

**Title: The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement in the Relationship between
Corporate Purpose and Organisational Performance**

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Abstract

This research paper addresses the research gap identified in this paper by examining the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance. The study employed a cross-sectional descriptive quantitative design, drawing responses from 246 participants across diverse demographic backgrounds ensuring a diverse and representative sample. The study achieved a significant response rate of 64.1% which provided a solid foundation for the study's statistical analysis and conclusions.

To analyse the data, the research employed a variety of quantitative techniques, ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings. These included rigorous statistical tests to validate the constructs related to corporate purpose, employee engagement (encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions), and organisational performance (both financial and non-financial).

The key findings of the research demonstrated a statistically significant positive correlation between corporate purpose and both dimensions of organisational performance. Additionally, corporate purpose was found to significantly influence all dimensions of employee engagement. Intriguingly, emotional engagement emerged as a mediator in the relationship between corporate purpose and non-financial performance, while behavioral engagement mediated the relationship with financial performance. The study also identified areas where mediation was not significant, highlighting the complexity of these relationships.

While the research was robust, limitations such as reliance on self-reported data and its cross-sectional nature were acknowledged. The paper concludes with recommendations for future research directions, including longitudinal studies and broader geographical and industry-specific explorations, to deepen the understanding of these relationships.

Conclusively, the paper makes a significant contribution to the field by empirically establishing the nuanced role of employee engagement in linking corporate purpose with organisational performance. This study not only fills a critical research gap but also offers practical insights for organisations aiming to align their purpose with employee engagement strategies, thereby enhancing overall performance and societal contributions.

Keywords

Corporate Purpose, Purpose-Driven Organisation, Employee Engagement, Organisational 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 Philosophy Corporate Strategy 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.

Signature:

Date: 27 November 2023

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Chapter 1: Introduction to research problem

1.1 Introduction to the research problem

In the scholarly pursuit of understanding organisational dynamics, the dialogue surrounding the essence of corporate purpose has significantly intensified, with a growing consensus that it is increasingly becoming important for organisational success. Academics have rigorously debated and provided empirical support for the notion that organisations which embed societal interests into their strategic core, transcending the traditional paradigm of profit maximisation, are those that outperform their competitors (Gartenberg, 2019; Pedrini & Ferri, 2019; Mayer, 2021).

Prominent researchers such as Zhao (2021) and Edmans (2023) have postulated that the disregard of socio-economic and environmental imperatives is no longer plausible for contemporary businesses, given the escalating demands for corporate accountability from a diverse array of stakeholders. The integration of corporate purpose with strategic initiatives is thus posited to confer a distinctive competitive edge, nurturing symbiotic relationships with customers, employees, and the wider society - a necessity for thriving in the current competitive and dynamic market (Jones et al., 2018; How et al., 2019; Edmans, 2023).

Amidst this milieu, corporate leaders find themselves under heightened pressure from shareholders to weave corporate purpose into the very fabric of their strategic endeavours (Harrison et al., 2020). Mayer (2021) contended that while strides towards ethical business practices and stringent compliance are in motion, such initiatives are insufficient in isolation. Mayer (2021) further advocated for a profound organisational self-reflection on their reason for being, urging a recalibration of business practices and policies to be in concordance with their articulated purpose.

This reorientation from the narrow focus on shareholder gains, originally espoused by Friedman (1970), to a stakeholder-inclusive perspective signifies a paradigm shift, with major corporations now viewing shareholder value as a resultant benefit rather than a primary objective. This approach fosters an overarching mission that caters to an extended community, encompassing employees, customers, and the intrinsic quality of

products and services (Harrison et al., 2020).

Rey, Bastons, and Sotok (2019) accentuated the transformative 'power of purpose' in catalysing employees towards remarkable achievements. Van Tuin et al. (2020) supported this view, presenting empirical evidence of the positive repercussions of a purpose-infused corporate vision on employee motivation and engagement. In alignment with this, Dupret et al. (2022) underscored the strategic significance of organisational purpose, positing that when employees resonate with such purpose, it endows their professional endeavours with enhanced meaning.

Biriowu and Chickwe (2020) discovered a salient link between employee engagement and organisational performance, underscoring that such engagement engenders a synergy between the goals of the organisation and those of its employees – a critical ingredient for maintaining a competitive advantage. Concurrently, the prevailing body of research indicates that corporate purpose and employee engagement, while individually salient, manifest a synergistic influence on both the individual and organisational echelons of performance and warrant joint examination (van Tuin et al., 2020). Furthermore, despite the rich discourse within business journals regarding the operationalisation of purpose for societal benefit, academic research delving into the theoretical and practical ramifications of corporate purpose on organisational performance remains relatively scarce (Jones-Khosla & Gomes, 2023).

1.2 Problem statement

In today's dynamic and increasingly conscientious business environment, the conventional understanding of corporate purpose – once narrowly defined by profit maximisation – is undergoing a significant transformation. The emerging paradigm stresses that companies should holistically incorporate societal, environmental, and stakeholder concerns into their core strategy, positioning these broader goals not just as ethical imperatives but as essential determinants of long-term success (Gartenberg, 2016; Pedrini & Ferri, 2019; Mayer, 2021). However, this raises a crucial question: How do organisations effectively translate this evolving sense of purpose into organisational performance?

Furthermore, stakeholders, including customers, employees, communities, and even shareholders, increasingly demand that businesses operate with a deeper, more holistic

sense of purpose (Harrison et al., 2020). As a result, businesses find themselves at a crossroads where aligning with this new purpose is not just a matter of ethics or societal responsibility but is seen as a strategic imperative to ensure competitiveness, resilience, survival and creating long term value (Zhao, 2021; Edmans, 2023).

Yet, while there is a growing consensus on the importance of an evolved corporate purpose, there remains a gap in understanding the mechanisms through which this purpose affects organisational performance. One potential mechanism, as hinted by existing research, is employee engagement. Engaged employees are posited to align their personal goals with that of the organisation, thus acting as crucial conduits that translate corporate purpose into on-the-ground actions and results (Biriowu & Chickwe, 2020; van Tuin et al., 2020).

There are studies on other related relationships of employee engagement and employee aspects such as commitment and satisfaction (Dominic Suta, 2023; Sypniewska et al., 2023). However, the existing literature, while acknowledging the above and other studies recognised the individual significance of corporate purpose and employee engagement (van Tuin et al., 2020) has yet to thoroughly explore their interrelationship and combined impact on organisational performance. Specifically, the potential mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance remains under-explored (Gartenberg, 2016; van Tuin et al., 2020; Jones-Khosla & Gomes, 2023).

This research, therefore, seeks to bridge this gap by investigating the following problem: To what extent does employee engagement mediate the relationship between an organisation's corporate purpose and its performance? Understanding this relationship is pivotal for businesses looking to navigate the modern landscape, where purpose and performance are inextricably linked.

1.3 Purpose of the Research

This research aims to explore the relationship between corporate purpose, employee engagement, and organisational performance in today's evolving business landscape. As organisations pivot from purely profit-driven objectives to encompass wider societal and stakeholder goals, it's critical to understand how these broader purposes influence business results.

The study seeks to critically assess the current interpretation of corporate purpose. Additionally, this research will delve into the role of employee engagement. Recognising employees as key vehicles in manifesting an organisation's vision, the study will examine the nature of their engagement. It will investigate how employees understand and integrate the evolving corporate purpose into their daily roles and responsibilities.

A central question the research addresses is the potential mediating role of employee engagement between corporate purpose and organisational performance. It posits whether a well-defined corporate purpose can enhance employee engagement levels, and if such increased engagement leads to improved organisational outcomes.

Beyond the theoretical exploration, the research also intends to provide actionable insights to business managers. The study aims to offer guidance to organisations striving to optimise the benefits of their corporate purpose, nurture engagement, and achieve sustainable performance.

1.4 Research objectives

The objectives of the research is to establish the relationship between a corporate purpose and organisational performance and the mediating role of employee engagement in this relationship. Therefore, the following objectives were developed:

- To interrogate the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance.
- To explain the relationship between corporate purpose and employee engagement.
- To test the hypothesis that employee engagement mediates the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance.

1.5 Research scope

The research encompasses an examination of existing theoretical frameworks and literature on corporate purpose, tracing its evolution and operationalisation in modern business environments. A focal point will be specific indicators and metrics employed to measure organisational performance, integrating both non-financial aspects, such as stakeholder satisfaction and employee satisfaction, and financial aspects like revenue

and profits (Ha, Lo & Wang, 2016).

Research demonstrated that individual level engagement premise on the psychological availability of the employee, which is defined as the sense of having the physical, emotional, or psychological resources to personally engage at a particular moment (Kahn, 1990, p. 714). The availability of both physical and emotional energy influenced the extent to which individuals were available to perform their work and positively impact organisational outcomes (van Tuin et al., 2020). Thus, central to the study is an exploration into the subdimensions of employee engagement, which is cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and behavioural engagement. This will dovetail into a rigorous statistical analysis aimed at interpreting the mediating effect of employee engagement on the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance. By focusing on all working individuals as the demographic of interest, this study aims to capture a holistic view of the modern workforce and the nuances of their engagement in relation to corporate purpose.

Concluding the research, based on empirical findings and analyses, the research paper includes a dedicated segment proffering actionable insights, strategic recommendations, and best practices. These are envisioned to guide organisations striving to fortify their corporate purpose, bolster employee engagement, and thereby amplify overall organisational performance.

1.6 Gap in the literature

According to the research, businesses are increasingly recognising the role of corporate purpose, not just as a pursuit of profits but as a broader commitment to social and environmental objectives (Mio et al., 2020; Jimenez et al., 2021; Jasinenko & Steuber, 2023). At the heart of this transformation is the belief that a clear and resonant corporate purpose can inspire and cultivate higher employee engagement; a concept discussed by Ali et al. (2020) and Jasinenko and Steuber (2023).

Furthermore, prior research has reinforced the idea that engaged employees contribute positively to organisational outcomes (van Tuin et al., 2020). Additionally, research has explored the relationship between corporate purpose and financial performance (Gartenberg et al., 2019, Alatawi et al., 2023). There's also work, like that of Park et al. (2022), probing the ties between employee engagement and facets of leadership and

job performance.

Yet, what remains insufficiently researched is the triadic interplay between corporate purpose, employee engagement, and organisational performance (Jones-Khosla & Gomes, 2023, p. 9). Although research demonstrated that corporate purpose could influence employee engagement, its mediated effect, in tandem with employee engagement, on organisational performance has been less explored, as highlighted by van Tuin et al. (2020). This research seeks to bridge this gap, delving into the synergistic relationships among these critical constructs.

1.7 Contribution from the study

In addressing the gap discussed in the preceding text, this study focuses on the intricate interplay between corporate purpose, employee engagement, and organisational performance. While existing research has shed light on the individual connections of these concepts, the collective dynamics between them have remained largely unexplored, as reported by Gartenberg et al. (2019), Park et al. (2022), and van Tuin et al. (2020) and Alatawi et al. (2023).

Through this research investigation, the study seeks to offer a holistic understanding of how a well-articulated corporate purpose can serve as a driving force for heightened employee engagement. Furthermore, it aims to illustrate the ripple effects of this enhanced engagement, steered by a compelling corporate purpose, on organisational performance. By doing so, the research aspires to equip organisations with insights that can guide them in harnessing the intertwined potentials of corporate purpose and employee engagement for optimal organisational performance outcomes.

The contributions of this research are not limited to theoretical advancements alone; the findings promise to serve as a valuable compass for business leaders, policymakers, and organisational strategists, empowering them with the knowledge to craft and refine strategies that prioritise both purpose-driven engagement and robust organisational results.

1.8 Structure of the Research

The background and the problem statement for this research has been discussed in this chapter as well the purpose for the research has been detailed. To further clarify the importance of the study, this chapter highlighted the research objectives and the scope of the study. The researcher motivated the need by providing empirical evidence of the gap that exist in the literature review.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review on constructs pertinent to the research problem. The constructs discussed include corporate purpose, employee engagement and organisational performance. The definition of corporate purpose is explored and a theoretical exploration of the definition of corporate purpose is broadly discussed which demonstrated the trajectory of corporate purpose's theoretical development and its varying applications in business strategy. The impact of corporate purpose on employee engagement is explored in detail as well the importance of employee engagement on organisational performance Further exploration is provided on employee engagement and the importance of its subdimension, namely cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement is theorised in line with the research objectives. This chapter also include an analysis on the construct of organisational performance and its multifaceted theoretical interpretation.

Chapter 3 presents the research objectives and the corresponding hypothesis aimed at addressing the research problem. This chapter includes the conceptual model that has been developed to research and draw conclusions to answer the objectives and its corresponding hypotheses. The latter is critical to determine the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance, as well the mediating role that employee engagement plays between corporate purpose and organisational performance.

Chapter 4 discuss the research methodology used and explains the rationale of the research design. The latter explains the research approach and method, which indicates how the study was conducted. The sampling method, data analysis techniques and research instrument used is also explained in this chapter. The ethical consideration is explained as expected for this type of study before the data is collected. The method of checking the validity and reliability of the data is depicted. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the limitations of the study.

Chapter 5 reports on the results of the research in accordance with the research objectives as outlined in chapter 1 and hypotheses in chapter 3.

Chapter 6 builds on the findings presented in chapter 5 by providing detailed analysis and interpretation of the research findings as they relate to the research objectives and hypotheses. This chapter draws on empirical evidence discussed in Chapter 2 to conclude the findings of the study.

Chapter 7 draws conclusion from the analysis in chapter 5 and the discussion in chapter 6. The researcher also provides recommendations on the topic of corporate purpose, employee engagement and organisational performance for business managers. The limitations of the study are highlighted and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The field of business research has plenty of studies that look into corporate purpose, employee engagement, and organisational performance as separate topics. Yet, there is a noticeable lack of research that brings these important concepts together. This gap exists even as the need to understand how these elements interact becomes more apparent.

In this literature review, we aim to gather and review the existing knowledge on these topics and show how they are connected. We will start by examining what corporate purpose means for businesses today and how this concept has developed over time. Then we will look at employee engagement, exploring its critical role in linking corporate purpose with the performance of an organisation.

The goal is to present the key theories behind each concept. This sets the stage for understanding how a clearly defined corporate purpose can guide a company's direction, how employee engagement can strengthen this purpose, and how both can lead to better results for the company.

By focusing on how these ideas are related, this review will tie in with the broader objectives laid out in Chapter 1. It will pave the way for a clear story that not only showcases the importance of each individual concept but also the powerful effect they can have when working together. This study is set to offer fresh insights into how employee engagement can play a pivotal role in turning corporate purpose into improved organisational performance.

2.2 Corporate purpose

2.2.1 Defining Corporate Purpose

In unpacking the construct of corporate purpose, it is pivotal to trace its developmental trajectory to appreciate how contemporary organisations strive to authentically embody

purpose. Traditionally, the notion of social responsibility within business paradigms was narrowly interpreted to equate to profit maximisation for shareholders, situating shareholder primacy as the singular interpretation of corporate purpose (Hurth et al., 2018).

Conversely, Freeman et al. (2020) suggested that corporate purpose has moved organisations from a profit-driven focus to focus on a more integrative perspective. Harrison et al. (2020) explained that corporate purpose should encompass a broader social focus, to include other stakeholders other than shareholders. This contemporary understanding is further delineated by Gartenberg & You (2022), who articulated corporate purpose as an ensemble of long-standing strategic intents that engender and preserve value for a spectrum of stakeholders – spanning employees, customers, to the extended community.

Research has reported on the reconceptualisation of corporate purpose which champions a more collectivist and enduring approach, transcending mere economic proliferation to include the broader ambit of societal contribution (White et al., 2017; Rey, Bastons, & Sotok, 2019).

A collection of academic discourses, as illustrated in Table 1, lend credence to these multifaceted delineations of corporate purpose. Despite the absence of a unified definition, the significance lies in acknowledging the theoretical development of the concept, steering the discourse toward a more enriched understanding of an organisation's reason for existence.

Table 1: Representative definitions of a broader view of Corporate Purpose

Corporate Purpose	
Scientist	Definitions
Friedman (1970)	The author argued that creating value for shareholder is the primary objective of the organisation.
Hurth et al (2018, p. 2)	“An organization’s meaningful and enduring reason to exist that aligns with long-term financial performance, provides a clear context for daily decision making, and unifies and motivates relevant stakeholders.”
(Freeman et al., 2020, p. 220)	“Purpose is the why behind a company’s existence and elucidates the shared value a corporation creates for customers, shareholders, employees and society at large.”
(Gartenberg & Yiu, 2022, p. 6)	“Corporate purpose is a company’s “reason for being,” or “the set of beliefs about the meaning of a firm’s work beyond quantitative measures of financial performance.”

Source: Compiled by the author, based on scientific literature analysed.

In the context of the literature review, this table is pivotal in demonstrating the trajectory of corporate purpose’s theoretical development and its varying applications in business strategy. It’s clear that the notion of corporate purpose has grown to encapsulate a balance between financial success and corporate social responsibility, setting the tone for a more inclusive and sustainable business ethos that has the potential to drive both internal engagement and external performance.

2.2.2 Linking corporate purpose to organisational performance

According to Jones-Khosla and Gomes (2023) the discourse on corporate purpose within the scholarly and business communities continues to be a subject of robust debate, with divergent views emerging regarding its definition and relevance to profit-oriented entities. A pivotal moment in this ongoing discussion was the 2019 declaration by the U.S. Business Roundtable, where leading CEOs publicly committed to guiding their organisations towards benefiting all stakeholders, expanding the focus beyond shareholder primacy (Moore, 2019; Harrison et al., 2020). According to Harrison et al. (2020) argued that corporate purpose represents an organisation’s ethical response to its responsibilities, including societal and environmental considerations, rather than merely serving as a means to leverage commercial prospects.

Jones-Khosla and Gomes (2023) discussed the concept of 'deep purpose'. These

authors described corporate purpose as the harmonisation of commercial success with societal betterment, warning that a failure to authentically embody such a purpose could incur both economic and social repercussions for the company. Hurth et al. (2018) supported this view, defining corporate purpose as an alignment between an organisation's existence and its financial viability. This notion of a dual focus on profit and societal good is further supported by Jones-Khosla and Gomes (2023), who advocated for an organisational intentionality that extends beyond profitability to benefit society at large.

Mayer and Roche (2021) argued that corporate purpose is truly beneficial only when profits are not accrued at the expense of other stakeholders, thereby setting a conditional premise for the validity of corporate purpose. They argued that profit should foster a conducive environment for fulfilling the organisation's purpose (Mayer & Roche, 2021). Kurznack et al. (2021) found that companies that integrate long-term, purpose-oriented strategies experience a congruent increase in both economic and societal value, suggesting a new business paradigm where stakeholder and shareholder benefits are no longer mutually exclusive but fully integrated.

While these perspectives advocate for the integration of purpose into business strategy, they are met with counterarguments in recent scholarship. Rönnegard and Smith (2023) argued that the focus on corporate purpose may dilute the primacy of shareholder value, therefore, may lead to a neglect of fiduciary responsibilities. A previous study conducted by Doane and Abasta-Vilaplana (2005) cautioned that the operationalisation of corporate purpose can be fraught with challenges, noting that without clear metrics and accountability, purpose-driven rhetoric may not translate into meaningful action.

Jones-Khosla and Gomes (2023) found that companies with a higher purpose tend to attract greater shareholder value over time. These authors found that investors are willing to pay a premium for companies that exhibit a positive record of environment, social and governance (ESG) commitments. These authors reported that such investor behaviour underscores the growing recognition of purpose-oriented companies that extend their focus beyond immediate financial returns to include environmental and social performance.

The literature suggests that while an authentic and strategically integrated corporate purpose may enhance an organisation's societal value and financial performance, this balance is not without its critics and implementation challenges. The ongoing academic

debate reflects the dynamic nature of this field, underscoring the need for continued empirical research and theoretical refinement (Jones-Khosla & Gomes, 2023).

2.2.3 Operationalising Corporate Purpose: Theory into Practice

Understanding the practical application of corporate purpose requires an examination of how organisations actualise their foundational values within their business strategies and operations. Malnight et al. (2019) and Knowles et al. (2022) highlighted the significance of corporate purpose in cultivating organisations that are purpose-driven, where the emphasis transcends profit generation to encompass broader societal and environmental impacts.

Gulati (2022) and Gulati et al. (2023) argued that organisations with a well-defined and authentic mission integrate their corporate purpose with their overarching strategic objectives. These authors found that this integration ensures the company's commitment to broader societal responsibilities is not merely a statement of intent but a guiding principle for action.

According to Malnight et al. (2019) and Fitzsimmons et al. (2022), purpose-driven companies strategically align their business practices with their core mission, thereby fostering positive societal and environmental changes. These authors argued that such alignment is not only ethically sound but also beneficial for the company's long-term success and reputation.

Cho et al. (2019) highlighted an important link between Corporate Purpose and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). These authors recognised the evolution from discretionary acts of goodwill to strategically integrated CSR initiatives reflects a profound shift in how companies operationalise their purpose. Research demonstrated that the strategic CSR activities are essential to the business model and integral to the organisation's success (Cho et al., 2019; Goedeke & Fogliasso, 2020).

Fitzsimmons et al. (2022) and Knowles (2022) highlighted the importance of purpose statements that reflect a company's commitment to ethical standards and social responsibilities. These authors argued that these statements are more than symbolic; they are instrumental in guiding the company's direction, motivating employees, and articulating the corporate ethos to stakeholders.

George et al. (2023) supported this view, by arguing that the true purpose of an organisation is revealed through its corporate vision, mission, and purpose statements. These authors found that when these statements are authentic and embedded within the core strategy, they significantly enhance company performance.

2.2.4 Conceptual Foundations: Vision, Mission, and Purpose Statements

Mirvis et al., 2010 discussed that corporate purpose is deeply intertwined with the conceptual clarity provided by vision, mission, and purpose statements. Dumitrascu & Feleaga (2019) argued these statement serves as a pillar in constructing a robust framework that guides companies toward their intended future, informs stakeholders, and fosters a culture of engagement and commitment.

According to Kirkpatrick (2017), vision statements were identified as depictions of an organisation's future aspirations, painting an aspirational landscape that companies endeavoured to realise. Fitzsimmons et al. (2022) concurred, observing that such statements embodied long-term ambitions and the desired future state that organisations aimed to achieve. These authors claimed that these proclamations acted as north stars for long-range planning, galvanising stakeholders toward a common aspirational goal.

Constantino et al. (2020) explained that mission statements define an organisation's present objectives and methodologies. These authors debated that the mission statements thus offered a clear, yet succinct outline of the company's operational focus, target demographics, and distinctive competences, elucidating the organisation's immediate operational focus. These authors argued that mission statements provided a foundational bedrock that articulated a firm's purpose, values, and aims, thereby orienting its actions in support of the broader vision.

Michaelson et al. (2020) furthermore explained that these statements probe the foundational 'why' of an organisation, extending beyond mere profitability to encompass ethical and societal commitments. The authors argued that the statements anchor a company's identity, expressing a dedication to a set of values and responsibilities that engaged a wide array of stakeholders.

Van Tuin et al. (2020) demonstrated a correlation between the presence of meaningful

corporate statements and the level of employee engagement. The authors found that employees who identified with these statements tended to display greater commitment and engagement, executing their roles with a sense of purpose beyond daily tasks.

Moreover, research found, during times of uncertainty and change, these statements provided a source of stability, reinforcing the organisational value system and guiding corporate navigation through periods of instability. They enabled a governance model that was infused with purpose, ensuring that decisions aligned with the organisation's core principles and strategic imperatives (Aguilera, 2023; George et al., 2023).

Zu (2019) argued that the integration of vision, mission, and purpose statements helps bringing corporate purpose to life and offering criteria to evaluate a company's impact on society in relation to its profitability. Zu (2019) argued that "purpose statements" serves as dynamic tools that could inspire organisational members and influence the broader public's perception, propelling the company toward decisions that enhanced sustainability and societal benefit. On the other end, a study conducted by Gartenberg, et al., (2019), premised on an assessment which entailed a synthesis of genuine employee perceptions regarding the significance and influence of their occupational endeavours, as opposed to relying on proclaimed statements of corporate purpose. The latter have been empirically demonstrated to be potentially inconsequential, tantamount to "cheap talk" as articulated by Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales (2015).

Gartenberg et al., (2019) and Hur et al. (2019) argued that the rationale underlying this evaluative strategy was predicated on the notion that, should corporate purpose be instantiated effectively, it would be reflected in a collective affirmation among employees about the meaningfulness and impact of their work. Consequently, the potency of a corporation's purpose was deduced indirectly through the intensity and conviction of employee beliefs. Hur et al. (2019) argued that the degree to which employees perceive their roles as meaningful and impactful serves as a proxy for the successful implementation of corporate purpose within the organisation.

2.2.5 Linking Purpose to Employee Engagement

Historically, the confluence of corporate purpose and employee engagement has been pivotal to organisational success. Scholars have argued that these constructs should not be siloed; rather, they interact synergistically to bolster both individual and organisational

outcomes (Biroiwu & Chikwe, 2020; van Tuin et al., 2020).

Van Tuin et al. (2020) research was instrumental in discerning this synergy, challenging the previously unexplored assumption that corporate purpose enhances employee motivation and engagement. The authors demonstrated a significant positive relationship between a clearly defined corporate purpose and high levels of employee engagement. Therefore, the study found that corporate purpose served as a precursor to heightened employee engagement levels.

Kossyva et al. (2021) identified work engagement as a psychological state reflecting the intensity of an employee's participation in their work. The authors argued that employee engagement encapsulates an employee's integration into their work, their team, and the organisation at large thus benefiting the organisation. This distinction underscored the significance of employee engagement as a holistic measure of an individual's connection with the entirety of their work experience (Shuck et al., 2017; Kossyva et al., 2023).

The unidirectional influence posited by van Tuin et al. (2020) suggested that employees who perceive their work as meaningful through the lens of the organisation's purpose are likely to exhibit increased engagement. These authors reported that the engagement of employees extends beyond the confines of task completion to embody their alignment with the organisational purpose.

