace as retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Fast pace nature as an energiser	2	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Feedback as a way to improve performance	1	Experiences that improve performance
Feedback as employee experience	1	Definition of Employee Experience
Financially performing organisation as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Flexibility as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Flexibility as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Founder led principles as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Fun element as a way of thinking to improve the experience	1	Experiences that improve performance
Genuine Transformation as a driver of transformation	3	Drivers of Performance

Code	Grounded	Code Groups
Global foot-print as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Goals and objectives as drivers of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Goals as drivers of performance	0	Drivers of Performance
Code	**Grounded**	**Code Groups**
Good opportunity as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Good track record of organisational performance as an attraction	1	Attracting Factors as Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Great people as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Growth and it measurement as employee experience	1	Definition of Employee Experience
Growth of people as an energiser	3	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Guidance from Leadership as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Hierarchical levels as an inhibitor of performance	2	Barriers to performance
Hierarchy as a negative experience	1	Additional information
Hierarchy as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
High performance culture	1	Actual Organisational experience description
Honesty and Openness as a way to improve performance	1	Experiences that improve performance
How people look as an energiser	1	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Identifying with the purpose and ambition as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
If discovery firstly changed their mission	0	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
If we were to change customer experience as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Importance of culture fit in organisational experience	1	Actual Organisational experience description

	Grounded	Code Groups
Importance of foundational elements (basics) as drivers of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Importance of measurement of performance	2	Drivers of Performance
Individual development as a driver of performance	2	Drivers of Performance
Individual Development as employee experience	1	Definition of Employee Experience
Influencing Strategy as an energiser	1	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
In-house agencies as energisers	1	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Innovation as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Innovation as an attraction	1	Attracting Factors as Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Innovation as an energiser	2	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Internal drive and curiosity as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance

Code	Grounded	Code Groups
Investment in individuals growth as a way of improving performance	1	Experiences that improve performance
Job Satisfaction as a way to improve performance	1	Experiences that improve performance
Lack of Accountability as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance
Lack of alignment with team and individual goals	1	Additional information
Lack of an African footprint as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Lack of career progression as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Lack of cascading leadership principles as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance
Lack of challenging work as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience

	Grounded	
Lack of change management as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Lack of control over KPIs as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance
Lack of departmental stability as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance
Lack of direction and personal issues as an inhibitor of performance	3	Barriers to performance
Lack of empathy as a performance inhibitor	1	Barriers to performance
Lack of excitement as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Lack of knowledge sharing as a performance inhibitor	1	Barriers to performance
Lack of meaningful work as a performance inhibitor(experience)	1	Barriers to performance
Lack of minorities mobility as a performance inhibitor	0	Barriers to performance
Lack of minorities' mobility as a performance inhibitor	2	Barriers to performance
Lack of mobility as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Lack of recognition as a performance inhibitor (experience)	2	Barriers to performance
Lack of relevant training content as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance
Lack of strategic understanding as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance
Lack of Transformation as a performance inhibitor	1	Barriers to performance
Lack of transparency as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance
Code	**Grounded**	**Code Groups**
Leadership as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Leadership as an energiser	3	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience

Leadership as dependency of organisational experience	1	Actual Organisational experience description
Leadership as driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Leadership as employee experience	3	Definition of Employee Experience
Leadership encouragement as a driver of performance	2	Drivers of Performance
Leadership humility as a retention factor	2	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Leadership support as a driver of performance	6	Drivers of Performance
Leadership's energy as an energiser	1	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Leading technology as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Leading technology as an attraction	1	Attracting Factors as Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Learning and career paths as a way to improve performance	1	Experiences that improve performance
Learning opportunities as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Living the values disconnect as employee experience	1	Definition of Employee Experience
Long tenure vs New Managers as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance
Loyalty as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Meaningful work as an energiser	3	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Mediocre line manager as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Meeting deadlines as a definition of performance	1	Definition of performance
Meeting KPIs as performance	1	Definition of performance
Mentorship as a driver of performance	3	Drivers of Performance
Mentorship as a way to improve performance	2	Experiences that improve performance
Micromanagement as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance

Mobility of minorities as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Motivation as performance	1	Definition of performance
Nice things done for employees as employee experience	1	Definition of Employee Experience
No direction as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Non-personal nature of conflict as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance

Code	Grounded	Code Groups
Not having a voice at ExCo level as a performance inhibitor	1	Barriers to performance
Not understanding the work as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance
Onboarding as employee experience	1	Definition of Employee Experience
One on Ones as a driver of performance	2	Drivers of Performance
Openness to new ideas as a way to improve performance	1	Experiences that improve performance
Opportunities as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Opportunities as an attraction	1	Attracting Factors as Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Opportunities provided as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Opportunity for non-traditional role as an energiser	3	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Organisation that gives back to South Africa as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
People and Leadership as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
People as an energiser	1	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Performance as employee experience	1	Definition of Employee Experience
Personal growth as an energiser	3	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Personal performance as employee experience	1	Definition of Employee Experience

	Grounded	
Policies and process as employee experience	1	Definition of Employee Experience
Politics as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance
Poor data quality as performance inhibitor	1	Barriers to performance
Poor Leadership as a performance inhibitor	3	Barriers to performance
Poor Leadership as an exit reason	2	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Positive and Negative experiences as Employee Experience	2	Definition of Employee Experience
Positive experience results in better performance	1	Experiences that improve performance
Prioritisation as a performance inhibitor	1	Barriers to performance
Progression and Self Improvement as performance	1	Definition of performance
Promise of starting a team as an attraction	1	Attracting Factors as Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Promotions process not clear as an inhibitor of performance	3	Barriers to performance
Purpose as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Quality of Performance appraisals as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance

Code	Grounded	Code Groups
Recognition as a driver of performance	7	Drivers of Performance
Remuneration as a driver of performance	2	Drivers of Performance
Remuneration as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Remuneration as an attraction	3	Attracting Factors as Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
Restructures as performance inhibitors	2	Barriers to performance
Role clarity as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
Role Pressure as a performance inhibitor	2	Barriers to performance
Scale as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance
Security as a retention factor	2	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Shifting the needle as performance	2	Definition of performance
Silos as inhibitors of performance	1	Barriers to performance

Start-up nature as an energiser	1	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
System impact on customer experience as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance
Systems, Policies and Processes in the confines of culture as employee experience	1	Definition of Employee Experience
Team as dependency of organisational experience	1	Actual Organisational experience description
Tenure as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
The brand as an attraction	4	Attracting Factors as Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
The brand as an energiser	2	Drivers and Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
The building as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
The culture for me is vitally important.	0	Actual Organisational experience description Additional information
The current economy as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
The leadership charter as a driver of performance	1	Drivers of Performance
The organisation as force for social good as an attraction	2	Attracting Factors as Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
The people as an attraction	3	Attracting Factors as Enablers of a Superior Employee Experience
The whole organisational journey as employee experience	1	Definition of Employee Experience
Total investment as performance	1	Definition of performance
Toxicity of the culture	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Transparency as a way to improve performance	1	Experiences that improve performance
Treatment of people and empathy as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Trust as a driver of performance	3	Drivers of Performance
Code	**Grounded**	**Code Groups**

Unfairness as an exit reason	1	Detractors to a Superior Employee Experience
Unfairness in the promotions process as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance
Unintegrated, disjointed legacy systems as a performance inhibitor	2	Barriers to performance
Values and value proposition as employee experience	2	Definition of Employee Experience
Values as a retention factor	1	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Working directly with decision makers as a retention factor	2	Retention factors as enablers of EX
Working environment as employee experience	1	Definition of Employee Experience
Working with people with no drive as an inhibitor of performance	1	Barriers to performance