Qin et al. (2022) argued that corporate purpose with key facets of employee engagement – such as trust, commitment, and communication – further substantiates this link. Literature suggested that employee engagement is vital for realising organisational purpose and fostering superior performance (Shuck & Reio, 2014; Murphey, 2019; van Tuin et al., 2020; Knowles et al., 2022). Biroiwu and Chikwe (2020) recognised employee engagement as a significant moderator in organisational resilience, asserting that engagement catalyses behaviours that are congruent with the organisation's strategic direction, thereby securing a competitive edge (van Tuin et al., 2020).

2.3 Employee Engagement: Examining the Implications for Performance

2.3.1 Introduction

The concept of employee engagement has increasingly become a focal point for organisations striving for excellence in performance. In recent years, the relationship between the engagement level of employees and the resulting impact on organisational outcomes has attracted substantial attention. Engaged behaviours are now recognised not only as drivers of favourable performance outcomes but also as pivotal contributors to an organisation's overall health and success. Scholarly inquiries into this domain have consistently shown that organisations with highly engaged workforces experience enhanced bottom-line results, augmented productivity, and superior customer satisfaction (Gruman & Saks, 2011; Biriowu & Chikwe, 2020).

Moreover, the presence of an engaged workforce is increasingly viewed as a strategic asset that provides a distinct competitive advantage, particularly in rapidly evolving business environments. This assertion is supported by findings that link employee engagement with higher retention rates, greater innovation, and the ability to effectively navigate market challenges (Coco, 2017; Smith, 2017; Eldor, 2020).

The purpose of this following section is to further explore the concept of employee engagement and the impact on organisational performance.

2.3.2 Defining Employee Engagement

The discourse surrounding the concept of employee engagement has predominantly been rooted in past scholarly endeavours, which have sought to characterise and understand the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon. The seminal work of Kahn (1990) served as the foundation for this exploration, introducing the idea that employee engagement entails the comprehensive utilisation of an individual's physical, cognitive, and emotional resources in their work roles.

Following this foundational perspective, Schaufeli et al. (2002) expanded upon Kahn's conceptualisation, proposing that engagement is best understood as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind with characteristics of vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Therefore, this tripartite model not only accentuated the necessity for mental resilience in sustaining work-related tasks but also highlighted the emotional and psychological investment an employee makes in an organisation.

Macey and Schneider (2008) proposed viewing engagement as a desirable state that embodies organisational purpose and is marked by passion, energy, and focused effort, suggesting that engagement is a state where employees aspire to surpass the normative expectations of their roles. This notion is supported by van Tuin et al (2020). These authors argued that purpose associate positively with employee motivation and work engagement. These authors described the latter when employees display high levels of energy and well-being, they experience their work to be fun, and argued that employee motivation and work engagement create a company's competitive advantage.

Further definitions on employee engagement is exemplified in the academic compilation presented in Table 2, which outlines a range of definitions and dimensions of engagement as described by various researchers. Despite the heterogeneity in their descriptions, there is a collective recognition across these definitions that engagement is characterised by a psychological presence – an earnest energy and deliberate effort geared towards the fulfilment of organisational goals.

Table 2: Representative Definitions of Employee Engagement

Author	Year	Definition	Dimensionality
Kahn	1990	The harnessing of organization's members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances (p. 694).	Physically Cognitively Emotionally
Haudan and MacLean	2002	People who are engaged do not notice the passage of time—their hearts and minds are involved, so time seems unimportant...It is sustained connection and undivided concentration (intellectual, emotional, behavioral) (pp. 255-256).	Intellectual Emotional Behavioral
Schaufeli <i>et al.</i>	2002	A positive fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption (p. 74).	Vigor Dedication Absorption
Robinson <i>et al.</i>	2004	A positive attitude held by the employees towards the organization and its value. An engaged employee is aware of business context and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. The organization must work to develop and nurture engagement which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee (p. 4).	Positive Attitude (Cognitive) Two-Way Relationship (Emotional) Awareness (Physical)
Strayhorn	2004	As occurs on three levels: cognitive, emotional and behavioral (p. 4).	Cognitive Emotional Behavioral
Scheimann	2005	Means that the hands, hearts and minds of employees are deployed at full tilt to meet the objectives of the business, serve customers, create a caring culture, and produce quality products and services (p. 19).	Intellectual Behavioral Emotional
Bakker and Leiter	2010	The psychological state that accompanies the behavioral investment of personal energy (p. 22).	Behavioral Investment Intellectual
Robertson and Coopers	2010	Psychological wellbeing: full engagement (p. 328).	Emotional Cognitive Behavior
Vaijayanthi <i>et al.</i>	2011	A measurable degree of an employee's positive or negative emotional attachment to their job, colleagues and organization, which profoundly influences their willingness to learn and perform at work (pp. 65-66).	Emotional Willingness Performances
Hewitt	2012	Engagement means when they say, stay and strive, consistently speak positively about the organization to co-workers, potential employers and customers, an intense desire to be part of the organization and exert extra effort and engage in behaviors that contribute to business success (p. 5).	Stay Say Strive

Source: (Sharma & Kaur, 2014)

Advancing the academic conversation, Kossyva et al. (2021) argued that employee engagement versus constructs such as employee satisfaction and motivation, entails a more profound emotional and cognitive bond with one's job, propelling employees to work at their utmost capacity and with a focus on outcomes. Kahn's (1990) argued that when employees are engaged, they forge emotional connections with their workplace, and a cognitive involvement where they remain acutely informed about their work

environment conditions corroborated the finding by Kossyva et al. (2021).

Eldor (2020) also defined employee engagement as the simultaneous dedication of an employee's physical, cognitive, and emotional energy. Bakker et al. (2012) argued that engaged employees are characterised by their high energy levels and their active and eager participation in their work. Studies have demonstrated the beneficial impact of employee engagement, with studies illustrating its role in enhancing individual performance both within and beyond prescribed job roles (Eldor and Harpaz, 2016; Eldor, 2020).

Engagement within organisational teams' mirrors that of individuals, presenting as a collective, motivational state marked by shared energy, commitment, and concentration, stemming from the joint experiences of team members (Torrente et al., 2012; Costa et al., 2014; Eldor and Harpaz, 2016; Eldor, 2020). Some researchers have further posited that engagement might also emerge as an organisational strength; that is, there may be a collective perception among employees that the organisation's members are collectively immersed in their roles (Barrick et al., 2015). This shared engagement is predicated on the notion of the collective 'we' – an alliance encompassing the full spectrum of organisational life, binding together the efforts, focus, and passion of all employees (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2017). Kahn (1992, p. 331) argued that when individuals are open to change and deeply connected to their work, these attributes become mirrored collectively within the organisation. Research has consistently shown that closely-knit employees frequently share similar emotional and motivational states (Hatfield et al., 1994; Barsade and Gibson, 2007) and exhibit parallel behaviours and attitudes that benefits the organisation as a whole (Bartel and Saavedra, 2000).

2.3.3 Understanding Employee Engagement and Disengagement: A Theoretical Perspective

According to Kahn (1990) personal engagement can be seen as the 'harnessing of organisation members selves to their work roles' and that engagement occurs when individuals fully invest themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally in their role (Kahn, 1990, p. 694). In contrast, Kahn also introduced the concept of personal disengagement, characterised as the "uncoupling of selves from work roles", where individuals withdraw and protect themselves, operating in a mode that may appear automatic or robotic (Kahn, 1990, p. 701). He argued that this withdrawal could manifest

in employees simply going through the motions without meaningful investment in their tasks.

Kahn (1990) argued that the presence or absence of engagement is predominantly contingent upon an individual's psychological state within their respective roles. He reported that when employees perceive their role as fulfilling and see that their job allows them to express their authentic selves, they are more likely to engage deeply with their work. Conversely, Kahn (1990) also reported that when the employee's role is constraining or unaligned with their selves, they may retreat into disengagement.

Afrahi et al. (2022) debated that disengagement is the state wherein an employee emotionally, cognitively, or physically distances themselves from their work. The authors argued that when disengagement is present an employee actively detached himself or herself from work-related tasks and roles.

2.3.4 Theoretical examination of Employee Engagement Subdimensions

According to the preceding literature review, understanding the multifaceted nature of employee engagement is crucial for organisations aiming to enhance performance and retain talent. The preceding section demonstrated that engagement extends beyond mere job satisfaction, encompassing an employee's emotional, cognitive, and behavioural investment in their work. Therefore, this depth of engagement is critical to unlocking discretionary effort, fostering innovation, and driving the organisation forward. As such, dissecting the subdimensions of engagement provides valuable insights into how employees interact with their roles and the organisation at large (Shuck et al., 2017).

Engagement, as a construct, has been extensively studied, revealing its significance in predicting employee behaviour, organisational success, and overall workplace climate (Sharma & Kaur, 2014; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Kossyva et al., 2023). The foundational work by Kahn (1990) paved the way for a nuanced understanding of engagement, subsequently elaborated upon by scholars such as Shuck et al. (2017), and previously Macey and Schneider (2008), and Robertson and Cooper (2010). These contributions have highlighted the importance of engagement at multiple levels: cognitive, emotional, and behavioural.

Cognitive engagement focuses on the employee's mental investment and attention to

their work, emotional engagement relates to the affective attachment and significance the work holds for the individual, and behavioural engagement reflects the actions taken by employees that go above and beyond formal role requirements Shuck et al (2017).

The following sections will delve into the theoretical relevance of these subdimensions of employee engagement, drawing on the extensive research conducted in this field to elucidate the mechanisms by which they influence organisational outcomes.

2.3.4.1 Cognitive Engagement

Shuck et al. (2017) defined cognitive engagement as the intensity of mental energy expressed towards positive organisational outcomes. These authors argued that employees who are cognitively engaged maintained a high level of attentiveness and concentration in their workplace, channelling mental energy towards work-related activities. Kahn's (1990) supported this notion, positing that such employees were likely to exhibit an increased focus and attention toward their job roles. Kahn (1990) argued that these individuals did not merely perform tasks; they engaged with their responsibilities, reflecting on how best to contribute their mental acuity to the organisation's success.

Khan (1990) also highlighted that cognitive engagement has been conceptualised as an individual's comprehension and alignment with the overarching aims and objectives of their organisation. Steers and Porter (1991) posited that when employees perceive themselves as valuable participants in the realization of the company's aspirations, this recognition is typically accompanied by an elevated performance. They contended that cognitive engagement is intrinsically linked to an employee's grasp of their role's significance within the broader organisational framework.

Boswell (2006) suggested that cognitive engagement is inherently tied to an employee's understanding of their contributions to the organisation's strategic imperatives. The author theorised that employees who are cognisant of how their efforts contribute to the strategic objectives of the organisation are more inclined to experience a sense of integration and compatibility within the company. Boswell (2006) argued that the sense of belonging is predicated on the clarity of the employee's role and its impact on the organisation's success.

2.3.4.2 Emotional Engagement

Macey and Schneider (2008) and Shuck et al. (2017) defined emotional engagement as the investment of an employee's emotional energy towards the organisation's favourable outcomes willingly. These authors found that emotional engagement involved the offering of one's emotional connectedness and personal resources, entailing a belief in, a sense of personal meaning towards, and an emotional connection to the organisation, thereby believe in the future of the organisation. These authors supported Kahn (1990) study that employees who are emotionally engaged not only aligned with the mission and purpose of their organisation but were also likely to derive a significant personal significance from their roles, fostering a robust commitment to their work and the organisation.

According to Kahn (1990) emotional engagement refers to how emotionally connected to others – such as managers and co-workers, how employees feel about the organisation, its leaders, and working conditions and whether they have positive or negative attitudes towards the organisation and its leaders. According to Biriowu and Chikwe (2020) an emotionally engaged employee are emotionally connected to the organisation's and participate actively in the pursuit of achieving the organisational goals, thus an employee is motivated to perform his job as well bring creative ideas and innovativeness to turn the fortunes of the business around (p. 80).

2.3.4.3 Behavioural Engagement

Macey and Schneider (2008) reported that behavioural engagement is concerned with one's psychological readiness to act in ways that would positively affect organisational performance. Shuck et al. (2017) echoed this by describing behaviourally engaged employees as those who not only committed to their work but were also willing to exert additional effort for the benefit of their team and company. These authors referred to it as proactive engagement, a psychological state predisposing individuals towards behaviours that surpassed basic job requirements. They argued that such employees were characterised by their propensity to volunteer extra effort and to proactively address work challenges, often resulting in enhanced organisational performance (Shuck et al., 2017).

Macey and Schneider (2008) characterised behavioural engagement as actions purposefully aligned with organisational objectives, noticeable through behaviours such

as innovation and proactivity within the work setting (p. 18). This dimension of engagement, which encompasses behaviours like taking initiative and exceeding standard expectations, is informed by a theoretical framework: Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) and its derivatives, the concept of role expansion, and personal initiative. From their perspective, behavioural engagement is interpreted as an adaptive behaviour (Macey & Schneider, 2008). This perspective aligns with Kahn's (1990) earlier work, which described engaged employees as those capable of adapting, initiating, and responding proactively to constantly evolving conditions. Kahn (1990) and Saks (2018) found that behavioural engagement is the degree to which employees are fully expressed and competent in their roles, being "psychologically present," as opposed to merely exceeding what is expected of them.

Kahn (1990, 1992) further detailed that the behavioural aspect of employee engagement is characterised by the voluntary exertion of effort that engaged individuals contribute to their work, manifesting through additional time, energy, and mental attentiveness. The author also highlighted that this dimension also encompasses the duration for which employees choose to stay with their organisation.

In summary, these subdimensions of engagement, as elucidated by prior research, suggest a multi-layered construct where an employee's full engagement was manifested through a synergistic combination of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural investment. This engagement model predicted that these dimensions could lead to optimal organisational outcomes, including increased productivity, improved job satisfaction, and enhanced performance (Jha & Kumar, 2016, Shuck et al., 2017, Biriowu & Chikwe, 2020).

2.3.5 Linking Employee Engagement to Organisational Performance

In examining the nexus between employee engagement and organisational performance, scholarly investigations have underscored the importance of a workforce that is intrinsically aligned with the organisation's broader societal purpose. Sallie (2017) theorised that employees' alignment with the company's mission engenders a state of emotional investment that catalyses sustained performance. This argument was further substantiated by Hansmeyer et al. (2018), who argued that an organisation's adoption of a purpose can ignite employee engagement, yielding a workforce that is energised and differentiated, which these authors argued that it is a crucible for sustained progress

and performance.

The positive ramifications of employee happiness on organisational welfare have been delineated by Spreitzer and Porath (2012), who equated happy employees with sustainable employees. They characterised these individuals as those who find satisfaction, exhibit productivity, and engage proactively in shaping the future, both of the company and their own. Empirical evidence supported their claims, illustrating that sustainable employees are significantly more committed to their organisations and satisfied with their jobs.

Additionally, Loo-Zambrano et al. (2022) established a positive and significant relationship between corporate social responsibility and organisational commitment. Their research indicated that employees' levels of commitment, motivation, and confidence are linked to an organisation's engagement in social responsibility practices.

The role of purpose-driven organisations in fostering internal sustainability and, in tandem, superior performance was highlighted by Dupret and Pultz (2021). They recognised that when organisations are driven by sustainability objectives, they not only acknowledge employees as inherently valuable but also motivate them to display higher levels of self-motivation and commitment. They argued that this commitment is rooted in pride to be associated with an organisation that contribute positively to the greater good.

Zhong et al. (2016) and Kossyva et al. (2023) have identified collective employee engagement as a source of competitive advantage. The authors postulated that when employees are engaged collectively, exerting their physical, cognitive, and emotional energies in unison, the result is an amplified individual performance that aligns with and furthers organisational goals. Barrick et al. (2015) suggested that when organisations treat competencies as collective resources, they can create structures that foster collective engagement, thus enhancing performance through strategic goal alignment.

Furthermore, Jha and Kumar (2016) and Eldor (2020) have confirmed that employee engagement is a pivotal element in enhancing organisational performance. They argued that engaged employees are not only cognisant of their roles in executing company strategy but also demonstrate a profound emotional connection and dedication to the organisation. According to these authors, engaged employees consistently pursue success and growth opportunities and contribute as exceptional team players. The authors found that such engagement not only bolsters individual and organisational

competitiveness but, when amalgamated with effective management practices, exerts a positive impact on organisational performance (Eldor, 2020).

In summation, the body of research clearly indicates that employee engagement is imperative to organisational performance, substantiating the proposition that the path to enduring organisational success is inextricably linked to the engagement levels of its workforce.

2.4 Organisational Performance

2.4.1 Introduction

The discourse on organisational performance has been a prominent theme within scholarly and commercial spheres for decades, with its significance in research and practice becoming increasingly salient since the 1980s. The original contributions of Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986) in the field of organisational performance theories have provided a robust foundation for the proliferation of subsequent investigative endeavours.

As the focal point of this study, organisational performance is posited as the dependent variable, reflecting a culmination of business efficacy and success. Recent scholarly discourse, as encapsulated by the work of Charles and Ochieng (2023), articulates that organisational performance can be appraised through various theoretical lenses, namely, the resource-based view, shareholder theory, and stakeholder theory. These theories propose a multidimensional assessment of firm performance, encapsulating elements such as profitability, growth, market value, shareholder returns, economic value added, and customer satisfaction, thus offering a comprehensive gauge of organisational efficacy in meeting the diverse interests of its stakeholders.

2.4.2 Defining Organisational Performance

The construct of organisational performance, prevalent in academic and business spheres since the 1980s, evolved from the seminal work of Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986), whose theoretical contributions provided a springboard for subsequent research. This concept has garnered increased attention, as scholars like Charles and Ochieng (2023) have examined firm performance through various

theoretical lenses including resource-based, shareholder, and stakeholder perspectives. These authors concluded that, informed by stakeholder theory and guided by shareholder theory, a firm's performance should be assessed based on profitability, growth, market value, total return on shareholders, economic value added, and customer satisfaction.

According to Otoo (2019) organisational performance is the organisation's capability to realise its aims. These aims encompasses both financial outcomes, such as profits and sales, and non-financial outcomes like employee and customer satisfaction (Contu, 2020). Dybvig et al. (2013) noted that a high return on assets (ROA) does not necessarily equate to robust firm performance, challenging the assumptions of prior studies which focused only on the financial measures.

Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986) posited the interchangeability of organisational performance and effectiveness, introducing a tripartite model consisting of financial, operational, and stakeholder influence dimensions. Building on this model, Kaplan and Norton (1996) proposed the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), arguing its causal linkage between financial and non-financial measures as a tool for understanding value creation within a firm. Bryant, Jones, and Widener (2004) illustrated this with correlations among employee skills, product introductions, and customer satisfaction within the BSC's structure.

The study's objective, exploring the linkage between corporate purpose and organisational performance, warranted the adoption of the BSC, a strategic management tool providing a balanced perspective of organisational performance (Chenhall & Langfield-Smith, 2007; Richard et al., 2009; Otoo, 2019). Kaplan and Mcmillan (2020) refined the BSC to reflect the importance of corporate purpose strategies, acknowledging the need for a multi-stakeholder approach and encompassing environmental and societal metrics within the traditional financial perspective.

2.4.3 Organisational Performance: A Multi-Dimensional view through the Balanced Scorecard

According to the financial perspective, Kaplan and Norton (1996) identified traditional measures such as revenue, profit, return on investment, and economic value added as fundamental indicators for assessing the financial health of an organisation. According

to Kaplan and Norton (1996) these measures served the primary purpose of providing shareholders and stakeholders with a transparent understanding of the organisation's fiscal condition. However, Kaplan and McMillan (2020) later contended that while profitability is essential, a shift in focus toward sustainable financial performance and the pursuit of long-term value creation is paramount over mere short-term financial gains. Their revised perspective on outcomes incorporated not only financial performance, which aligns with shareholder interests, but also included a consideration of environmental and societal performance metrics. These metrics reflect an organisation's contribution to the enhancement of quality of life for the community, as evidenced by higher household incomes, social cohesion, employment, health, education, and the reduction of inequality and inequity (Kaplan & Mcmillan, 2020, p. 14).

The customer perspective of Kaplan and Norton's (1996), Balanced Scorecard historically focused on evaluating organisations based on customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention. It was concerned with gauging how effectively an organisation met its customers' needs and how positively customers viewed the organisation. Kaplan and Mcmillan (2020) later expanded to a stakeholder perspective, reflecting a broader consideration of various stakeholder interests within the company's value proposition, beyond solely the customer base.

According to Kaplan and Mcmillan (2020) the stakeholder perspective recognised that a company's corporate purpose, and its alignment with broader societal values, could enhance resonance with customers, thereby impacting customer loyalty and retention. Gartenberg, Prat, and Serafeim (2019), found that companies with a well-defined and genuine corporate purpose could forge stronger connections with their customers. They argued that such companies not only fulfilled immediate customer needs but also appealed to the customers' sense of identity and values.

The learning and growth perspective, as delineated within Kaplan and Norton's (1996) Balanced Scorecard framework, emphasises an organisation's capacity to evolve, enhance its competencies, and assimilate new knowledge. According to these authors, this perspective incorporated metrics related to employee training, the prevailing organisational culture, and the adequacy of the necessary infrastructure to facilitate an organisation's adaptability and preparedness for future challenges and growth. Against this backdrop, the concept of a corporate purpose has been recognised as a vital ingredient in nurturing an atmosphere ripe for innovation and training. Scholars such as Gartenberg, Prat, and Serafeim (2019) have contended that a well-communicated and

authentic corporate purpose exerts a considerable influence on employee motivation and engagement. They suggested that employees, when they understand and connect with their organisation's broader mission as contributing to societal welfare, demonstrate an elevation in engagement. Employees who resonate with their organisation's mission tend to exhibit deeper commitment to their roles, often going above their formal responsibilities to introduce innovative solutions and embrace learning opportunities, which in turn can significantly enhance organisational performance (Gartenberg, Prat, & Serafeim, 2019). Such enhanced engagement, fuelled by a collective sense of purpose, is instrumental in merging personal employee goals with an organisation's strategic aims.

Kaplan and Norton's (1990) internal process perspective historically evaluated an organisation's operations by focusing on efficiency and effectiveness. It concentrated on quality, efficiency, and process duration as key metrics for performance enhancement. In the contemporary strategic discourse, this perspective has evolved to integrate sustainable practices and articulate clear sustainability goals. Kaplan and McMillan (2020) indicated that modern strategy frameworks have refined the Learning & Growth dimension to address not only internal capabilities but also collaborative efforts towards sustainability. This refined focus mirrors a strategic shift towards internal processes that not only optimise performance but also align with broader sustainable development objectives, thereby embedding sustainability into the core operational strategy of organisations (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2017).

2.4.4 Organisational Performance: Success Factors

Kurzack et al. (2021) identified that the positive performance of an organisation transcends simplistic financial metrics to encompass a spectrum of success factors that are indicative of long-term value creation for shareholders, customers, and other stakeholders. Academic and empirical studies have increasingly converged on a multidimensional approach to gauge organisational success (Charles & Ochieng, 2023).

According to Kaplan and Norton (2001) revenue generation, as the lifeblood of an organisation, remains a primary indicator of its market position and ability to capture value within its industry. Porter and Kramer (1985) found that a sustained growth in revenue depicts the organisation's competitive advantage and market demand for its offerings.

Wang (2019) argued that a company's profit margin, beyond being a sheer financial

metric, is reflective of an organisation's operational efficiency and its capability to manage costs relative to its revenue. Thus, the author proposed that a healthy profit margin is indicative of a company's financial stability which reflects an organisation's adeptness in translating its operational strengths into tangible financial outcomes.

A recent study reported that a positive cash flow is integral to organisational vitality, signalling effective cash management and liquidity; thus, allows for investment in growth opportunities and resilience against market volatilities (Ayenew, 2023). The study found that positive cash flow indicated a company's ability to sustain operations, invest in its future, and provide returns to shareholders (Ayenew, 2023).

Jensen (2001) argued that the provision of long-term value to shareholders is multifaceted, requiring a balance of immediate financial returns with the pursuit of sustainable growth strategies. Thus, it is imperative that organisations align their strategic objectives with shareholder interests, ensuring that decisions are made with a view toward future value creation (Friedman, 2006).

Reichheld (2003) studied the significance of customer metrics such as high rates of retention and satisfaction. The author argued that a company that performs well in these metrics is destined to achieve future revenue. Kumar and Reinartz (2016) supported this notion by reporting that satisfied customers tend to demonstrate loyalty, which can translate into a stable revenue stream and positive word-of-mouth, thereby contributing to a strong reputation. According to Islam et al. (2021) reputational capital can be a source of competitive advantage, fostering trust with employees and customers; thus, enhancing the firm's ability to attract and retain customers and employees.

Agrawal (2022) argued that the integration of sustainable business practices within an organisation's operations and the articulation of clear sustainable goals are increasingly recognised as pivotal to corporate success. Ortiz-Martínez (2023) argued that sustainable business practices are indicative of an organisation's commitment to the triple bottom line – people, planet and profit – therefore getting support from stakeholders and mitigating operational risks associated with environmental and social factors.

2.5 Chapter summary

Chapter 2 reflects on the literature that connects the constructs of corporate purpose,

employee engagement, and organisational performance. The scholarly examination within this chapter has explained the evolving nature of corporate purpose – from a narrow focus on shareholder returns to a broad, stakeholder-inclusive perspective that encompasses social and environmental dimensions (Gartenberg, Prat, & Serafeim, 2019; Mayer, 2021).

In line with the study's objectives, the literature on employee engagement reveals a compelling narrative of how a shared sense of purpose within an organisation not only fuels individual motivation but also cultivates a collective ethos of commitment and dedication (Rey, Bastons, & Sotok, 2019; van Tuin et al., 2020). Employee engagement is argued as a pivotal force that can transform the aspirational elements of corporate purpose into the operational and strategic fabric of the organisation, thus underpinning organisational performance (Biriowu & Chickwe, 2020; van Tuin et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the synthesis of literature on organisational performance offers a nuanced understanding that surpasses traditional financial metrics. The balanced scorecard, enhanced by the inclusion of corporate purpose, serves as a strategic tool that captures this multifaceted performance, advocating for a balanced approach to achieving sustainable organisational performance (Kaplan & Norton, 1996; Kaplan & McMillan, 2020; Gartenberg, et al., 2019).

The convergence of these constructs within the literature provides a foundational basis for this study, aligning with its overarching aim to dissect and comprehend the interplay between an organisation's purpose, the engagement of its employees, and the resultant performance. This exploration is timely and resonates with the shift in modern business paradigms that increasingly prioritise purpose-driven strategies and the well-being of all stakeholders (Harrison et al., 2020; Edmans, 2023).

In essence, the comprehensive literature review conducted in Chapter 2 sets the stage for empirical investigation, priming the study to contribute valuable insights to the field. It establishes a conceptual framework (depicted in Chapter 3) from which to probe how the dynamism of employee engagement can be harnessed to actualise corporate purpose and drive organisational performance, thus addressing the study's objectives and addressing the scholarly gap highlighted in Chapter 1 (Zhao, 2021; Dupret et al., 2022).

Chapter 3: Research questions and hypotheses

3.1 Introduction

The relationship between corporate purpose, employee engagement and organisational performance can be depicted using a three-factor model (Ventatraman & Ramanujam, 1986). The theoretical framework was formulated from the preceding theoretical analysis, which is depicted in Figure 1. The theoretical framework is also developed in line with the “literature review and is unique because it is created and designed to support this study” (Quinlan, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2019, p. 68).

Figure 1: The conceptual framework of the study



Source: Adopted and influenced by Creswell et al (2018)

This chapter 3 represents the research questions of the study. The questions emanate from the problem statement that was discussed in chapter 1.

3.2 Research objectives

To adequately give context to the research questions and its corresponding hypotheses of the study, it is of paramount importance that the objectives of the research are clear and consistent. The study focuses on establishing the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance. The research aims to establish the relationship between a corporate purpose and organisational performance and the mediating role of employee engagement in this relationship. Therefore, the objectives of this research are

to examine:

- The relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance.
- The relationship between corporate purpose and employee engagement.
- the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance.

3.3 Hypotheses

Based on the research objectives, the following hypotheses are formulated: The first hypothesis examined the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance. To provide clarity on the first hypotheses under consideration, the null hypothesis postulates that there is no significant relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance. Conversely, the alternative hypothesis contends that a positive relationship exists between corporate purpose and organisational performance. The first hypothesis has been developed as follows:

H₁₀: Corporate purpose does not have a statistically significant relationship with organisational performance

H_{1A}: Corporate purpose have a statistically significant relationship with organisational performance

The second hypothesis test the relationship between employee engagement and organisational performance. The null hypothesis is that there is no relationship between these two variables. The alternative hypothesis is that there is a positive relationship between these two variables. The second hypothesis has been developed as follows:

H₂₀: Corporate purpose does not have a statistically significant relationship with employee engagement

H_{2A}: Corporate purpose has a statistically significant relationship with employee engagement

The third hypothesis test the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between employee engagement and organisational performance. The null hypothesis is that employee engagement does not mediate this relationship. The alternative hypothesis is that employee engagement does mediate this relationship and has been

developed as follows:

H₃₀: Employee engagement does not mediate the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance

H_{3A}: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance

Developing the hypotheses allows the research to design the research methodology using the relevant research instrument (Bell et al., 2019). The methodology detailing “how” the research was conducted leading to hypotheses testing is presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

4.1 Introduction

This section outlines the proposed research methodology, which provides the blueprint of the investigation and the research methods followed to investigate the research question (Quinlan et al., 2019) and test the hypotheses. The methodology proposes how the research was conducted and starts by describing the study's philosophical assumption, research approach, methodological choice and design (Quinlan et al., 2019, p. 145). This is followed by explaining the population and sampling, providing insights into the target population, the unit of analysis, the sample size, and the sampling methods. This ensures that the relevant and adequate sample is selected and surveyed as a critical element for the rigour and credibility of the study (Guetterman, 2015). The next part presented in the chapter is the research methods, which explain the collection methods entailing the study's instrument and the data collection approach. The methods also explain the data analysis approach and the validity and reliability of the study. The last part of the chapter explains the research ethics of the study as well as the methodological limitations of the research.

4.2 Research approach and design

The research design highlights the philosophy, approach and methodological choice and design of the research. Research is guided by research paradigms shaped by their underlying assumptions and ideas. Understanding assumptions related to a paradigm aid in shedding light on the validity of results that substantiate scientific investigations and identifying deficiencies in producing evidence. The positivist logic is embedded in social science; thus, the proposed design was cross-sectional, a social survey design. In line with the primary research question, the test for patterns of association will be conducted, allowing the possibility of examining relationships between variables. Positivism is following the hypothetico-deductive model of science (Hoyle et al., 2009). This research approach is most associated with the research tradition known as positivism, which was a philosophical framework for this study (Quinlan et al., 2019). Positivist is “deductive, following a sequence of framing hypotheses, collecting data to test them, seeking to falsify them, and if they are not false, accepting the hypothesis as representing provisionally true statements about reality” (Bell et al., 2019, p. 1)

Therefore, examining the structure and foundation of positivism from a hypothetico-deductive perspective is a valuable starting point. The hypothetico-deductive approach is a cyclical procedure that commences with the utilisation of existing theories in the literature to formulate hypotheses that can be empirically tested and operationalise variables. A deductive approach was followed, which assisted in investigating the relationship between theory and the research (Bell et al., 2019). The deductive approach is preferred when existing literature is tested in a particular setting or adapted for a particular setting. Although the theory of corporate purpose is growing with work, for example, done on the BSC being refined to recognise the importance of corporate purpose (Kaplan & Mcmillian, 2020) and how corporate purpose can drive employee engagement (van Tuin et al., 2020), work on employee engagement and organisational performance has a well-developed theory. This and a need for understanding the intricacies of these relationships justify the use of a deductive approach. Bell et al. (2019) posit that the deductive approach allows the deduction of a hypothesis subjected to empirical scrutiny.

The design followed in the study was the cross-sectional quantitative design. Being cross-sectional in nature the study, capture date at a specific point in time, which includes a social survey design (Quinlan et al., 2019). The quantitative design is based on “the data that will be in the form of numbers or data that can readily be coded numerically” (Quinlan et al., 2019, p. 63). Quantitative research entails the systematic and empirical examination of observable phenomena through the utilisation of statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. The primary emphasis of this approach lies in the quantification of data collection and analysis, with a framework designed to yield outcomes that are characterised by objectivity, measurability, and replicability (Mtotywa, 2019). In the quantitative research the process entails the critical measurement and quantification of variables, as well as the utilisation of mathematical models for the purpose of analysing and interpreting data. This study examines the moderation effects of employee engagement on the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance. The selection of a particular design is contingent upon various factors, including the inherent characteristics of the research question, the accessibility of data, ethical issues, and limitations in resources (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019).

The selected design has been proven applicable and effective in studies of relationship between the constructs of interest in the study. These studies relates to corporate purpose and organisational performance (Gartenberg et al., 2019; Cardona, 2022). There are also studies such as Employee engagement and performance (Supriyantoc et

al., 2020) or other related relationships of employee engagement and employee aspects such as commitment or satisfaction (Dominic Suta, 2023; Sypniewska et al., 2023).

4.3 Population and sampling

4.3.1 Population and unit of analysis

The population for the study includes organisations across various industries with a clearly defined corporate purpose of which employees and management are primary respondents (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). Corporate purpose pertains to the underlying rationale for a company's existence that extends beyond the exclusive objective of generating financial profits. These organisations centralise the mission of the organisation, the values it espouses, and the wider societal impact it aims to achieve, encompassing its employees, customers, and other stakeholders. The establishment of a clearly defined corporate purpose frequently signifies the company's dedication to social responsibility, sustainability, and ethical conduct (Gulati et al., 2023). Moreover, it commonly serves as a guiding principle for strategic decision-making and implementation. Within the realm of current business discourse, there is a growing recognition that the corporate mission holds significant importance in shaping a company's identity, strategy, and overall prospects for sustained success (van Tuin et al., 2020). Furthermore, this response might be attributed to the increasing public and consumer demands for firms to actively contribute to societal well-being and tackle social and environmental issues. The population of these organisations are unknown but span across the different industries, and the focus of this research was on the private sector.

Within this population the unit of analysis focus on “what” or “who” is being analysed. The level and unit of analysis for this study is limited to individuals. The need to examine employee engagement at an individual level of analysis is supported in the literature because it avoids over-generalising the results for studies that measured employee engagement at an organisational level to an individual level (Kumar, 2018).

4.3.2 Sampling size and method

In research since it is not possible to study the who population, it is recommended that a sample is analysed. The sample is a smaller, representative selection of individuals, items, or data that is selected from a larger population for the purpose of conducting

research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). According to Bell et al. (2019), quantitative research invariably involves sampling and mostly concerns sampling for social surveys involving data collection by structured interviews or questionnaires. Sampling is a commonly employed method in research due to the impracticality, high costs, or even infeasibility associated with collecting data from every individual within the target population. Within an unknown population the sample size was determined with the formula:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 P (1-P)}{d^2}$$

Where n the size of the sample, while P is the proportion, and Z is statistics which is 1.96 at 95% confidence and representing the precision. Based on this formula the sample size for this study was 384. This has been used in other studies with unknown population (Naing et al., 2006) including moderation studies (Mtotywa & Mdlalose, 2023).

The sampling technique is thus relevant because sampling involves any procedure that uses a small number of items or a portion of a population to conclude the whole population (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). The author also wrote that if statistical procedures are followed, selecting every item in a population is unnecessary because the results of a good sample should have the same characteristics as the population. In this study, the non-probability sampling technique was employed in particular convenience sampling (Sanders & Lewis, 2017). Convenience sampling is a widely utilised approach because to its cost-effectiveness, time efficiency relative to alternative sampling procedures, and simplicity. Convenience sampling proves to be advantageous when employed for the purpose of formulating a probable hypothesis or study objective. Although convenience sampling has its drawbacks, there are measures that can be implemented to enhance the credibility of this widely used and straightforward approach (Stratton, 2021). The author explained that convenience sampling lacks generalisability since not all members in the population do not have an equal chance to be included in the sample. The sample size of more than 200 partially mitigates this issue.

4.4 Data instruments and collection

For the research objectives that were investigated, the researcher used an instrument which was developed from multiple-existing instruments. Using a questionnaire, the survey technique gathers information from a sample of people (Sanders & Lewis, 2017). Saunders and Lewis (2017) wrote that questionnaires are an exemplary method for

collecting data about the same things from many respondents. The questionnaire collected data required to answer the study’s objective, research questions and hypotheses. The survey questionnaire comprised of four sections. Section A investigate the profile of the respondents with gender of the respondents, age group, occupation, and tenure in the organisation. Section B focuses on the construct – corporate purpose and comprise of five statements adapted from van Tuin et al. (2020). The cross-lagged panel model used by van Tuin et al. (2020) assessed “corporate purpose” by presenting the organisation’s mission and vision to the respondent, followed by five items that were composed of keywords from the literature review in chapter 2 that discussed and analysed corporate purpose, vision, mission and purpose statement. Section C comprise of three sub-sections which related to the three dimensions of the employee engagement and comprise of 15 statements related to Cognitive Engaged, Emotional Engaged and Behavioural Engaged. The statements were adapted from the instruments from Sucks et al. (2017) known as the Employee Engagement Scales (EES) which consist of three subfactors (cognitive, emotional and behavioral and a higher order, employee engagement The third construct (Section D) is also multidimensional – analysing the organisation from non-financial and financial perspective, as performance is beyond the financial as already discussed. There are four statements related to the financial performance and four statements related to non-financial performance of the organisation. The organisational performance was developed from the instrument by Charles and Ochieng (2023).

Section B (corporate purpose), Section C (employee engagement) and Section D (organisational performance) statements were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale: The employee engagement was developed from the multi-dimensional instrument by Sucks et al. (2017) known as the Employee Engagement Scale (EES) which consist of three subfactors (cognitive, emotional and behavioral).

Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Disagree nor Agree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
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The full questionnaire is presented in Appendix 1. Quinlan et al. (2019) defined respondents as persons who answer researchers’ questions or provide answers to written questions in a self-administered survey. The self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data using online platform, Microsoft Forms. A self-administered questionnaire is a method of data collecting when respondents autonomously complete

the questionnaire without any direct involvement or assistance from the researcher. The utilisation of this approach is extensively employed in academic investigations owing to its cost-efficiency and efficacy, particularly when confronted with substantial sample sizes.

4.5 Data analysis

The empirical data collected was exported from the online platform to Microsoft Excel then to the statistical packages, Statistical Package for social science (SPSS) version 28 for cleaning, screening and descriptive statistics, and then exported to SmartPLS 4 for Structural Equation Modelling Partial Least Square (PLS-SEM). The data was initially assessed for the missing values. This was critical to ensure that the levels of missing values were within acceptable levels of 10% (Dong & Peng, 2013). This was important as high missing values can introduce bias to the analysis. This was followed by analysing for extremist outliers. Extreme outliers refer to data points that exhibit a substantial deviation from the remaining data within a given dataset. The identification of severe outliers can often be accomplished through the utilisation of the interquartile range (IQR). The interquartile range (IQR) is a statistical measure that quantifies the dispersion of a dataset. It is calculated as the difference between the first quartile (Q1) and the third quartile (Q3). The IQR provides insight into the spread of the middle 50% of the data. In this study, three times interquartile range was deemed to be the threshold for extreme outliers. This was followed by analysing the common method variance with Harman's single factor test. This occurs when the measurement employed is not the underlying constructs that the measurements are intended to represent, thus either magnify or diminish the perceived associations among variables. This sometimes occurs when all variables in a research study are obtained using the same survey instrument simultaneously, the observed relationships between these variables may be influenced, at least in part, by the data collection method rather than reflecting genuine correlations between the underlying constructs. This was assessed using Principal Axis Factors with the value less than 50% indicating that there are no common method variance issues (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Initially the demographic information was analysed using frequency and percentage frequency to obtain the description and characteristics of the respondents. This was followed by the descriptive statistics analysis the central tendency and dispersion (Mtotywa, 2019). The concept of central tendency in research pertains to a core or

representative value within a probability distribution. The concept of summarising the central tendency of a dataset using a singular numerical value is commonly referred to as a measure of central tendency. There exist three primary measurements of central tendency. The study utilised both the mean and median as statistical measures. The term "mean" refers to the arithmetic average of a given set of numbers. It is computed by summing all the values inside the set and subsequently dividing the sum by the total number of values. The median is a statistical measure that identifies the central value within a given set of numerical data. To determine the median, one must arrange the given numbers in ascending or descending order and thereafter identify the middle value. In the case of an even number of observations, the median is determined by calculating the arithmetic mean of the two centre integers. The median is relatively less susceptible to the influence of outliers and skewed data. The dispersion was analysed with the standard deviation.

The inferential statistics was used to test the hypotheses using the Structural Equation Modelling using partial least square (PLS-SEM). The utilisation of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was favoured due to its application as a statistical tool in the analysis of multivariate data, with a specific emphasis on the exploration of structural correlations (Hair et al., 2014). To test the hypothesis one the study analysed the direct effect interest on the effect of X = corporate purpose on Y = organisational performance. For hypothesis two the interest was on the effect of corporate purpose on employee engagement. Hypothesis three focused on the mediation effect. On the context of mediation analysis, the primary focus lies on comprehending the causal relationship between an independent variable (X) and a dependent variable (Y) by means of one or more mediator variables (M = Cognitive Engaged, Emotional Engaged and Behavioural Engaged). The mediation effect can be conceptualised as the result of the influence exerted by the independent variable on the mediator, as well as the subsequent impact of the mediator on the dependent variable, while accounting for the influence of the independent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

4.6 Validity and Reliability of the instrument

In this study the validity and reliability were conducted using PLS-SEM measurement model. The study reported the convergence validity, composite reliability, and discriminant validity (Hair Jr. et al., 2017; Cheung et al, 2023). Initially the model ensured that there loading factors are all above 0.7. the model fit with the root mean square

residual (RMSR), adequacy of the bootstrap-based test for the exact overall model fit measures d_{ULS} and d_G and the Normed Fit Index.

Validity refers to whether a study measures or examines what it claims to measure or examine. Internal validity will be considered, which is the extent to which the design and the data yields allowed the researcher to draw accurate conclusions about cause-and-effect and other relationships within the data; thus, the latter meets the study's objective. The convergence validity was assessed with average variance extracted (AVE) with a value of 0.5 and higher, indicating a good convergence validity. Reliability is the stability of measurement or the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under the same condition with the same subjects, predicting consistency, but this does not mean it will measure accurately. Therefore, the composite reliability was measured with ρ_a and ρ_c together with Cronbach's alpha coefficient which measures internal consistency and reliability to determine how well a set of items measures a specific construct (Quinlan et al., 2019). The discriminant validity was measured with Fornell-Larcker criterion, Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) and cross-loadings (Hair Jr. et al., 2017).

4.7 Ethical considerations

The study obtained ethical clearance from GIBS as it involved human participants. Notably, the study ensure that critical ethical considerations are adhered to. Participating in this research is voluntary, thus affording individuals the option to abstain from involvement. The respondents were provided with the objective of the study and advises to consent online before participation. Moreover, the respondents were advanced of their prerogative to discontinue involvement at any given moment of their choosing. The survey in its entirety-maintained anonymity, ensuring that no personally identifying information is collected, with the respondents personally submitting the survey to a database with other respondents' completed surveys. The data will be treated with caution and will only be accessible to individuals who have been granted authorisation. The data have been gathered solely for academic research purposes and will not be utilised for any other objectives. The researcher plans to disseminate the findings of the research publication.

4.8 Limitations of the research design and methods.

The research conducted the survey within different organisation but because of the non-probability methods using convenience sample, the generalisability cannot be guarantee that the result reflects adequality the collective view for the organisation with corporate purpose. As such, this may require caution in generalising the results to the rest of the company (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Furthermore, because the survey instrument was a self-reporting measure, the information presented by the participants might be based on their subjective perceptions. The questionnaire solicited the respondents' views per the selected sample. However, the quality of the data and validity of the result may be questionable as these were based solely on the respondents' perceptions. Also, not all the factors that influence organisational performance were included in the study. The survey will be subject to the bias and prejudices of the respondent's self-reporting.

Chapter 5: Results of the study

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the research was to investigate the relationship between corporate purpose, employee engagement, and organisational performance in today's evolving business landscape. This is through analysing the mediation effect of the multi-dimensional factors of employee engagement on the corporate purpose and organisational performance. The investigation was conducted with a cross-sectional descriptive quantitative design where 246 responses were obtained and used as the empirical data. All 246 responses were retained as there were no issues with missing value analysis, as none of the items have a value of more than 10% (Dong & Peng, 2013). The missing value analysis is attached in Appendix A1. This equates to a response rate of 64.1% from the sample of 384 from an unknown population (Naing et al., 2006). The response rate of 64.1% is higher than the general online response rate of 44% (Wu et al., 2022). A box plot was used to assess the extreme outliers within the data. Normally, there are two levels of outliers, with those at 1,5 times interquartile range and those at three times interquartile range, which are regarded as extreme. In assessing the data, there were no extreme outliers, and those all-data points were retained during the rest of the analysis (Annexure A2). The Harman's single factor test was conducted with principal axis factoring and the results of total variance of 33.63 indicates that there are no issues with common method variance.

This chapter presents the results of the study. Starting with demographic information, which profiles the respondents. This is followed by descriptive statistics, which provide the central tendency and spread of the data across all the constructs, and then the inferential statistics to test the hypotheses. The statistical significance is accepted at 95% confidence ($p < .05$). The final part of the chapter summarises the results, which are discussed in Chapter 6.

5.2 Demographic information

The demographic profile of the respondents was assessed with gender, age, occupation and tenure (Table 3). Of the respondents, 59.0% were females, and 41.0% were males across the age groups. The age groups mostly represented were 36 – 45, comprising

43.7% of the total respondents, followed by those who were 35 years and constituting 29.80%, then 46 - 55-year-olds comprising 24.1%. Few respondents were older than 55 years, only comprising 2.45%. All occupational levels were represented with 33,8% from non-management, followed by those from senior management comprising 21,3%, then 15,4% from junior management and the executive, who are inherently the smallest group in the organisation, constituting 9.58%. Within the respondents, 26.0% were in their respective organisation for two years or less, while 25.2% had a tenure of 6 to 10 years in their respective organisation, then those with 3 to 5 years, constituting 24.0%. Noticeably, there was a sizeable number of respondents who have been in their respective organisation for more than ten years, constitution 11.0% for 10 to 15 years and 13.0% for more than 15 years.

Table 3: Profile of the respondents

		Frequency	% Frequency
Gender	Female	144	59,0
	Male	100	41,0
	Total	244	100,0
Age	35 years and younger	73	29,80
	36 - 45 years	107	43,67
	46 - 55 years	59	24,08
	Older than 55 years	6	2,45
	Total	245	100,00
	Executive	23	9,58
Occupation	Senior Management	51	21,3
	Junior Management	37	15,4
	Middle Management	48	20,00
	Non-Management	81	33,75
	Total	240	100,00
Tenure	2 years or less	64	26,0
	3 to 5 years	59	24,0
	6 to 10 years	62	25,2
	10 - 15 years	27	11,0
	More than 15 years	32	13,0
	Total	244	100,0

5.3 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics play a crucial role in facilitating a comprehensive comprehension of the attributes exhibited by a given sample. In this data these attributes were analysed mean, median, and standard deviation (SD). The mean serves as a measure of the central tendency for the dataset, while the median measure of central tendency. However, unlike the mean, the median is less influenced by extreme values, whether very high or low. The standard deviation measures the variation of the data. The mean, median and SD of the data is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics

		Mean	Median	SD
My employer has a clearly defined and authentic vision and mission that extends beyond financial success.	CP1	4,08	4,00	1,043
My employer's mission also focuses on addressing social and environmental concerns.	CP2	4,07	4,00	0,966
My employer's demonstrate ethical response in its responsibilities	CP3	4,03	4,00	0,951
My employer's decisions and strategies are genuinely aligned with its stated purpose.	CP4	4,07	4,00	0,936
My employer's purpose reflects the organisation's values and beliefs	CP5	4,16	4,00	0,940
I am really focused on my job when I am working	CE1	4,54	5,00	0,652
I concentrate on my job when I am at work	CE2	4,44	4,50	0,672
When working, I think a lot about how I can give my best	CE3	4,55	5,00	0,696
At work, I am focused on my job	CE4	4,52	5,00	0,637
When I am at work, I give my job a lot of attention	CE5	4,53	5,00	0,635
Working at my current organisation has a great deal of personal meaning to me	EE1	4,10	4,00	0,953
I feel a strong sense of belonging to my job	EE2	3,90	4,00	1,086
I am proud to tell others that I work for my current organisation	EE3	4,20	4,00	1,013
I believe in the mission and purpose of my organisation	EE4	4,25	4,00	0,927
I care about the future of my organisation	EE5	4,52	5,00	0,717
I do more than what is expected of me	BE1	4,47	5,00	0,688
I really push myself to work beyond what is expected of me	BE2	4,43	5,00	0,753
I am willing to put in extra effort without being asked	BE3	4,59	5,00	0,632
I often go above what is expected of me to help my team be successful	BE4	4,55	5,00	0,636
I work harder than expected to help my organisation be successful	BE5	4,42	5,00	0,691
		Mean	Median	SD
My organisation has consistently met or exceeded its revenue targets	P1	3,91	4,00	0,989
My organisation has maintained a stable profit margin	P2	4,03	4,00	0,925
My organisation has a positive cash flow that supports business growth and expansion	P3	4,14	4,00	0,906
My organisation delivers superior long-term value to our shareholders, customers and other stakeholders	P22	4,07	4,00	0,938

My organisation has a good and strong reputation in the market	P4	4,00	4,00	0,996
My organisation has a high rate of customer retention	P5	3,89	4,00	0,904
My organisation is committed to sustainable practices in its operations	P6	4,03	4,00	0,901
My organisation has clear sustainability goals and has achieved it	P7	3,89	4,00	1,012

The data show that respondents generally agree with the statement, with most of the statements within a mean range of 4.0 – 4.5, indicative of “agree” to “strongly agree”. The top 5 statements that the respondents mainly agreed with were in the constructs, Cognitive Engaged (CE) and Behavioural Engaged (BE).

The statement the respondents mostly agreed with was “I am willing to put in extra effort without being asked”, denoted by BE3 with a mean ($M = 4.59$) and $SD = 0.632$, and a Median ($Mdn = 5.00$). This is followed by the statements, “I often go above what is expected of me to help my team be successful” and “When working, I think a lot about how I can give my best” both with $M = 4.55$ and $Mdn = 5.00$. The other statement also higher than 4.50 were “I am really focused on my job when I am working” (CE1) with $M = 4.54$, $SD = 0.652$ and $Mdn = 5.00$, “When I am at work, I give my job a lot of attention” (CE5) with $M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.635$ and $Mdn = 5.00$ and “At work, I am focused on my job” (CE4) with $M = 4.52$, $SD = 0.637$ and $Mdn = 5.00$. Though still generally higher as there were also within the “agree” zone, the statements the respondents least agreed with, which were slightly lower than 4.0, comprised of three in the performance constructs and one in the emotionally engaged (EE) construct. In the organisational performance construct, it was “My organisation has clear sustainability goals and has achieved it” ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.012$, $Mdn = 4.00$), My organisation has a high rate of customer retention ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.904$, $Mdn = 4.00$) and My organisation has consistently met or exceeded its revenue targets ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.989$, $Mdn = 4.00$). In the EE construct, it was the statement “I feel a strong sense of belonging to my job” (EE2) with $M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.086$, $Mdn = 4.00$.

5.4 Hypothesis testing

Based on the conceptual model from Chapter 3, and the presented hypotheses, inferential statistics were used to test these hypotheses. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was preferred as it is a statistical methodology employed for examining multivariate data, specifically focusing on investigating structural relationships (Hair et al., 2014). SEM integrates component analysis and multiple regression analysis, thereby facilitating the investigation of intricate associations between observable and latent variables. There exist two primary methodologies in the field of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), namely Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM) and Partial Least Squares SEM (PLS-SEM) (Hair Jr. et al., 2017).

The PLS-SEM was selected over SEM-CB because it is better with the primary objective of enhancing the predictive capability of the dependent variable (Hair Jr. et al., 2017). Furthermore, it is flexible and effective even in small data, data that is non-normally distributed and has missing values, unlike SEM-CB. The data set was shown earlier to have missing values, and data is not normally distributed based on the test by Shapiro-Wilk shown by the statistical significance ($p < .05$) of the statistical values (Table 5).

Table 5: Test for Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
CP1	.274	197	<.001	.767	197	<.001
CP2	.289	197	<.001	.783	197	<.001
CP3	.274	197	<.001	.815	197	<.001
CP4	.271	197	<.001	.803	197	<.001
CP5	.255	197	<.001	.780	197	<.001
CE1	.401	197	<.001	.622	197	<.001
CE2	.344	197	<.001	.657	197	<.001
CE3	.394	197	<.001	.623	197	<.001
CE4	.373	197	<.001	.641	197	<.001
CE5	.381	197	<.001	.635	197	<.001
EE1	.247	197	<.001	.805	197	<.001
EE2	.255	197	<.001	.842	197	<.001
EE3	.293	197	<.001	.765	197	<.001
EE4	.301	197	<.001	.739	197	<.001
EE5	.381	197	<.001	.675	197	<.001
BE1	.370	197	<.001	.691	197	<.001
BE2	.356	197	<.001	.700	197	<.001
BE3	.419	197	<.001	.630	197	<.001
BE4	.388	197	<.001	.674	197	<.001
BE5	.348	197	<.001	.712	197	<.001
P1	.298	197	<.001	.822	197	<.001
P2	.292	197	<.001	.805	197	<.001
P22	.250	197	<.001	.790	197	<.001
P3	.240	197	<.001	.817	197	<.001
P4	.226	197	<.001	.836	197	<.001
P5	.251	197	<.001	.854	197	<.001
P6	.279	197	<.001	.813	197	<.001
P7	.257	197	<.001	.853	197	<.001

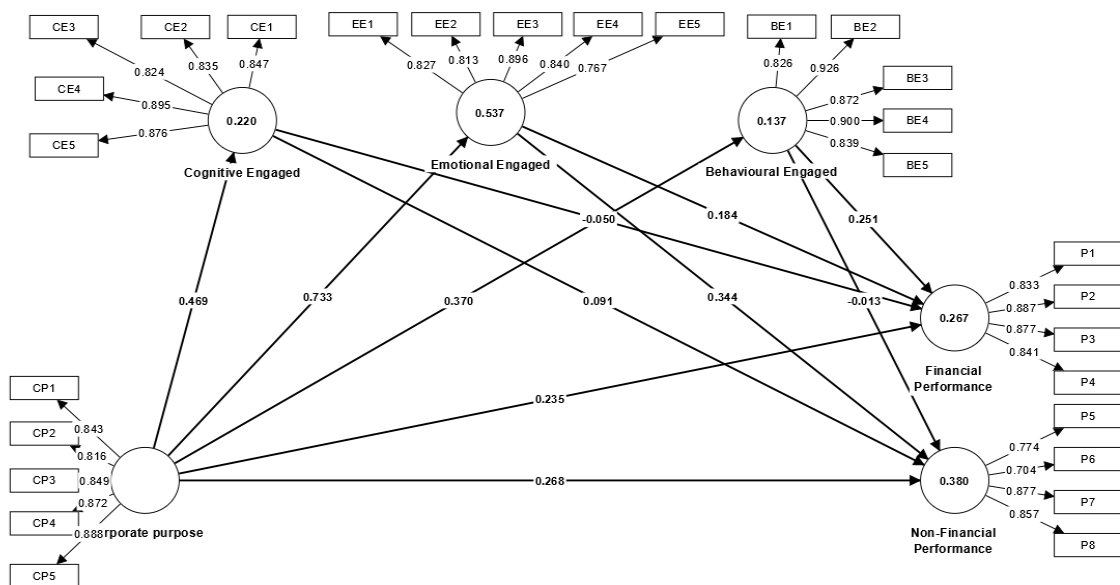
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

5.4.1 Measurement model – Factor loading and model fit

The survey was developed from existing instruments that were already validated previously, though adapted for the study. The corporate purpose was developed from the instrument by van Tuin et al. (2020) which assess purpose by presenting the importance of the company's vision and mission to the respondents. The employee engagement was developed from the multi-dimensional instrument by Sucks et al. (2017) known as the Employee Engagement Scale (EES) which consist of three subfactors (cognitive, emotional and behavioral). The organisational performance was developed from the instrument by Charles and Ochieng (2023). As such, the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was the preferred method for construct validity and reliability. A measurement model was developed in Smartpls 4.0, and the model fit with its factor loading is presented in Figure 2.

The model shows good factor loading across all constructs, with all factor loading higher than 0.70. For corporate purpose, the factor loading range from 0.816 – 0.888. The factor loading for the multidimensional construct of employee engagement ranging from 0.824 to 0.876 for cognitive engaged, 0.767 to 0.896 for emotional engaged and 0.826 to 0.926 for behavioural engaged. For financial and non-financial performance ranging from 0.833 to 0.887 and 0.704 and 0.877, respectively.

Figure 2: Measurement model



SRMR = 0.066 d_ULS = 1.793 (6.067) d_G = 0,646 (0.788) NF1 = 0.826

The model fit was assessed with the root mean square residual (RMSR). The RMSR value of the model was 0.066, which is better than the acceptable threshold of 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). It was also confirmed by evaluating the adequacy of the bootstrap-based test for the exact overall model fit measures $d_{ULS} = 1.793$ (6.067) and $d_G = 0,646$ (0.788). The Normed Fit Index, though ideally should be 0.9, in this model it is 0.826. This is not regarded as a problem, as this measure must always be treated with caution in PSL-SEM and as such, not the final determinant of the final acceptable fit of the model.

5.4.2 Measurement model – validity and reliability

The convergence validity was assessed using Average variance extracted (AVE) with a value of 0.5 and higher, indicating a good convergence validity. The results showed an excellent convergence validity across all the constructs (Table 6). The AVE for corporate purposes is 0,729. For employee engagement, there is an AVE = 0.762 for Behavioural Engaged, AVE = 0.732 for Cognitive Engaged, and AVE = 0.688 for Emotional Engaged. For organisational performance the AVE = 0.739 and 0.650 for financial performance (Fin Perf) and non-financial performance (Non-Fin Perf), respectively.

Table 6: Convergence validity and composite reliability of the constructs

Construct	Cronbach's alpha (α)	Composite reliability (ρ_a)	Composite reliability (ρ_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Behavioural Engaged	0,922	0,935	0,941	0,762
Cognitive Engaged	0,909	0,922	0,932	0,732
Corporate purpose	0,907	0,909	0,931	0,729
Emotional Engaged	0,887	0,898	0,917	0,688
Financial Performance	0,885	0,918	0,919	0,739
Non-Financial Performance	0,821	0,849	0,880	0,650

The results also show good reliability with both Composite reliability (ρ_a and ρ_c) as well as Cronbach's alpha coefficient higher than 0.7. For corporate purpose the $\rho_a = 0.900$, $\rho_c = 0.931$ and $\alpha = 0.907$. The composite reliability for behavioural engaged range from 0.922 – 0.941 ($\rho_c = 0.935$, $\rho_a = 0.935$ and $\alpha = 0.922$), while for

cognitive engaged ranged from 0.909 – 0.932 ($\rho_c = 0.932$, $\rho_a = 0.922$ and $\alpha = 0.909$) and emotional engagement from 0.887 – 0.917 ($\rho_c = 0.917$, $\rho_a = 0.898$ and $\alpha = 0.887$).

The discriminant validity was analysed with Fornell-Larcker criterion, Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) and cross-loadings. The Fornell-Larcker criterion measures the degree to which a construct is genuinely separate from other constructions within the model. Discriminant validity is deemed to be proven when a particular construct exhibits a stronger correlation with its own indicators compared to its correlations with other constructs within the model. The results show the discriminant validity with all constructs are strongly loaded compared to the correlations of the others. Corporate purpose value is 0.854 compared to the range of the rest which is 0.440 to 0.733. The same pattern is found across the employee engagement and organisational performance constructs (Table 7).

Table 7: Fornell-Larcker criterion measures

Constructs	Behavioural Engaged	Cognitive Engaged	Corporate purpose	Emotional Engaged	Financial _Performance	Non-Financial _Performance
Behavioural Engaged	0,873					
Cognitive Engaged	0,627	0,856				
Corporate purpose	0,370	0,469	0,854			
Emotional Engaged	0,438	0,502	0,733	0,830		
Financial _Performance	0,388	0,311	0,440	0,442	0,860	
Non-Financial _Performance	0,294	0,381	0,558	0,580	0,575	0,806

The heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) confirms the discriminant validity of the constructs with all the values less than the threshold of 0.90, with the highest being 0.800 with the majority ranging from 0.4 to 0.6. (Table 8)

Table 8: Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) matrix for discriminant validity

	Behavioural Engaged	Cognitive Engaged	Corporate purpose	Emotional Engaged	Financial Performance	Non-Financial Performance
Behavioural Engaged						
Cognitive Engaged	0,679					
Corporate purpose	0,398	0,502				
Emotional Engaged	0,475	0,540	0,808			
Financial Performance	0,412	0,323	0,465	0,470		
Non-Financial Performance	0,332	0,433	0,619	0,661	0,646	

The cross-loading pertains to the correlation between an indicator (or item) and constructs distinct from the measured intended construct. The evaluation of cross-loadings becomes significant as it ascertains that each indicator exhibits a stronger correlation with its corresponding construct than other constructs within the model. The results show good cross-loading of items on the constructs (grey shades) (Table 9).

Table 9: Cross-loadings for discriminant validity

Item	Behavioural Engaged	Cognitive Engaged	Corporate purpose	Emotional Engaged	Financial _Performance	Non-Financial _Performance
BE1	0,826	0,515	0,251	0,291	0,305	0,167
BE2	0,926	0,620	0,375	0,427	0,395	0,304
BE3	0,872	0,535	0,375	0,436	0,348	0,283
BE4	0,900	0,547	0,288	0,365	0,306	0,242
BE5	0,839	0,511	0,301	0,367	0,324	0,263
CE1	0,557	0,847	0,398	0,380	0,269	0,290
CE2	0,494	0,835	0,327	0,357	0,194	0,254
CE3	0,536	0,824	0,512	0,536	0,330	0,382
CE4	0,568	0,895	0,373	0,419	0,261	0,343
CE5	0,515	0,876	0,346	0,406	0,241	0,328
CP1	0,291	0,403	0,843	0,620	0,357	0,429
CP2	0,317	0,380	0,816	0,584	0,338	0,405
CP3	0,333	0,420	0,849	0,622	0,357	0,555
CP4	0,277	0,374	0,872	0,643	0,419	0,509
CP5	0,362	0,423	0,888	0,658	0,405	0,472
EE1	0,386	0,409	0,596	0,827	0,346	0,410
EE2	0,354	0,398	0,531	0,813	0,288	0,462
EE3	0,389	0,445	0,650	0,896	0,435	0,596
EE4	0,396	0,491	0,731	0,840	0,403	0,494
EE5	0,281	0,316	0,497	0,767	0,340	0,421
P1	0,297	0,239	0,294	0,283	0,833	0,394
P2	0,268	0,223	0,316	0,316	0,887	0,448
P22	0,332	0,227	0,313	0,360	0,877	0,427
P3	0,397	0,339	0,516	0,493	0,841	0,631
P4	0,232	0,317	0,345	0,408	0,420	0,774
P5	0,218	0,271	0,282	0,357	0,437	0,704
P6	0,255	0,304	0,580	0,553	0,468	0,877
P7	0,245	0,338	0,524	0,517	0,530	0,857

5.4.3 Structural model – Hypotheses testing

The structural model was developed with a bootstrapping procedure. The analysis first confirms the predictive relevance of the model with Q^2 . This highlights how well the model can predict the data, with $Q^2 > 0$ indicating a good predictive relevance. The results show good predictive relevance with all Q^2 higher than 0, with the strongest being Emotional engaged ($Q^2 = 0.536$) and non-financial performance ($Q^2 = 0.306$) (Table 10). These are higher than the threshold of 0.26, indicating substantial prediction relevance (Cohen, 1988).

Table 10: Predictive relevance of the model

Constructs	Q^2 predict	RMSE	MAE
Behavioural Engaged	0,122	0,954	0,768
Cognitive Engaged	0,205	0,920	0,696
Emotional Engaged	0,536	0,690	0,556
Financial Performance	0,185	0,913	0,681
Non-Financial Performance	0,306	0,841	0,658

5.4.3.1 Effect of corporate purpose on organisational performance

The first hypothesis examined the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance and can be recapped as follows:

- H_{10} : Corporate purpose does not have a statistically significant relationship with organisational performance
- H_{1A} : Corporate purpose have a statistically significant relationship with organisational performance

Path analysis was employed to examine the relationship between these constructs, and the results are presented in Table 11. The results show that the corporate purpose has a statistically significant positive relationship with both financial and non-financial organisational performance. The path, Corporate purpose -> Financial Performance with $\beta = 0.230$, t-statistics = 2.290, $p < .05$ and path, Corporate purpose -> Non-Financial Performance, $\beta = 0.267$, t-statistics = 2.917, $p < .05$ confirms this relationship. Corporate purpose predicted more non-financial performance than financial performance, with

32.5% ($R^2 = 0.325$) of the non-financial performance predicted by the corporate purpose, compared to 19.9% ($R^2 = 0.199$) of financial performance being predicted corporate performance (Table 11).

Table 11: Path coefficient, t-statistics, significance and R2 of corporate purpose on organisational performance

	β	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	R ²
Corporate purpose -> Financial Performance	0,230	2,290	0,022	0.199
Corporate purpose -> Non-Financial Performance	0,267	2,917	0,004	0.325

The results reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that Corporate purpose have a statistically significant relationship with organisational performance.

5.4.3.2 Effect of corporate purpose on employee engagement

The second hypothesis examined the relationship between employee engagement and organisational performance and can be recapped as follows:

- *H₂₀: Corporate purpose does not have a statistically significant relationship with employee engagement*
- *H_{2A}: Corporate purpose has a statistically significant relationship with employee engagement*

The results are presented in Table 12, and they show that the corporate purpose has a statistically significant positive relationship with all three dimensions of employee engagement. The paths confirm with, Corporate purpose -> Behavioural Engaged, is significant with $\beta = 0.371$, t-statistics = 5.142, $p < .001$; Corporate purpose -> Cognitive Engaged, $\beta = 4.69$, t-statistics = 6.061, $p < .001$ and Corporate purpose -> Emotional Engaged, $\beta = 0.733$, t-statistics = 20.72, $p < .001$.

Table 12: Corporate purpose -> Emotional Engaged Path coefficient, t-statistics, significance, and R2 of corporate purpose on employee engagement

Paths	β	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Corporate purpose -> Behavioural Engaged	0,371	5,142	0,000
Corporate purpose -> Cognitive Engaged	0,469	6,061	0,000
Corporate purpose -> Emotional Engaged	0,733	20,716	0,000

These results reject the null hypothesis and confirm the alternative hypothesis, thereby corporate purpose has a statistically significant relationship with employee engagement.

5.4.3.3 Mediation effect of employee engagement on the corporate purpose and organisational performance

The third hypothesis test the mediation role of employee engagement in the relationship between employee engagement and organisational performance and can be recapped as follows:

- *H₃₀: Employee engagement does not mediate the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance*
- *H_{3A}: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance*

The specific indirect effect highlights the causal pathway that connects the independent variable to the dependent variable, mediated by the mediator variable. Thus, it determines the proportion of the effect that can be attributed to the mediation process. The results show that emotional engaged mediates the relationship between corporate purpose and non-financial performance; in this path, Corporate purpose -> Emotional Engaged -> Non-Financial _Performance ($\beta = 0.255$, t-statistics = 3.752, $p < .001$). The results also show that behavioural engaged mediates the relationship between corporate performance and financial performance. This is evident in the path, Corporate purpose -> Behavioural Engaged -> Financial _Performance ($\beta = 0.094$, t-statistics = 2.561, $p < .05$). These paths show partial mediation as the direct paths are also statistically significant (Table 13).

Table 13: Mediation analysis with total effect and specific indirect effect

		T statistics		
		β	(O/STDEV)	P values
	Behavioural Engaged -> Financial _Performance	0,255	3,002	0,003
	Behavioural Engaged -> Non-Financial _Performance	-0,010	0,182	0,855
	Cognitive Engaged -> Financial _Performance	-0,052	0,585	0,558
	Cognitive Engaged -> Non-Financial _Performance	0,089	1,304	0,192
	Corporate purpose -> Behavioural Engaged	0,370	5,142	0,000
	Corporate purpose -> Cognitive Engaged	0,467	6,061	0,000
	Corporate purpose -> Emotional Engaged	0,734	20,716	0,000
	Corporate purpose -> Financial _Performance	0,440	6,817	0,000
	Corporate purpose -> Non-Financial _Performance	0,561	9,810	0,000
Total effect	Emotional Engaged -> Financial _Performance	0,190	1,922	0,055
	Emotional Engaged -> Non-Financial _Performance	0,347	3,888	0,000
	Corporate purpose -> Emotional Engaged -> Non-Financial _Performance	0,255	3,752	0,000
	Corporate purpose -> Cognitive Engaged -> Financial _Performance	-0,024	0,572	0,568
	Corporate purpose -> Cognitive Engaged -> Non-Financial _Performance	0,043	1,194	0,233
Specific indirect effect	Corporate purpose -> Behavioural Engaged -> Non-Financial _Performance	-0,004	0,177	0,860
	Corporate purpose -> Behavioural Engaged -> Financial _Performance	0,094	2,561	0,010
	Corporate purpose -> Emotional Engaged -> Financial _Performance	0,140	1,902	0,057

The results also show that the path Corporate purpose -> Behavioural Engaged -> Non-Financial _Performance ($\beta = 0.225$, t-statistics = 3.752, $p < .05$), suggesting a statistically significant relationship.

The other paths are all not statistically significant, therefore it does not mediate the relationship. These paths are Corporate purpose -> Cognitive Engaged -> Financial _Performance, Corporate purpose -> Cognitive Engaged -> Non-Financial _Performance, Corporate purpose -> Behavioural Engaged -> Non-Financial _Performance and Corporate purpose -> Emotional Engaged -> Financial _Performance. These results partially accept the hypothesis, as shown in the Table 14.

Table 14: Mediation effect of the hypotheses summary

Path (Hypothesis)	Decision
Corporate purpose -> Emotional Engaged -> Non-Financial _Performance	Reject Null, accept alternative
Corporate purpose -> Cognitive Engaged -> Financial _Performance	Accept Null
Corporate purpose -> Cognitive Engaged -> Non-Financial _Performance	Accept Null
Corporate purpose -> Behavioural Engaged -> Non-Financial _Performance	Accept Null
Corporate purpose -> Behavioural Engaged -> Financial _Performance	Reject Null, accept alternative
Corporate purpose -> Emotional Engaged -> Financial _Performance	Accept Null

5.4 Conclusion

The study collected 246 respondents, which were used to test the hypotheses. The results confirm a statistically significant relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance. The results also confirm a statistically significant relationship between corporate purpose and all the dimensions of employee engagement. Finally, the emotional dimension of employee engagement mediates the relationship between corporate purpose and non-financial performance, while behavioural engaged mediates the relationship between the corporate purpose and financial performance. These results are discussed in Chapter 6, with the limitations that help contextualise these findings explained in Chapter 7.

Chapter 6: Discussion of the results

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we build upon the results discussed in Chapter 5. The analysis and interpretation of these results are enriched by the insights acquired from the literature review in Chapter 2. The research findings are methodically presented, beginning with the exploration of the three research objectives and its corresponding hypotheses. The discussions are comprehensive, incorporating references to the existing research in the fields of corporate purpose, employee engagement, and organisational performance.

6.2 Discussion of the first hypothesis (H₁₀ and H_{1a})

The first hypothesis was set out to assess the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance through a statistical test. The results from the test indicated that there is a direct statistically significant positive relationship between Corporate Purpose as the independent variable and Organisational Performance as the dependent variable. The conclusion of this analysis supports the primary research question and concludes the alternative hypothesis (H_{1a}), meaning that corporate purpose influences organisational performance positively; thus, rejecting the null hypothesis (H₁₀). The outcome of this result is depicted in Table 9. As per Table 9, the path, corporate purpose -> financial performance with $\beta = 0.230$, t-statistics = 2.290, $p < .05$ and path, Corporate purpose -> non-financial performance, $\beta = 0.267$, t-statistics = 2.917, $p < .05$ confirms this relationship. The results also indicate that corporate purpose predicted more non-financial performance than financial performance, with 32.5% ($R^2 = 0.325$) of the non-financial performance predicted by the corporate purpose, compared to 19.9% ($R^2 = 0.199$) of financial performance being predicted corporate performance. Also, both confidence intervals for financial performance and non-financial performance do not cross zero and are positive, indicating that there is a positive effect of corporate purpose on organisational performance with 97.5% certainty.

This finding is supported by Hurth et al. (2018), Kurznack et al. (2021) and Jones-Khosa and Gomes (2023) who theorised that companies that integrate long-term, purpose-oriented strategies experience a congruent increase in both economic and societal value;

thus, improved organisational performance.

Organisational performance is theorised as the dependent variable, reflecting a culmination of business efficacy and success. Charles and Ochieng (2023), concluded that a firm's performance should be assessed based on profitability, growth, market value, total return on shareholders, economic value added, and customer and employee satisfaction and brand reputation; thus, encapsulating financial and non-financial measures. Therefore, research instrument – as per Appendix 1 – was designed to incorporate and test both financial and non-financial measures as part of the dependent variable, organisational performance. The research instrument includes the following questions for the construct: organisational performance, which is shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Organisational Performance: Survey questions alignment to financial and non-financial performance classification

Organisational Performance	Measurement type
My organisation has consistently met or exceeded its revenue targets	Financial performance
My organisation has maintained a stable profit margin	Financial performance
My organisation has a positive cash flow that supports business growth and expansion	Financial performance
My organisation delivers superior long-term value to our shareholders, customers, and other stakeholders	Financial performance
My organisation has a good and strong reputation in the market	Non-Financial performance
My organisation has a high rate of customer retention	Non-Financial performance
My organisation is committed to sustainable practices in its operations	Non-Financial performance
My organisation has clear sustainability goals and has achieved it	Non-Financial performance

Organisational performance, encapsulated as an organisation's capability to realise its aims (Otoo, 2019), encompasses both financial outcomes, such as profits and sales, and non-financial outcomes like employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction and brand reputation (Contu, 2020). The questions in Table 15 were developed to align to the theoretical definition of this construct.

According to Fitzsimmons et al. (2022), purpose-driven companies strategically align their business practices with their core mission, thereby fostering positive societal and environmental changes. These authors argued that such alignment is not only ethically sound but also beneficial for the company's long-term success and reputation. Knowles (2022) and George et al. (2023) found that the true purpose of an organisation is revealed through its corporate vision, mission, and purpose statements. These authors

found that when these statements are authentic and embedded within the core strategy, and they significantly enhance company performance. Therefore, the survey questions were developed in line with van Tuin et al. (2020) who assessed purpose by presenting the importance of the company's vision and mission to the respondents (Table 16).

Table 16: Corporate Purpose: Survey questions alignment

Corporate Purpose:
My employer has a clearly defined and authentic vision and mission that extends beyond financial success.
My employer's mission also focuses on addressing social and environmental concerns.
My employer's demonstrate ethical response in its responsibilities
My employer's decisions and strategies are genuinely aligned with its stated purpose
My employer's purpose reflects the organisation's values and beliefs

Considering the preceding writing on corporate performance and organisational performance and to further support the first hypothesis and its outcome, an analysis on the relationship between corporate purpose and the financial and non-financial performance has been conducted.

6.2.1 Corporate Purpose and Financial Performance

The moderate positive relationship between corporate purpose and financial performance, as indicated by a mean effect size of 0.205 (Table 9), resonates with the insights provided by the literature. Gartenberg et al. (2019) argued that a clearly defined and authentic corporate purpose can enhance financial performance by aligning and motivating stakeholders towards shared goals. The low variability and consistent effect sizes across these samples further solidify this relationship. The statistical significance of these findings, with a p-value of 0.002 (Table 9), firmly supports the alternative hypothesis (H1a) that corporate purpose positively influences financial performance and rejects the null hypothesis ((H1o), reinforcing the notion that purpose-driven strategies are not merely ethical imperatives but also key drivers of financial success (Kurznack et al., 2021).

6.2.2 Corporate Purpose and Non-Financial Performance

The relationship between corporate purpose and non-financial performance is even more pronounced, as indicated by a higher mean effect size of 0.288 (Table 9). This

finding aligns with the arguments presented by Serafeim et al. (2021), who noted that an organisation's commitment to broader societal and environmental goals could significantly impact its non-financial performance. These dimensions of performance, often encapsulated in metrics such as customer satisfaction and employee engagement, are increasingly recognized as critical indicators of long-term sustainability and success (Contu, 2020). The highly significant p-value of 0.000 in this context not only underlines the statistical significance which supports the alternative hypothesis (H_{1a}) and rejects the null hypothesis (H_{1o}) but also reflects the growing empirical evidence that corporate purpose is intrinsically linked to broader organisational wellbeing and stakeholder satisfaction (Harrison et al., 2020; Jones-Khosla and Gomes, 2023).

6.2.3 Summary of the first hypothesis

In conclusion, the analysis suggests that corporate purpose positively affects both financial and non-financial organisational performance, supporting the alternative hypothesis and negating the null hypothesis. Therefore, the researcher is in support that the purpose statement served to anchor a company's identity, expressing a dedication to a set of values and responsibilities that engaged a wide array of stakeholders (Michaelson et al., 2020). These set of values and responsibilities serves a guiding principle for action towards achieving organisational goals (Gulati, 2022).

6.3 Discussion of the second hypothesis (H_{2o} and H_{2a})

The examination of the second hypothesis has revealed compelling evidence regarding the influence of corporate purpose on the multi-dimensional construct of employee engagement. With the alternative hypothesis (H_{2a}) firmly supported by the data, the findings indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between corporate purpose and the three dimensions of employee engagement: behavioural, cognitive, and emotional.

The employee engagement was developed from the multi-dimensional instrument by Sucks et al. (2017) known as the Employee Engagement Scale (EES) which consist of three subfactors (cognitive, emotional, and behavioural). Therefore, the survey questions in Table 16 were developed in line with the existing EES model that assessed the three subfactors of employee engagement based on the existing questions in the survey conducted by Sucks et al., (2017).

Table 17: Employee Engagement Subdimensions : Survey questions alignment

Subdimensions	Survey Questions
Cognitive Engagement	I am really focused on my job when I am working
Cognitive Engagement	I concentrate on my job when I am at work
Cognitive Engagement	When working, I think a lot about how I can give my best
Cognitive Engagement	At work, I am focused on my job
Cognitive Engagement	When I am at work, I give my job a lot of attention
Emotional Engagement	Working at my current organisation has a great deal of personal meaning to me
Emotional Engagement	I feel a strong sense of belonging to my job
Emotional Engagement	I am proud to tell others that I work for my current organisation
Emotional Engagement	I believe in the mission and purpose of my organisation
Emotional Engagement	I care about the future of my organisation
Behavioural Engagement	I do more than what is expected of me
Behavioural Engagement	I really push myself to work beyond what is expected of me
Behavioural Engagement	I am willing to put in extra effort without being asked
Behavioural Engagement	I often go above what is expected of me to help my team be successful
Behavioural Engagement	I work harder than expected to help my organisation be successful

6.3.1 Corporate Purpose and Behavioural Engagement

The behavioural engagement, often linked with the physical involvement of employees in tasks (van Tuin et al., 2020), shows a substantial relationship with corporate purpose, as denoted by a beta coefficient (β) of 0.371. The strength of this relationship is further corroborated by a t-statistic of 5.142 and a highly significant p-value ($p < .001$). This suggests that when employees perceive their organisation as having a strong and meaningful purpose, they are more likely to exhibit higher levels of dedication and effort in their roles (van Tuin et al., 2020). As defined by Macey and Schneider (2008), behavioural engagement concerned the psychological readiness of employees to act in ways that would positively affect organisational performance. These authors also characterised behavioural engagement as actions purposefully aligned with organisational objectives; thus, employees will exert behaviours such as innovation and proactivity address problems within the work setting (p. 18). This dimension of engagement therefore encompasses behaviours like taking initiative and exceeding standard expectations (Saks, 2018).

6.3.2 Corporate Purpose and Cognitive Engagement

The cognitive engagement, which pertains to employees' psychological investment and attentiveness in their work (Kahn, 1990; Shuck et al., 2017), demonstrates an even stronger association with corporate purpose, with a β of 0.469. This is reinforced by a t-statistic of 6.061 and a p-value indicating significance at $p < .001$. This element of engagement is critical as it encapsulates the attention and thought employees contribute to their job tasks, which can be greatly enhanced by a resonant corporate purpose (Steers & Porter, 1991; Boswell, 2006).

6.3.3 Corporate Purpose and Emotional Engagement

Most strikingly, emotional engagement, which reflects the affective connection employees feel towards their organisation (Macey & Schneider, 2008), exhibits the strongest link to corporate purpose ($\beta = 0.733$). The exceedingly high t-statistic of 20.72, along with a p-value of less than .001, highlights the impact corporate purpose has on the emotional investment of employees. This dimension is particularly important, as emotionally engaged employees are typically more passionate, satisfied, and aligned with their organisation's values. According to Biriowu and Chikwe (2020) an emotionally engaged employee are emotionally connected to the organisation and participate actively in the pursuit of achieving the organisational goals; thus, an employee is motivated to perform his job as well bring creative ideas and innovativeness to turn the fortunes of the business around (p. 80).

The rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) in favour of the alternative hypothesis (H_2a) suggests that corporate purpose is not merely a backdrop against which organisational activities unfold but a driving force that significantly energises all facets of employee engagement. These findings resonate with contemporary organisational theories that emphasise the centrality of purpose in cultivating a motivated and committed workforce. As Dupret and Pultz (2021) noted, an authentic and well-communicated corporate purpose can foster a work environment where employees feel a sense of belonging and alignment with their organisation's goals, leading to higher levels of engagement. In addition to this, Ali et al. (2020) and Jasinenko and Steuber (2023) posited that a clear and resonant corporate purpose can inspire and cultivate higher employee engagement. Therefore, engaged employees contribute positively to organisational outcomes (van Tuin et al., 2020).

6.3.4 Summary of the second hypothesis

In conclusion, the validation of the alternative hypothesis through these findings significantly accentuates the strategic importance of corporate purpose within the organisational context.

The data, highlighting the profound influence of corporate purpose on behavioural, cognitive, and emotional engagement, mirrors the theoretical propositions of Kahn (1990), who conceptualised engagement as the full expression of oneself in role performances. The strong positive correlations identified in this study ($\beta = 0.371$ for behavioural engagement, $\beta = 0.469$ for cognitive engagement, and $\beta = 0.733$ for emotional engagement) underscore Kahn's assertion that employees' personal investment in their roles is critical for organisational health and success.

Furthermore, the results align with the theoretical framework posited by van Tuin et al. (2020), who argued that corporate purpose serves as a precursor to heightened employee engagement. The significant statistical indicators (t-statistics and p-values) affirm this theory, suggesting that employees' perceptions of their work as meaningful, facilitated by a clear corporate purpose, substantially enhances their engagement levels.

Hence, these findings advocate for a reconceptualization of corporate purpose as a fundamental driver of employee engagement. This strategic reorientation, supported by the theoretical underpinnings of Kahn (1990) and van Tuin et al. (2020), presents an opportunity for organisations to harness the potential of their human capital fully. By embedding a strong and resonant corporate purpose into their core, organisations can foster a workforce that is not only highly engaged but also more aligned with achieving overarching organisational goals. This study thus propels the narrative that corporate purpose and employee engagement are inextricably linked, each reinforcing the other in the pursuit of superior organisational performance. The study therefore supports the finding by van Tuin et al. (2020). These authors study proved a significant positive relationship between a clearly defined corporate purpose and subsequent employee engagement. Their study revealed a directional effect: corporate purpose served as a precursor to heightened employee engagement levels.

6.4 Discussion of the third hypothesis (H₃₀ and H_{3a})

The third hypothesis was set out to assess the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance. The analysis of the third hypothesis yielded nuanced insights which are discussed below.

6.4.1 Mediation effect on the relationship between corporate purpose and the financial performance dimension

The results indicate that behavioural engagement mediates the relationship between corporate purpose and financial performance. The path corporate purpose -> behavioural engaged -> financial performance ($\beta = 0.094$, t-statistics = 2.561, $p < .05$) highlights this mediation effect (Table 13). This pathway shows that employees' actions and behaviours, influenced by the organisation's purpose, contribute significantly to financial outcomes. The partial mediation observed here, along with the direct paths also being statistically significant, suggests that while behavioural engagement is an important mediator, corporate purpose also directly influences financial performance.

The significant indirect effect of behavioural engagement ($\beta = 0.094$) in financial performance, supported by the total effect ($\beta = 0.255$) as seen in Table 13, emphasises the role of proactive and voluntary employee behaviours in enhancing financial results. This aligns with theories of behavioural engagement, which suggest that employees who go beyond their basic job requirements can drive financial success (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Shuck et al., 2017).

6.4.2 Mediation effect on the relationship between corporate purpose and the non-financial performance dimension

The emotional engagement is shown to mediate the relationship between corporate purpose and non-financial performance significantly. The path corporate purpose -> emotional engaged -> non-financial performance ($\beta = 0.255$, t-statistics = 3.752, $p < .001$) demonstrates this mediation (Table 13). This pathway underscores the importance of employees' emotional connection to their organisation in enhancing non-financial performance metrics, such as customer retention, employee satisfaction, and brand reputation. Kossyva et al. (2021) argued for a distinction between engagement and closely related constructs such as employee satisfaction and motivation, contending that engagement entails a more profound emotional and cognitive bond with one's job, propelling employees to work at their utmost capacity and with a focus on outcomes.

This line of argumentation corroborated Kahn's (1990) initial concept of engagement.

The strength of this mediation effect, as indicated by the specific indirect effect, confirms that emotional engagement, fostered by a resonant corporate purpose, is a key driver in boosting non-financial aspects of organisational performance. This finding is in line with the theoretical frameworks that underscore the impact of emotional engagement on organisational wellbeing (Kahn, 1990; Macey & Schneider, 2008). This finding is further supported by Biriowu and Chikwe (2020) who reported that emotionally engaged employees are emotionally connected to the organisation and participate actively in the pursuit of achieving the organisational goals, thus an employee is motivated to perform his job as well bring creative ideas and innovativeness to turn the fortunes of the business around (p. 80).

6.4.3 Discussion of the non-mediated paths

The results in Table 14 indicate that the path corporate purpose -> cognitive engaged -> financial performance and corporate purpose -> behavioural engaged -> non-financial performance do not show significant mediation effects. This suggests that cognitive engagement and certain aspects of behavioural engagement may not directly influence financial or non-financial performance as mediators, highlighting the complexity of how different dimensions of engagement interact with organisational performance. Additionally, the path corporate purpose -> emotional engaged -> financial performance, along with other cognitive engagement paths, did not show significant mediation. This implies that emotional engagement's impact as a mediator may be more pronounced in non-financial areas, while its influence on financial performance might be indirect or influenced by other factors.

According to Steers and Porter (1991) when employees perceive themselves as valuable participants in the realisation of the company's aspirations, this recognition is typically accompanied by an elevated performance. These authors contended that cognitive engagement is intrinsically linked to an employee's grasp of their role's significance within the broader organisational framework. In addition, van Tuin et al. (2020) argued that a clearly defined corporate purpose positively influence employee engagement by reporting a significant positive relationship between corporate purpose and employee engagement. Van Tuin et al. (2020) suggested that employees who perceive their work as meaningful through the lens of the organisation's purpose are likely to exhibit

increased engagement.

Therefore, the researcher inferred that when an organisation's purpose doesn't resonate with an employee, the employee is likely to exhibit lower levels of engagement thus impacting organisational performance negatively. In support of this inference, the researcher draws from the literature review in Chapter 2.

Kahn (1990) described this lower levels of engagement as "personal disengagement", characterised as the "uncoupling of selves from work roles", where individuals withdraw and protect themselves, operating in a mode that may appear automatic or robotic (1990, p. 701). The author argued that this withdrawal could manifest in employees simply going through the motions without meaningful investment in their tasks. Kahn (1990) also argued that when the employee's role is constraining or unaligned with their selves, they may retreat into disengagement, Kahn (1990) further explained that during personal disengagement, people become physically uninvolved in tasks, cognitively unvigilant, and emotionally disconnected from others in ways that hide what they think and feel, their creativity, their beliefs and values, and their personal connections to others (p. 702).

Therefore, there finding, and the above discussion is supported by Sallie (2017) who argued that employees' alignment with the company's mission engenders a state of emotional investment that catalyses sustained performance. This argument was further supported by Hansmeyer et al. (2018), who contended that an organisation's adoption of a purpose can ignite employee engagement, yielding a workforce that is energised and differentiated, which these authors argued that it is a crucible for sustained progress and performance.

6.4.4 Summary of the third hypothesis

In summary, these results provide a nuanced understanding of the mediating role of different dimensions of employee engagement in the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance. Behavioural engagement plays a significant mediating role in influencing financial performance, while emotional engagement is pivotal in mediating non-financial performance outcomes. The lack of significant mediation in certain paths highlights the complex interplay between corporate purpose, different dimensions of employee engagement, and various aspects of organisational performance. This analysis substantiates the critical role of aligning employee

engagement strategies with corporate purpose to achieve comprehensive organisational success.

6.5 Conclusion of the chapter

The discussions in this chapter have provided an in-depth analysis of the relationship between corporate purpose, employee engagement, and organisational performance, supported by empirical data and theoretical perspectives. The findings from the hypotheses tested offer valuable insights into the dynamics of how corporate purpose influences both financial and non-financial aspects of organisational performance and how employee engagement plays a crucial mediating role in this relationship. These findings were supported by the Hurth et al. (2018), Kurznack et al. (2021) and Jones-Khosa and Gomes (2023) who theorised that companies that integrate long-term, purpose-oriented strategies experience a congruent increase in both economic and societal value; thus, improved organisational performance. Furthermore, Biriowu and Chikwe (2020) reported that emotionally engaged employees are emotionally connected to the organisation and participate actively in the pursuit of achieving the organisational goals.

The analysis reaffirms the significance of corporate purpose as a strategic asset in driving organisational success. The direct positive relationship between corporate purpose and both financial and non-financial performance underscores the value of aligning organisational strategies with a meaningful and authentic purpose. This alignment not only enhances economic value but also fosters societal and environmental benefits, contributing to a holistic measure of organisational success (Gartenberg, 2019; Kurznack et al., 2021). These authors found that companies that integrate long-term, purpose-oriented strategies experience a congruent increase in both economic and societal value.

The exploration of employee engagement in its various dimensions – behavioural, cognitive, and emotional – reveals its complex yet critical role in mediating the effects of corporate purpose on organisational outcomes. The significant mediation by behavioural engagement in financial performance and emotional engagement in non-financial performance highlights the multifaceted nature of employee engagement. The lack of significant mediation in some paths suggests a need for further research to understand the interplay between different engagement dimensions and organisational outcomes

fully.

In summary, the findings presented in this chapter underscore the transformative power of a well-defined corporate purpose and a highly engaged workforce in achieving superior organisational performance. The study's insights emphasise the need for organisations to adopt a holistic approach that integrates purpose-driven strategies with robust employee engagement practices, paving the way for sustained success and societal impact.

As we move forward, the insights collected from this research can serve as a foundation for future studies, offering a roadmap for organisations seeking to leverage their corporate purpose and employee engagement as key drivers of success in an increasingly complex and dynamic business landscape.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and recommendations

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 7, we synthesise the key findings of the research, drawing theoretical and practical conclusions from the analysis presented in the previous chapters. This chapter encapsulates the essence of the research, highlighting its contributions, implications for management and stakeholders, limitations, and recommendations for future studies.

The objectives of this study, which were elucidated in Chapter 1 was to establish the relationship between a corporate purpose and organisational performance and the mediating role of employee engagement in this relationship.

Therefore, the following objectives were developed:

- To interrogate the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance.
- To explain the relationship between corporate purpose and employee engagement.
- To test the hypothesis that employee engagement mediates the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance.

Based on the above research objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated.

The first hypothesis examined the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis postulates that there is no significant relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance. Conversely, the alternative hypothesis contends that a positive relationship exists between corporate purpose and organisational performance. The first hypothesis has been developed as follows:

H₁₀: Corporate purpose does not have a statistically significant relationship with organisational performance

H_{1A}: Corporate purpose have a statistically significant relationship with organisational performance

The second hypothesis was developed to test the relationship between employee engagement and organisational performance. The null hypothesis is that there is no relationship between these two variables. The alternative hypothesis is that there is a positive relationship between these two variables. The second hypothesis that was developed is depicted below:

H₂₀: Corporate purpose does not have a statistically significant relationship with employee engagement

H_{2A}: Corporate purpose has a statistically significant relationship with employee engagement

The third hypothesis was developed to test the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between employee engagement and organisational performance. The null hypothesis is that employee engagement does not mediate this relationship. The alternative hypothesis is that employee engagement does mediate this relationship, thus positioned as follows:

H₃₀: Employee engagement does not mediate the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance

H_{3A}: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance

The next section captures the principle conclusions of the findings discussed in chapter 6.

7.2 Principle theoretical conclusions

The study has set out to test the hypotheses that were developed in conjunction with finding from the literature as presented in Chapter 2.

The first objective was to interrogate the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance. This was assessed by testing Hypothesis 1 (H₁₀ and H_{1a})

as stated above and in Chapter 3.

Statistical results were presented in support of the alternative hypothesis (H1a). The research affirms a positive relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance, both financial and non-financial. This supports the alternative hypothesis (H1a) and rejects the null hypothesis (H10), aligning with the theories proposed by Hurt et al. (2018) and Kurznack et al. (2021) on the integral role of purpose in driving organisational success.

The second objective was to explain the relationship between corporate purpose and employee engagement. This was assessed by testing Hypothesis 2 (H20 and H2a) as stated above and in Chapter 3.

The findings indicate a significant positive relationship between corporate purpose and the dimensions of employee engagement: behavioural, cognitive, and emotional. This validates the alternative hypothesis (H2a), consistent with the theoretical frameworks of Kahn (1990) and van Tuin et al. (2020), highlighting the centrality of purpose in fostering a motivated workforce.

The third objective was set to test the hypothesis that employee engagement mediates the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance. This was assessed by testing Hypothesis 3 (H30 and H3a) as stated above and in Chapter 3. The third objective considered the three dimensions of employee engagement namely, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. The study reveals the following conclusive results:

The study reveals the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance. The statistical results were presented that behavioural engagement significantly influences financial performance, while emotional engagement affects non-financial performance, thus supporting the alternative hypothesis (H3a).

Consequently, the study reveals that cognitive engagement does not show significant mediation effects on both financial and non-financial performance. Behavioural engagement was also predicted to not have a significant mediation effect on non-financial performance. The dimension emotional engagement also predicted to not have a significant mediation effect on financial performance. Thus, the above study rejected the alternative hypothesis and accept the null hypothesis.

7.3 Proposed framework of the study and conclusions

The conceptual framework delineating the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance, and the mediating role of employee engagement in this nexus, is outlined in Table 19. This framework was meticulously crafted, drawing from extensive literature, and subsequently corroborated by the empirical findings of this study. It serves as a structured representation of the interplay between corporate purpose, various dimensions of employee engagement, and their collective impact on organisational performance, both financial and non-financial.

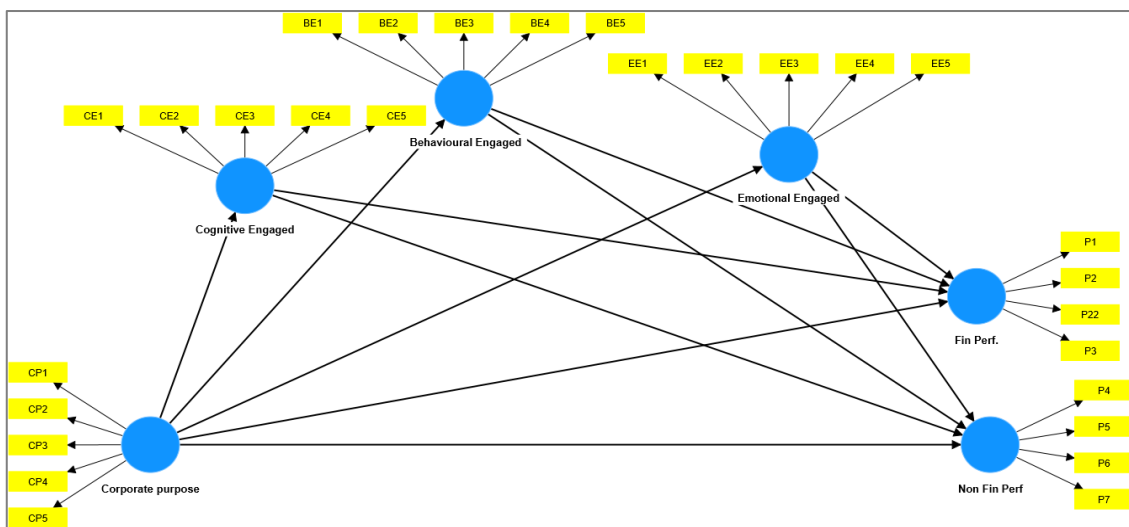


Figure 3: Proposed framework of corporate purpose and organisational performance, and employee engagement as a mediator

Source: Ringle et al., (2022)

The framework has the following attributes:

- The relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance, depicted as financial performance (Fin Perf) and non-financial performance (Non Fin Perf). There is a statistically significant positive relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance.
- The relationship between corporate purpose and employee engagement's subdimensions name cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and behavioural engagement. In the presence of a corporate purpose, all three dimensions of employee engagement is level of employee engagement is increased.
- The mediation effect of behavioural engagement on financial performance (Fin Perf). There is a mediation effect.

- The mediation effect of behavioural engagement on non-financial performance (Non-Fin Perf). There is no mediation effect.
- The mediation effect of emotional engagement on financial performance (Fin Perf). There is no mediation effect.
- The mediation effect of emotional engagement on non-financial performance (Non-Fin Perf). There is a mediation effect.
- The mediation effect of cognitive engagement on financial performance (Fin Perf). There is no mediation effect.
- The mediation effect of cognitive engagement on non-financial performance (Non-Fin Perf). There is no mediation effect.

The above conclusions from the framework highlight the multifaceted and nuanced nature of the relationships between corporate purpose, employee engagement, and organisational performance. The outcome of the tests emphasises the importance of considering various dimensions of engagement and their differential impacts on different types of organisational outcomes.

7.4 Research contributions

This research significantly contributes to the existing body of knowledge by examining the triadic interplay between corporate purpose, employee engagement, and organisational performance, a domain previously identified as underexplored in the literature (Jones-Khosla & Gomes, 2023). While previous studies have acknowledged the rising importance of corporate purpose beyond profit-making (Mio et al., 2020; Jimenez et al., 2021; Jasinenko & Steuber, 2023), and the positive impact of employee engagement on organisational performance (van Tuin et al., 2020), the nuanced dynamics of how these elements interact and influence each other, particularly in terms of organisational performance, have been less thoroughly investigated.

This study builds upon the foundational understanding that a clear and resonant corporate purpose can inspire and cultivate higher employee engagement (Ali et al., 2020; Jasinenko and Steuber, 2023). It extends this premise by empirically examining how this enhanced engagement, with a link to a strong corporate purpose, translates into both financial and non-financial organisational performance. The research, thus, not only corroborates but also quantifies and articulates the direct influence of corporate purpose on various dimensions of employee engagement.

A pivotal contribution of this research lies in its exploration of the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance. Prior studies have touched upon aspects of this relationship in isolation, such as the link between engagement and aspects of leadership or job performance (Park et al., 2022). However, this study uniquely captures the comprehensive mediation effect, demonstrating how behavioural and emotional engagement function as conduits through which corporate purpose impacts organisational performance. This insight substantially advances our understanding of the mechanics of organisational dynamics in the context of a purpose-driven business model.

Building on the work of Gartenberg et al. (2019) and Alatawi et al. (2023), this research integrates the concept of corporate purpose with a range of organisational metrics. By doing so, it sheds light on how corporate purpose transcends traditional financial metrics to encompass broader, more holistic non-financial outcomes, thereby providing a more comprehensive view of organisational success in the modern business landscape.

By delving into the synergistic relationships among corporate purpose, employee engagement, and organisational performance, this research fills a critical gap highlighted by van Tuin et al. (2020). It provides empirical evidence to support the mediated effect of corporate purpose, via employee engagement, on organisational performance, thereby offering a nuanced perspective on these interdependencies.

Therefore, this research significantly enriches the discourse in the field of organisational studies, particularly concerning the evolving concepts of corporate purpose and employee engagement. It offers valuable insights for academics and business practitioners alike, providing a clearer understanding of how purpose-driven strategies, manifested through engaged employees, can lead to enhanced organisational performance. The findings of this study not only bridge an identified research gap but also pave the way for future investigations into the dynamics of corporate purpose, employee engagement, and organisational success.

7.5 Practical recommendations and managerial implication

The recommendations are based on the findings of this study and the comprehensive literature review. The findings are particularly pertinent for businesses that are either already purpose-driven or those contemplating the integration of 'purpose' at the core of

their strategic framework. Specifically, it addresses the challenges faced by such businesses in striking a balance between fulfilling shareholder profit interests and adopting a more holistic stakeholder approach. These recommendations aim to assist these organisations in navigating the complexities of aligning their profit-driven objectives with broader, value-driven goals, ensuring a harmonious blend of financial performance and stakeholder welfare (non-financial performance).

According to the research finding, there is a direct statistically significant positive relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance. Management should integrate a strong, authentic corporate purpose into their strategic planning. This study underscores the importance of aligning organisational goals with purpose-driven strategies to enhance both financial and non-financial performance. This finding is also supported by Hurth et al. (2018), Kurznack et al. (2021) and Jones-Khosa and Gomes (2023) who found that companies that integrate long-term, purpose-oriented strategies experience an increase in both economic and societal value.

The study also revealed that corporate purpose that is authentic and resonant effectively inspire employee engagement. This involves ensuring that the purpose is not just a statement but a living part of the organisation's culture and operations, as this has been shown to enhance all dimensions of employee engagement. The result of the study is supported by van Tuin et al. (2020), who demonstrated that corporate purpose serves as a precursor to heightened employee engagement. Therefore, management must embrace corporate purpose, by embedding a strong and resonant corporate purpose into their core strategies. The study highlighted by doing this organisation can foster a workforce that is not only highly engaged but also more aligned with achieving overarching organisational goals.

Given the significant mediation effects of behavioural and emotional engagement, management should develop targeted strategies to foster these specific dimensions of engagement. For behavioural engagement, this could involve recognising and rewarding proactive and innovative behaviours. For emotional engagement, creating a work environment that values employee well-being and fosters a sense of belonging could be key.

The absence of significant mediation in some paths, such as the cognitive engagement's impact on both financial and non-financial performance, suggests that other factors might be influencing these relationships. Management should explore additional avenues to

enhance cognitive engagement, such as transparent communication, continuous learning opportunities, and meaningful job roles. According to Boswell (2006) cognitive engagement is inherently tied to an employee's understanding of their contributions to the organisation's strategic imperatives, thus management must ensure that the organisation's purpose as well as role clarity is communicated so that employees understand it clearly.

Based on the non-mediated paths revealed by this study, management should develop comprehensive employee engagement programs that address behavioural, emotional, and cognitive aspects. While behavioural and emotional engagement directly mediate performance outcomes, cognitive engagement, though not a direct mediator, is crucial for overall employee involvement and should not be overlooked. Therefore, fostering an environment that supports all dimensions of employee engagement is crucial for translating corporate purpose into tangible outcomes.

Based on the above recommendation, it is thus important for management to regularly assess the effectiveness of corporate purpose initiatives and employee engagement strategies. This ongoing evaluation should consider both mediated and non-mediated paths to organisational performance, adapting strategies as necessary to meet changing business and employee needs.

The practical implications and recommendations underscore the importance of a strategic, holistic approach to managing corporate purpose and employee engagement. By understanding and leveraging the nuanced relationships between these factors, management can effectively enhance both financial and non-financial organisational performance, thus achieving a sustainable competitive advantage in the evolving business landscape.

7.6 Limitation of the research

The study acknowledges several limitations that are important to consider when interpreting its findings.

A primary limitation is the reliance on self-reported data, which inherently carries the risk of subjective biases and perceptions, potentially affecting the accuracy and objectivity of the findings. Additionally, the cross-sectional design of the research limits its ability to

establish causality, offering only a snapshot in time without capturing the dynamics of changing relationships over a period time.

The geographical and sectoral scope of the study may also not fully represent the diversity of organisational contexts as highlighted in chapter 4, raising questions about the universality of its applicability. Moreover, the response rate of 64.1% from a sample of 384, while commendable, involves a sample size that may not adequately represent the broader population, thus affecting the generalisability of the findings. The use of a non-probability convenience sampling method further limits the study's ability to generalise its findings to a wider audience, potentially not reflecting the collective views of organisations with a corporate purpose.

Methodologically, the choice of PLS-SEM over CB-SEM was influenced by its suitability for predictive analysis and flexibility with small, non-normally distributed data. However, this choice may have implications for the nature and depth of relationships explored. While the survey instruments were adapted from existing validated tools, the adaptations made for the study might influence their applicability and relevance to this specific research context.

The study's approach to missing value analysis and outlier assessment, though methodologically sound, could have implications on the representativeness of the data. The absence of extreme outliers and the decision to retain all data points might influence the study's conclusions. Furthermore, the respondents' subjective perceptions, as captured in the survey, might not accurately reflect the reality of the organisations they represent, which could influence the validity of the results.

Lastly, the study did not encompass all factors that might influence organisational performance, which could limit the comprehensiveness of the findings and their applicability in different organisational contexts. These limitations highlight the need for caution in generalising the results and point to areas for improvement in future research.

7.7 Suggestions for future study

Building upon the limitations and recommendations identified in this study, future research in corporate purpose, employee engagement, and organisational performance is required to deepen our understanding and expand the applicability of the findings.

Longitudinal studies are crucial for elucidating the causal relationships and dynamics over time, which this cross-sectional study potentially has not fully captured. Such longitudinal studies may provide valuable insights into how the interactions between corporate purpose, employee engagement, and organisational performance evolve and influence each other in the long term.

Addressing the methodological limitations identified in this study, such as the reliance on self-reported data and the cross-sectional nature of the research, is important. As a result, future studies should consider objective data sources to ensure a more robust and reliable set of findings.

As per the limitation highlighted above, improving the generalisability of results through larger sample sizes and the use of probability sampling methods is another critical consideration for future studies. This approach may enhance the representativeness of the sample and strengthen the validity of the conclusions drawn.

This study followed a quantitative research approach; therefore the consideration of an in-depth qualitative research could provide richer, more nuanced insights into how corporate purpose and employee engagement are perceived within organisations. Such qualitative explorations would complement the quantitative findings and offer a deeper understanding.

Given the non-mediated paths observed in this study, future research should also explore other dimensions of employee engagement that might influence organisational performance such as Kahn's conceptualisation and expanded by Schaufeli et al. (2002) proposing that engagement is best understood as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. This could lead to a more comprehensive understanding of how different aspects of engagement interact with organisational outcomes. Also, investigating other potential mediators or moderators in the relationship between corporate purpose and organisational performance is also an essential area for future research.

Finally, given the significant impact observed on non-financial performance metrics, future studies could delve more into these aspects, exploring how they contribute to an organisation's long-term sustainability and societal impact. By addressing these areas, future research can build upon the current study's findings, offering more comprehensive insights and practical implications for organisations aiming to leverage their corporate

purpose and foster an engaged workforce in today's dynamic business environment.

7.8 Conclusion of this chapter

In conclusion, this research underscores the profound impact of corporate purpose on organisational performance and the pivotal role of employee engagement in this relationship. The findings offer valuable insights for business managers and contribute to academic discourse in the fields of corporate purpose, employee engagement, and organisational performance. As the business landscape continues to evolve, the insights from this study provide a roadmap for organisations striving to achieve sustainable success through purpose-driven strategies and engaged workforces. The potential for future research in this area is evident and vast, promising further exploration into the nuances of how corporate purpose can be leveraged to foster organisational excellence and societal impact.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement in the Relationship between Corporate Purpose and Organisational Performance

Dear Respondent,

My name is George Engelbrecht, and I am currently studying for a Master of Philosophy in Corporate Strategy (MPhil CS) degree at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS).

My study investigates the relationship between Corporate Purpose and Organisational Performance. My research is titled: **The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement in the Relationship between Corporate Purpose and Organisational Performance.**

I invite you to participate in this survey. The survey will take less than 10 minutes of your time to complete, and there are no costs to you. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. Of course, all data will be kept confidential. By completing the survey, you indicate that you voluntarily participate in this research.

If you have any concerns, please get in touch with my supervisor or me. Our details are provided below.

Researcher name: George Engelbrecht, Email: gengelbrecht@randmutual.co.za or Phone: 079 493 9580
Research Supervisor: Dr Teresa Onaji-Benson, Email: onajit@gibs.co.za Phone: 060 750 5883

Section A1: Demographic Information (Please indicate your gender by selecting one of the below option)

Male	
Female	
Prefer not say	
Other	

Section A2: Please select your age band

25 years and younger	
26 - 35 years	
36 – 45 years	
46 - 55 years	
Older than 55 years	

Section A3: Please select your occupation. If other, write down your occupation in the box labelled "Other"

Executive	
Senior Management	
Middle Management	
Junior Management	
Non-Management	
Other	

Section A4: Please select the years you have been working for the company

2 years or less	
3 to 5 years	
6 to 10 years	
10 - 15 years	
More than 15 years	

Section B: Corporate Purpose

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My employer has a clearly defined and authentic vision and mission that extends beyond financial success					
My employer's mission also focus on addressing social and environmental concerns					
My employer's demonstrate ethical response in its responsibilities					
My employer's decisions and strategies are genuinely aligned with its stated purpose					
My employer's purpose reflects the company's values and beliefs					

Section C1: Subdimension of Employee Engagement: Cognitive Engaged

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
CE1: I am really focused on my job when I am working					
CE2: I concentrate on my job when I am at work					
CE3: When working, I think a lot about how I can give my best					
CE4: At work, I am focused on my job					
CE5: When I am at work, I give my job a lot of attention					

SECTION C2: Subdimension of Employee Engagement: Emotional Engaged

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
EE1. Working at my current organisation has a great deal of personal meaning to me					
EE2. I feel a strong sense of belonging to my job					
EE3. I am proud to tell others that I work for my current organisation					
EE4. I believe in the mission and purpose of my organisation					
EE5. I care about the future of my organisation					

SECTION C2: Subdimension of Employee Engagement: Emotional Engaged

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
EE1. Working at my current organisation has a great deal of personal meaning to me					
EE2. I feel a strong sense of belonging to my job					
EE3. I am proud to tell others that I work for my current organisation					
EE4. I believe in the mission and purpose of my organisation					
EE5. I care about the future of my organisation					

SECTION C3: Subdimension of Employee Engagement: Behavioural Engaged

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
BE1. I do more than what is expected of me					
BE2. I really push myself to work beyond what is expected of me					
BE3. I am willing to put in extra effort without being asked					
BE4. I often go above what is expected of me to help my team be successful					
BE5. I work harder than expected to help my organisation be successful					

SECTION C: Organisational Performance

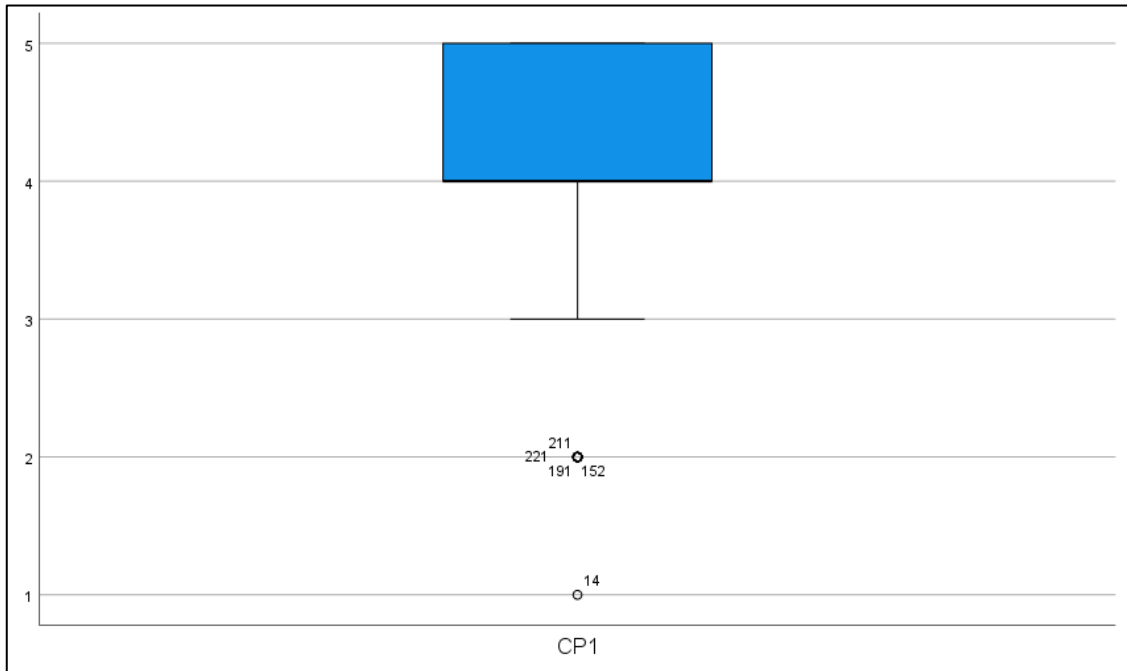
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My organisation has consistently met or exceeded its revenue targets					
My organisation has maintained a stable profit margin					
My organisation has a positive cash flow that supports business growth and expansion					
My organisation delivers superior long-term value to our shareholders, customers and other stakeholders					
My organisation has a good and strong reputation in the market					
My organisation has a high rate of customer retention					
My organisation is committed to sustainable practices in its operations					
My organisation has clear sustainability goals and has achieved it					

Appendix A1: Annexure A1 Missing value analysis

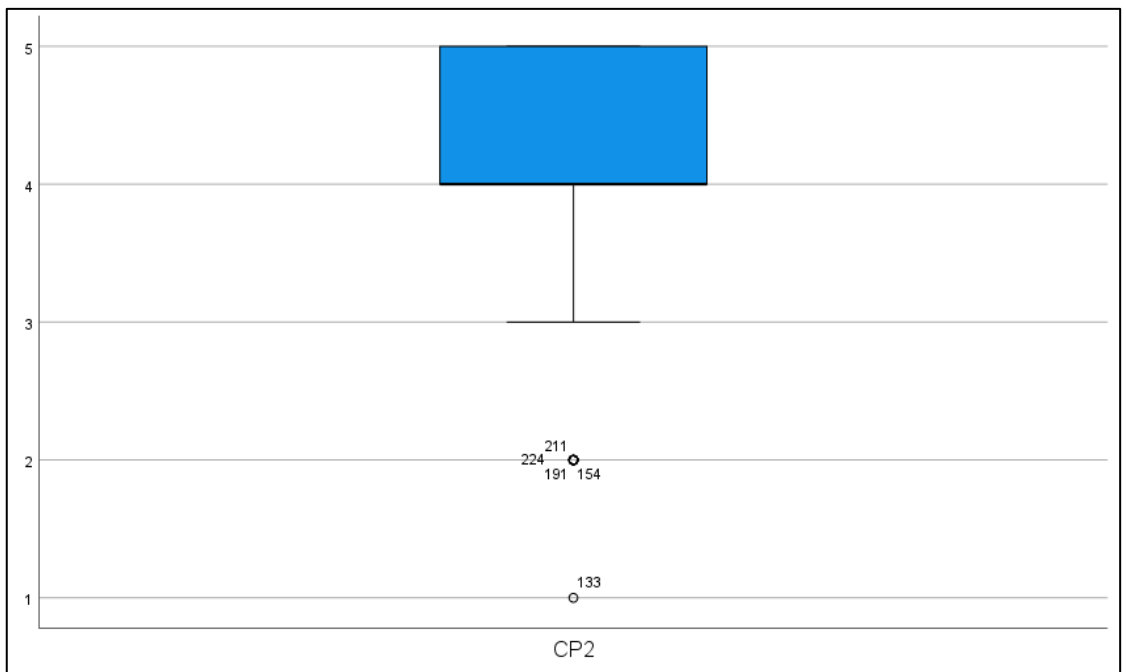
	N	Missing	
		Count	Percent
CP1	246	0	.0
CP2	244	2	.8
CP3	243	3	1.2
CP4	244	2	.8
CP5	243	3	1.2
CE1	241	5	2.0
CE2	236	10	4.1
CE3	230	16	6.5
CE4	233	13	5.3
CE5	237	9	3.7
EE1	246	0	.0
EE2	245	1	.4
EE3	245	1	.4
EE4	245	1	.4
EE5	244	2	.8
BE1	243	3	1.2
BE2	244	2	.8
BE3	244	2	.8
BE4	244	2	.8
BE5	242	4	1.6
P1	245	1	.4
P2	245	1	.4
P22	243	3	1.2
P3	243	3	1.2
P4	244	2	.8
P5	244	2	.8
P6	240	6	2.4
P7	243	3	1.2

Appendix A2: Box plots for outliers

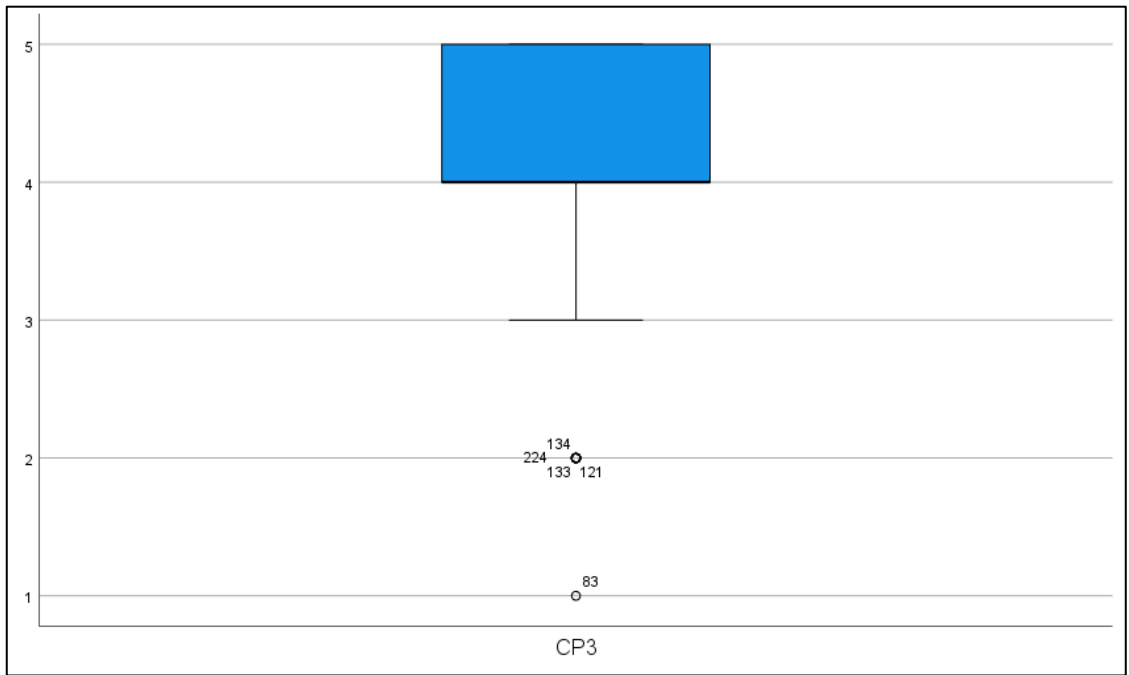
CP1



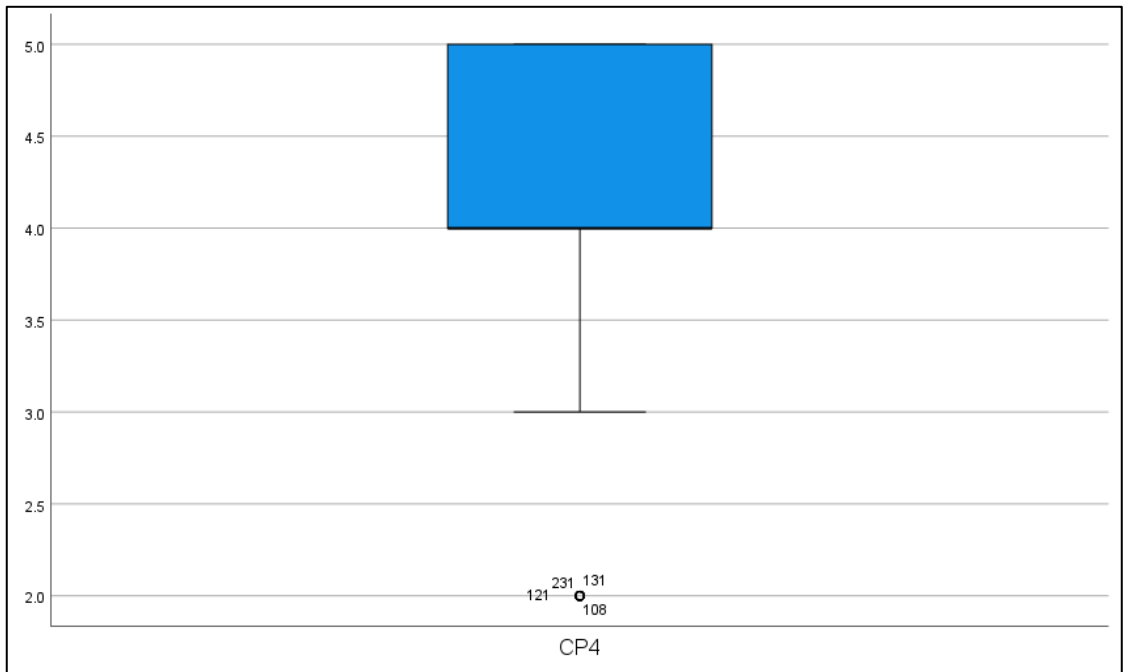
CP2



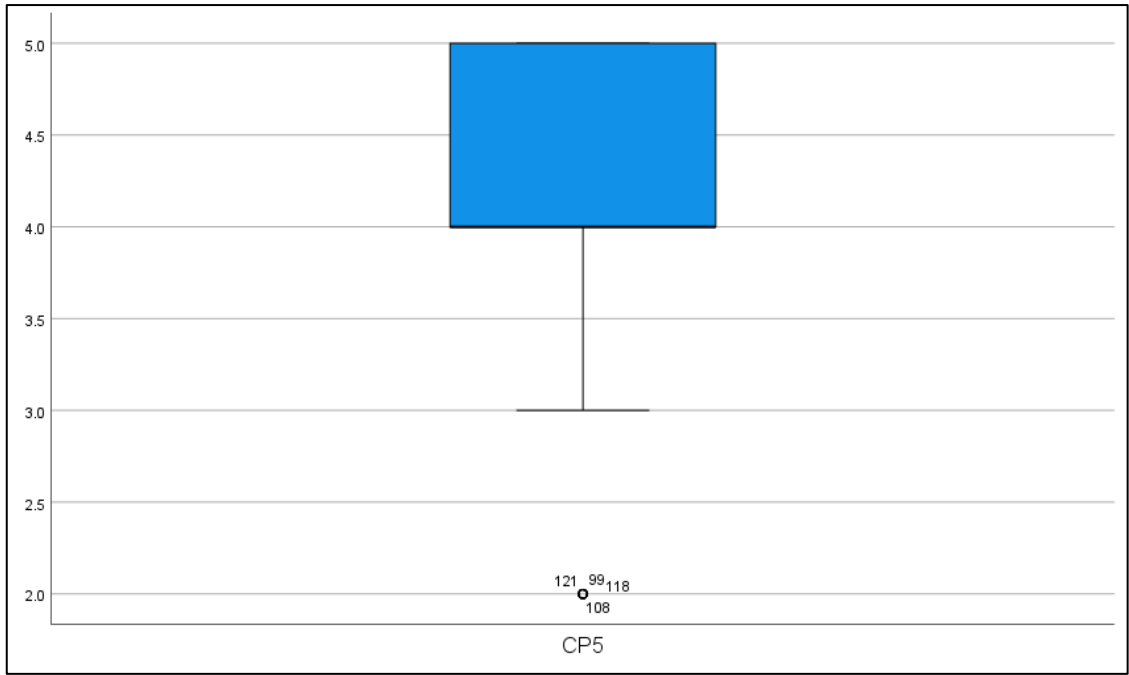
CP3



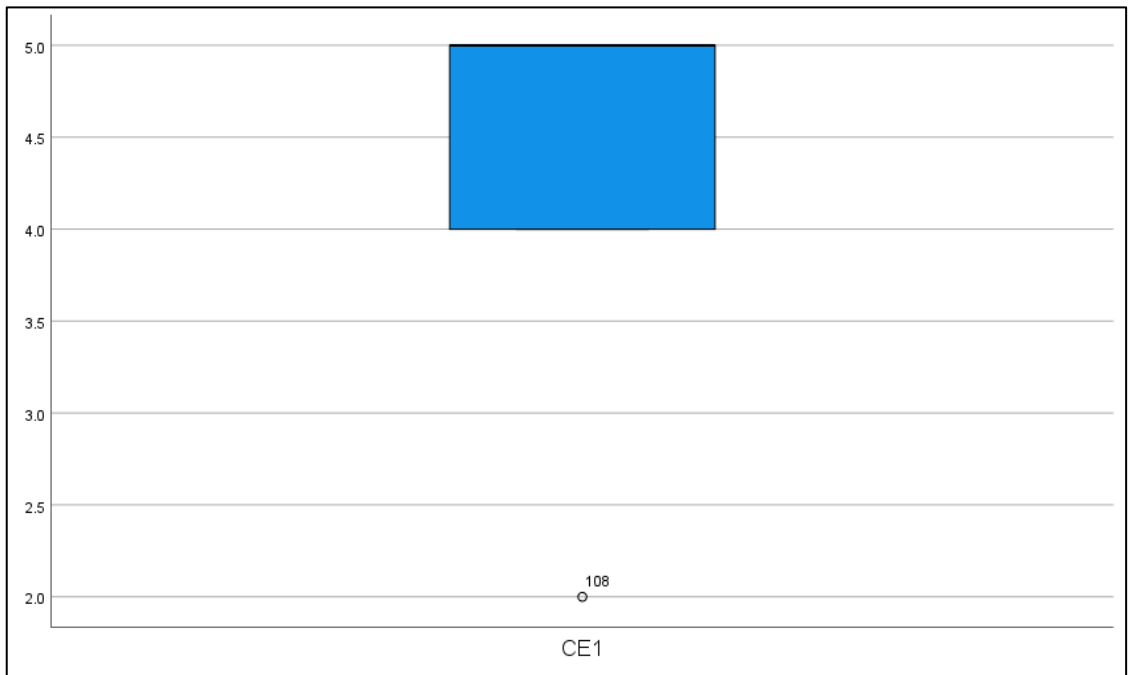
CP4



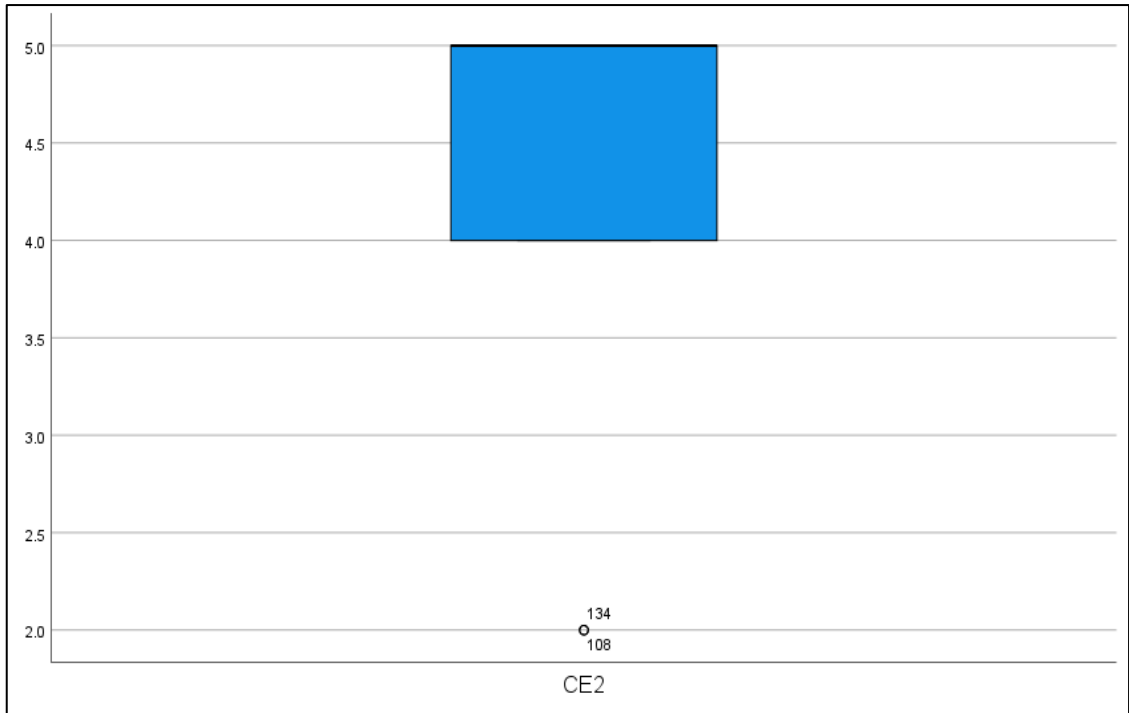
CP5



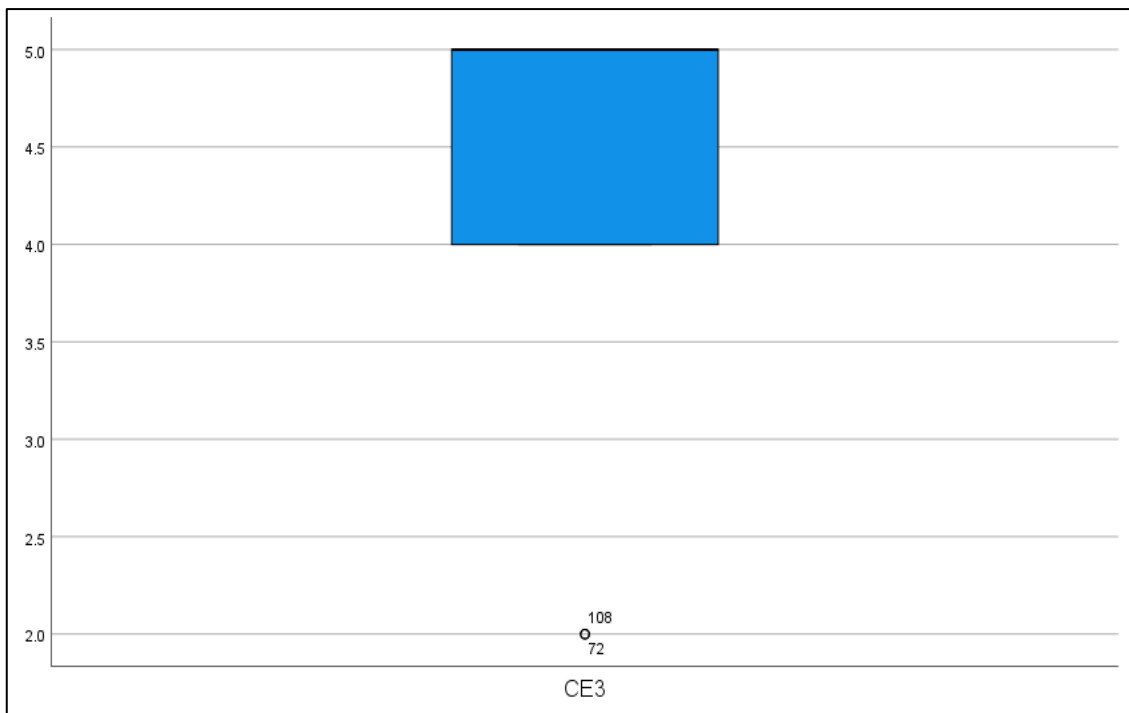
CE1



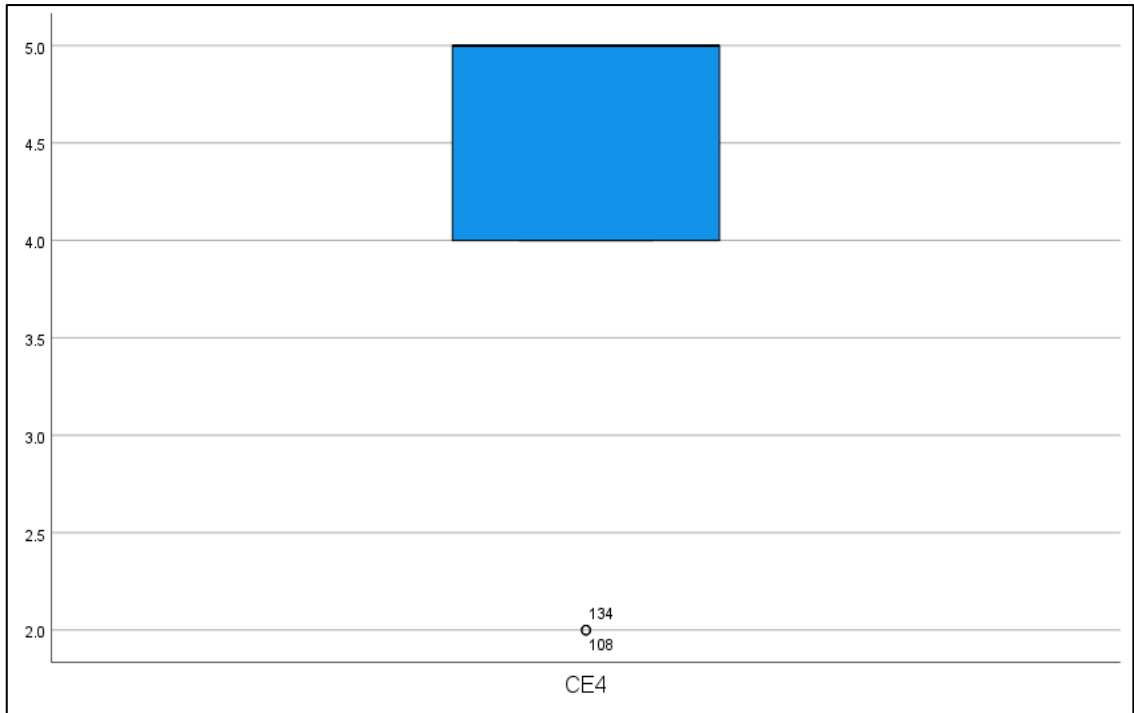
CE2



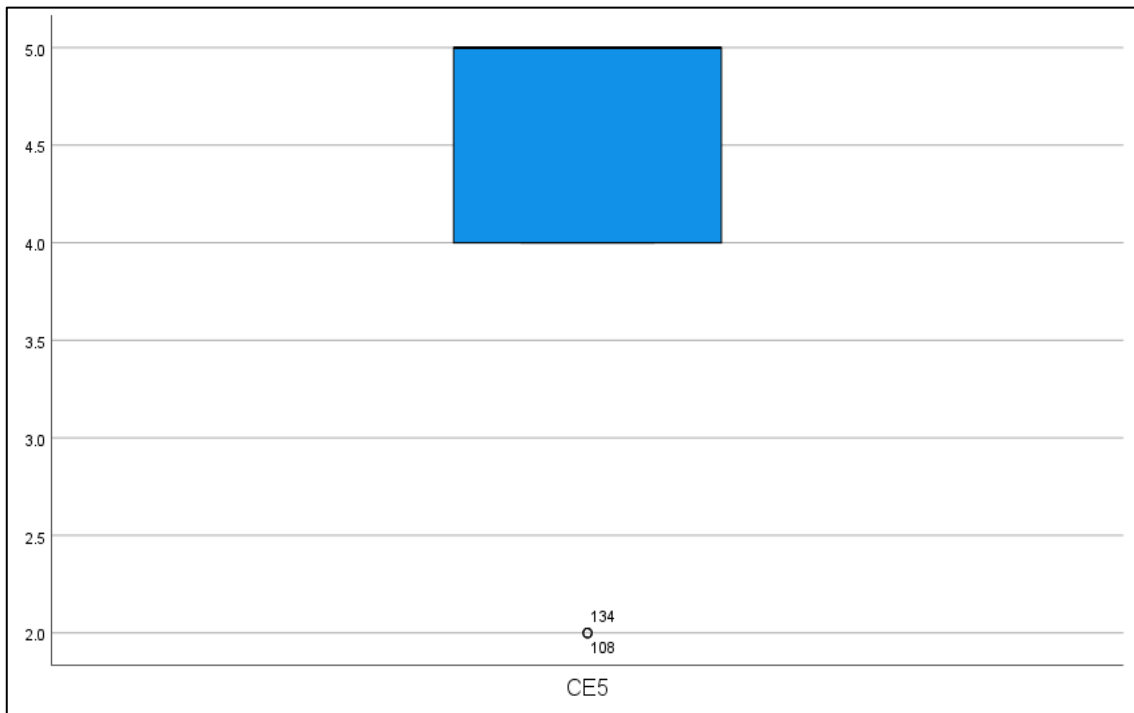
CE3



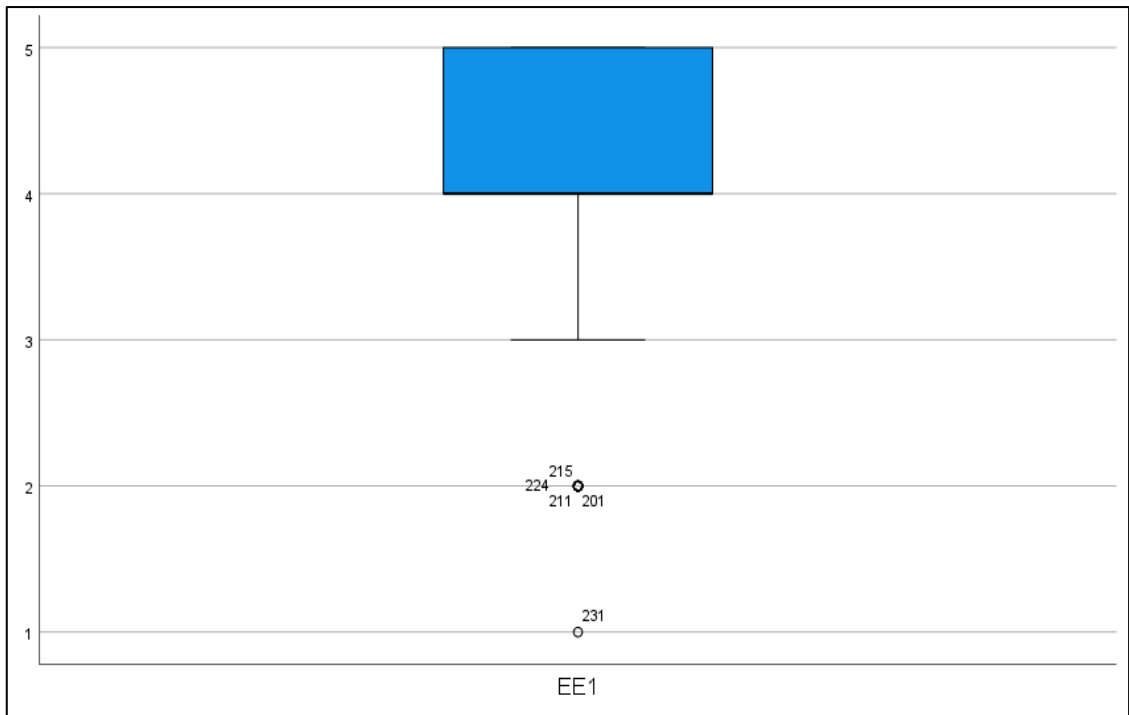
CE4



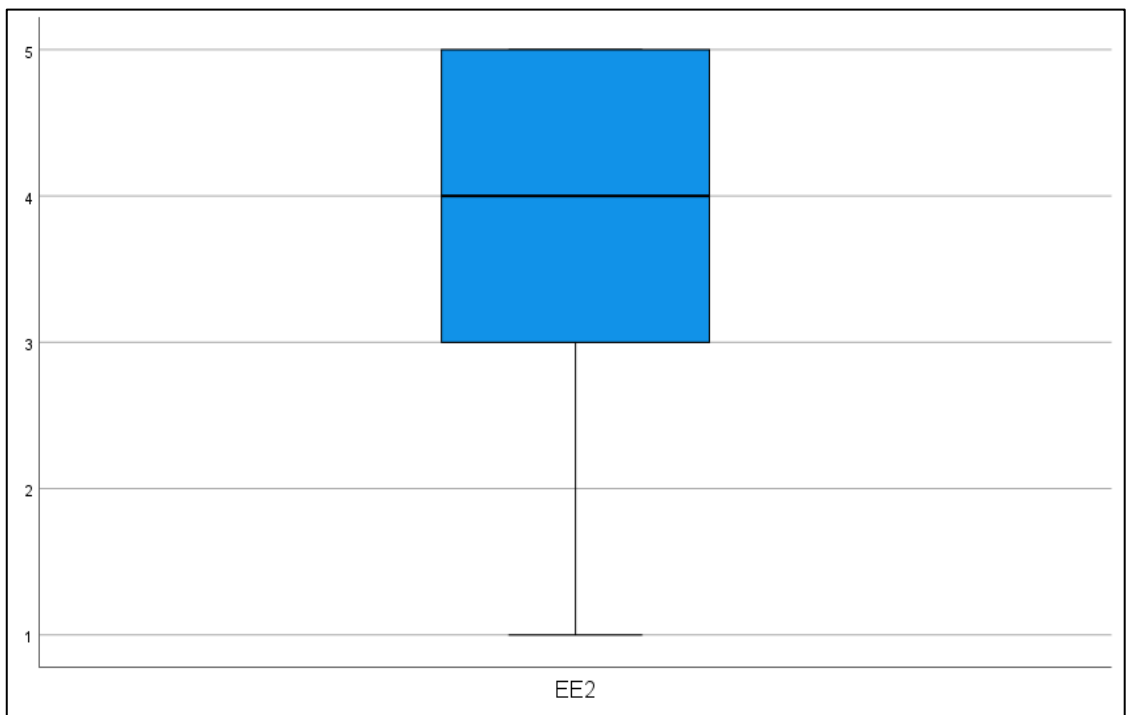
CE5



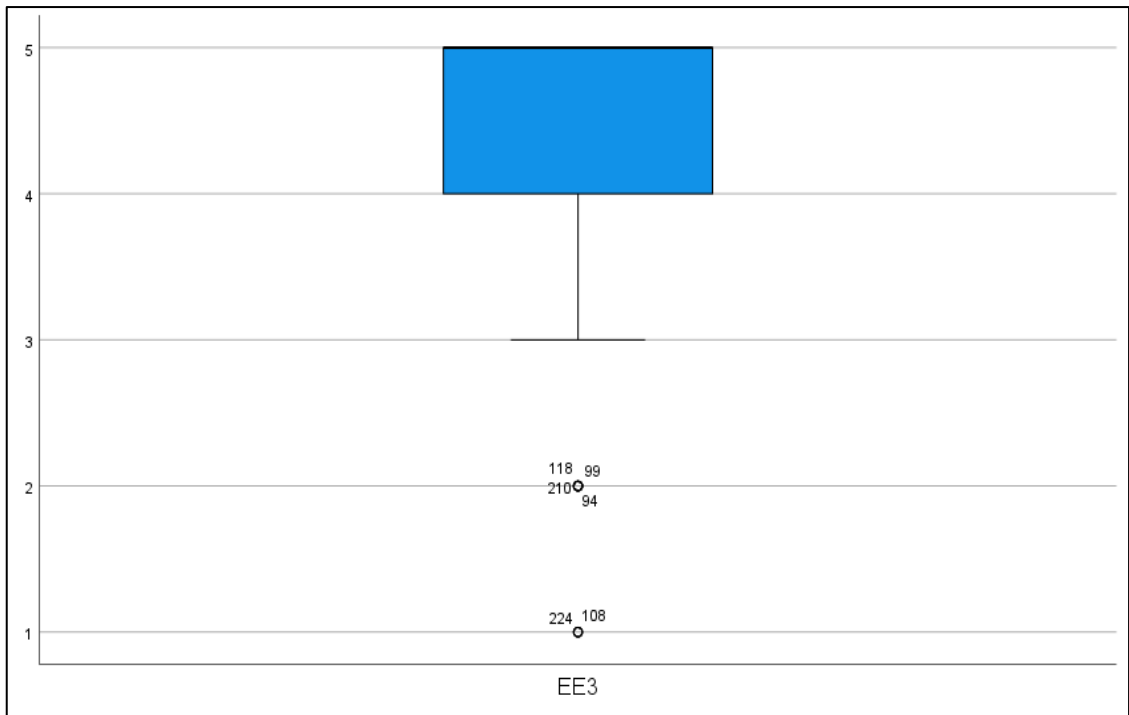
EE1



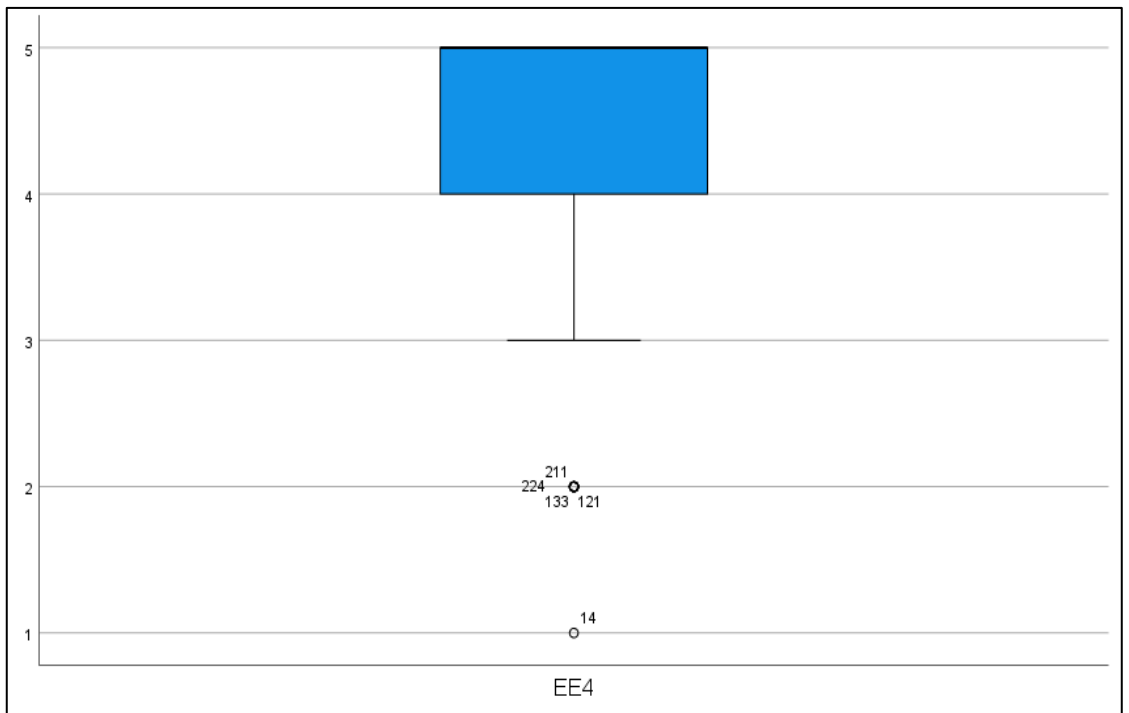
EE2



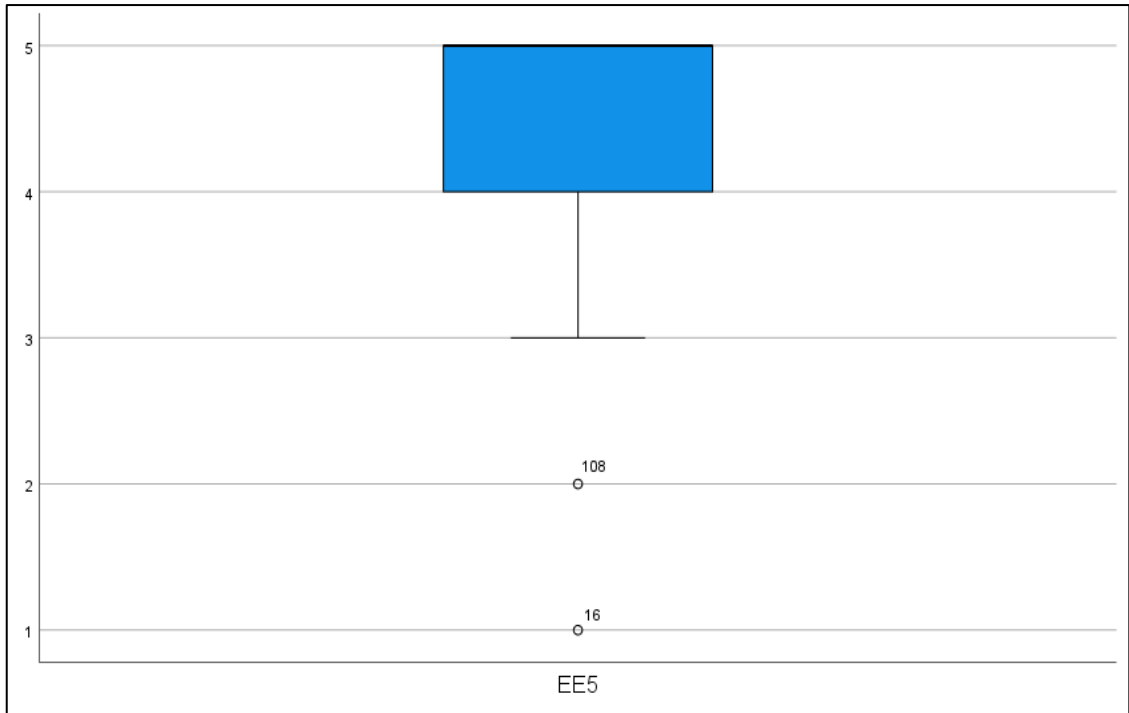
EE3



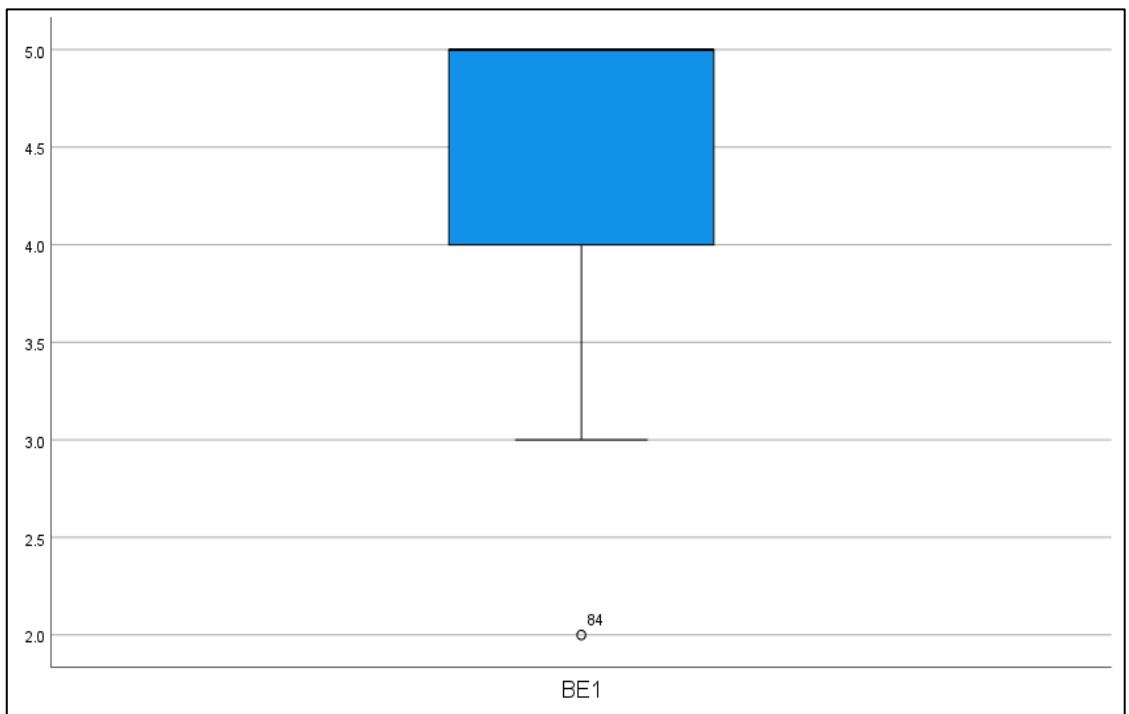
EE4



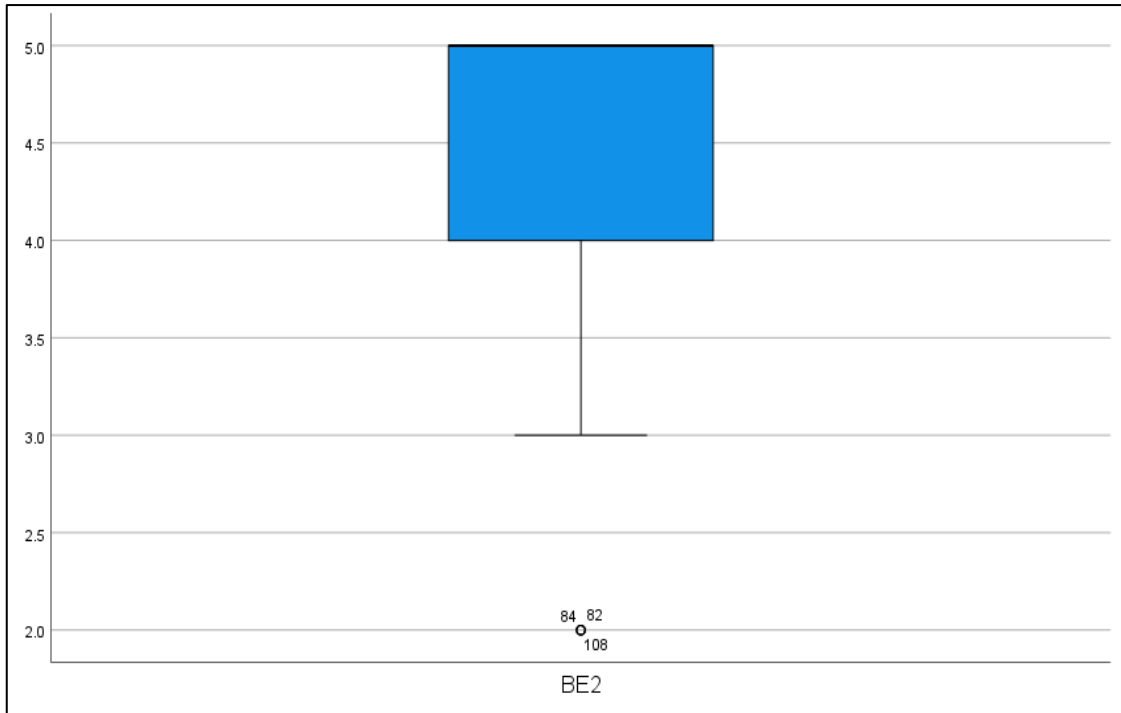
EE5



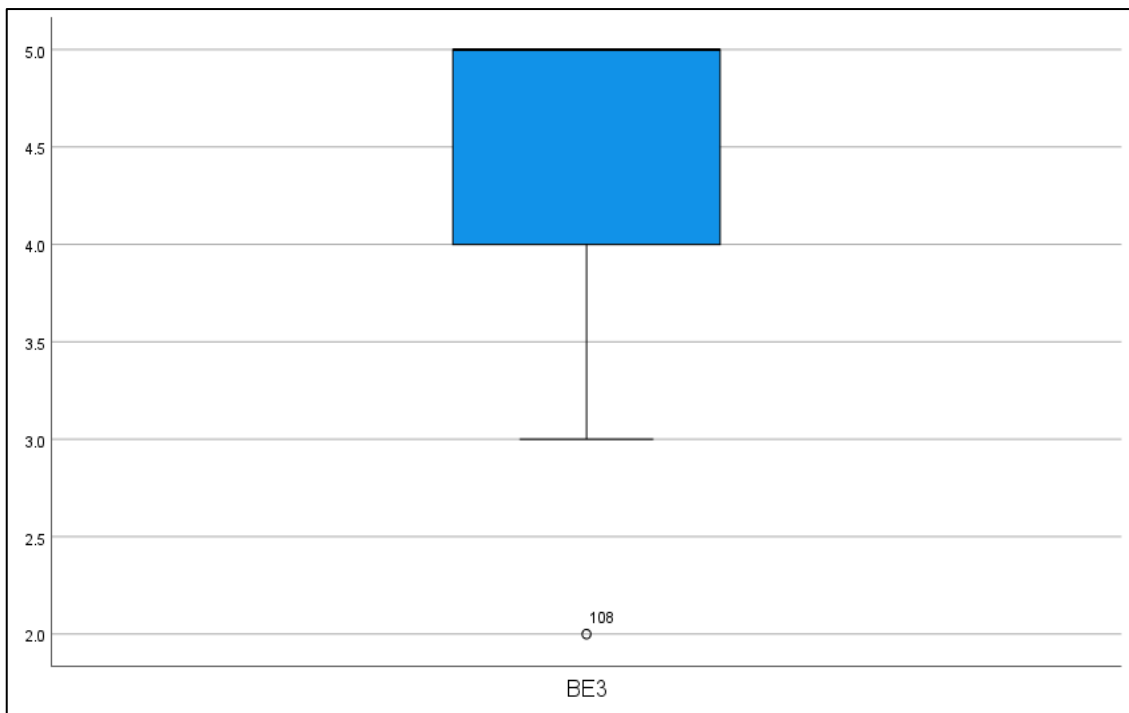
BE1



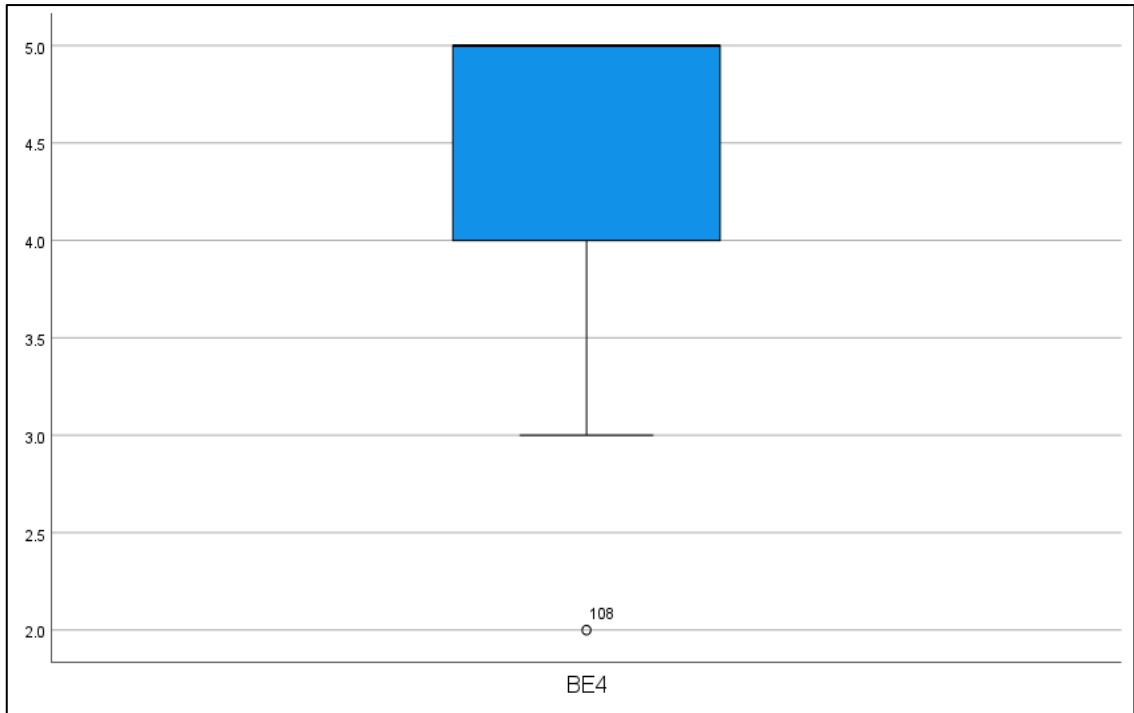
BE2



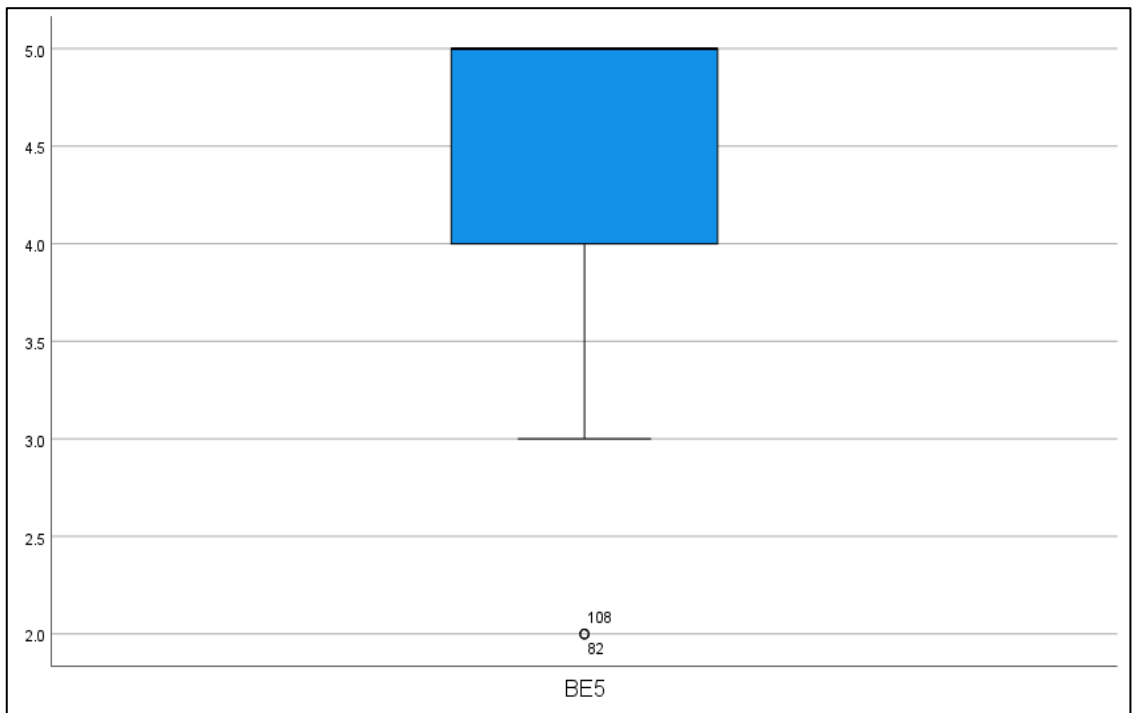
BE3



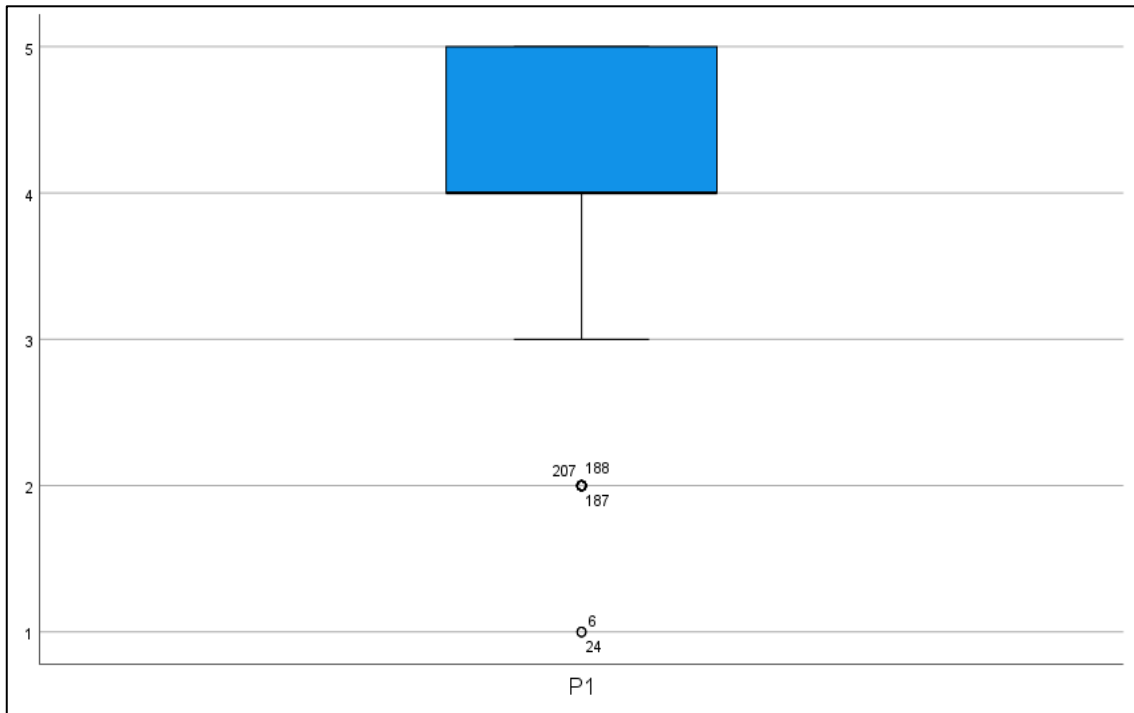
BE4



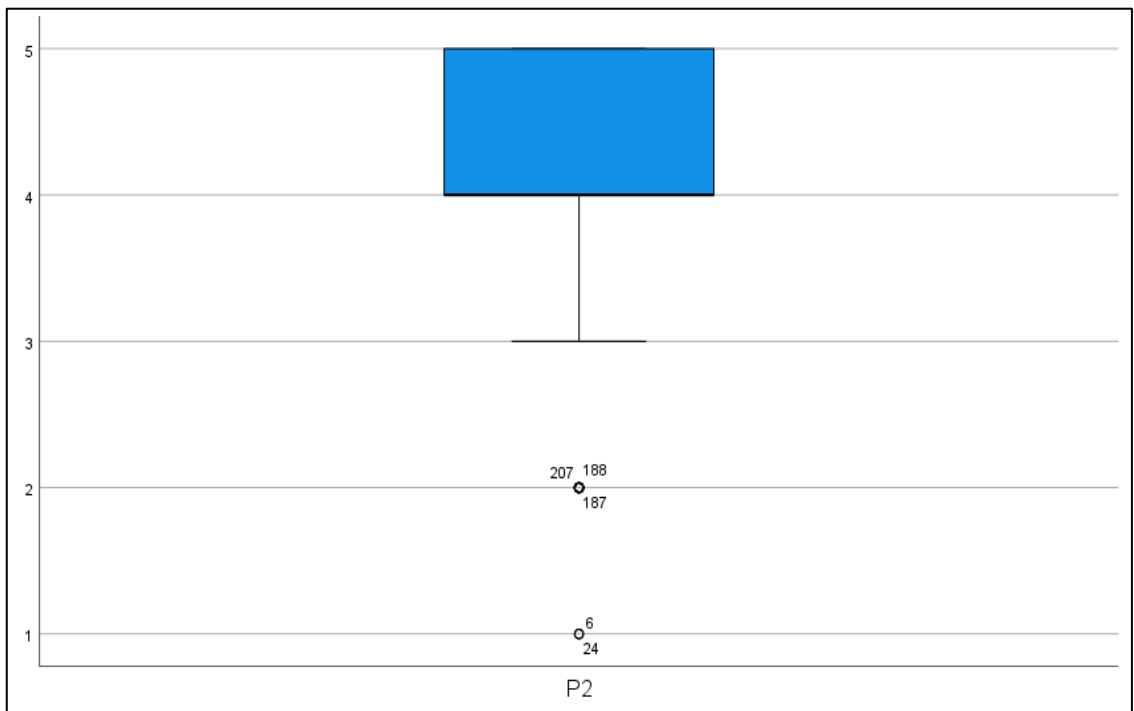
BE5



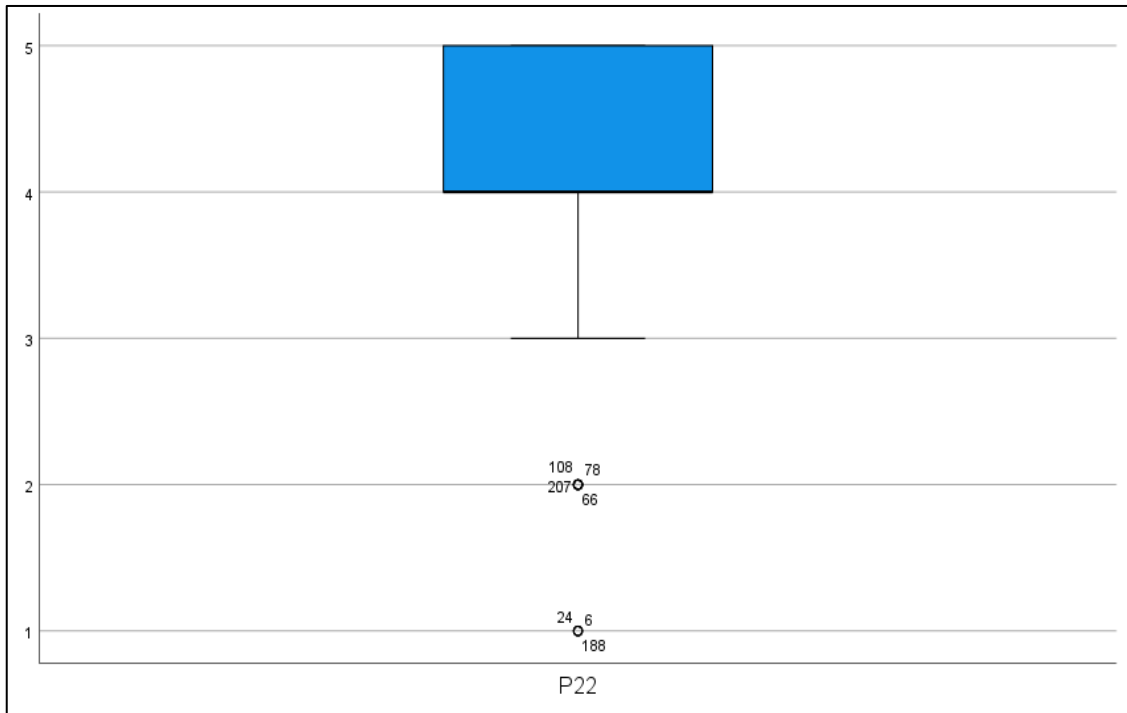
P1



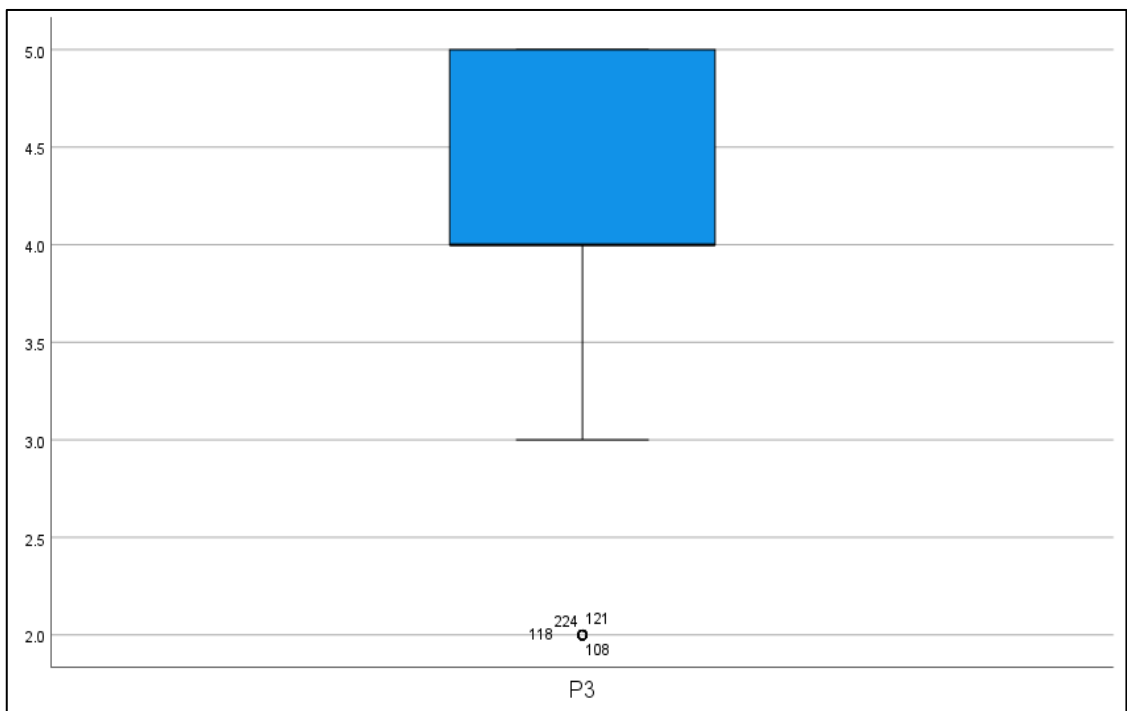
P2



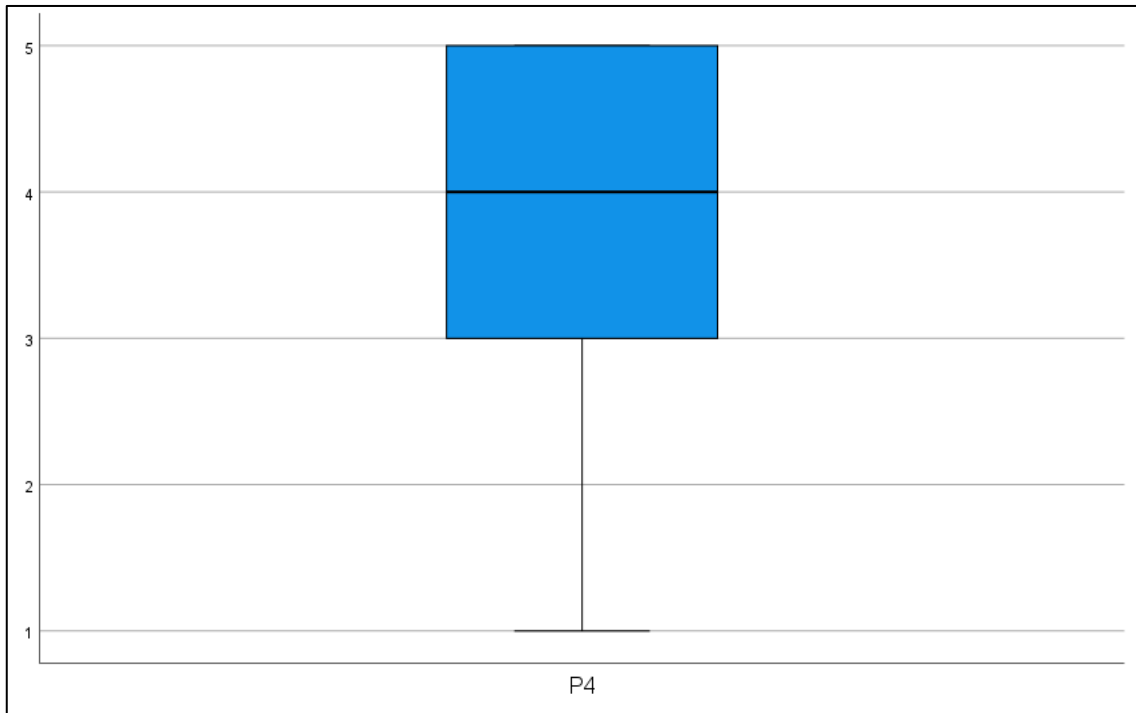
P22



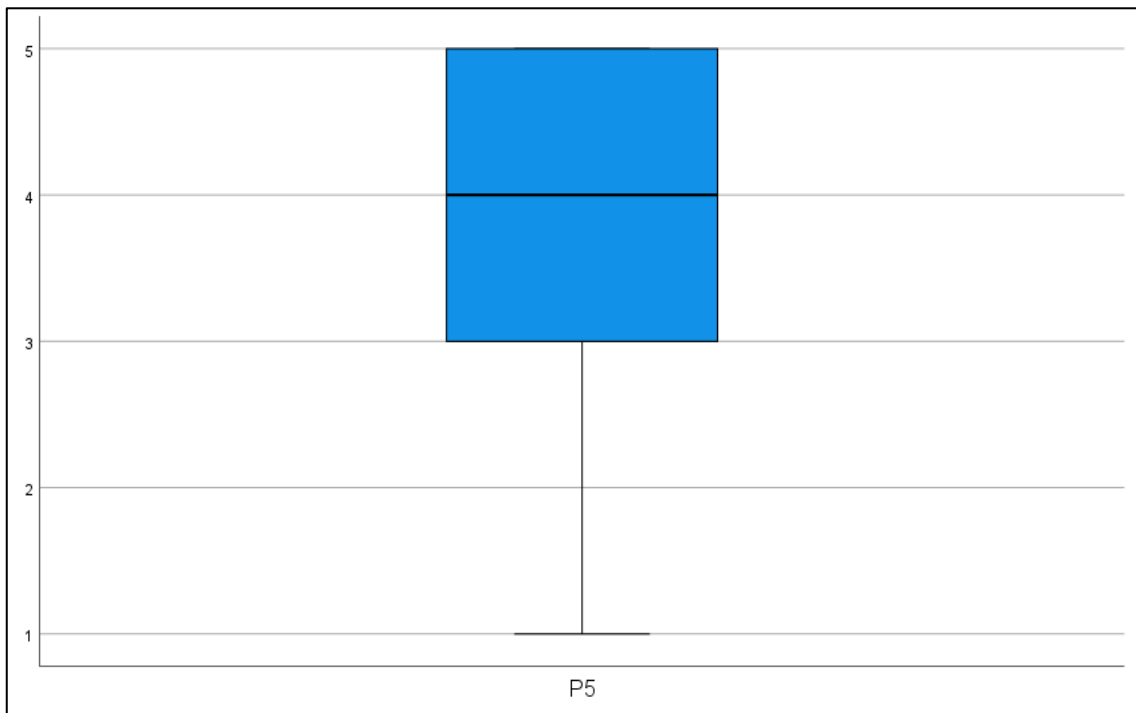
P3



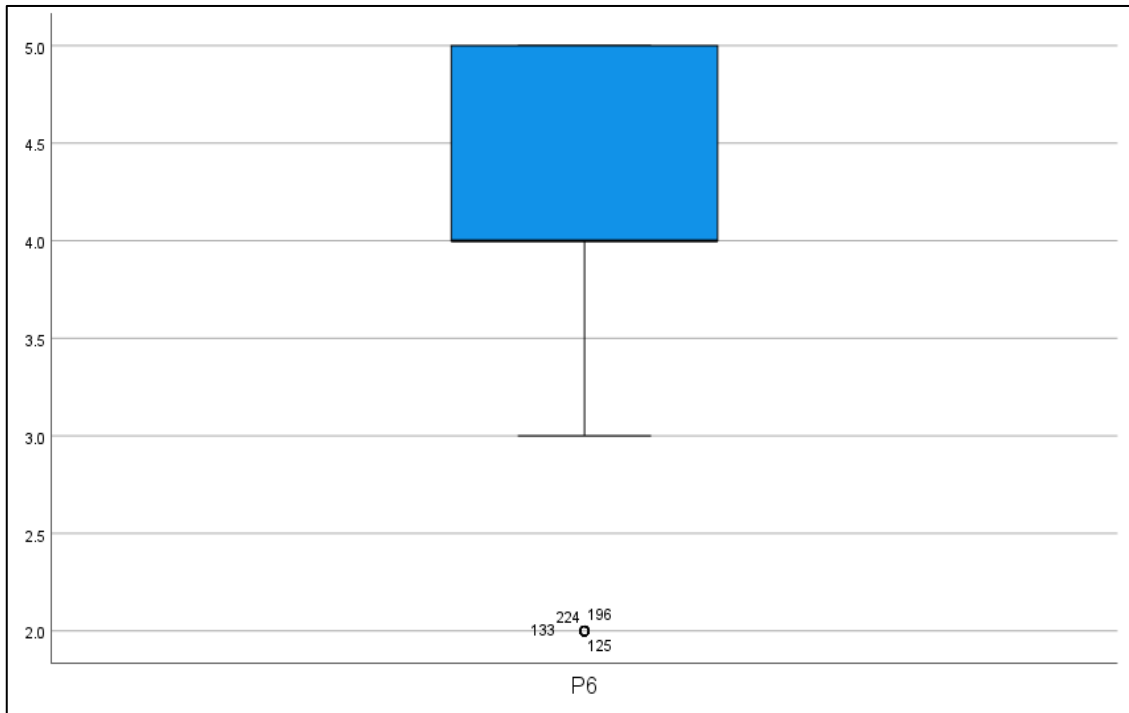
P4



P5



P6



P7

